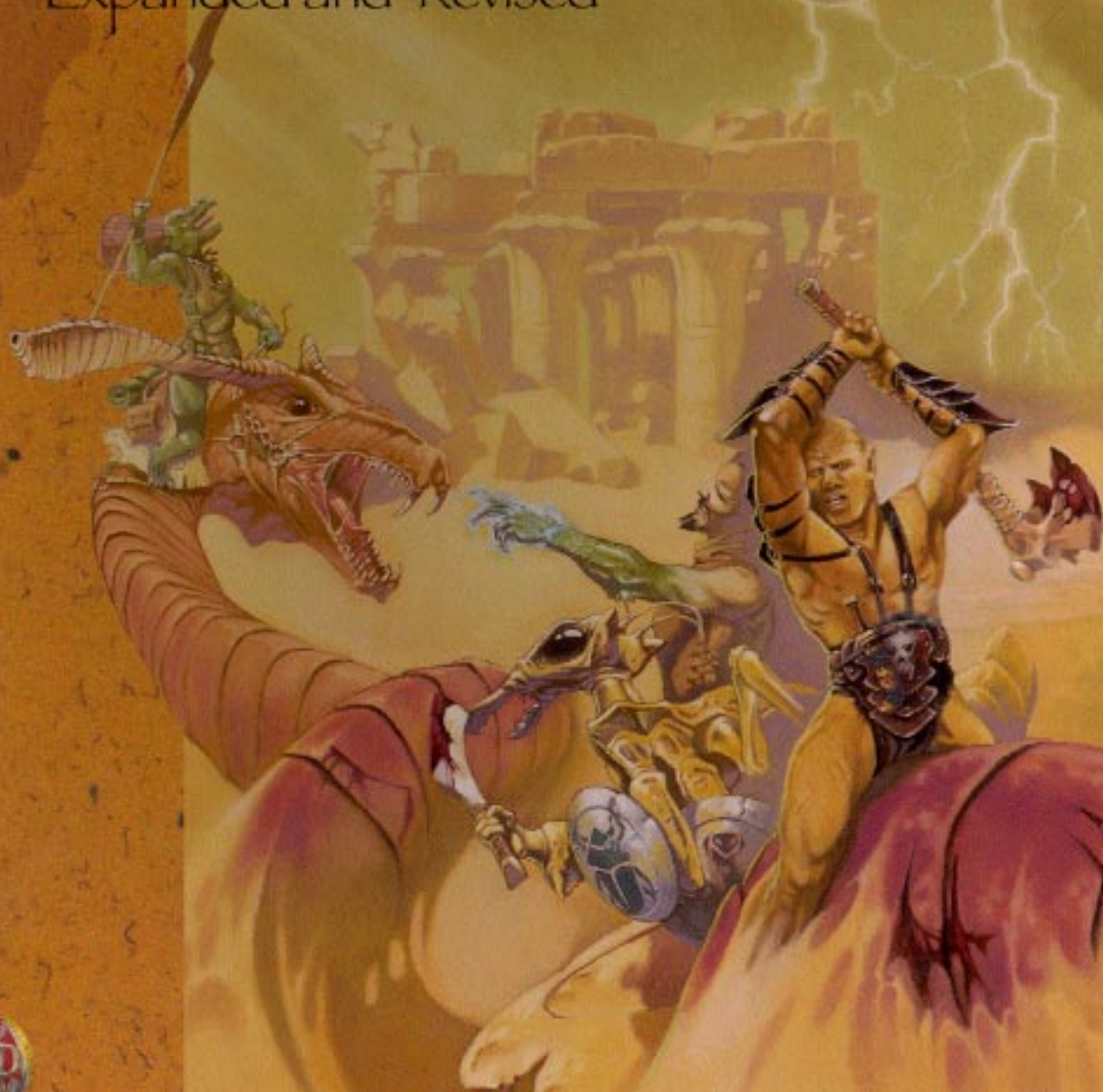




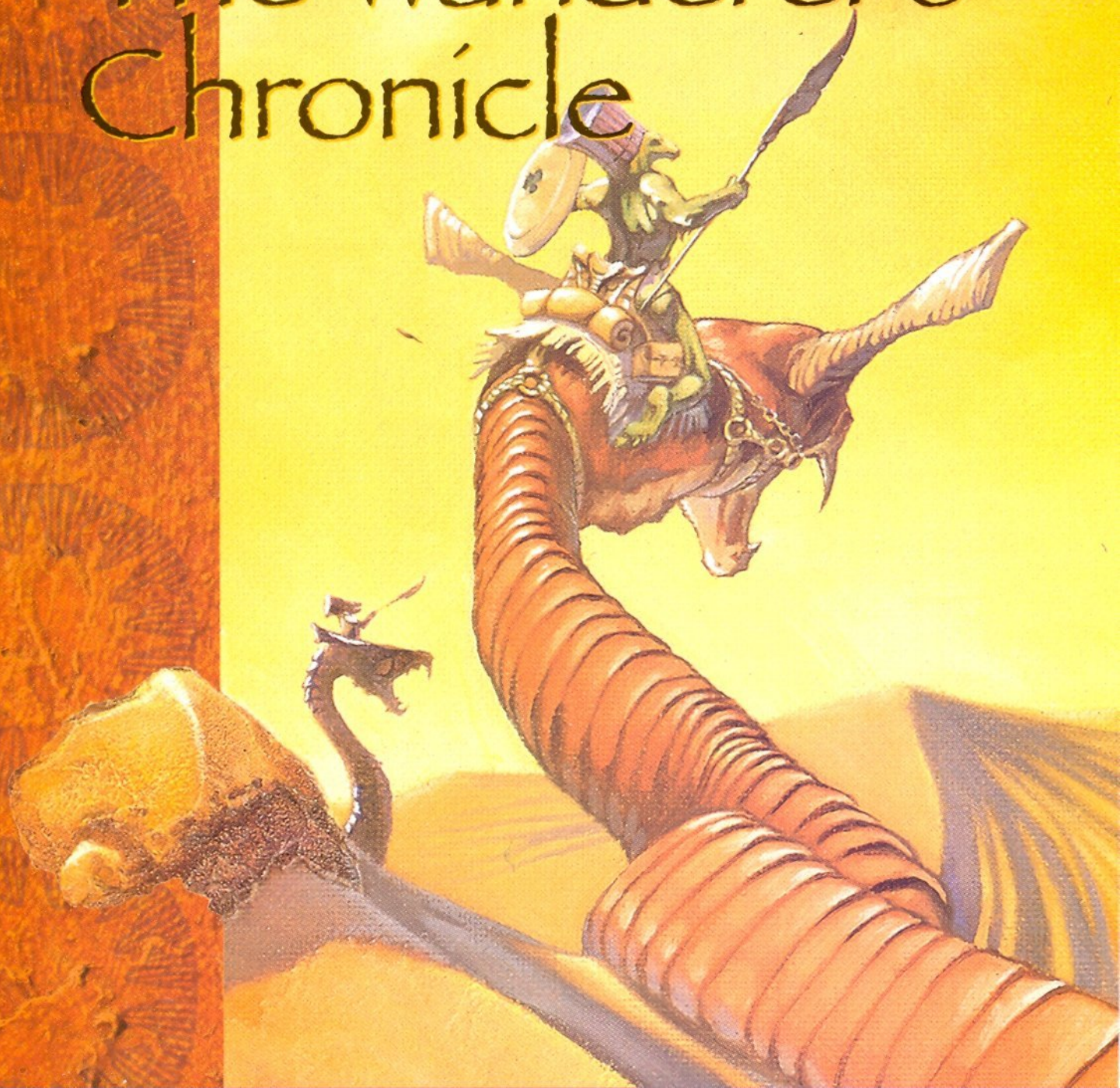
# Campaign Setting

Expanded and Revised





# The Wanderer's Chronicle





# The Wanderer's Chronicle

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# The Wanderer's Journal

*I live in a world of fire and sand, where blistering heat is the companion of days long and cold, where fear-filled darkness rules the night. I am the Wanderer, traveling far and wide to learn the secrets of Athas so that I may write them down and share them with the world.*

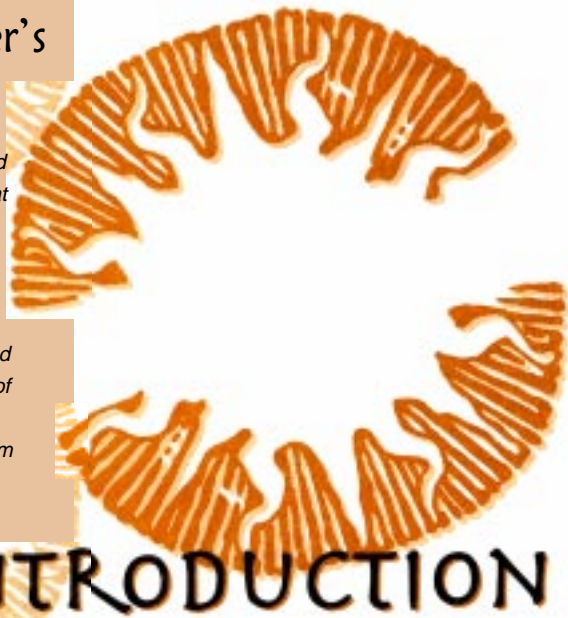
Look around you! The crimson sun beats down from a shimmering sky, scorching the life from everything that crawls or flies

or runs. Listen! This is a land of blood and dust, of unending earthquakes, scouring sand squalls, and swift, violent rainstorms that deliver lightning and death from the sky.

This is my home: Athas. It is an arid and bleak place, a wasteland with a handful of bleak cities clinging precariously to a few scattered oases. It is a brutal and savage land, beset by political strife and monstrous abominations, where life is grim and short.

Athas may be an endless wasteland, but it is not all desert. The terrains I have seen are as varied as they are deadly, as starkly beautiful as they are desolate. I have visited forests of green trees, fast obsidian plains, and jagged cliffs shrouded in clouds full of thunder and rain.

But the land is only part of the picture. Athas is also defined by its denizens, creatures great and small struggling to find a way to survive in this barren world. From humans, who seem to be everywhere, to dwarves and elves and halflings, to the alien thri-kreen, to the mul and half-giants, every people . . .



## INTRODUCTION

*The endless wastes . . . The burning sand. . . The crimson sun. . .* This is the world of Athas, the world of the DARK SUN® campaign. Athas's savage, primal landscape is the result of long centuries of ecological and magical abuses. The world is dying. It breathes its last gasps as water turns to silt, grasslands become sandy waste's, and jungles decay into stony barrens. Still, life finds ways to endure even in these hellish conditions. In fact, it thrives.

Athas is a place of contrasts. Bleak deserts exist beside verdant belts, rocky badlands give way to thick forests, and scrub plains surround opulent oases. These contrasts go beyond environmental conditions. Magic, for example, is relatively scarce and universally feared, while psionic powers are a common and accepted part of life.

Water is more precious than gold in this resource-depleted world, and metals of all sort are likewise in short supply. Except for heat and sun, blood and dust, few things can be found in abundance.

Children growing up beneath the crimson sun don't aspire to become heroes. True heroes who champion causes or seek to make the world a better place are as rare as steel on Athas. Living to see the next dawn is more important than defending a set of beliefs, so survival ultimately motivates all living creatures—not virtue or righteousness.


But heroes are desperately needed in this harsh, savage world. . . . Heroes like the ones who stepped forward to destroy the sorcerer-king Kalak and set Tyr free. Heroes like those who risked everything to kill the Dragon and keep Rajaat the Warbringer from devastating the land.

Today, Athas rushes toward its future. If the course of destruction is to be diverted, of Athas is to be restored, then more heroes must grab the reins of destiny and give new hope and promise to the world.

## About This Revision

Change has been the driving force in the world of Athas since the original DARK SUN campaign set Leas introduced in 1991. From the moment the box was opened and the first player characters were created, the world began to change. Moreover,





it wasn't the static, nominal evolution experienced by other game worlds. Significant transformations totally altered Athas in ways that the original boxed set never addressed.

For example, King Kalak of Tyr was introduced in the boxed set. As a sorcerer-king, Kalak ruled the primary city-state with an iron fist and a cruel heart. Life wasn't easy in Tyr, for any action could turn a free citizen into a slave. By the conclusion of the first adventure, however, Kalak was dead-killed by three slaves, a noble, and a templar. By their very actions, these five Athasians stepped forward and became heroes in the noblest sense of the word. Tyr became the first free city of the region, and the course of revolution and change was set for the next decade of campaign time.

Through the Prism Pentad novel series and the role-playing game products, the Tyr Region was explored in detail. Ten years of campaign time passed, and a great many things changed. The Dragon, the worst scourge known to Athas, was destroyed. Three more of the sorcerer-kings were toppled. An ancient threat was turned back before more harm could befall the, beleaguered land. Natural disasters such as a great earthquake, continuing aftershocks, and supernatural rainstorms all combined to recreate the Tyr Region and the lands beyond, as did new threats from beyond the Tyr Region. Suddenly the complexion of the world had been altered to such an extent that little of the original source material still applied.

Change wasn't the only motivation for this revision, of course. In the original boxed set and through the first four years of its existence, all campaign action in DARK SUN was concentrated in the Tyr Region. After more than two dozen individual products, few secrets remain to be uncovered, and few areas are left to explore in the initial material. There are mysteries beyond the Hinterlands, the Ringing Mountains, and the Endless Sand Dunes waiting to be explored and plundered, Athas beyond Tyr is now ready to reveal its dark, burning secrets!

For these reasons, the book you now hold was created. *The Wanderer's Chronicle* includes a summary of the material from *The Wanderer's Journal* (the campaign book included in the original boxed set); updates on all of the people and places introduced since the initial release of the DARK SUN campaign; and an expansion of the known world that gives players and Dungeon Masters (DMs) eight times as much area to adventure in and explore.

If you're new to Athas or just want to immerse yourself in the story of the world, read through this book first. You'll find a portion of "The Wanderer's Journal" (written in the words of the legendary Wanderer of Athas himself) at the start of each chapter, while the bulk of the book details the campaign world and sets the stage for the adventuring and role-playing to come. But if you'd rather get right to the nuts and bolts, turn to the *Rules Book* for character creation, magic, and all of the other game mechanics needed to play in a DARK SUN campaign.

The other books in this boxed set should be saved for later. These are *The Way of the Psionicist: Psionic Abilities and Powers*, a new psionic system for the DARK SUN campaign, and *Mysteries of the Ancients*, a full-length adventure that gets campaigns set in the new period off and running at breakneck speed.

## Who Is the Wanderer?

The Wanderer is a mysterious figure whom everyone knows about but few can claim to have met. Tales say he's a human cleric of earth who never stays in one place, perhaps because of an insatiable curiosity. He has one highly distinctive feature: His left arm is reptilian, covered with scales and marked by talon-pointed fingers. How he came to possess such a limb has never been revealed, but tales told around campfires speak of his many skills, fighting prowess, and knowledge about the world.

There's an old traveler's blessing circulating around Athas: "All you need on your journey is a sharp bone sword, a full waterskin, and the Wanderer to guide you."



# The Wanderer's Journal

*... the wonders I have seen since my last tour of the Tyr Region. Once I thought that all parts of Athas shared the blazing sun, the burning winds, and the dry, arid plains. Now I know the truth. Only most of the world shares these characteristics. Some places are ecological paradises that hide other dangers behind their lushness and beauty. And a few places are even worse than the Athasian standard of desert.*

*I have walked across cracked fields of obsidian where nothing lived but the spirits of the dead, and the only water was an occasional puddle after a rare rainstorm.*

*I have stood beside lakes of molten lava where the heat that radiated from the bubbling surfaces was great enough to cause my flesh to blister and burn.*

*In the forests west of the Ringing Mountains, I drank from cool, clear ponds and ran from feral halfings who wanted to tear the flesh from my bones and feast upon the soft, warm meat that remained.*

*Have I been afraid? Yes, many times. But I have also been awed by the spectacles of the world, and I have learned to revere Athas and all its dangerous wonders. When first light casts its emerald hues over the Sea of Silt, or when sunset paints a bloody stain over the Ringing Mountains, my heart stirs to the savage song that rumbles through the land. . . .*

## CHAPTER I:

# The Nature of the World

Much of Athas is a desert: sun-scorched and wind-scoured, parched and endless.

From the first moments of dawn to the last twinkling of dusk, the crimson sun shimmers in the olive-tinged sky like a fiery puddle of blood. It climbs toward its zenith, the temperature rising with equal relentlessness: 100°F by midmorning, 110°F at noon, 130°F—perhaps even 150°F—before the sizzling day gives way to night.

The wind doesn't help matters. As hot as a forge's breath, it blows up sandstorms that last for as long as a month or more. Even gentle breezes feel like flame licks, carrying throat-searing and nose-clogging dust.

In most locations, the greatest danger is the lack of water. Much of Athas sees rain but once a year, while a few locations experience storms no more than once a decade. Even with the advent of the deadly Tyr-storms, actual rainfall has increased only slightly across the land. Evidence exists that water was once as plentiful as sand in this burning world, but now it's as rare as a cool breeze at midday.

Nights are as brutal as days. Low humidity allows the day's heat to escape into the clear sky, plunging the temperature to 40°F or less. In higher elevations, the temperature can plummet to zero. The light of Ral and Guthay, Athas's twin moons, provide no warmth as they shine over the darkened land.

Extreme temperatures and lack of water aren't the only features of Athas. Since the Great Earthquake that struck in the Year of Friend's Agitation, tremors and aftershocks have been a constant threat in the western Tyr Region. That same year saw the birth of the Cerulean Storm over the Sea of Silt. This huge storm of lightning and rain hasn't abated since it appeared. In fact, it seems to be growing stronger. Periodically it spins off a smaller tempest that sweeps across the Tablelands as a dangerous Tyr-storm.

# A Timeline of Athas

THE BLUE AGE

THE REBIRTH

THE GREEN AGE

- Water covers most of Athas, and a sapphire sun fills the sky.
- Halflings are the only intelligent race.
- Halfling society, led by the nature-masters, develops into a highly advanced civilization.
- A brown tide contaminates the water and the sea begins to die, ending this age.

-14,100

- The brown tide spreads; most halflings flee in search of safety.
- Those nature-masters seeking to counter the tide create the Pristine Tower, which they use to focus the sun's energy in order to kill the brown tide.
- The halflings are successful, but the force of the powers unleashed by the Pristine Tower alters the sun.
- The land contorts drastically, and much of the halfling civilization is destroyed. A portion of their race survives to evolve into the new races.

-14,000

- The new races—humans, dwarves, elves, gnomes, and others—fill the forests and fertile valleys left unscathed by the receding waves.
- Great cities spring up beneath the yellow sun, including Tyr, Ebe, and Bodach.
- Religions develop, but no true gods exist to empower the priests.
- Psionics develop into the power of this age, reaching fantastic heights and setting an unprecedented standard of living.



Still, the deserts and sandy wastes do give way to other terrain types in some locations. A few lush forests, for example, cling to the earth with a desperate desire to survive. Jagged mountains rise into the sweltering sky, dividing one barren landscape from another. To the east, the ever-present and seemingly endless Sea of Silt fills the horizon. To the south, vast plains of blackest obsidian form a desert of chipped stone. To the north and west, great cliffs overlook grasslands that stretch off as far as the eye can see.

Athas is a rugged world with a majesty that commands admiration. The land has personality and a beauty that's as awe-inspiring as it is deadly. One must respect the land and learn to anticipate its capricious moods, for its relentless cruelty and indifference will sweep away anyone who does less.

The passing seasons aren't so mercurial, for Athas is the same from month to month and year to year. History is marked by events and physical features that best sum up a particular age. For example, the age that recently ended was called the Age of the Sorcerer-Kings; the accessories and adventures following the release of the original DARK SUN boxed set shifted the timeframe into the Decade of Heroism. The past, however, remains as hidden and mysterious as the depths of the Silt Sea. Few written records exist, for the sorcerer-kings have worked hard to keep knowledge of the past a well-guarded secret. Recently, however, some of those secrets have come to light.

In the great battle to keep an ancient horror named Rajaan locked away, the sorcerer-kings had to share some of their knowledge of the past with Sadira and Rikus, the heroes of Tyr. Plus, ancient records have been unearthed in the ruins of Giustenal that shed more light on the shadows of the past. From these sources and others, the Wanderer has put together "A History of Athas," which has been reproduced below.

**Note:** Due to some mysterious barrier, no magical or psionic means can project a character further into the past than the Green Age. Some scholars within the Order believe this must be due to the fact that one can't use powers to go somewhere in time where those powers don't exist, but none are sure.

-8,000

- Rajaat discovers the principles of magic, heretofore unknown on Athas.
- Rajaat publicly teaches the techniques of preserving magic, while secretly teaching a select group of students the ways of defiling magic. From this group he selects the most powerful defiler/psionics to become his Champions.
- Rajaat uses the Pristine Tower to focus the sun's energy, seeking to elevate his Champions' powers. He succeeds, but the sun turns a dark crimson.

-3,500

- Rajaat orders his Champions to destroy the races created during the Rebirth in an effort to return the world to the Blue Age.
- Many of the nonhuman races are eliminated, including gnomes, lizard men, and orcs.
- The Champions discover that Rajaat plans to give the world to the halflings, not the humans. Led by Borys, the Champions revolt and Rajaat is trapped within the Hollow.

-2,000

- The remaining Champions become the sorcerer-kings, each claiming one of the city-states of the Tyr Region to rule.
- The sorcerer-kings gain godlike powers, including the ability to grant spells to their templars.
- Borys is transformed into the Dragon, a creature of power never before seen on Athas.
- The devastation of the world begun in the last age continues as the sorcerer-kings engage in ever greater defiling magic.

-77 to Present

- King Kalak is assassinated and Tyr becomes a free city.
- Rajaat is freed from the Hollow, but only momentarily before he is once again imprisoned.
- Only three sorcerer-kings remain after major events transpire—events that lead to the death of the Dragon and the creation of the Cerulean Storm.
- The Great Earthquake rips through the Tyr Region, opening paths to the lands beyond the cradle of Athasian civilization.

## A History of Athas

*What generally passes for the history of Athas is a jumble of folklore and propaganda. Most people are too concerned with the problems of the present to devote much time to the lessons of the past. There is some truth to be found in this folklore, though few pay much attention.*


*The bards' lyrics speak of a land of plenty of a time when warriors fought not for food or entertainment but for honor and glory. Can this be truth? I wonder. That Athas is a barbaric shadow of a better world is true, this I know. Humans, elves, halflings, and the other demihuman races are but savage descendants of worthier beings. The essence of every living thing, from the highest to the lowest, has been warped into a vicious, cunning, and twisted twin of what it once was.*

*I have searched and questioned the wise and the well placed for many years, and I believe that I have glimpsed the world of splendor and abundance buried beneath the centuries, the blood, and the sand. I have made sense of the jumble, cut past the folklore, and found at least a portion of the true history of our world. This truth I share with you.*

### The Blue Age

*Lost in the dim recesses of time, the first age of Athas was marked by an almost endless sea of blue. An azure flame burned deep within the sun's heart. The few land masses that existed were marshes, swamps, or the peaks of mountains that jutted up from the sparkling waves, their tips covered with forests and that oddity known as snow.*

*In this age, a great halfling civilization flourished beneath the azure sun. Yes, you read rightly, friend. Moreover, the halflings were the only intelligent beings on Athas at the time (though there were apparently small numbers of primitive thri-kreen, whom the halflings looked upon as beasts). These halflings had neither magic nor psionics to call upon, but they had created a society more sophisticated and*



*advanced than anything that presently exists on Athas. Their cities dotted the endless sea, spreading their influence far and wide and making them the undisputed masters of the world.*

*Perhaps the greatest halfling city was Tyr'agi, located in the hollow that would someday become the Tyr Valley. The vale was filled with a vast swamp of vine-draped trees and floating islands of moss. At the edge of the valley, a strange, beautiful city of graceful sweeps and brilliant colors rose from the marsh. The buildings were not so much constructed as they were **grown**, marked by an architecture of gentle curves and elegant spires, with no straight edges, sharp points, or abrupt corners. Everything was made from a uniformly porous stone that radiated any number of wonderful hues—blazing crimson, emerald green, royal blue, deep purple, and others.*

*There were no streets in Tyr'agi, but wide canals filled with long, slender boats crisscrossed the halfling city. The boats were not built of wood and hides, but were as **alive** in their own way as the child-sized halflings who guided them. I know what you must be thinking: How could the feral halflings create living structures, they who seem to hold life so cheaply? But I tell you these were not the feral halflings of today's Athas. These halflings were not cannibals: they had short-cropped hair, elegant tabards, and wore "living creatures" on their bodies that served functions of which I have little understanding.*

*The halflings were the masters of the world, growing homes, tools, and other items from a rocklike plant that lived beneath the waves. They harvested the sea for everything they needed to maintain their vast, splendiferous society. They could create anything they needed by manipulating the principles of nature itself. They had no wizardly magic, no psionics, and only a small understanding of elemental priestly magic, but they were nature-masters and life-shapers, and that was more than enough.*

*The Blue Age lasted for untold generations, and with each passing century the halflings learned more and more about nature and the ways to manipulate it. They grew living transports, living armor, living weapons, and living tools. The world of the Blue Age was wondrous and alive, and it bowed to the commands of the halflings who inhabited it.*

*While most of the halfling nature-masters worked in concert with the environment, a few rebels kept trying to push the boundaries, to make nature bend in ways it was never meant. Wars were fought against some of these nature-benders. . . . Sadly, a few of their living weapons have survived even to the current age. But it wasn't a war, or an evil nature-bender, or a corrupt elemental priest who caused the Blue Age to come to an end. It was an accident, and nothing more.*


*While the knowledge the halflings possessed was vast, it was far from complete. The halflings of Tyr'agi tried to increase the sea's capacity to sustain life so that the number of creatures and plants it produced could be doubled. The experiment went awry, however, and instead the sea began to die. A fetid brown tide spread across the waves, killing everything it touched. Many of the halflings panicked and looked for ways to protect themselves. Some built great subterranean strongholds. Others fled to the mountain forests. A few, however, remained in Tyr'agi, struggling to find a way to cure the dying sea.*

*Eventually reality sank in. There was no way to save the Blue Age. If life on Athas was to have any chance at all, the halflings had to stand aside and let another age begin.*

## The Rebirth

*A brown tide spread across the waves, and the endless sea of the Blue Age slowly died. All life sprang from this sea. Without it, life could not survive beneath the azure sun. It was a desperate time, and it called for desperate measures. The halflings used their mastery of nature to manipulate the very building blocks of life from their outpost—a stronghold that would one day come to be called the Pristine Tower. By changing the sun so that its energy could be focused through the tower, the halflings were able to kill the brown tide.*

*But changing the sun also changed the land.*



*The sun, once a blazing sphere of brilliant blue, shifted to a radiant yellow ball. Its rays bombarded the planet, causing the brown tide to dissipate. But as the tide disappeared, so did a portion of the endless sea. Dry land—not swamp or even marsh-emerged from beneath the waves to replace the receding water.*

*From the Pristine Tower, now glowing with the energy of the yellow sun, the halflings worked their technical skills. They initiated a time of spontaneous creation, and this period came to be known as the Rebirth.*

*During the Rebirth new creatures appeared at an amazing rate, finding life in the shadow of the halflings' glowing tower and spreading across the land. Some creatures survived, others disappeared in an instant, but the land was generous; animals and monsters alike continued to file into the world after the devastation of the brown tide. Vast forests grew across land that was once submerged, and still more creatures crept about the land.*

*The halflings' high civilization came to an end, for those who had fled to the mountains and hid underground soon forgot the principles of nature manipulation in the struggle to survive. And the last halfling nature-masters gave this new world its greatest gift: They transformed themselves into new races, becoming humans, demi-humans, and other humanoids so that they could repopulate the world. These races resumed the business of civilization.*

*A new paradise was born, but not without pain, sacrifice, and great loss. The world of the halfling nature-masters died, but a new world emerged from its ruins, thanks to The Rebirth. With a yellow sun in the sky, a good proportion of land to water, and vast tracts of emerald forests, the Green Age began.*

## The Green Age

*The Green Age began approximately 74,000 years before the current age, when Athas was a verdant paradise beneath a blazing yellow sun. The new races filled the vast forests and fertile valleys, learning the art of civilization and forming great societies. Tribes formed villages. Villages grew into towns. Towns developed into cities. Cities joined to create nations. It was a time of honor and abundance, and the Athas of today is but a pale, sickly shadow of its former brilliant existence.*

*While humans, dwarves, elves, gnomes, and the other new races prospered, the remaining halflings continued their spiral into savagery. They moved farther from the walled towns and villages, disappearing from view.*

*Great cities sprang into existence. Soon an intricate series of cobblestone roads wound through the vast forest, connecting one city to another. A city grew in the valley where ancient Tyr'agi once flourished, and it was called Tyr . . . perhaps in honor of some now nearly forgotten memory. Other cities sprang up, with names like Urik and Ebe and Bodach and Giustenal,*

*There were no nature-masters in this new age, and only a small number of elemental clerics practiced their arts, instead, new religions were born, dedicated to new gods who made the young and superstitious races feel protected. These gods, with their opulent temples and elaborate rituals, filled the spiritual needs of the new races, but produced no true clerics.*

*The real power of the age was psionics, which developed through the mutations created by the Rebirth and the power of the Pristine Tower. Almost every living thing had some psionic potential, and throughout the Green Age the Way was fostered to amazing heights. Most people started as wild talents, but soon true masters of the Way were teaching the principles of mind and body to the masses, Psionics provided the means for all manner of conveniences and set a high standard of living for those who dwelt in the great cities.*

*In Giustenal, for example, underground corridors of stone stretched for miles into the water-filled sea that is now the Sea of Silt. With psionics even more powerful than what the best masters are capable of today, ivory platforms provided near-instantaneous travel from one end of the corridors to the other. There were other psionic wonders, but the remnants I have seen in the ruins are beyond even my understanding.*



## The Time of Magic

A special group of beings appeared during the Rebirth. These beings had the characteristics of all the new races, plus great powers that set them apart. They were called the pyreen. Whether this race sprang into existence by accident or was the direct result of the manipulations of the nature-masters is not known. There were few of them, and they lived an extremely long time. The pyreen hid themselves from the other races, content to stick to their own agendas and stay out of the affairs of the rest of the world.

But one pyreen was unlike his brethren. He called himself Rajaat, and while he had much in common with the pyreen, he was also different. Rajaat was deformed and ugly of both heart and body. In his youth he had high ideals and great plans, but these became as twisted as the body and spirit that housed them.

By all accounts, Rajaat was hideous. He had a huge head with a flat, grossly elongated face. His eyes were half-covered by flaps of skin. His long nose, lacking a bridge, ended in three flaring nostrils. His small, slitlike mouth was marked with tiny teeth and a drooping chin. His body was contorted and weak, with humped shoulders and gangling arms. Even so, Rajaat was blessed with certain advantages: He had a supreme intellect and great command of the Way.


During the earliest days of the Green Age, Rajaat explored the world. He traveled the wooded lanes on the floating ivory platforms of the mindbenders, wandering from the majestic towers of the human cities to the sylvan citadels of the elves, from the gloomy metropolises of the dwarves to the tiny pockets remaining to the halflings. He spent centuries trying to reconcile his brutish appearance with his humane spirit. But in the end, Rajaat could find nothing positive to sustain him. He came to revile himself as nothing but a deformed accident. . . . Even an accident, however, can find a grand purpose.

Rajaat discovered "magic" about 8,000 years ago, that strange and mystical science that had heretofore not occurred on Athas. He could only accomplish small things at first, but he eventually found a place of power where he could experiment in secret. It was an idyllic glen surrounded by a forest of green and intersected by a river of glistening blue, and it was located at the base of the Jagged Cliffs. Here, secluded and hidden from his fellow pyreen, Rajaat learned to draw energy from life itself to power his magic. But in doing so, the meadow turned into a dire fen, a swamp of foul proportions-and the First Sorcerer was born.

For almost 200 years Rajaat worked in that dire marsh, learning to draw energy from plants. He experimented with magic that drew its strength from the world itself but he couldn't control such raw power. The results of these experiments with the world's life force fouled the swamp and almost destroyed Rajaat. When he recovered, he left the fen behind and went to search for the last great creation of the ancient halfling nature-masters. Rajaat went to find the Pristine Tower, for his dreams were haunted by the whispered tales of halflings.

The First Sorcerer took possession of the abandoned tower, altering it to fit his own needs. He plundered the place, and soon its secrets were his own. With the power of the Pristine Tower to aid him, Rajaat refined his control of sorcery into two spheres-preserving magic and defiling magic. He went on a quest then, seeking students to pass this knowledge to. Many came to learn about this new source of power-humans, elves, gnomes, and others-but Rajaat selected only students who were human. On the surface, his acts looked like a beneficial enterprise, but Rajaat hid darker motives behind an altruistic front. In public, he taught one group of students how to use preserving magic. In secret, he showed a select group of others how to use defiling magic. Of these students, he kept watch for powerful mindbenders, for his ultimate plan required those who could combine psionics with defiling magic to transform themselves into a new type of being . . . a being of dark power.

Eventually, Rajaat sent all but fifteen of his students away. With the nature-manipulating powers of the Pristine Tower, he turned these fifteen students into his Champions. Drawing energy from the yellow sun, Rajaat imbued each of his Champions with immortality and the ability to draw magical energy from living crea-



tures through the use of obsidian orbs. This, combined with their own psionic powers and defiling magic, would have made them nearly invincible. But Rajaat did not stop there. He hinted that there was a level of existence beyond that which he had granted them. "Through sorcery and psionics, you can become as gods!" Rajaat promised, and his Champions believed him.

As the Pristine Tower channeled the sun's energy into the Champions, the yellow orb changed. It turned crimson and dark, signaling the beginning of a time of blood and death of unprecedented magnitude. It signaled the start of the Cleansing Wars.

## The Cleansing Wars

After century upon century of hating himself, Rajaat turned his hatred outward. He declared the Rebirth a mistake, claiming that all the races it had spawned were monsters. "The only way to return Athas to the glory and harmony of the Blue Age is to wipe out the blight of these monsters from the world!" Rajaat bellowed, and his Champions believed him. They took his cause to heart. Of course, they believed he meant to give the world to humans (specifically, to the Champions). Rajaat, however, wanted to return Athas to its original inhabitants: the halflings.

You may ask why Rajaat did not simply turn halflings into his Champions; the answer is that he could not. Halflings belonged to the old world, to a time before the birth of magic. No halflings could become sorcerers, and few wanted anything to do with Rajaat's twisted dreams. A small group of halflings still kept the old ways of the nature-masters, though, and they decided to serve Rajaat as his personal guard. It fell to the humans, with their natural ability to learn new skills and powers, to become Rajaat's Champions.

Approximately 3,500 years ago, the first battle of the Cleansing Wars raged in the Athasian wilderness. With titles like *Butcher of Dwarves*, *Ravager of Giants*, and *Pixie Blight*, Rajaat's Champions set forth to deliver death and destruction to the demihuman and humanoid races. Rajaat became known as the *Warbringer*, and the nonhuman races perished. Some of the pyreen tried to stop his insane march, but they too fell before the Warbringer and his Champions. The pyreen became the *Peace-Bringers* forever after that time, even though they failed to stop Rajaat's wretched plans.

Great patches of forest withered and died as the Champions waged their terrible war and drew the life force to power their defiling spells. Some of the Champions succeeded in their wicked desire to eliminate whole races, for lizard men, pixies, and gnomes have vanished from Athas. Others came exceedingly close, like the *Dwarf Butcher* and the *Tari Killer*. The land itself suffered along with the nonhumans, for the Champions indiscriminately used defiling magic to increase their power. Whoever tried to oppose them, no matter what race they belonged to—even the human nations—fell before their dark powers.

From Rajaat's place atop the Pristine Tower, bathed in the light of the crimson sun, an immeasurably older Warbringer waited for victory. Weeks turned to years, years to centuries, until one day Rajaat saw his Champions return. He stood before them with his long shocks of gray hair and his white, burning eyes, eagerly anticipating the news they brought him. "Have all the abominations been destroyed?" Rajaat asked his Champions. "Can the Blue Age start anew?"

The answer to both questions was no. The Champions had almost achieved victory when they realized Rajaat was mad. In retrospect, the Champions had always known that. What they learned was that it was not the humans who would inherit the new-born Athas—it was the halflings.

The 13th Champion, *Borys of Ebe*, the *Butcher of Dwarves*, personally led the revolt against Rajaat; most of the other Champions sided with Borys in their betrayal of Rajaat. With the help of an artifact called the *Dark Lens*, Borys and the Champions imprisoned Rajaat beyond the shadow dimension of the *Black*, in a place of nothingness called the *Hollow*; they hurled his halfling guards into the *Black*. Both were secured with spells of holding and binding that remained in place until *Tithian of Tyr* disturbed them recently.

The Cleansing Wars came to an end, and the Age of the Sorcerer-Kings began.



## The Age of the Sorcerer-Kings

*Approximately 2,000 years before the present day, Borys and most of the Champions betrayed Rajaat and imprisoned him in the Hollow. In exchange for the help they provided, Borys gave the Champions that were now loyal to him the following benefits: First, he allowed each Champion to claim one of the city-states of the Tyr Region as his or her own domain, elevating each to the title of sorcerer-king. Then he taught them the process for taking the next step up the ladder of existence: Borys taught the sorcerer-kings how to become dragon kings.*

*Using the Dark Lens to focus their combined magic and psionic energy, Borys began the transformations of the sorcerer-kings. The resulting storm of energy as the initial metamorphosing spells were cast connected each of the sorcerer-kings to all of the elemental planes, thereby creating magical conduits through which elemental priestly magic could be cast. This magic could not be used by the sorcerer-kings themselves, but it could be imbued upon their loyal servants, the templars, the humans who helped in the Cleansing Wars.*

*Now the sorcerer-king were like gods, but Borys did not stop there. "One of us must complete the full transformation to dragon if the spells holding Rajaat are to remain in place," Borys explained. "One of us must become his warden for the rest of time.,, Borys, of course, was to be that warden. Using the Dark Lens again, the sorcerer-kings transformed Borys into the Dragon.*

*The Age of the Sorcerer-Kings began with betrayal and was marked by tyranny and slavery. The world was turned into a wasteland by the sorcerer-kings', defiling magic, and that has been its state through to the present day.*

## The Decade of Heroism

*I believe that the newest age has already begun, but we who stand upon its brink do not possess the hindsight to see where this age will lead. Perhaps it is presumptuous of me to call this the Age of Heroes, and so I have satisfied myself by calling this time the Decade of Heroism. I leave the true naming of this period for the chroniclers that will come after me. This new age began just over ten years ago, when King Kalak of Tyr attempted to cheat nature much like Borys had done two millennia past,*

*King Kaiak tried to perform the entire ten-stage metamorphosis process to become a full dragon in one grand ritual. In Tyr, all that remains of his attempt is the ziggurat he constructed to focus the life energy of his subjects. I call this the Decade of Heroism because heroes stepped forward to stop Kalak's ruthless plan. (I have heard some bards refer to it as the time of Fools, for many today equate heroism with foolhardiness.) Led by Rikus the gladiator, these heroes were able to kill Kaiak and save the lives of thousands of Tyrians. There was another significant and hopefully far-reaching result to their heroism: Tyr became the first city-state to free its slaves.*

*As the decade progressed, others tried to gain the mantle of sorcerer-king or sought power from other venues. The Dark Lens was recovered. Sadira of Tyr found the power to oppose the Dragon in the Pristine Tower. Tithian, who took Kaiak's place as king of Tyr, looked to ancient Rajaat as a source of immortality. The Dragon was destroyed, two sorcerer-kings and a sorcerer-queen fell—and ancient Rajaat, the First Sorcerer, the Warbringer, escaped from his prison for a while but was eventually forced back into the Ho/low that had contained him for two thousand years . . . and will hopefully contain him for many more.*

*We can see the results of this decade all around us. The Tyr Region is in turmoil as the power-hungry and the ambitious vie to fill the vacuum left by the deaths of sorcerer-kings. Rajaat's defeat formed the Cerulean Storm, a huge rainstorm that continues to rage over the Sea of Silt. About the same time as Rajaat was confined, a great earthquake thundered from the west. Aftershocks still threaten the Tyr Region, and a gaping rift was opened by the quake that leads to parts of Athas that were once sealed from the lands of the sorcerer-kings.*

*Will this age of heroes continue? I fervently hope so, for Athas needs heroes if it is going to survive and recapture its lost vitality.*





# Champions and Sorcerer-Kings

The Wanderer's history speaks of a fraternity of ancient villains called the Champions of Rajaat. A vile combination of powerful defiler and advanced mindbender, the Champions were Rajaat's generals in the Cleansing Wars that ravaged Athas and wiped out many of the nonhuman races.

The Champions that survived the Cleansing Wars and eventually betrayed Rajaat became the sorcerer-kings of the Tyr Region. Today, only a handful of the original Champions remain active in the world. All of them are detailed below.

**Sacha, the 1st Champion:** The 1st Champion of Rajaat, Sacha of Arala was the Curse of the Kobolds. He succeeded in his mission during the Cleansing Wars, eliminating kobolds from the Athasian countryside. Sacha stood beside Rajaat when Borys and the others betrayed the Warbringer, and the 1st Champion was subsequently beheaded. Sacha's bodiless head was kept alive, however. He served Kalak until Tyr's lord was assassinated. Then he served Tithian. Sacha was finally destroyed trying to free his ancient master when Rikus of Tyr crushed his skull.

**Kalak, the 2nd Champion:** Kalak, called Ogre Doom by the Warbringer, wiped out the race that had been assigned to him during the Cleansing Wars. He joined in Borys's rebellion against Rajaat, becoming the sorcerer-king of Tyr until his death just over ten years ago.

**Dregoth, the 3rd Champion:** Dregoth, the Ravager of Giants, didn't complete the task given him by Rajaat. Though he betrayed the Warbringer and took his place as sorcerer-king of Giustenal, his reign was short-lived. To prevent Dregoth from becoming a full dragon, Abalach-Re and the other sorcerer-kings teamed up to kill him. Death wasn't the end for Dregoth, however, for he continues to exist as an undead creature, seeking to become the first real god of Athas.

**Myron, the 4th Champion:** Myron of Yorum, the Troll Scorcher, displeased Rajaat. The Troll Scorcher was killed by Hamanu, who then took this Champion's place at Rajaat's side.

**Hamanu, the 4th Champion:** Hamanu wasn't one of Rajaat's original Champions. Instead, he was selected to replace Myron the Troll Scorcher due to a transgression the original 4th Champion committed against Rajaat. Later, Hamanu assisted Borys's rebellion and became the sorcerer-king of Urik. He still rules that city-state, though he did help Sadira and Rikus banish Rajaat back to the Hollow recently.


**Abalach-Re, the 5th Champion:** Originally Uyness of Waverly, Abalach-Re was the Orc Plague. She carried out her deadly task with glee, though she was quick to join Borys's rebellion. She was Raam's sorcerer-queen until Sadira of Tyr killed her less than a year ago.

**Nibenay, the 6th Champion:** This Champion started as Gallard, Bane of Gnomes. He took the name Nibenay after joining Borys's rebellion. He still rules the city-state that bears his name, as he is one of the few survivors of the recent events surrounding the birth of the Cerulean Storm.

**Sielba, the 7th Champion:** Sielba, the Destroyer of Pterrans, became the sorcerer-queen of Yaramuke after helping Borys imprison Rajaat. A few centuries later, she tried to increase her personal power by opposing Urik. Hamanu and his army destroyed Sielba and the city, and today both are barely a memory.

**Andropinis, the 8th Champion:** Once known as Albeorn, Slayer of Elves, Andropinis became the sorcerer-king of Balic in the wake of Rajaat's betrayal. During the short period when Rajaat emerged from the Hollow (which caused the creation of the Cerulean Storm), the First Sorcerer had his revenge on Balic's king. Andropinis was imprisoned in the Black for 1,000 years.

**Tectuktitlay, the 9th Champion:** Tectuktitlay, Wemic Annihilator, accomplished the task given him by Rajaat with great glee. However, his thirst for power made it impossible for him to turn down Borys's offer. Tectuktitlay helped defeat Rajaat, then he became the sorcerer-king of Draaj. During Rajaat's recent, brief respite from the Hollow, the First Sorcerer beat Tectuktitlay to death with the Dark Lens.



**Oronis, the 10th Champion:** In ancient days, the sorcerer-king Oronis was known as Keitis, Lizard Man Executioner. After joining the other Champions in the betrayal of Rajaan, Oronis distanced himself from the power struggles that marked the Age of the Sorcerer-Kings. To this day, Oronis rules the secluded city-state of Kurn, located to the northeast of the Tyr Region.

**Lalali-Puy, the 11th Champion:** Lalali-Puy, once known as Aarakocra Scourge, survived Rajaan's attempts to punish his betrayers in the Year of Friend's Agitation. She still rules the city-state of Culg, and she is viewed as the forest goddess by her subjects.

**Wyan, the 12th Champion:** Wyan of Bodach, Pixie Blight, remained loyal to Rajaan even as the other Champions betrayed him. For his loyalty, Wyan was beheaded. His bloated head survived until recently, when Sadira of Tyr cut Wyan's head in half with the enchanted sword, the Scourge of Rkard.

**Borys, the 13th Champion:** Borys of Ebe, the 13th Champion of Rajaan, was the Butcher of Dwarves. He orchestrated the rebellion against Rajaan and became the leader of the Champions. Borys convinced his followers to use the Dark Lens to transform him into the Dragon. As the Dragon, Borys watched over Rajaan's prison in the city-state of Ur Draxa until Rikus killed him with the enchanted sword, the *Scourge of Rkard*.

**Daskinor, the 14th Champion:** Daskinor was knighted Goblin Death, the 14th Champion of Rajaan. He had no love for his master, however, and readily agreed to join Borys's rebellion. Afterward, Daskinor became the sorcerer-king of Eldaarich, a city-state northeast of the Tyr Region, on the shores of the Silt Sea. He continues to rule Eldaarich, though most contact with the city-state ended centuries ago.

**Kalid-Ma, the 15th Champion:** Kalid-Ma, Tari Killer, became the sorcerer-king of Kalidnay after helping the other Champions overthrow Rajaan. His city-state was among the wealthiest of those dotting the Tyr Region. An unknown disaster befell the city-state a few centuries back, and today Kalid-Ma is only a memory and Kalidnay is nothing more than a jumble of ruins.


## Supernatural Forces

Supernatural forces saturate the Athasian landscape, shaping the world and its inhabitants in significant ways. In general, these forces can be categorized in one of three ways: priestly magic, wizardly magic, and psionics. Each plays an important part in the cycle of life and death on Athas.

### Priestly Magic

Athas is a world without true gods. As far back as the earliest days of the Green Age, people have believed in gods, but there exists no true gods on Athas. Unlike the other worlds of the multiverse, where true gods do exist, Athas has never had any, and it never will. The spiritual conduits that allow gods (or powers, as they're called elsewhere) to draw strength from their worshipers don't exist on Athas. Without these spiritual conduits, divine power can't be attained or sustained. So priestly magic on Athas comes from two lesser sources: the elemental planes and the sorcerer-kings. Elemental clerics and druids draw their power from the elemental planes, while templars draw theirs directly from the sorcerer-kings.





**Elemental clerics** pay homage to one of the four elemental forces: earth, air, fire, or water. These forces are like the desert itself, neither benevolent nor malevolent. They care only that their natural forms be preserved in the material world. As long as an elemental cleric keeps the pact he made with his patron element, he'll continue to receive spells to use in that element's service. Elemental clerics have no all-encompassing hierarchy, no great temples to call worshipers to, no holy books to draw knowledge and inspiration from. They tend to be loners and wanderers who travel the world in the service of the elements they revere.

**Druids** are a special class of priest who work to save the dying world. A druid serves nature and the ecological balance by selecting a particular natural feature or aspect of Athas to bind with. Throughout Athas, unique geographical features are guarded by spirits of the land. The druids serve these spirits, gaining their powers from the elemental planes through these supernatural guardians.

**Templars**, on the other hand, receives their power from one of the sorcerer-kings. Are the sorcerer-kings gods? No, even though most of them have claimed to be. The power comes from the same place all priestly power on Athas comes from, the elemental planes. When Rajaat's Champions combined their magic with the Dark Lens to become the sorcerer-kings, the resulting storm of energy connected them to all the elemental planes. This opened magical conduits through which elemental priest magic could be drawn from. The sorcerer-kings couldn't use this magic themselves, but they could bestow spellcasting abilities on their most loyal servants. These priests, dedicated to a single sorcerer-king, are called templars.

The opening of the magical conduits to the elemental planes was a unique effect of the events that created the sorcerer-kings. It can't be duplicated, so no new sorcerer-kings (if any appear on the scene) will ever gain the ability to grant their followers priest spells. Currently, templars with the ability to cast priest spells exist only in the city-states of Urik, Nibenay, and Gulg, serving the remaining sorcerer-kings Hamanu and Nibenay, and the sorcerer-queen Lalali-Puy.

## Wizardly Magic

The magic used by wizards is significantly different from that of the priests, both in where it comes from and how it's used. Wizardly magic converts the energy of living things into magical power that can be shaped into spells. Generally, wizards can only tap the energy found in plants; such wizards fall into two categories: preservers and defilers.

**Preservers** have a deep and abiding respect for the life forces of the world. They take great care to balance their gain of magic against the cost of life energy so as not to create adverse effects. Preservers take only enough life energy from plants to produce a spell effect, being careful not to take so much that the neighboring plants can't recover.

**Defilers**, on the other hand, care only for power, reveling in it as it courses through their bodies. They don't care about the life forces that are lost when they weave their webs of magic. Nearby plants wither and die when a defiler draws power for his spells, and the fertile soil surrounding him turns to sterile ash.

The sorcerer-kings are defilers of the highest order, and they combine wizardry with psionics. They can draw the energy for spells from not only plants, but from all living things—including animals and humans. This makes the sorcerer-kings extremely powerful and very dangerous to the world and its inhabitants.

The last type of wizard is represented by a single individual, but it deserves mention. Sadira of Tyr has become a sun wizard through a process that likely can't be repeated. During the day, Sadira draws the energy to power her spells from the ultimate source of all life on Athas, the crimson sun. While imbued with the sun's energy, she doesn't have to take life force from any living thing. At night, however, she reverts to a normal wizard and must use the life force of plants to power her spells.

Wizardly magic is the cause of most of Athas's problems, mostly due to the defilers and the sorcerer-kings. As such, wizards are almost universally feared and shunned. The use of wizardry in many of the city-states is a criminal offense punish-



able by death. In the communities beyond the walls of civilization, wizards can sometimes find homes, but more often they find suspicion, fear, and death.

There are a few notable exceptions to the rule. The Free City of Tyr, for example, welcomes preservers and allows them to openly practice their art. Elf tribes enjoy the protection afforded by wizards, and even provide spell components for sale on the black market. The sorcerer-kings keep a few defilers on hand to provide magical power, though these “court wizards” are usually kept in secret and out of the public eye. In most other places, wizards (defilers and preservers both) must hide their true identities. A secret organization called the Veiled Alliance operates in many cities, towns, and villages, offering some small aid to preservers, but otherwise wizards are on their own.


## Psionics

The third supernatural force prominent in the world is psionics, the power of the mind. Psionics isn't magic. It doesn't use power provided by an outside agent or pulled from an external source. Instead, psionics draws upon the user's own inner resources to produce extraordinary effects.

Psionics is one of the cornerstones of Athasian life and society. Most living things possess some ability to use psionics, and all have developed at least minimal defenses against it. Almost every human, demihuman, and humanoid in the world is at least a wild talent, and even plants and animals have developed psionic disciplines to help them survive the brutal wilderness. In civilized regions, psionics has become a tool for advancement and political survival.

A few have advanced beyond the natural talents they were born with to become full-fledged psionists. These people study and practice, honing their psionic abilities to great heights. A psionist works to perfect mind, body, and spirit into a unified, powerful whole. With an internal (or psionic) strength that comes from deep inside (from a place referred to as “the nexus”), a psionist gives form and purpose to his will.

Athasians call innate psionic ability “the Will,” though psionists also refer to their reserve of mental strength with this term. Wild talents have the Will, but rarely can they move beyond the single ability nature has provided them. The study of psionics and the refinement of psionic ability is called “the Way.” While the Will makes the use of psionics possible, only through the Way can a person truly master the powers of his mind.



Unlike wizardly magic, psionics is an accepted part of life on Athas. Wild talents and psionics aren't feared. Instead, a community's psionic members are valued as vital assets and encouraged to improve. In many ways, psionics has become the edge needed to compete and survive in this unforgiving and dangerous world. Some even believe that psionics can be used to compensate for the deterioration of Athas's vital resources, but this has yet to be proven in any significant manner.

Every city in the Tyr Region has schools devoted to the Way, and wandering teachers can even be found in the wilderness. It isn't unusual for a priest or a wizard or a warrior to attend an Academy of the Way to develop his or her psionic abilities.

Rumors of a psionic fraternity called the Order persist throughout the Tyr Region. It's said that this group of high-level psionics is dedicated to two precepts: Psionics should only be studied for its own sake, and psionic talents should only be used to preserve the natural order of the world. The Order does in fact exist. A few years ago, one of its members used the psionic artifact called the *Psionatrix* in an attempt to conquer Athas. The attempt failed, and the Order has withdrawn from the affairs of the world—at least for the time being.

## Natural Forces

Perhaps even more than the supernatural forces, it is the forces of nature that truly shape life in this burning land. Some contend that psionics and magic should be considered natural forces, but they are extraordinary enough to receive the special category they've been placed in. The natural forces include the barren complexion of the world itself, the importance of metal (or the lack of it), and the recent environmental changes that continue to influence life beneath the crimson sun.

### A Barren World

With the exception of sand and sun and burning heat, very few things can be found in abundance on Athas. The basic necessities of life are as scarce as a friendly half-ling, so every living thing works hard to attain food and safeguard water.

The land gives up its meager resources only after much trouble, for it's stubborn and miserly in the extreme. Hunters must spend the better portion of their days just searching for prey, not to mention actually catching it and preparing it to eat. Herders must constantly move from place to place to find good grazing land, and when they do they have to defend it from the predators their herds attract. City dwellers may have the hardest lives of all. Though they know where their next meal is coming from, it takes legions of workers toiling in the fields to support a city's population. At the same time, armies of soldiers patrol the fields to keep scavengers and raiders at bay.

Water is an even more important commodity in this hot, arid world. There are few open bodies of life-giving fluid, and these are jealously guarded by those who have claimed them. Most of Athas's water supply is deep beneath the ground. In some places the water naturally bubbles to the surface, forming a small spring or oasis. In other places, wells have been dug to obtain the precious water.

Given that food and water is essential for life to exist, it shouldn't come as a surprise that those who control the sources of these staples form an elite class in Athasian society. The best stalkers, the wisest herders, the owners of farms and wells—these are the influential and politically powerful members of every community.

More than a lack of vital resources makes Athas barren. Travel in any direction from a city or village, and the desolate nature of this world is driven home. Athas consists of small, isolated pockets of life separated by vast stretches devoid of a drop of water or a blade of grass. This makes the inhabitants of a given area close-knit and dependent upon each other, while strangers are viewed with suspicion and sometimes greeted with hostility. Everyone feels small, insignificant, and very much alone in the middle of the sandy wastes that span the horizon.



## The Lack of Metal

The scarcity of metal has given a peculiar spin to life on Athas. Because an entire elf tribe may possess only enough metal to forge a single long sword, or a village of ex-slaves may only own one metal dagger, the inhabitants of Athas have improvised with the resources they do have in more abundance. Stone and bone are the obvious materials of plenitude, though neither can compare to a good chunk of steel or iron. In communities close to one of Athas's few forests, wood is also used to make weapons and tools. Some societies have even found uses for the hides of animals and the claws or fangs of the terrors that roam the desert wastes.

When metal is available, it is a great boon to those who possess it. Hunters can fashion metal arrow- and spearheads that are sharper and more durable than those made of stone or bone. Herders can craft metal shoes to protect the feet of their mounts. City dwellers can produce tools of metal to make farm work easier and more efficient. In Urik, for example, iron tools aid the slaves who toil in the obsidian mines.

Metal can even facilitate commerce, for merchants and traders use it as a universal currency. However, large supplies don't exist, so traders must often resort to barter. Hauling both the goods a trader sells and those he receives in return can be a cumbersome and dangerous business in the Athasian wastes.

The scarcity of metal hampers industrial and economic development, for there are limits to how far a society can advance without the proper tools to aid it. This shortage hampers a community's defense efforts, for obsidian-edged sabers and bone axes can't stand long against steel swords and iron-tipped javelins.

If metal was in greater supply, Athas would surely be a different place. Commerce would be easier and less hazardous, workers more efficient, and battles quicker and more decisive. But metal wasn't always rare. Though the halflings of the Blue Age didn't use it, metal ore filled the land around them. When the Green Age began, metal became the resource of choice. Throughout the Green Age to the end of the Cleansing Wars, Athasians devoured the supplies of ore without a thought to those who would come later. Today, the main source of metal is the debris of ancient ruins. A few mines still exist, like the iron mine of Tyr, but the scraps that come from them are small and extracted with great difficulty. As the meager supply that remains is exhausted, the ghost of civilization evaporates like a puddle at midday.

## Changes in the Land

There have been recent geological and climatic developments that have subtly changed the complexion of Athas. The Great Earthquake struck west of the Ringing Mountains, cleaving the land and wreaking massive devastation; tremors and aftershocks have become constant occurrences since the quake struck. A vast rainstorm, called the Cerulean Storm, sprang up over the Sea of Silt a few months ago-and has been raging ever since, with no end to the storm in sight. Likewise, smaller storms of deadly ferocity have spun off this highly destructive storm to burst upon the Tyr Region.

**Geological Developments:** Shortly before the Cerulean Storm came into existence, the Great Earthquake rocked the Tablelands. It rumbled out of the west, sending powerful shock waves into the Hinterlands, past the Ringing Mountains, and rampaging toward the Silt Sea. The shock waves cut a huge rift through the Hinterlands, ending near the Dragon Crown Mountains. Falling rocks echoed through the Ringing Mountains, sealing oft-traveled passages and opening new ones.

The Great Earthquake caused minor damage as far east as Draj, Balic, and the silt shore villages of Cromlin and Break Shore. The worst damage occurred in locations west of the Altaruk trade road, with villages and forts handling the brunt of the quake far worse than cities like Tyr and Urik.

Since the massive quake struck, frequent aftershocks and tremors have become commonplace. Most of these are centered west of the Forest Ridge, but the effects are still felt in the Tablelands. Each new shockwave causes damaged structures to crumble a bit more and forces cracks in the ground to widen or new ones to appear.



New tremors cause more rock slides, send animals into stampedes, and add to the terror and chaos already gripping the land.

**Climatic Developments:** The massive rainstorm known as the Cerulean Storm covers what was once the Valley of Dust and Fire in the Silt Sea. The energies unleashed to force Rajaat back into his ancient prison ignited the storm. It's fueled by the First Sorcerer's bond with elemental water, and it rages with thunder, lightning, and rain over what was once the city-state of Ur Draxa. It shows no signs that it will deplete its roiling energies any time soon.


The area is now called the Valley of the Cerulean Storm. The ever-present rain strikes the molten rock of the lava pools, sending up clouds of boiling, billowing steam. The valley's deepest interior is uninhabitable, and even the edges are deadly due to the violent lightning discharges, the pounding rain, and the scalding steam.

The Cerulean Storm has changed Athas's weather pattern in a small way. Smaller storms, called Tyr-storms, spin off the greater storm at irregular intervals. These Tyr-storms ride the winds blowing across the Sea of Silt toward the Tyr Region. The storm clouds turn black as they rush toward the land, gaining power and intensity until they finally burst over the Tablelands in small, concentrated downpours.

Tyr-storms strike various parts of the Tyr Region as often as the Dragon used to collect his levy from the city-states. A Tyr-storm ravages everything within its path with furious wind, pelting rain, devastating hail, and lethal lightning. Tyr-storms strike in addition to an area's regular weather pattern, and a place that used to see rainfall once a year can expect a destructive Tyr-storm in addition to the gentle rain it sorely needs.

There is approximately one Tyr-storm every month in a different part of the Tyr Region, though no area receives more than one visit from the black storms in a given year. As has thus far been observed, Tyr-storms don't travel beyond the Ringing Mountains or past the Barrier Wastes.

When a Tyr-storm appears on the horizon, the residents of an area have little time to prepare. The black clouds approach rapidly and erupt without warning,



unleashing their fury quickly. No Tyr-storm lasts more than an hour, and most dissipate within 20 minutes of the first raindrops striking the ground. But when the storm passes, death and destruction are left in its wake.

## The Races of Athas

Athas is home to a varied number of intelligent races, from belgoi to braxat, giant to gith, but not all of these beings have made a lasting or prominent impact on the Tyr Region and its surrounding environs. But ten racial types have made an impact on the Tyr Region, and these are aarakocra, dwarves, elves, half-elves, half-giants, halflings, humans, muls, pterrans, and thri-kreen. In most Athasian societies, little distinction is made between the sexes as far as jobs and social positions are concerned. All that counts is if the person can accomplish the task at hand. Each racial type is described briefly below.

### Aarakocra

The intelligent bird-people called aarakocra live in small tribes in the rocky badlands and mountains of Athas. In most cases, these uncivilized aarakocra have little impact on the world around them. One group of bird-people, however, has an advanced society in the White Mountains north of the Tyr Region. Here, nestled in the snow-covered peaks, is the large village called Winter Nest.

Winter Nest's aarakocra (who call themselves "the silvaarak," or "people of the silver wing") average about 7' feet tall. Males weigh 100 pounds, females 85. They have gray beaks, black eyes, and plumage that ranges from purest white to silver to shades of light blue.

Silvaarak tend to stay among the mountain peaks. They believe themselves superior to all other creatures because of their ability to fly above the world. Those who visit the mountains or the forest around them must be careful not to abuse the gifts of nature found there, for the aarakocra see it as their obligation to protect the region. Winter Nest maintains trade relations with the city-states of Draij and Kurn, but are on hostile terms with the bandit states of the Barrier Wastes and the city of Eldaarich. In fact, Eldaarich regularly sends out slavers to capture any aarakocra they can find.

The aarakocra of the White Mountains are rarely found in the Tyr Region, although many of the young bird-people have begun to explore the world beyond their mountain sanctuary. These adventurous silvaarak believe that the time has come for Winter Nest to take part in the affairs of the world. What impact the silvaarak will have on Athas now that a significant portion of their community has abandoned their isolationist ways has yet to be seen.

### Dwarves

Short but extremely powerful, Athasian dwarves average 4½ to 5 feet tall. Because of their massive musculature and wide frames, full-grown dwarves weigh in at a hefty 200 pounds or so.

Cities of the dwarves were once as numerous as the caravan forts guarding the trade roads, but today not one exists. Likewise, no more than a handful of dwarf villages remain in the Tyr Region. Kled and the twin villages of North and South Ledopolus are the most prominent. The rest of the dwarf population lives in the city-states of the sorcerer-kings or among the slave tribes that wander the desert wastes.

Dwarves embrace work with joy, often giving themselves over to a favorite cause or task. They are a stoic, single-minded people to whom compromise doesn't come easy. Dwarf soldiers, laborers, and crafters are common, though members of this race can be found among the templars, nobles, merchants, and slaves.

The commitment to a single task is called a dwarf's focus. A dwarf will work to complete his focus above all else, for the compulsion to succeed is built into his very



nature. If a dwarf dies without completing his focus, the need remains so strong that the dwarf returns as an undead banshee to finish the task that drives him.

Athasian dwarves are not magical by nature and can't learn or use wizardry. This restriction doesn't extend to priestly magic, but it does include scrolls and many magical items that aren't combat-oriented in nature. However, enchanted weapons, armor, and shields can be used without penalty.


## Elves

While the last remnants of civilization huddle around pools of brackish water and clumps of withered vegetation, the elves of Athas run free. Elf villages are even less likely to be found than a pool of clear water in the desert, for elves only stop running when they fall down and die. Silver Spring, of course, is a notable exception. Otherwise, elves gather in nomadic tribes that revel in theft, raiding, and warfare. Elves are excellent merchants, though they have no concept of fair trade practices. Anything goes when dealing with an elf trader.

Athasian elves stand between 6½ and 7½ feet tall. They are slender, lean, long-limbed, and usually in excellent physical condition. They aren't the pale-skinned, delicate elves of other worlds. Their features are deeply etched into their weather-toughened faces, and their skin is as rough and rugged as the bark of an agari tree. Yet their flesh is as varied in hues as the other races, and as affected by the baking sun and scouring wind. Elves grow no body hair, save for the hair on their scalp. The locks are long, full, and come in all colors.

Elves are generally lazy and deceitful. They strive to lead short, happy lives as opposed to long, sad ones. For an elf, the future is a dark, deadly place, so he struggles to make every moment (every now, as the elves speak of it) as enjoyable and full as possible. Elves will do whatever is necessary to keep themselves and their tribemates alive and prosperous, but no more. When the work is done, and not a moment later, the fun begins. They engage in long periods of frenzied feasting and raucous revelry. Elf tribes do work, however, mostly at hunting and foraging, for they don't farm. They detest hard labor and never construct anything larger or more permanent than a market tent, but they will spend long hours haggling over the price of a single trade good.





Blessed with lightning-fast reflexes and uncanny speed, elves are natural runners. They are swift, sure, and extremely self-reliant. In the cities, elves represent their tribes in the trading bazaars and market districts. Usually too fast and canny to be caught by slavers, the elf that finds himself locked away usually dries up and dies like a darcu fruit cut from its vine.

## Half-Elves

Humans and elves must deal with each other from time to time, and in some cases—whether by force or through genuine love—children are born of mixed parentage. These are the half-elves, beings who combine features of both races, creating something different in the process. Half-elves generally grow taller than their human parents but rarely approach the height of their elf side. They average about 6' feet tall, though they tend to inherit some of the bulk of their human half. In most cases, a half-elf can pass himself off as a human with greater ease than he can a full elf, though telltale elven features can be spotted if he is examined with care and scrutiny.

Half-elves don't form their own communities. Instead, they live either among or on the fringe of human society. Half-elves are most often encountered in the cities of the Tyr Region, though some can be found in the villages and tribes of ex-slaves that inhabit the wilderness. Unlike mul's, half-elves can produce offspring.

Elves have no tolerance for children of mixed heritage. Their tradition demands that children born from the union of elves and humans be left for lirs and other predators. Humans are more tolerant of half-elves, but only to a limited extent. Humans will work with them, but few will call a half-elf friend unless they mistakenly believe him to be human. Half-elves born in a human society have a better chance to survive, but life is never easy. Humans have no faith in a half-elf's elven side, and elves likewise distrust the human in them. As such, they go through life as outsiders and loners, developing high levels of self-reliance in order to survive.

The intolerance of their parents' kin doesn't extend to other races, however, and some half-elves find companionship among dwarves and thri-kreen. Still, the typical half-elf goes through life trying to gain the acceptance of one side of his parentage or the other, usually in vain.

## Half-Giants

Half-giants are one of the newer races to walk upon the burning sands of Athas. The race was created by the magical experiments conducted during the first years of the Age of the Sorcerer-Kings. At the time, the sorcerer-kings were looking to create ultimate warriors to protect their domains. Because of these origins, half-giants have no culture of their own to draw upon, no ancient traditions and homelands to turn to for inspiration.

Typical half-giants stand between 10 and 12 feet tall, weighing about 1,600 pounds. They have human features that are exaggerated in some way. Along with the size gained from their giant heritage comes low intelligence and great physical strength. From the human side, half-giants get an interest in communication and cooperation, curiosity, a willingness to learn, and a general tendency toward kindness. They don't gather in communities of their own, but instead tend to adopt the cultures of those they admire or have access to.

Half-giants can produce offspring by mating with other half-giants. All half-giants that exist in modern Athas are the descendants of the first magically created half-giants produced in the early years of the rule of the sorcerer-kings. There is no natural way for giants and humans to mate and create half-giant children.

In the city-states, half-giants serve as soldiers, guards, or laborers. In the wilderness, they attach themselves to charismatic leaders or communities demonstrating tendencies that they admire. Wherever they are, half-giants have to deal with the fact that they are too big for the world around them, for things built for the use and convenience of humans don't work well in the hands of half-giants.

## Halflings

Once halflings were the masters of the world. In fact, during the Blue Age the halflings were the only intelligent beings on all of Athas. They were the original inhabitants of the world, and all human, demihuman, and humanoid races are descended from them.

That said, today's halflings bear little resemblance to their ancient forebears. Where once halflings filled the land in every direction, today they inhabit the slowly disappearing forests and jungles, like the Forest Ridge and the vertical forests of the Jagged Cliffs. Where once they were civilized masters of an advanced society, today they are feral, savage creatures as wild as the arid winds. They are more willing to eat a stranger in their lands than to welcome him.

Halflings grow to a height of 3½ feet and weigh 50 to 60 pounds. They are muscled and proportioned like humans, but they have the faces of wise and beautiful children whose features never succumb to the rigors of age. Ritual and custom control every aspect of halfling life, and their culture is rich in art and song. Oral tradition recounts the halflings' mighty past, though it has deteriorated to the point where memories seem but legend and fable. Still, the deep and abiding respect for the world that led the halflings of the Blue Age to sacrifice themselves remains imbedded in the halfling psyche.

The halflings care little for the things that motivate other races. What good is gold or other currency to halflings? They care more for an individual's inner well-being and spiritual unity with his race and the environment. Everything a halfling does is for the good of his community and halfling culture as a whole. When outside their own areas of control, however, halflings can be tolerant of the lack of "civilization" they encounter.



DAN  
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Their language is made up of words and the sounds of nature, making it very difficult for outsiders to understand. Perhaps this is one reason why they are rare in human society; they also die quickly in bondage. If they believe themselves to be free, though, they will work for nobles and sorcerer-kings.

## Humans


Due to the Cleansing Wars of ages past and their own natural tenacity, humans are the predominant race on Athas. They are a versatile breed, brilliant and exceptional as often as they are unremarkable and mundane. The average Athasian human male stands between 6 and 6½ feet tall, and weighs 180 to 220 pounds. Females are typically smaller, topping out at 6 feet tall and weighing 100 to 140 pounds. Skin, eye, and hair color vary widely, though most Athasians humans have tanned, weathered exteriors.

Compared to dwarves, muls, half-giants, and thri-kreen, humans aren't very strong. They are, however, cunning, highly inventive, and persistent in the extreme. They tend toward impulsiveness and great daring, seeking to make the most of whatever fate throws their way. Wherever life has entrenched itself in the Athasian wastelands, humans can be found.

Humans can also be found at all levels of society. In the city-states, humans fill more than their share of the ranks, from sorcerer-kings, nobles, and templars, to free workers and lowly slaves. In the wilderness, humans hunt with slave tribes, drive herds with nomadic clans, and lead or serve merchant caravans as they trek across the barren plains. Humans are extremely adaptable and usually highly tolerant of the differences that drive other races to war. They often serve as diplomats, tribal chiefs, or some other function that binds different races together.

## Muls

Muls are born of mixed heritage, created from the union of humans and dwarves. They have existed for as long as the two races have been interacting, but their numbers were never significant enough in the past to categorize them as a sepa-



rate race. It was only with the rise of the Age of Sorcerer-Kings, as the former Champions of Rajaat sought the most powerful soldiers to defend their new domains, that muls have been bred in large numbers—though as slaves. As muls tend to be independent and hard to control, the sorcerer-kings quickly abandoned the idea of forming large armies of them. Instead, other uses were found for this hardy race.

Muls retain the height and adaptability of their human heritage and keep the durability, bulk, and raw strength of their dwarf side. As such, muls are among the most powerful of the demihuman races. Adults grow to heights of between 6 and 7 feet tall, weighing in at over 250 pounds. It isn't unheard of for particularly large and strong muls to weigh upwards of 300 pounds. Their robust metabolism makes muls lean and muscular, but this isn't to suggest that they're thin. Muls are broad-shouldered and wide, with almost no body fat. They appear to be large humans in most respects, though there are significant and obvious differences. With prominent eye ridges and pointed, swept-back ears, if their size doesn't give away their heritage these features certainly will. Male and female muls alike have no body hair, and almost every mul is bald. Unlike half-elves and half-giants, muls are sterile; the only way to create a mul child is through the union of a human and a dwarf.

Like half-giants, muls don't have a unified history or culture to draw upon. They don't gather in mul communities, and there are no mul villages hidden in the wastes. For the most part, muls are slaves or ex-slaves, living in the city-states, client villages, merchant houses, or slave pens of the nobles—or among the slave tribes roaming the wilderness. A small number of muls are born free in the dwarf villages or somewhere else outside the jurisdiction of the sorcerer-kings and merchant lords.

Muls found in the slave pens of the city-states and merchant houses usually work as gladiators or laborers. Their great strength and endurance make them valuable in both positions, and because so much goes into creating and maintaining a stable of mul slaves, their owners often pamper them—provided they perform well. The owners also jealously guard their muls, for it's cheaper to pay exorbitant fees to slavers to retrieve a runaway mul than to start over in the breeding pens. Slave muls are easy to spot: Tattoos denoting ownership, occupation, and even number of victories in the arenas decorate head and body of these slaves.


## Pterrans

The Hinterlands west of the Ringing Mountains are home to many different species of animals and even a few intelligent races. The most prominent sign of civilization is the pterrans of the large villages of Pterrann Vale and Lost Scale. Prior to the Great Earthquake, when few people left the confines of the Tyr Region, the only pterrans ever encountered were those of the small, primitive clans that settled near the rocky barrens on the eastern side of the Ringing Mountains. These pterrans bear only a superficial resemblance to their cousins from the Hinterland villages.

Hinterland pterrans have already made an impact on the societies of the Tablelands. The free city of Tyr has exchanged diplomatic envoys with Pterrann Vale, and a few of the more adventurous merchant houses have begun establishing trade.

Pterrans are reptiloids with light brown, scaly skin. Adults grow to be about 6 feet tall, and there are no obvious physical characteristics that distinguish males from females. Pterrans stand upright, with two arms that end in hands that have three taloned fingers and an opposable thumb, and two legs with three-toed feet. They have short tails and two stubs at their shoulder blades—evidence of wings that vanished many generations ago. Some believe pterrans are related to the flying creature called the pterrax, though the link must be in the distant past.

The highly intelligent pterrans from the Hinterland villages have begun exploring the Tyr Region in earnest, hoping to find help from the threats unleashed by the Great Earthquake. They are particularly fearful of the thri-kreen emerging from the Great Rift, though the continuing aftershocks have wreaked destruction on the twin villages.



All pterrans revere the Earth Mother, the name they have given to Athas. They believe that they are the Earth Mother's first, best children, and that the recent earthquake and aftershocks are a call to action for their race. "The Earth Mother cries out, and we share her pain," the pterrann druids proclaim. "Now we must aid her in her time of desperate need." Adult pterrans follow one of three "Life Paths"—the Warrior's Path, the Druid's Path, and the Psionicist's Path—as part of their normal society.

While most encounters with the Hinterland pterrans have been instigated by explorers ranging far from the Tyr Region, a few pterrann adventuring parties have made their way across the Ringing Mountains. Of the city-states, only Tyr has thus far welcomed them, but Lalali-Puy's templars have extended an invitation for them to come to Culg at their earliest convenience. The Oba is very interested in meeting strangers who seek to aid the troubled world. The pterrans have yet to accept the gracious invitation. Beyond that, a few merchant houses and elf tribes have greeted the visitors warmly, hoping to profit from them in some way. The pterrans have taken great pains to avoid any of the thri-kreen packs that wander the Tablelands.

## Thri-Kreen

Thri-kreen are large insectoids—the least "human" of all the intelligent races of Athas. Standing 7 feet tall at the shoulder and growing about 11 feet long from end to end, they have six limbs, sandy-yellow exoskeletons, and large, multifaceted eyes. The two hindmost limbs are designed for walking and leaping, while the four forward limbs end in extremely dexterous hands.

In the Tyr Region, thri-kreen aren't common in the city-states. They gather in packs devoted to the hunt that roam the wastes and have little understanding of human society. If encountered in a city, a thri-kreen is either a slave or attached to a group of adventurers (whom the thri-kreen has adopted as his pack). As slaves, thri-kreen are used on the farms or as laborers, though some make it to the gladiatorial pens to offer a different kind of entertainment to the crowds.

Many things make the thri-kreen strange and alien to those of the other races, not the least of which is their appearance. Add to that the fact that thri-kreen don't sleep, that they don't collect wealth or possessions, and that they sometimes eat other intelligent creatures, and the differences between humans and thri-kreen seem vast and imposing. When thri-kreen join up with a group consisting of members of other races, they seek to establish dominance as they do in their own packs. Once the matter is settled, they abide by the outcome, though party members who aren't prepared for such behavior often experience moments of genuine terror as the hulking insect-men make menacing threats in an effort to dominate the group, or "clutch." Is it any wonder that most people fear the thri-kreen, or that they are viewed as treacherous and unreliable?

However, those who have won the trust and friendship of a thri-kreen wind up with a friend for life. The pack mentality is so ingrained in thri-kreen culture that they apply it to every situation they find themselves in. As they would in an all-thri-kreen pack, they leap to protect their clutchmates (regardless of race) whenever danger strikes, no matter the risk to themselves.

The thri-kreen of the Tyr Region employ a few exotic weapons, most notably the gythka and the chatkcha. A gythka is a polearm with blades on both ends. A chatkcha is a crystalline throwing wedge. When not hunting or gathering food and water, thri-kreen spend their time making or repairing their weapons.

Recently, the people of the Tyr Region have learned that there is a vast thri-kreen empire to the northwest, beyond a natural boundary called the Jagged Cliffs. The rift created by the Great Earthquake has opened a path to these "civilized" thri-kreen and brought new dangers to the Tyr Region. While there has only been a few brief encounters, it appears that the northern thri-kreen take the concept of pack dominance to new heights: They want to dominate all the lands and people of the Tyr Region.

# The Wanderer's Journal

*Almost all the Tyr Region is a desert wasteland, though it is beautiful and spectacular in its own fashion. Over each hill, behind each sand dune, the terrain appears more awesome than the land before. In my travels, I have often been overwhelmed by the sheer magnitude of this land, cowed by its indifferent brutality, even frightened by the unrestrained might of its elements—but I have never been bored.*

*Can I impart the grandeur and majesty of this area with mere words? I wonder. I can write of storms blowing in from the Sea of Silt, of watching a wall of pearly dust billow thousands of feet into the air like a roiling mountain to come crashing down when it reaches the shore. I can describe the queasy feeling of sliding down the glassy slopes of the Smoking Crown, or make your eyes sting with tales of walking the salt flats on a windy day. My words are but transparent reflections of this magnificent land, but perhaps they can be of use.*

*Beware the disparate terrains of the Tyr Region! From the Sea of Silt to the Tablelands, from the Ringing Mountains to the Hinterlands—all are treacherous places, not for the faint of heart. Take these words and see these lands yourself; for each of you must find your own way through the challenges of our world. . . .*

## CHAPTER 2:

# The Tyr Region

The Tyr Region is the center of the world of Athas, at least as far as the people of the seven city-states are concerned. It's here, along the shores of the Silt Sea and in the shadows of the Ringing Mountains, that civilization clings to a few scattered areas of fertile land and fresh water. The majority of the population lives in the city-states of Tyr, Urik, Raam, Draji, Nibenay, Gulg, and Balic. The remainder lives in remote villages built around oases and wells, or wanders about in nomadic tribes searching for what they need to survive.


The Tyr Region is defined as the area bordered by the Sea of Silt on the east, the Hinterlands to the west, and the Endless Sand Dunes to the south. The north isn't as clearly cut off by a geographical feature, but is generally agreed as ending about 30 miles north of the Urik/Raam trade road. Between these boundaries lies an area some 400 miles wide by 250 miles long, full of great stretches of desert, badlands, and the occasional plot of scrub grass or lush forest. The Tyr Region map may prove helpful when reading this chapter.

## Culture

The Tyr Region bustles with humans, demihumans, humanoids, and thri-kreen. Every group has found a way to survive in the harsh, barren environment. All of the area's people fall into seven types: city dwellers, *villagers*, *merchant house dynasties*, *herders*, *raiders*, *hunter-gatherers*, and *hermits*.

The **city-states** bustle with life, human and demihuman enclaves surrounded by golden fields of crops and built atop sizable oases. These cities stink of garbage and the sweat of the masses, but they're paradise to the hungry and thirsty of Athas. Walls keep out dangers—though they also lock in the residents.

A few short months ago, almost all of the city-states were ruled by sorcerer-kings and their bureaucracies of nobles and templars. Now only Urik, Nibenay, and Gulg still bow to the absolute authority of their respective sorcerer-kings. The



other city-states fall under a variety of leadership styles, depending on who seized power in the aftermath of the recent struggle. Whatever the case, each city-state is an autonomous domain struggling to produce enough food to feed its population.

**Villages** are little more than clusters of mud-brick shelters erected at small oases in forlorn locations, like the edge of a salt flat or beneath a rocky overhang. Some villages are ruled by officious bureaucrats, others by minor despots or charismatic leaders. A few have developed democratic councils. At best, most villages are semipermanent. Eventually a village dies as its oasis dries up, raiders come calling, or a Tyr-storm sweeps out of the east to tear through the fragile community.

**Dynastic merchant houses** are sophisticated trading companies operating networks of commerce that extend for hundreds of miles. These networks transcend political boundaries and span all social classes, for merchant-house caravans and the traders who run them are welcome in almost every city-state, village, and oasis in the region. From desolate trading posts in the bleakest corners of the Tablelands to elaborate emporiums in the heart of each city-state, the merchant houses move goods from place to place in hope of earning big profits. Families own most of the merchant houses, passing ownership from one generation to the next. While not technically citizens of any city, the matriarchs and patriarchs of the merchant houses generally live in royal fashion in the city-states. Younger family members and hired agents either live on the trade roads as caravan workers, as traveling buyers seeking new trade routes or new supplies of goods, or in the various villages, forts, and outposts along the caravan routes.

**Herders** wander the scrub plains, stony barrens, and sand dunes in nomadic fashion, pausing wherever they find pastures for their herds to graze. Herders usually gather in small bands, for their lifestyle can rarely support more than five to ten extended families. They raise everything from kanks to crodlus, erdlus to carrus. Fiercely independent, herders tend to govern themselves through councils of elders. Usually, a psionist or magic-wielding patriarch serves as leader of each council.

Others living in the wastes beyond the city-states engage in more hostile approaches to earning a living. These groups become **raiding tribes**, procuring what they need to survive by pillaging caravans, poaching herds, and plundering weak villages. Cutthroats, thieves, and murderers, raiders hide in the desolate salt flats or among the canyons of the rocky badlands, emerging only long enough to strike before running back to their hole with whatever spoils they can carry. Self-styled warlords command each raiding tribe, but most are nothing more than bullies leading by ruthless example. They hold their position through violence and treachery with the help of well-rewarded guards-and sometimes even potent defilers.

Many consider the **hunting-gathering clans** to be the most primitive of the social groups living in the Tyr Region, but they're also the most versatile. They're encountered anywhere: hunting snakes in the salt flats, gathering roots in the stony barrens, even stealing eggs from nests perched high atop craggy peaks. The hunter-gatherers live in small groups made up of no more than three or four immediate families and are led by respected elders or powerful warriors or priests.

Lastly, there are more **hermits** living in the Tyr Region than one would think, given the desperate struggle for survival. Few travelers will ever meet them, however, for by their very nature, hermits have withdrawn from one society or another to live a lonely existence among the wastes. Some become hermits of their own volition; others are forced into this life by circumstances they can't control. Many druids, for example, tend and protect an isolated stretch of territory in relative seclusion, while practitioners of the Way seek the solitude of the wilderness to enhance their skills. Add to these the number of outcasts thrown to the wastes who manage to survive through skill, luck, or rugged determination and the hermit population grows quickly.





# Geography

The geography of the Tyr Region can be divided into four general terrain types: the Silt Sea, the Tablelands, the Ringing Mountains, and the Hinterlands. Each of these terrain types are described in this section.

## The Silt Sea

Once a great sea of water that lapped along the shores of the Tablelands, the Silt Sea is now a huge, sunken basin of dust and wind-blown silt. Like water, the Sea of Silt is flat, its contents fill a low-lying area, and heavy objects sink and disappear beneath its dusty surface.

On a rare day when the wind is calm, the Silt Sea looks like an endless plain of pearly powder. Sometimes it lies as flat as a table and it seems like a person could see clear to the other side of the world. Other times the surface appears frozen in wavelike ridges that could come crashing down without warning. The most common condition is much more turbulent. The wind churns the dust into star-shaped dunes or massive swells, and the shape of the surface can change in an instant.

When the wind blows, dust rises to cover the Silt Sea with clouds that reduce visibility significantly. The slightest breeze stirs up a silvery pall of dust that clings to the surface like fog. The silt-laden air and the dust bed merge into each other, making it impossible to tell where one ends and the other begins. Stronger winds, which blow across the Silt Sea almost constantly, turn the dust bed into a roiling cloud of silt.

On stormy days, the wind roars over the silt like the howl of a mekillot. Not even the crimson sun at midday can penetrate the obscuring dust. Visibility is cut to only a few feet in every direction as the storm intensifies. Dust coats everything over the sea and along the shore, and anyone wandering nearby faces great danger. Not only does the dust get into the nose and lungs and eyes, but it swirls around a body, forming a sandy embrace. The ground and sky disappear. Thick dust covers the land, making it hard to walk. Direction has no meaning when a silt storm rushes onto the shore, for the dust disorients even those who know the area well. It's easy for those caught in the swirls to walk into the sea itself, becoming lost forever beneath its churning surface.

When a large storm springs up, everyone within 50 miles of the shore had best find shelter and wait it out. The air becomes so thick that the only way to breathe is to wear a cloth over one's nose and mouth. Those who stop to rest in the open will find themselves buried beneath a drift of gray powder before they know it. On some days the silt rises thousands of feet into the sky, blocking out the sun and turning day into night. Once the wind dies down, it may take days for the disturbed powder to settle.


Then the wind kicks up again, and the whole process begins anew.

**Methods of Travel:** The surface of the Silt Sea isn't solid. For those who want to travel across it, only a handful of methods exist: *flying* over it, *wading* through it, or levitating above it. Other methods are tried from time to time, and there's always the possibility that new modes of transport will be discovered, but these three are the most common methods employed by those who travel the Silt Sea.

**Flying** avoids the hazards of the sea itself, but few humans and demihumans have the ability to travel in this fashion for extended periods. Even wizards who have access to spells of flight or psionics who have the proper powers must be careful, for when the spells dissipate or psionic abilities fail, the sands below await to drag the hapless person down.

There are also a few skyborne predators, like floaters and razorwings, waiting to pluck fliers out of the air.

**Wading** only works near the shore or across silt shoals that lie hidden beneath the sea's deceptive surface. In most locations, the dust is too deep for humans and



demihumans to walk through without sinking completely beneath the sand. Moving through the silt is exhausting work, for the fine sand clings and pulls at a body. At best, it is a slow, tedious process, for the wader needs to probe the silt ahead with a long pole to determine the locations of unseen drops and holes. If a wader doesn't notice a pit or takes a misstep, he plunges into the silt and suffocates within minutes.

The giants who live on the islands in the Estuary of the Forked Tongue wade through the silt along paths that lie about 12 to 15 feet below the surface. At depths of 15 feet or more, the silt is solid enough to hold weight. There are also compressed sand bars, ruins, and other solid objects beneath the silt that they can navigate along. Even smaller humans and demihumans can use some of these paths, such as the Silt Road that stretches from the shores of Giustenal into the sea.

Other inventive sorts have employed stilts, silt shoes, and even vehicles called silt skimmers to navigate the Silt Sea. Some of these methods work better than others, but all depend on knowing where hidden pits are waiting. The silt skimmers are probably the best method for traveling the silt shoals. Using a combination of wind-powered sails and slaves to turn their massive wheels, silt skimmers roll along established routes at a slow, though steady, pace.

**Levitating** across the Silt Sea is usually only an option available to wizards and psionicists. By magically or psionically floating above the surface of the silt and then being propelled by sail or pole, people or objects can travel safely over the sea. Silt schooners, for example, use shipfloaters to levitate the craft psionically while sails catch the wind to provide horizontal motion. The city-state of Balic has a fleet of silt schooners.

**Features of the Silt Sea:** Not everything in the Silt Sea is dust and sand. Travelers may come across mud *flats*, twisting *estuaries*, protruding islands, mysterious *ruins*, and even *silt* shoals hidden beneath the loose powder.


**Mud flats** are areas where traces of water seep up through the floor of the Silt Sea, turning the dust into mud. Mud flats range from 50 to 500 yards in diameter and support a variety of bushes and small trees. Sometimes the top layer of mud is baked hard by the sun, but more often a mudflat is swampy. These locations become the hunting grounds for all kinds of ferocious beasts who feast upon smaller creatures that come to feed on the vegetation.

Although the ground is moist, there isn't any freestanding water, though swamp plants make their home in the mud flats. Towering, naked-trunk trees capped by umbrellas of huge fronds are common, while the undergrowth is a thick tangle of ferns, grasses, and broad-leafed plants springing out of bulbous roots. Travelers should beware the grasses, for some have thick blades sharp enough to cut unprotected skin.

**Estuaries** are long, narrow arms of the Silt Sea that extend inland. Estuaries have all the characteristics of the sea itself, cutting into the Tablelands and forming considerable barriers to overland travel. While humans and demihumans have as much trouble traversing these inlets as they do the sea itself, estuaries often serve as passageways for giants and other creatures that inhabit the Silt Sea.

**Islands** jut from the dust all along the shore of the Silt Sea and even deeper into its powdery expanse. Flying creatures, giants, silt pirates, hermits, and even the occasional herders dwell on these isolated pieces of land. Many islands have pristine supplies of water and abundant foliage because of their secluded nature. Those who dwell on a particularly lush island tend to be highly territorial. Strangers are chased away or even killed to keep the location of the bountiful spot a secret. Note that many islands have as many deadly animals and plants as they have benign ones. The most beautiful flower could be a killer on these oases of solid rock in the sea of dust and sand.

**Ruins** from ages past are as prevalent in the Silt Sea as they are anywhere else on Athas. Ancient cities litter the shores like the bleached bones of long-dead beasts, their walls stretching for miles into the swirling powder. Towers and shattered buildings rise out of the dust far from shore, and even the islands house the tumbled bricks of yesterday's communities. Many ruins contain secrets and treasures waiting



to be plundered, but they also serve as lairs for terrible beasts and undead horrors from ancient days.

**Silt shoals** serve as paths through the Sea of Silt—if one is skilled, knowledgeable, or brave enough to navigate these unseen roads. In most cases, silt shoals are compressed sand bars or solid rocks lying beneath the surface of the silt. In others, they are buried walls of stone or the roofs of ancient buildings that once stood tall and proud beneath the crimson sun. Silt skimmers can travel along these shoals, provided their captains have accurate charts or the means for determining routes through the dusty basin. Even the best charts can fail if a sudden storm springs up or the wind forces a skimmer off the precarious path and into the deeper silt.

**Other Hazards:** Travelers must beware the living creatures that inhabit the Sea of Silt. In many cases they can be even more dangerous than the natural perils of the terrain. Silt horrors, for example, attack from beneath the dust, sending their powerful tendrils into the air in hopes of snagging passing prey. Flocks of predatory birds, flesh-eating bats, and semi-intelligent razorwings fill the sky, while giants, silt pirates, and mudfiends wade through the powdery dust.

In addition to the usual dust storms, a portion of the Silt Sea has been consumed by a raging rainstorm filled with thunder and lightning. This vast weather disturbance, called the Cerulean Storm, covers the area once known as the Valley of Dust and Fire. The boiling steam rolling out of this area is deadly in its own right, and the occasional Tyr-storms that swirl off the larger turbulence range far and deal in sudden death and massive destruction. The Cerulean Storm has not abated since it appeared a few months ago, and it shows no sign of ending soon.

## The Tablelands

The Tablelands stretch to the west of the Silt Sea, forming a relatively flat plain that ends at the foothills of the Ringing Mountains. Not only is this area the seat of modern civilization, it is also the place where the civilizations of the ancients flourished.

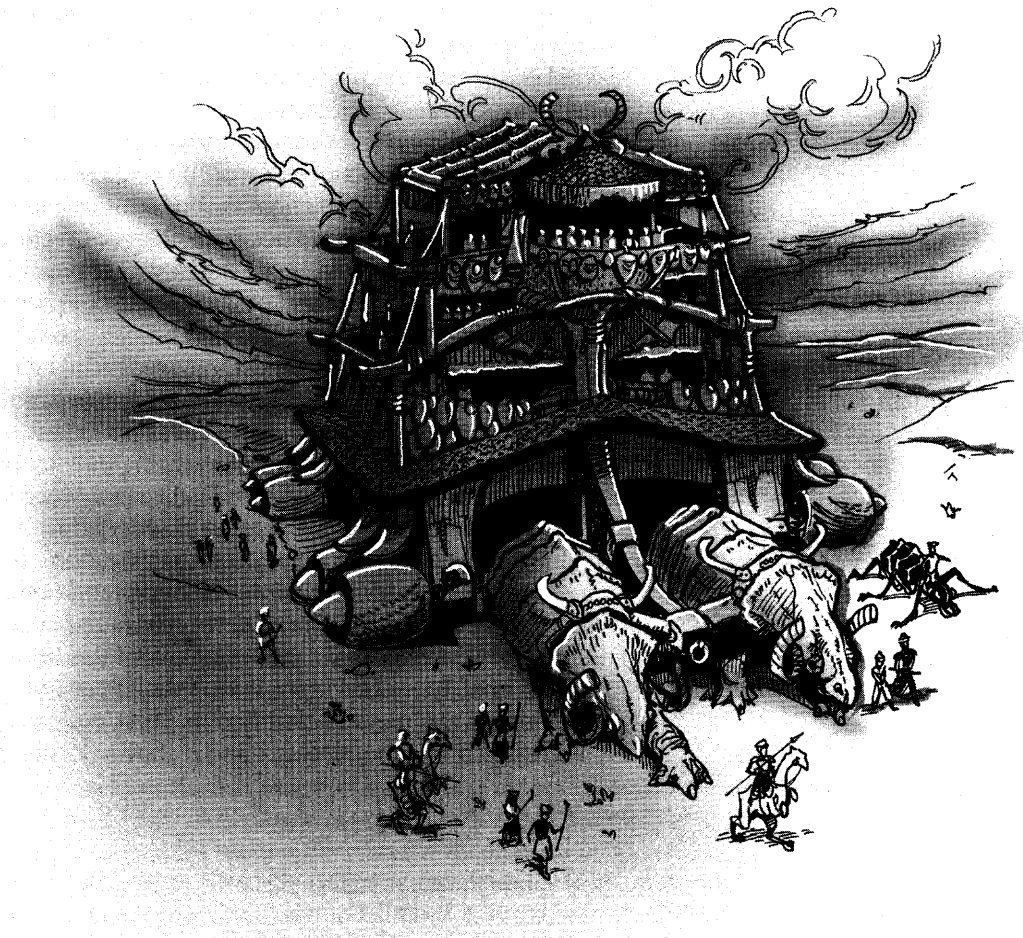
Generally, the Tablelands are hot, arid, and barren. A yellow-green haze of floating silt fills the sky, while the crimson sun blazes mercilessly on slave and sorcerer-king alike. Breezes, when they blow, feel like the burning breath of the now-dead Dragon. The ground is parched and desolate, baked to ceramic hardness or dried to the consistency of powder. Thorny bushes and spiny grass cling to the soil in places, waiting for the annual rain so they can release their dormant seeds.

From the seven city-states to the smallest nomadic tribes, the Tablelands contain a vast majority of the known societies of Athas. All manner of classes and races mix on the flat plains. Nobles and freemen, merchants and slaves—all levels of society come together here. This area isn't tame by any means, for beyond the cities and villages, past the oases and hidden valleys, the Tablelands are wild and empty. In this emptiness where civilization never treads, savage beasts and untamed tribes clash over the limited sources of food and water.

**Methods of Travel:** Those who have powers and abilities beyond the scope of normal humans can employ more exotic means of traveling the Tablelands. The greater majority of people are limited to either *walking* or *riding* across the wastes and deserts.

**Walking** gets travelers from one location to another in the most inexpensive and reliable way. However, it's one of the slowest and most dangerous modes of transportation (unless a traveler happens to be an elf, of course). Walkers can take themselves and a small amount of equipment or supplies, but not much else. On a good road (like the trade roads depicted on the map of the Tyr Region), an average human or demihuman can walk about two miles an hour for a maximum of ten hours a day. This means a human traveler can walk about 20 miles a day, thereby making the 170-mile trip from Tyr to Urik, for example, in about nine days.

Traveling by foot is a real test of endurance, and travelers need to carry enough food and water to make a trip. Those who rely on finding enough of both along the




way inevitably never reach their destination. At a minimum, a human needs one good meal and a gallon of water each day to survive in the wastelands. Even then, most humans can only travel in the cool hours after dusk and before dawn. It's best to sit out the hottest part of the day beneath the shade of an overhang or an oasis tree.

Travelers also need to carry weapons to defend themselves. The wastes and deserts are hostile places, full of unfriendly strangers and hungry beasts. More times than not they'll have to fight to survive, and so walkers must plan for the unexpected. A sudden sandstorm, a scavenger attack, or an injury due to an unforeseen accident can end a trip on foot very quickly. If any of these or countless other events happen, the unprepared traveler dies.

**Riding** can be astride a mount or via a wagon. Individual mounts provide the fastest form of travel, and the most common mounts in the Tyr Region are kanks and crodlus. Kanks are giant insects that are hardy, docile, and swift. They move at a rate of four miles per hour and can cover 40 miles or more in a day. Crodlus are large reptiles that can run at high speeds for long periods of time. They move at a rate of six miles an hour and can cover 60 miles or more in a day. While crodlus are faster, most riders prefer kanks because the giant insects need less water to make the same trip.

Wagons travel the trade roads of the region, usually as part of a merchant caravan. Wagons come in many sizes, from small, open carts to huge, enclosed fortresses on wheels. Many types of beasts of burden are employed to pull wagons. Crodlus and inix can draw small wagons, while the huge rolling fortresses need the strength of mekillots to get them from place to place. Mekillots are monstrous lizards that plod along at a pace of two miles per hour, but they can travel for as many as 15 hours per day. Their thick hides make them as impenetrable as the fortresses they pull behind them.

All of the merchant houses and the independent dune traders use caravans to move their goods from one market to another. A typical caravan consists of a number



of large wagons and mercenary outriders belonging to a single major merchant house, or a cluster of smaller wagons owned by a few minor houses and independents who have banded together for safety. Sometimes a caravan is made up of a single giant fortress pulled by a team of mekillots and protected by outriders. This type of caravan carries all of its cargo, supplies, drivers, guards, and traders inside the wagon. Most caravans will allow other travelers to journey with them for a small fee or in return for services rendered as guards or workers.

**Features of the Tablelands:** Six distinct terrain types— *stony barrens*, *sandy wastes*, *salt flats*, *rocky badlands*, *scrub plains*, and *dust sinks*— can be found throughout the Tablelands. Each type is described below.

**Stony barrens** are the most common terrain type in the Tablelands. These barrens consist of large sheets of exposed bedrock, mostly orange-red sandstone. Exposed to the wind and sun, the barrens are littered with stones of all sizes, from tiny pebbles to massive boulders. A thick layer of red dirt covers some areas, and in places drifts of orange sand and yellow dust pile at least waist high.

Except on roads and well-worn paths, the loose rocks make for treacherous footing. Humans and demihumans can move at only half their normal walking speeds over the loose rocks. Mounts can move at their normal walking speeds, but can't be pushed to faster rates off the paths in the stony barrens. Wagons suffer the worst fate, for the loose stones pulverize even the sturdiest wheels in a matter of miles.

Vegetation virtually bursts from the rocky soil, but only in the form of cactus. Squat spheres covered by long yellow needles push up from among the tumble of boulders. Twisted masses of ground-hugging tubes and thorns hide in the puffy heaps of dust. Tall spine-covered barrels rise as high as 20 feet, some growing in tangles that resemble trees. Cacti can be sources of both food and water, provided one is careful to avoid the thorns and knows which cacti to seek out, for some can move and attack and others are toxic in the extreme.


The barrens aren't devoid of animal life, either. Wild erdlus, mekillots, crodlus, and inix are drawn to the nourishing cacti, while predators like braxats, tembos, and belgoi are drawn to the animals.

**Sandy wastes** are open deserts consisting of vast expanses of yellow sand piled into dunes of odd shapes and sizes. The most common types of dunes have been named by travelers for the things they resemble. When a strong, steady wind from one direction heaps the sand into "mountains" as high as 750 feet, they are called *mekillot dunes*. Moderate winds from one direction create sharp, evenly spaced ridges of sand with crests between 50 and 100 feet high, and these are called *wave dunes*. The mekillot dunes are difficult to cross, but the wave dunes of mile after mile of regularly spaced dunes have been known to drive some to impatient frenzies.

*Crescent dunes* form where the sand doesn't completely cover the ground. They result from a steady wind blowing more readily over the dune's low tips than its high center. Travelers can almost always find a way around these dunes instead of having to climb over them. The most interesting piles of sand are *star dunes*. These twisted masses have tentaclelike ridges extending in all directions. They form in areas where the winds from different directions meet, causing the dune's radial arms to twist back on themselves. Star dunes are called the traveler's friend, because they change shape slowly and seldom move far, thus making them excellent landmarks in an otherwise indistinguishable terrain.

Not all sand is shaped into dunes. In places where there is no wind, the sand forms a yellow plain as level as a salt flat and as seemingly endless as the Silt Sea. It can also be heaped into great fan-shaped hills, especially near the base of the Ringing Mountains where it spills from the canyons running out of the high country.

Whether flat plains or piled dunes, traveling through sand is hard work. It requires great stamina, long periods of rest, and ample supplies of food and water. The wind can also present another hazard: sandstorms. Sometimes the wind howls with such ferocity that it drowns out the sound of a screaming mul and stirs up so much sand that visibility drops to a few precious feet. Travelers must stop and wait out sandstorms or risk getting lost or separated from their companions.



Plants fight a constant losing battle with the wind and lack of moisture, so they aren't common in the sandy wastes. Still, the occasional clump of tough grass, wiry stems of ocotillo, or scrawny sprays of salt brush find purchase in the sand. Few of these are nutritious to humans or demihumans, but most mounts can graze upon them without ill effect. There are some plants in the wastes that have a purple hue to their stems and leaves. When ingested by mounts (with the notable exception of kanks), these plants induce a period of murderous rage. Although rare because of the lack of vegetation, many animals common to the Tablelands eventually find their way into the sandy wastes.

**Salt Flats** stretch out in immense plains of salt-crusting ground. Generally level and packed as hard as stone, travel over salt flats is fast and easy. Unfortunately, very little grows or lives in the salt flats. Here and there a hardy weed or a dwarf cactus juts from the salty plains, but most of these foul areas are lifeless. An occasional oasis puddles in a hidden depression, but the water is typically bitter, salty, and undrinkable. Even water that seems safe often contains a slow-acting poison that kills long after the drinker has departed. Travelers must carry their own supplies, to make it across a salt flat healthy and alive.

Rocky badlands are labyrinths of narrow, twisting canyons that wind through regions of high ground. Walls of crumbling rock form cliffs that border the canyons, while the hilltops consist of knife-sharp ridges that separate one canyon from the next. Oases are prevalent in the badlands, making this terrain type a natural haven for hermits, raiding tribes, and creatures of every description.

Travel through the badlands is easy as far as movement is concerned. However, travel can only be accomplished along the canyon bottoms, which means travelers must follow the winding paths to wherever they lead. Scaling the sheer cliffs, especially with cargo, is next to impossible. Add to this the fact that every turn can hide a new danger, and the badlands quickly become less appealing to those who need to cross them.

Rocky badlands often surround mountains, as shown on the Tyr Region map. Most of these peaks are nothing more than pinnacles of stone that rise above the nearby hills, but occasionally a true mountain climbs thousands of feet above the twisting canyons. The mountains usually provide plenty of places to find food and water, but they also attract creatures powerful enough to claim these places as their own.


Diminutive trees bearing tiny leaves of silver, gold, and purple cover the badland gulches, while low-lying brush with sharp, serrated, silver-white leaves grow along the bottoms of the canyons. There is also an abundance of spherical gray-yellow bushes with thorny stems that grow as tall as an elf.

**Scrub plains** dot the Tablelands. These small areas feature clumps of grass, thorny bushes, and sometimes even spindly trees. Though scarce in the Tyr Region, these tracts of land provide the best foraging available for animals. In fact, they contain more vegetation per acre than most other types of terrain. Herders tend to let their animals overgraze the foliage, however, and what was a scrub plain yesterday might be a sandy waste or stony barren tomorrow. These plains also attract defilers seeking the life force of the vegetation to power their mystic spells-another source of this land's demise.

Druids often take it upon themselves to protect scrub plains from defilers and careless herders. The nature priests actively harass defilers to drive them away, sometimes even resorting to deadly force to protect the land. Herders are treated more kindly. When their herds threaten a tract of land, druids summon ferocious creatures or insects to drive the herders away.

Travel in the scrub plains is generally quick and easy. Sometimes travelers inadvertently anger a local druid or attract the attention of some kind of predator, but usually trips through the tracts of brown-green grass are uneventful. Travelers do have to watch out for gith, however, and other wild creatures appear more frequently in these relatively fertile areas.

After an infrequent rainfall, entire fields blossom with colorful wildflowers and leafy green plants. That's when the scrub plains are the most beautiful.



**Dust sinks** are essentially small inland silt basins that resemble the larger Silt Sea to the east. Often, a gray pall of windborne silt shrouds a dust sink, and the silt is usually too deep for human-sized creatures to wade through. Some claim to know hidden paths through particular dust sinks, including buried roads that were once the walls of ancient towns. If such paths exist, they are as treacherous and unreliable as those hidden beneath the Silt Sea.

Traveling across a dust sink requires the same precautions and methods used by those who navigate the Silt Sea. Except for the lack of silt horrors, most creatures and geographical features of the Silt Sea can be found in a typical dust sink.

**Encounters in the Tablelands:** Travelers can encounter almost anything in the Tablelands, for the region is the mixing bowl of Athas. While much of the Tablelands is bleak and savage, the region is far from deserted. All the major races can be found, either as nomads, raiders, traders, hunters, or hermits. Nomads tend to be herders and are most often encountered in the scrub plains. Raiders hide within the mazes of the rocky badlands, emerging long enough to strike at travelers on the trade roads or resting at a peaceful oasis. Traders appear wherever there are other people, ready to haggle and make deals whenever the opportunity presents itself. Hunters follow the course of their prey through stony barrens, rocky badlands, sandy wastes, and scrub plains. Hermits, of course, prefer to live in remote locations that have hidden sources of water and enough food to sustain them. How these different types of people react depends on their races, their goals, and the attitudes of the travelers they meet.


Survival of the fittest is the rule as far as Athas is concerned, and its diverse animal life is no exception. A wide variety of animals—all dangerous—inhabit the Tablelands. Carnivores, omnivores, and herbivores alike have defenses and attack abilities that deliver deadly force, for kill or be killed is the directive of nature beneath the crimson sun. The herbivores included in this book and described in the various DARK SUN MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® accessories tend to stick to the terrain types listed as their natural habitats unless something forces them to migrate elsewhere. Carnivores, on the other hand, move through all terrains as they see fit—either pursuing prey or searching for it.

Encounters most often take place in one of the following locations: *cities*, *villages*, *caravans*, and *ruins*. These locations are described below.

**Cities** are large, walled metropolises that boast anywhere from 15,000 to 50,000 or more inhabitants. The Tablelands of the Tyr Region house seven cities, all of which are well known and easy to find. They lie along the course of oft-traveled roads and are surrounded by wide bands of cultivated land. Smaller service roads crisscross the cultivated land so that wagons, water, and slaves (or free workers, as in the case of Tyr) can move without injuring crops. Crowds start to grow within several miles of a city's gates, for each has a constant stream of travelers going and coming at all hours of the day. Entry into most cities is as simple as letting the gate guards record the traveler's name, purpose for visiting, and paying a small tariff (or even a bribe) for whatever cargo is being carried. Unless the traveler has banned goods, the transaction should go smoothly, with entrance an easy matter.

**Villages**, on the whole, tend to be temporary communities consisting of a few dozen to a few hundred inhabitants. In some cases, villages can be as large as several thousand inhabitants. These communities aren't common, however. Travelers can wander for hundreds of miles without finding a single village. Even so, hamlets sometimes spring up in the most unusual places—in the middle of a salt flat, hidden within the twisting mazes of the rocky badlands, or even clinging to the side of an isolated mountain. Some villages welcome strangers with open arms. Others attempt to imprison or slay visitors. The most common villages in the Tablelands are "client" villages (those that are sponsored by the city-states or merchant houses); there are also slave tribe or raiding villages as well as a small number of dwarf villages.

**Caravans** follow the major trade roads that connect the seven city-states. These merchant-controlled collections of cargo and travelers come in all sizes and descriptions. Passage can be purchased on most caravans with money or by offering labor in exchange. A caravan trip isn't comfortable, fast, or luxurious, but it's usually safe. In



most cases those who travel with a caravan must provide their own transportation, food, and water. The passage they purchased only grants them the protection of the caravan guards.

**Ruins** literally dot the landscape of the Tablelands, for the Tyr Region has always been the seat of civilization through all of Athas's ages. Most of the ruins encountered while traveling the land date back to the Green Age, the time when the world was lush and great keeps of stone towered into the sky. Ruins of great cities as well as isolated buildings standing solitary watch can be found in the wastes. The architecture is marked by gracefully arched doors, windows, and gates, with walls built of thousands of flat rocks that were carefully shaped and fitted into place. The most common ruins are solitary remnants of a time when the world was a very different place, before the wars of the defilers destroyed the land. Great stone bridges span long-dry riverbeds. Cobblestone lanes lead past shattered guard towers that were lonely posts even in the days of plenty.

Ruins offer places to hide from the sweltering sun or the merciless wind. Sometimes a lucky visitor will discover a hidden passage to a secret basement or lost tunnel that still holds some treasure of the ancients—a steel sword, perhaps, or a breastplate of bronze. Beware, for these ruins might just as likely serve as a terrible monster's lair. Larger ruins, like lost temples and half-buried castles, often contain strange creatures—undead and living both.

At least eight ruined cities can be found in the Tablelands. Three flourished earlier in this current age, while the others date to more ancient times. The ruins are dangerous and forlorn, holding mysteries and creatures best left forgotten in the shifting sand. There are even a few ruins that date back to Athas's Blue Age, identifiable by structures that appear to be *grown* instead of built.

There are other ruins waiting to be discovered in the wastes. The bards sing of buried cities of steel and lost cities of gold, of towers of silver and temples of polished brass. All it takes to find these spots are explorers lucky, brave, and smart enough to find the truth hidden within the legends and buried beneath the baking sand.

## The Ringing Mountains


The Ringing Mountains form the western boundary of the Tablelands. The range runs from north to south, forming a barrier that separates the area from the unknown regions beyond. From a distance of 100 miles, the Ringing Mountains look like a ridge of reddish clouds hugging the horizon. As a traveler moves closer, the range gradually grows sharper and more distinct. From 50 miles away, the craggy shapes of individual peaks become visible. Between 20 and 30 miles from the base of the mountains, the traveler must climb fan-shaped heaps of coarse sand that wash down out of the canyons. About five miles from the mountains, the range appears as a great wall of loose rock, a sheer cliff that seems impossible to climb. However, the Ringing Mountains aren't as inhospitable as they look, and many paths exist for determined travelers.

The recent earthquake and aftershocks have had significant impacts on the Ringing Mountains. Well-traveled corridors through the canyons and foothills have collapsed, but new ones have opened to take their place. Most of these have yet to be charted by the merchant house agents who regularly travel into the mountains, so few guides can be relied upon to lead travelers quickly and safely to the other side.

**Methods of Travel:** The best way to get from one side of the mountains to the other is by walking. Riding animals can cover many miles up into the canyons that twist their way into the range, but eventually a boulder field or rocky escarpment will make it dangerous to remain mounted. Eventually, a traveler must dismount and rely on his own two feet.

Walking through the mountains is even more exhausting than plodding through the desert. It's impossible to travel in a straight line because obstacles intrude that must be avoided. Cliffs, high peaks, deep crevices, rock slides, and other barriers





require travelers to constantly change direction. Add to this the fact that for every mile a traveler journeys horizontally, he has hiked hundreds of feet vertically.

The paths aren't all solid and stable. Loose stones and crumbling cliffsides can cause footing to slip, plunging a traveler down the mountain. If such a fall doesn't kill the traveler, the resulting injury probably will. Creatures of all sorts roam the craggy peaks, and desperate raiders wait in ambush around every other bend. At night, the mountain air becomes extremely cold, dropping well below freezing in the highest elevations. Travelers unaccustomed to such rapid temperature changes could freeze to death before the blazing sun rises at dawn.

Travelers need to beware one final danger. The thin air produces a weariness of both body and spirit. Elves and half-giants are particularly susceptible to this malady, which manifests as a desire to rest more than anything else. Those affected by it even forget to eat and drink as the lethargy overtakes them.

**Features of the Ringing Mountains:** The four major terrains that make up the Ringing Mountains are the *foothills*, *canyons*, *mountains*, and *the Forest Ridge*. While these terrain types are distinct, the transition from one to another is sometimes so gradual as to be imperceptible. Of course, there are places where the break is harsh and obvious. The best advice for travelers is to watch for signs of terrain changes, for the land can be cruel to those who wander around blindly.

**Foothills** are steep inclines at the base of the mountain range, rising on either side of the sand heaps that wash down from the canyons. Foothills resemble the rocky badlands of the Tablelands, for they are filled with twisting canyons interspersed with steep ridges of higher ground. Vegetation and animal life is the same, as are the characteristics of the land. There are differences, however. The ridges between the canyons tend to be higher, and their summits are rounded and expansive instead of sharp and narrow. The closer one gets to the mountain range, the more dramatic the foothills become. The canyons plunge deeper, the cliffs grow steeper, and the hills rise higher.

The bottom of the ravines make for the easiest travel, especially along dry creek beds. Boulder fields and steep walls of stone sometimes intrude in these otherwise flat areas, but the paths are usually clear. Travelers should take heed if the sky suddenly darkens and a rare rainstorm appears, for the ravines can be washed out by a wall of water. Flash floods occur frequently in these foothill ravines, draining rainfall from the higher elevations in violent fashion.

The ridge tops of the foothills are easy to navigate and lead toward the spines of the mountains. Of course, not everyone is comfortable walking out in the open along the edge of a precipice that may plunge hundreds or even thousands of feet into an abyss.

**Canyons** wind through the foothills and cut deep into the heart of the mountains. Their floors have a slight but steady incline that eventually leads to higher ground. Every 20 to 40 miles, the regularity of the foothills is broken by a major canyon between one and five miles wide. Sand washed down from the mountains fills the first few miles of each canyon, sometimes for a distance as great as ten miles. Water gets trapped beneath the sand, providing sustenance to copses of small trees, fields of grass or flowers, and hedges of thorny bushes. These sandy plots makes good grazing land, so they tend to attract herders.

Deeper in the canyons, the sandy washes give way to stony barrens littered with boulders of all shapes and sizes. There is more vegetation here than in similar terrain types, for the high canyon walls provide shelter from the sun, and water runs down from the mountains on a fairly regular cycle. The ample vegetation supports a large population of grazing animals which, in turn, attracts numerous predators. A common yet dangerous form of vegetation found here is the dagger plant. A mild poison coats its long, sharp leaves—some that are as sharp as polished obsidian.

As the canyon floors rise, a steep field of packed boulders replaces the stony barrens. The only way to cross the boulder fields is to jump from rock to rock. Travelers quickly learn that these boulders are precariously balanced, and any false step can tip a stone and send a body tumbling into a mass of sharp-edged rocks. If even one boulder shifts, others above it may be dislodged in an avalanche of crush-

ing stone. With the frequent aftershocks that continue to rumble through the mountains, the boulder fields have become extraordinarily dangerous. A sudden tremor can cause an entire field to slide. Strong tremors can make the boulders rise and fall like the waves of some long-dead sea.


Above the boulder fields, near the summit of the Ringing Mountains, large fields of scrub stretch out for 20 to 100 miles. Ample water, cooler temperatures, and a lack of grazing animals allow the scrub to thrive. A lush carpet of grass covers the area, and tall puff-ball trees climb toward the crimson sun high overhead.

The **mountains** of this range rise high above the Tablelands, forming a natural boundary between the eastern and western portions of the Tyr Region. The canyons and gulches abruptly end at the bases of sheer walls that jut thousands of feet into the sky, while the ridge tops gradually grow into steeper slopes and cliffs become more frequent. Loose gravel and stones litter the slopes, and little vegetation grows on the wind-swept terrain. One exception is the stunted ranike tree, which—although not edible—is valued for its aromatic properties when burned. Insects find it repugnant, including the rugged thri-kreen. Few animals crawl or slither atop the mountains, but a variety of flying creatures live among the crags.

**The Forest Ridge** stretches all along the western side of the mountain summit, hugging the spine of the range from north to south. Here, a jungle of tall fir and birch trees, with a thick undergrowth of bamboo, covers the slopes of the high mountains. This area is surprisingly moist; in the morning a gentle drizzle fills the air, in the afternoon a torrential rainstorm may spring up, and at night as much as an inch or two of snow can fall.

The vegetation in the forest is so thick that travelers must cut a path through it. The canopy overhead and the closeness of the trees makes the ridge dark and gloomy. The cries of animals and birds fill the forest with noise, while an almost constant breeze blowing through the treetops produces an eerie ringing that gives the nearby mountain range its name.





Although the summit is as steep on the western side as on the eastern side, the footing is far less treacherous. A thick carpet of moss clings to a deep layer of black soil. The cliffs are as rocky and the crevices as deep on this side, but they're hardly visible behind the everpresent curtain of green. The most amazing thing about the forest is the abundance of water. Humidity hangs in the air, producing beads of water that cling to tree leaves, rocks, and even travelers passing through. The gentle murmur of tiny brooks echoes from every direction, and the occasional roar of a stream plunging over a precipice drowns out the other sounds of the forest.

At night, the forest retains a surprising amount of the day's heat thanks to the insulating qualities of the canopy. The temperature still drops to about the freezing point, but never to the depths experienced on the barren eastern slopes.

The greatest danger in the Forest Ridge doesn't come from predatory animals or poisonous plants. It comes from the feral halflings who consider everything within the forest—including other intelligent creatures—to be sources of food. These halflings are expert hunters, skilled in the arts of stalking, tracking, and slaying. Travelers shouldn't be fooled by their opponents' small size. There aren't many creatures more savage than a feral halfling, and in great numbers they are as deadly as a nightmare beast and as destructive as a herd of rampagers.


**Encounters in the Ringing Mountains:** The most important element travelers must deal with is the environment itself, for the mountains and forests are unlike almost any other location on Athas. Two specific categories beyond the environment deserve mention, however. These are ruins and other intelligent beings.

**Ruins** can be found in the most peculiar places, while other areas—like canyons and gulches, for instance—seem to have avoided the taint of the ancients. Either the ancients never settled in these areas or the centuries of flash floods have washed away all evidence of their existence. On the other hand, crumbling towers, abandoned keeps, and forgotten castles dot the ridges of the foothills. Often, these ruins sit atop strategic locations, like knolls overlooking canyon entrances. Some ruins remain empty to this day, while others serve as the strongholds of powerful raider chiefs or the lairs of monster tribes. In the deepest parts of these ruins, ancient treasures may still be found, including bits of metal, psionic artifacts, and arcane texts that refuse to succumb to the effects of time.

Ancient mines and other subterranean tunnels spiral through the mountains and foothills. Low ceilings and narrow walls make walking through the tunnels all but impossible for creatures larger than dwarves and halflings. The mines dating back to the Green Age were constructed by dwarves or the now-extinct gnomes, while older tunnels were the work of the ancient halfling nature-masters. These latter excavations can be distinguished by the organic feel of the passages, for they seem to have been shaped through growth rather than fashioned by tools. Smooth walls of vibrantly colored porous stone mark these halfling tunnels, some of which lead to underground cities shaped from the same growing stone. (In fact, a few of these graceful, almost-living structures have been unearthed by the Great Earthquake. What mysteries they hold concerning the ancients has yet to be passed on to the general public.) Some of these tunnels were used by the people of the Green Age, serving as psionic highways that provided quick transport from one side of the mountains to the other.

Time and the Great Earthquake have made many of these mines and tunnels unstable. They can collapse unexpectedly, trapping explorers or even crushing them beneath tons of falling rock. Water fills some of the mines. Every so often a pool of stagnant water burns like acid or dissolves flesh clear to the bone. Explosive gases hang in the air in a few mines, causing tunnels to burst into flames at the slightest touch of torch light. Some words of caution: Travelers don't want to be in these subterranean regions when the tremors of an aftershock rumble by. Even the weakest quakes can cause extensive damage to the ancient systems.

**Intelligent beings** can be encountered throughout the Ringing Mountains, but travelers must be constantly ready to fight or flee. Few of the mountain inhabitants that travelers meet will be friendly, with the exception of the herders tending their



animals in the canyon sand washes. Most others are hiding or hunting, so they should be avoided.

Travelers may discover trading posts hidden in the canyon passes, especially since a few of the merchant houses have begun to seek routes to the lands beyond the mountains in recent months. Of course, the locations of outposts are jealously guarded, so travelers not affiliated with an outpost's ruling house shouldn't expect a warm welcome. However, if the new trade routes develop as anticipated, more than one outpost should grow into a full-fledged fort or even a trade village before too long.

Gith wait in ambush throughout the mountain region, while the forest is the domain of savage halflings. Gith hate most other humanoid races, attacking travelers on sight with murderous and plunderous intentions.

Halflings, on the other hand, see travelers as potential meals. They stalk travelers, waiting for opportunities to spring ambushes. Halflings always attempt to capture their prey alive so that they can present them to their chiefs. The most savage tribes eat prisoners while they're still alive and kicking. More civilized halflings at least kill their food before consuming it. Even a halfling among a group of captured travelers is no guarantee of better treatment. Savage halflings assume that their unfortunate brother was a prisoner that they have freed from bondage. "Freed" halflings are invited to join the tribe that "liberated" them or presented with gifts and left to decide their own course through the world.

## The Hinterlands

The Hinterlands lie beyond the Ringing Mountains, running "west to the Jagged Cliffs and south toward the end of the world" in the words of the famed Wanderer of Athas. Some have described the Hinterlands as just a mirror region of the Tablelands, for the western slopes of the Ringing Mountains descend through sand-strewn canyons to a flat, empty plain. However, where the Tablelands consist of mostly stony barrens, the Hinterlands is made up of primarily scrub plains.

The other major difference is that, while the Tablelands holds the seat of Athasian civilization, the Hinterlands tends to lack settled communities (with a few exceptions). The eastern side of the Ringing Mountains serves as a mixing ground for the intelligent races, while the western side is relatively empty as far as intelligent societies are concerned.

**Methods of Travel:** The level plains of the Hinterlands make most forms of travel relatively easy. Of course, as it's nearly impossible to get riding animals and beasts of burden across the mountains, most travelers in the Hinterlands wind up walking. A few herds of wild kanks forage through the scrub fields, and an extremely limited number of recently discovered villages might have animals to sell, but in general even wealthy travelers have to rely on their own feet to get around.

**Features of the Hinterlands:** Game and forage are plentiful in the Hinterlands, as are sources of fresh water. However, as no trade roads exist and concentrated populations of people is sparse, finding an oasis among the scrub plains isn't an easy feat. Most oases don't have worn paths leading to their locations, and travelers can walk for days without spotting a herd that they can follow to a nearby water hole.

The Hinterlands features much of the same terrain as the Tablelands, though some types have a subtle difference that travelers need to be aware of. The Hinterlands contain their own versions of *stony barrens* and *scrub plains*, but only a limited area of *rocky badlands*, *mountains*, and *forests*.

A band of **stony barrens** extends between 5 and 30 miles from the base of the Ringing Mountain's western slopes, a distance considerably more than the barrens found in the Tablelands. In most other respects, however, this area is the same as the stony barrens of the Tablelands.

**Scrub plains** stretch in every direction, as level and as flat as a tabletop: An occasional tree and scattered clumps of bushes are all that disturb the expansive ter-

rain. A constant, gentle breeze blows across the plains, stirring up a haze of gray-green dust that cuts visibility to barely half a mile. Animals inhabit the plains, but even their presence can't dispel the eerie feeling of emptiness and desolation. Still, travelers will encounter feral herds of erdlus, wild mekillots, untamed kanks, and other creatures the likes of which don't exist on the eastern side of the mountains.


The only evidence of **rocky badlands**, **mountains**, and **forests** in the Hinterlands is in the vicinity of the Dragon Crown Mountains. The Silent Forest sits in the secluded valley, protected by a band of rocky badlands and the surrounding range.



**Encounters in the Hinterlands:** There are few signs of the ancients beyond the Ringing Mountains. The exceptions lie near or within the Dragon's Crown. Here, on the scrub plains just south of the mountains, waits the ruins of the Chak'sa. This giant stone head is sacred to the thri-kreen of the Tyr Region. It once looked like a masterful replica of a thri-kreen head, complete with jeweled eyes and a stone dais apparently used for worship. The Great Earthquake damaged the Chak'sa, even causing its foundation to shift and realign. It has also recently been vandalized by strange thri-kreen from the north.

Near the Chak'sa, the first cracks of the Great Rift spread out, forming an increasingly wider and deeper crevice that stretches northwest out of the Tyr Region. The strange northern thri-kreen used the Great Rift to reach the Chak'sa, and travelers near the earthquake-induced wound across the Hinterlands may meet up with these insect-men. Such meetings don't go well, for the northern thri-kreen consider themselves to be superior to all creatures-including humans and their southern thri-kreen cousins. Reports of these thri-kreen ranging throughout the Hinterlands and taking slaves back into the rift have made the merchant lords trying to open routes to the west extremely nervous.

No animals and few insects roam the Silent Forest, and the unearthly quiet makes the place unnerving. A dark lake in the center of the forest contains a lush island. On



this island, the ancient fortress of Dasaraches sits. The fortress was constructed by the Wind Mages, a fraternity of preservers who unsuccessfully battled Rajaan's Champions during the Cleansing Wars. More recently, the fortress served as a base of operations for Pharistes and his supporters in the Order. These master psionics launched a plot that almost eliminated psionic abilities from the world. They were foiled, and the fortress now lies deserted.

Beyond these locations, travelers might encounter primitive hunting and gathering clans as well as nomadic herders—though all are exceedingly rare in the Hinterlands. The only merchants that travelers may encounter are those from the Tyr Region trying to find new markets and supply points west of the Ringing Mountains. A number of tribes have left the Tablelands to seek fortune and happiness in the Hinterlands, but all they've found is trouble in the form of thri-kreen invaders. A civilized group of pterrans lives in the southern section of the Hinterlands. These pterrann villagers are discussed in the chapter that deals with that region.

## The City-States

The Tyr Region isn't called that because the city-state of the same name dominates this vast area (it doesn't) or because it's the largest of the seven cities (it isn't). The name made its way into *The Wanderer's Journal* because the city was the place where the Wanderer was born. His explorations started in Tyr, so that's what he decided to call the region surrounding it. Those who make extensive use of the Wanderer's writings (merchants and adventurers mostly) have adopted his terminology.


The seven city-states, once the domains of powerful sorcerer-kings, are the centers of civilization for the Tablelands, and maybe for all of Athas. A discussion of Tyr is presented below, followed by the remaining city-states in the order that they surround Tyr. (Refer to the Tyr Region map for orientation.) There are other societies to be sure (described later in these pages), but with the exception of the thri-kreen empire to the northwest, none influences as extensive an area as the cities of the Tyr Region.

From Tyr to Raam, Urik to Balic, all of the city-state entries have been updated to incorporate the changes that have occurred since the Wanderer last put feathered pen to paper. The original campaign started in the Year of Priest's Defiance of the 190th King's Age (or Free Year 1 for those using the calendar of Free Tyr). Time has passed, and all campaigns using this revised material begin (or advance to) the Year of Desert's Fury of the 190th King's Age. To the Tyr citizens, it's Free Year 11. The Great Earthquake occurred four months ago, about the same time that the Cerulean Storm appeared over the Silt Sea.

Each city-state is different. Laws, customs, economies, architectural styles, and cultures vary according to the tastes of each city's ruler, the sorcerer-kings (or sorcerer-queens, as in the case of Lalali-Puy and Abalach-Re). Though most of the sorcerer-kings have fallen from power, the influence they exerted for nearly two thousand years continues to hold sway as far as these patterns are concerned. With all of the differences, there are similarities, especially in the way each society is organized. The basic society model follows this hierarchy: *sorcerer-kings*, *templars*, *nobility*, *free citizens*, *merchants*, and *slaves*. Each class of people is described below; note that this is a global overview and that some discrepancies may occur, depending on which city-state a traveler decides to visit.

The **sorcerer-kings** were the absolute rulers of the city-states. Each was one of Rajaan's Champions, powerful psionics/defilers who claimed one of the cities of the Tablelands to rule after the Cleansing Wars ended approximately 2,000 years ago. Today only the sorcerer-kings of Urik, Gulg, and Nibenay remain in power in the Tyr Region. The others were either killed or imprisoned during the monumental events of the last decade.

The **templars** are clerics devoted to a particular sorcerer-king. They receive spells from their monarchs in return for worship, as each sorcerer-king fancies himself the "god" of his domain. Besides being priests, templars are bureaucrats of the highest order, trained to run their cities with authority. Only members of the nobility and the



templars are allowed to read and write, and it falls to the templars to enforce this and other laws of their king's domain. Templars are recruited from the children of existing templars, from the free citizens, and even from the nobility. Most nobles, however, consider it below their station to take on the duties of the templar class.

Those templars who were loyal to sorcerer-kings that have been disposed of no longer have access to priestly magic. Many of these templars have gone into hiding or left their home city in order to avoid the retributions of those they once lorded over. In some instances, templars have received positions in the new governments because of their bureaucratic skills and familiarity with routine government functions, though these are far from harmonious associations.

The **nobility** controls the farms and water supplies of the cities. In those city-states still ruled by sorcerer-kings, a member of each noble family sits on a council that theoretically acts as advisers to the monarch. In reality, they're little more than administrative bodies through which the king passes commands to the aristocracy. In the cities that have recently been relieved of their monarchs, the nobles have been able to exert a greater level of power and influence. In most cases, noble families maintain standing armies to help defend their city from attack. Like templars, nobles have always been allowed to read or write. Even in the cities where prohibitions no longer apply, those with the greatest command of the written word come from either the nobility or the templar bureaucracy.


**Free citizens** are those people living in the cities who aren't owned by the king, the templars, or the noble families. By virtue of birth, free citizens receive the right to reside within the protection of a city's walls and enjoy the (theoretical) benefits of its laws. Most free citizens work as crafters and artisans, while a select few operate as elemental priests, providing healing and working minor miracles to earn a living.

In those cities still controlled by sorcerer-kings, if a free citizen shows ability in reading, writing, or wizardly magic; can't pay his debts; or breaks a city law, his rights become forfeit and he can be sold into slavery. Many templars earn extra income by selling these free citizens as slaves or by accepting bribes to look the other way at infractions. In the cities that have thrown off the grip of their sorcerer-kings, the definition of free citizen is slightly different. In Tyr, for example, all people are free. In Balic, however, slavery is still common, and free citizens can lose their rights and wind up in chains.

**Merchants** maintain headquarters in one particular city and usually operate trading emporiums in all the others. Merchants aren't considered citizens of any city and wouldn't want to be even if the position was offered. The very nature of their business requires them to come in contact with a variety of societies that might not trust them if they pledged loyalty to a rival monarch or city-state. Instead, merchants receive long-term licenses to reside in a city in exchange for donations to assist public works. The laws prohibiting reading and writing apply to merchants, but they are allowed to keep accounts of their business transactions. These accounting methods are, in effect, a secret written language used by the merchant houses. Many of the forts, outposts, and villages shown on the map of the Tyr Region belong to one or more of the merchant houses.

**Slaves** were common in all the city-states until the practice was abolished in Tyr. Slavery of one form or another still exists in the other cities. People become slaves by being born to parents who are slaves, by being captured in a war or in a raid, or by being sold into slavery for committing a crime or failing to pay a debt. A member of any race or social class can become a slave, though nobles and merchants usually have the means to buy back their freedom. Slaves are especially restricted from learning to read or write, though many do depending on the function they serve. Slaves can be categorized by the type of work they perform. The most common types of slaves are artists and artisans, concubines, domestic servants, farmers, gladiators, indentured scholars, laborers, and soldiers, as follows:

- **Artists** and **artisans** produce the aesthetic items that the nobility appreciates but considers too laborious to create—a chore, of course, and chores are always left for slaves. Artists produce items of style and beauty; artisans craft tools and weapons.

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- *Concubines* are slaves kept for the physical enjoyment of their owners. Male and female concubines live pampered existences, for they are expected to pamper their owners in return. They're experts in all forms of physical pleasures, but are rarely viewed as more than attractive furniture. Some sorcerer-kings were known to keep harems of concubines, while most nobles rarely own more than one or two. Templars, however, keep as many concubines on hand as they can afford to attend to their pleasures.
  - *Domestic servants* attend to the daily needs of the households they're bound to. Cooks, baby sitters, chamberlains, butlers, maids, and major-domos are all examples of domestic servants. The wealthiest slave owners keep dozens of specialized slaves to handle these duties, while templars and lesser nobles own one slave who fills all these roles. Most nobles have come to rely so heavily on domestic servants that they can't accomplish anything without them.
  - *Farmer slaves* work the fields of crops and tend the herds of carrus and kitsus that feed the cities. Nearly half of all slaves in a city serve as farmers, enduring a rigorous and hardship-laden life. They are considered beasts of burden, tilling the soil, weeding the fields, and fetching water with back-breaking regularity.
  - *Gladiators* receive almost as much pampering as concubines, but the end result is vastly different. Slaves used as gladiators are expected to provide momentary distractions from the daily adversities of life on Athas by participating in combat for the entertainment of the masses. Templars, nobles, and merchant lords keep gladiator stables full of powerful and highly skilled fighting slaves. Of course, some slaves become gladiators because of their exotic or troublesome natures, though these rarely survive more than one bout in a city arena. In addition to the spectacle gladiators provide, wagering on the outcomes of each contest has become big business.
  - *Indentured scholars* are a rare breed of slave kept specifically for their ability to read and write. They are found only in the depths of merchant house headquarters or in the service of the Shadow King of Nibenay. Those working for merchant lords help keep the accounts of the house. Nibenay uses his scholar slaves to study ancient writings found in the ruins near his city. These slaves work in a university that Nibenay prepared especially for them deep in the confines of his walled inner city. They never emerge from this place, and rumors persist that the texts drive them mad or that the sorcerer-king kills so that they don't reveal the secrets they've uncovered for him.
  - *Soldier slaves* are servants used to bolster the regular army units of the sorcerer-kings, nobility, and even some of the merchant houses. Often, slaves are taken from other duties and assembled into armies when something threatens their owners. The sorcerer-kings only raise slaves to the ranks of soldiers in time of need, for they're reluctant to keep large forces of armed slaves within city walls—with the exception of a select number of special units, like Nibenay's half-giant legion. The nobility, however, does train slaves to be soldiers, raising them from early childhood to create fighting machines loyal to their houses. In most cases, soldier slaves have little actual military training. They receive a weapon and are sent out to provide whatever help they can to the regular soldiers.

## Tyr

Located in a fertile valley in the foothills of the Ringing Mountains, the city of Tyr has a population of 15,000. It was the first city-state to successfully revolt against its sorcerer-king. King Kalak ruled Tyr until he fell to a group of heroes led by the gladiator Rikus, the wizard Sadira, and Agis of the noble house of Asticles. With Kalak dead, the High Templar Tithian stepped forward to take his place as king. Tithian received the backing of Rikus and the others, for the templar promised to free all Tyr slaves and institute other sweeping reforms—promises he actually kept. Tithian had his own agenda, of course, which slowly played out over the decade he held the throne.

The new king created the Council of Advisers and gave members of the most important groups in Tyr a role in the city's government. Councilors were drawn from



all ranks of society and worked diligently to pass laws that would strengthen Tyr's newfound freedom. Tithian allowed the Council to operate independently and virtually run the city while he sought the means to become a true sorcerer-king.

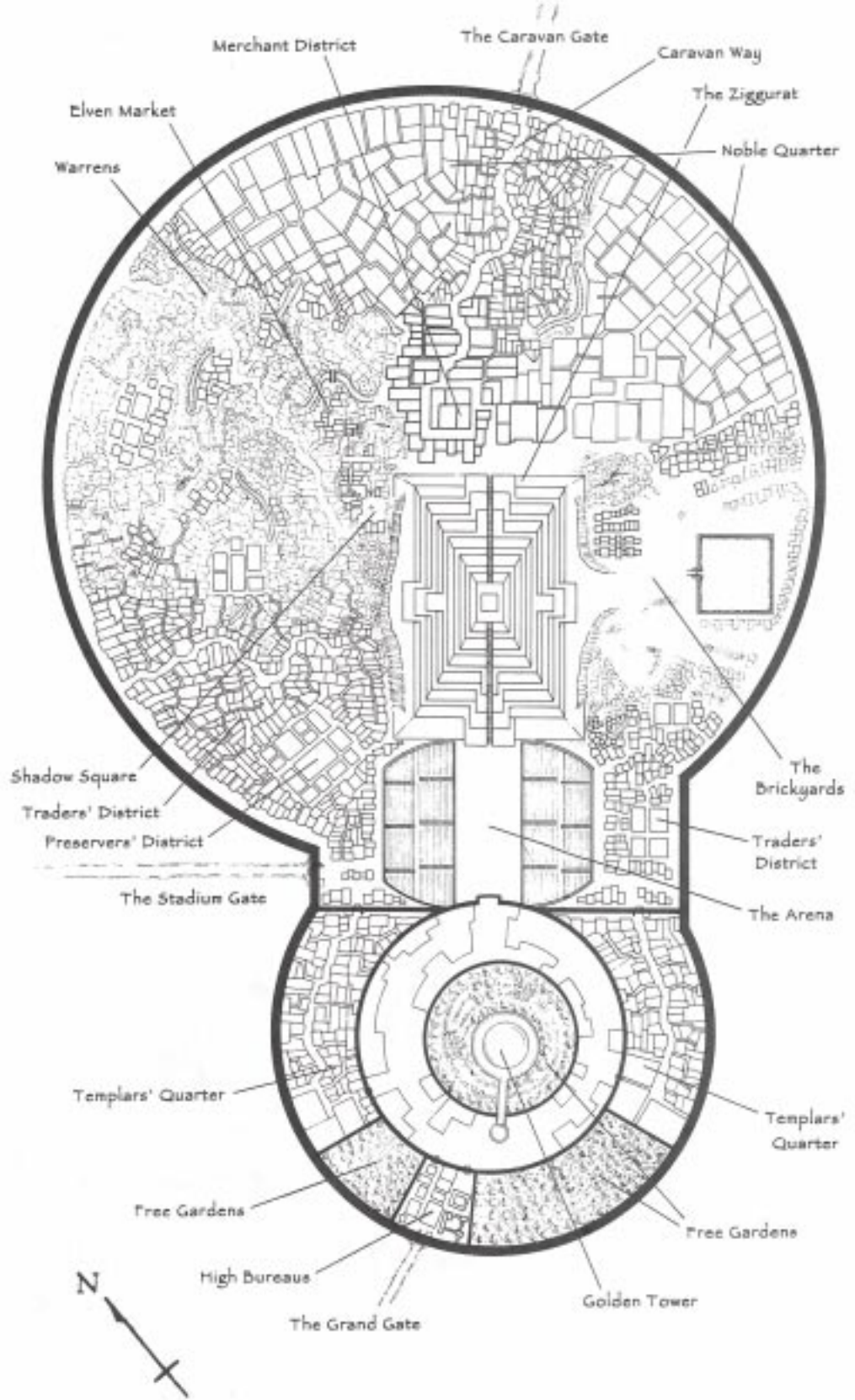
Urik tried to capture Tyr's iron mines less than six months after Kalak's death. The resulting battles made Tyr's leaders realize how necessary a strong military was, and how important it was to resume iron production and get trade and commerce back on an even keel. During his reign, the new king also faced the problem of finding a way to overcome the Dragon's levy, had numerous skirmishes with raiding tribes, and battled angry giants intent on plundering the city. The Council struggled to stay together in the face of secret agendas and conflicting partisan interests. The templar revolt of FreeYear 3 shut down the bureaucracy and public works for nearly two months until those who swore new oaths to abandon the old ways and support the tenets of Free Tyr were given more representation in the Council. The artisan strike of Free Year 6 lasted almost four months, then ended in increased wages for basic services. Agis and the Council handled most of these crises in one way or another, for Tithian was much too busy to get involved in what he considered to be the chores of government.


Today, in its eleventh year of freedom, Tyr faces new challenges. Agis of Asticles is dead, so his wisdom and honor can no longer guide the Council of Advisers. King Tithian's rule has come to an end. His ambitions led to his downfall, for he is trapped in the Cerulean Storm (though only a few people know of his true fate). The general populace believe that Tithian died fighting to keep Tyr free, thanks to the tales told by Rikus and Sadira. The heroes decided to keep Tithian's current state a secret, fearing that ambitious defilers might try to free him in order to gain power and prestige. Can Tyr's freedom take root in the Tablelands in the wake of these events, or will it be blown away in a devastating Tyr-storm?

Tyr citizens remain as untroubled by modesty as they were in the days of Kalak. The less a person has to wear in the heat of the day, the better. Most wear loose-fitting cotton tunics gathered at the waist with wide, colorful belts. Others wear loin-cloths and vests. Light gauze or silks are draped over heads and exposed flesh to protect the skin from the blistering sun. Turbans and other forms of light headgear often finish off a Tyrian's attire.



# Free City of Tyr





**Government:** A Council of Advisers makes the laws of Tyr. The Council is divided into five distinct groups who together represent Tyr's varied citizenry. These groups are the Guildsmen, made up mostly of human and dwarf artisans and other professionals from Tyr's three trade districts; the Nobles, representing Tyr's aristocratic families; the Templars, who continue to handle administrative functions in the city; the Free Citizens, chosen from among the masses who were either slaves or paupers before Tyr's liberation; and the Preservers, the newest group admitted to the Council, consisting of members of the once secret and outlawed Veiled Alliance.

When Rikus, Neeva, and Sadira returned with the news of Agis's and Tithian's death, it was resolved that the Free City shouldn't be burdened with another king. With no king to lead the city, the Council now oversees all aspects of government; a subcommittee made up of one member from each of the Council's divisions serves as an OverCouncil. This OverCouncil governs on a daily basis, while the entire Council of Advisers only meets three out of every fifteen days. The OverCouncil consists of the dwarf stonecutter Gar Bonehammer (male dwarf/3rd-level fighter/NG) who represents the Guildsmen; Lady Laaj of Mycilen (female human/6th-level psionist/LE) for the Nobles; the High Templar Timor (male human/8th-level defiler/LE) for the Templars; Rikus (male mul15th-level gladiator/NG) who represents the Free Citizens; and Sadira (female half-elf/10th-level preserver, 18th-level Sun Wizard/N) for the Preservers.


Surprisingly, the Council runs relatively smoothly. Some councilors posture for power and influence and partisan voting sometimes causes meetings to stall, but in general the Council has learned how to get the job done. Each division of the Council meets separately with its constituents to draft its own agenda before coming to a full session. Then the councilors do their best to get their own projects pushed through the voting process while trying to keep in mind the welfare of Tyr as a whole.

While the Council deals with the big picture, the templars continue to fill the administrative roles they have long been associated with. Since the loss of their spellcasting abilities, it has become doubly important for this division to demonstrate why Tyr needs them. The tangled bureaucracy has been reformed, but it still exists. Without the templars to turn the massive wheels of government, Tyr's infrastructure would have collapsed long ago. High Templar Timor (who hides his status as a defiler) serves as the Minister of Tyr, overseeing the various Senior Templars who run departments like Fields, Finance, Public Works, Water, and Trade.

**Trade and Commerce:** Tyr's primary trade good remains iron ore, though the metal isn't mined by slave labor anymore. Free citizens work as paid laborers under much improved conditions (safety being the major concern addressed by the Council of Advisers). A small number of prison laborers serve their punishments working in the mines, as directed by Council decree, but all other workers earn decent wages, work six-hour shifts, and receive free room and board in the mining village for the duration of their stints. Mine workers sign on for three- or six-month shifts, during which time they can save a tidy sum and help get Tyr's iron ore to market.

Various guilds and noble houses produce goods that are sold both in Tyr and abroad. The templars, meanwhile, oversee the production and marketing of goods that belong to the city-state itself. Textiles, silk, ceramics, and glass once produced from land belonging to King Kalak now earn resources for the Council's treasury. These resources go to pay for public works, maintain the city farms (those that haven't been turned into private collectives), and pay the wages of the city's standing army.

The merchants of HouseVordon maintain a trading headquarters and emporium in Tyr, basing much of their business around the Free City. Before Kalak's death, this merchant family seemed on the verge of collapse because of the shutdown of the mines and other factors tied to Kalak's mad plans. Now the merchant house is thriving, conducting trade with the other city-states, the major villages of the Tyr Region, and with the pterrann villages beyond the Ringing Mountains.



The Free City regularly imports fruit, wood, and rice to supplement the goods and foodstuffs Tyr can produce for itself. Though many of the other cities originally refused to conduct business with a city of ex-slaves, the connections made over the last decade have profited all involved. Even Urik, which once went to war with Tyr, regularly imports goods to the Free City.

**Conditions in Tyr:** Four months into its eleventh year as a free city, Tyr must deal with the environmental and social conditions left over from the past decade. The Great Earthquake, for example, struck while most of Tyr's beloved heroes and its king were away. It fell to the remaining members of the Council of Advisers to pick up the pieces. Though the rumbling ground made for a terrifying period of time, Tyr escaped the disaster relatively unscathed. There was some structural damage and a small number of deaths, but most of these occurred in the Warrens. The comparatively weak and dilapidated buildings in this part of the city buckled when the quake hit, burying the residents beneath rubble and debris. Ironically, if the quake had struck during Kalak's reign, even less deaths would have occurred. In Kalak's day, the Warrens were mostly unoccupied. It's only since the First Edict freed the slaves that the Warrens have been filled to overflowing with the new crop of free citizens.


The earthquake caused other damage. Cracks appeared in the city wall, and a whole section of the wall near the Grand Gate collapsed. Minor damage can be seen throughout the rest of the city, but the most noticeable appears on Kalak's Ziggurat. Great cracks riddle one face of the tower, while another face has collapsed into a heap of rubble. The client villages that dot the valley endured the worst of the quake's effects, however. One village was leveled by the quake, and others were pounded by rockslides that cascaded out of the mountains.

Beyond the death and destruction, the worst aspect for the city are the refugees. Intelligent races and a wide variety of creatures and monsters have fled the mountains, flooding the valley in search of a safe haven. This, in turn, has sent villagers to the city gates, seeking protection from the ravaging hordes.

What with the Great Earthquake, the periodic aftershocks that visit the city, and the violent Tyr-storms that occasionally sweep the land, the populace has turned into a frightened mob. Not everyone has succumbed to these base fears, of course, but a significant portion have lost control—the Council desperately needs to find a way to calm the people and restore order. A particularly vocal group claims that Kalak has returned to gain vengeance against the city, calling for open worship of the sorcerer-king to appease his wrath. Others have been trying to placate the elemental spirits of earth, hoping that they'll spare Tyr from their ground-shaking anger. Then there are those who seek to take advantage of the misfortune, looting shops, robbing nobles, and generally taking what they want and need by force of arms. These violent mobs are concentrated in the Warrens, but they sometimes range into other parts of the city to sow mayhem and destruction.

The Council of Advisers has been working overtime to address these problems, though first it had to deal with King Tithian's supposed death. It established the OverCouncil to rule in Tithian's place so that the business of government could continue. Second, it increased the size of the City Guard and commanded it to restore order. Things haven't returned to normal yet, but the situation is much better than it was in the days immediately following the Great Earthquake. Various subcommittees have been set up to handle damage control, to see to the fair distribution of water and supplies, and to handle the refugee problem—both those rushing into the valley and those fleeing the villages for the safer environs of the city walls.

The situations in the other city-states have added to the general nervousness and apprehension hanging over Tyr. While Urik has sealed itself off from the rest of the Tablelands (except for the heavily armed trade caravans that set out and return at random intervals), Gulg and Nibenay have made a few overtures to the Council of Advisers. Both city-states have offered to aid Tyr, claiming that without a sorcerer-king to defend it, the city is vulnerable to all sorts of terrible dangers. The Council, naturally, has thus far graciously refused these offers. Draji and Balic have recently resumed trade with Tyr, but both cities have changed significantly since the reported



deaths of their sorcerer-kings. In fact, though Sadira and Rikus assured the Council that the kings had been disposed of by Rajaat, rumors of their return continue to drift in with caravans, adventurers, and refugees. The worst tales come out of Raam, where confusion, madness, and ambition have given rise to anarchy. Tales of nobles being murdered in their homes, of templars being slaughtered in the streets, and of vicious invaders from a hidden city-state controlled by a king named Dregoth have made the Tyr citizens ill at ease and not quite confident that their leaders can protect them.

Sadira recently convinced a significant portion of the Veiled Alliance to come out of hiding and join Tyr society. These wizards formed a new group in Tyr, called the Preservers. The Preservers were given a place on the Council of Advisers to reflect their new role in Tyr. Sadira, as their leader and as an important member of the Council, was assigned to the OverCouncil. These good wizards are developing plans and guidelines for helping the city in a variety of ways that adhere to their overall morals and code of ethics.

**The Veiled Alliance:** The Veiled Alliance remains active in the wake of this new age of wizardly openness. Matthias Morthen (male human/18th-level preserver/LG) continues to lead a small number of preservers who feel that secrecy must be maintained until all of Kalak's defilers have been eradicated and the citizens of Tyr learn to deal with the responsibilities of freedom. Besides, Morthen doesn't like or trust Sadira, whom he believes has often approached the moral line between defiling and preserving magic (if not actually crossed over it) in the course of defending Tyr. He believes that the veiled Alliance must continue, if only to serve as a balance for a wizard whose powers and motivations he doesn't fully understand.


## Urik

Located northeast of Tyr, between the Dragon's Bowl and the Smoking Crown Mountains, the square, clean lines of the city-state of Urik can be found. The city-state has a population of 30,000 and has remained virtually the same as it was before the Great Earthquake and the demise of the Dragon. Hamanu, the King of the World and the Lion of Urik, was away from his city when the tremor struck. Although minor damage and only a few deaths resulted from the quake, the citizens trembled. When Hamanu returned, he promised his citizens that they would have nothing else to fear from Athas and its cruel temperament. The sorcerer-king's word (and his magic) was as strong as precious steel, for neither the aftershocks nor the Tyr-storm that arrived two months later could breach the towering yellow walls of Urik.

Hamanu's promise wasn't unconditional. Though the Urikites don't have to fear change, they do have to fear their king. To disobey Hamanu is to risk punishment and even death, while to obey him is to live without fear. That's how it's always been in eternal Urik, and that's how it always will be.

Urikites wear their hair in square cuts with elaborate ringlets. Some men wear square-cut curled beards. White linen shirts with short, tight sleeves are the fashion of Urik. Individuals of the lower classes wear plain, unadorned shirts that fall to their knees. Individuals of the upper classes increase the length to their ankles and add a striped or diamond pattern as well as a tassel-trimmed girdle. Elaborate scarves, worn only at night, indicate a citizen's station. The longer and richer the scarf, the higher the wearer's social status. By law and tradition, only templars may wear cloaks, and these are always bleached pure white.

**Government:** The sorcerer-king Hamanu rules Urik, taking a personal interest in the affairs of his city. Except for Hamanu's direct involvement, Urik operates as a traditional sorcerer-king domain. Templars enforce Hamanu's laws and handle the day-to-day bureaucracy, nobles manage the farms and water supplies, free citizens engage in business and try to remain free, and slaves provide the muscle to get everything else done.



Hamanu is a third-stage dragon king (male human/23rd-level dragon/LE). Through a combination of the Way and magic, he appears before his subjects as either a tall, vigorous man with close-cropped silver hair, dark skin stretched tight over ruthless features, and heartless yellow eyes, or as a half-man and half-lion of powerful build and mythic proportions. He is never seen in his true dragon form, even by his most-trusted templars. His laws, called Hamanu's Code, are strict and innumerable, covering almost every conceivable aspect of life in Urik. It relies on punishment in kind and emphasizes loyalty to the king and his templars. The Code stands unsurpassed in the Tyr Region for utility, comprehensiveness, and ruthlessness.

At one time, Hamanu's ambitions exceeded his resources. Since the Great Earthquake and the events surrounding Rajaan's brief return, his agenda has subtly changed. The three surviving sorcerer-kings sensed that the time had come to rethink the old ways, to find new approaches to the challenges of life on Athas. Until he figures out what those new approaches are, Hamanu has decided to withdraw a bit. He has effectively closed Urik off from the rest of the Tablelands, trying to keep change from intruding on his domain for as long as possible.

**Trade and Commerce:** Urik's main export is obsidian extracted from the Black Crown, a mountain in the Smoking Crown chain. The glassy stone commands high prices in the other city-states and is used to make a variety of weapons and implements. Urik's economy depends almost entirely on the black rock, though the city exports a variety of other goods that are unique to its environs. Urik imports iron from Tyr which is fashioned into tools for extracting obsidian. Though the two cities fought a brief war about ten years ago, today trade has been resumed to the benefit of both Urik and Tyr.

Other than its trading with the Free City, Urik has sealed itself off from the rest of the Tyr Region. Hamanu doesn't want his city inundated by refugees, nor does he want the ideas sparking problems in the other cities to spread to his free citizens and slaves. Urik periodically allows caravans to approach the city, but they are subject to thorough searches and psionic investigation. Traders are restricted to specific areas inside the city walls. Failure to comply with any of these statutes can have deadly ramifications for the traders.

The same is true for the merchants of House Stel, Urik's resident merchant house. When a caravan is ready to strike out from Urik, the traders must comply with a series of restrictions and requirements enforced by powerful templars. Only the most loyal members of Stel's organization may leave and enter Urik, men and women who have been tested repeatedly by the templars. All cargo is checked a dozen times, and trade routes must be approved in advance. If a caravan returns that has deviated from its route in any way, it isn't allowed back into the city.

**Conditions in Urik:** Except for the new restrictions regarding trade and travel, things in Urik are the same as they ever were. The city remains a warrior culture, ruled by a warrior king and geared toward fighting and winning wars. The current enemies aren't the other city-states, however. Rather, the refugees seeking shelter from the constant tremors and the monsters fleeing from the violent storms near the Silt Sea have become Urik's foes. When either approaches Urik's high, yellow walls, Hamanu leads his army out of his gigantic palace (called Destiny's Kingdom) and charges into battle. In most cases, the result is slaughter, for terrified invaders can't stand against Hamanu's highly trained and well-equipped legions.

The few signs that the Great Earthquake touched Urik have been wiped out; buildings have been repaired, streets repaved, the dead buried. Now, Hamanu's magic keeps the aftershocks and the storms from entering the city, and in most respects the citizens have learned to ignore the disasters. As long as the disasters remain outside Urik's walls, the citizens see no reason to worry about them.

Closing the city off from the rest of the world has made it difficult for certain members of Urik's society. Adventurers and traders, for example, are severely hampered by the well-guarded walls. Elves, never really welcome near Urik's walls, now avoid the city completely. They are treated like invaders, set upon as soon as they're


spotted entering Urik's verdant belt. Things may change as soon as the king finishes contemplating his city's new approach to the world-or it may simply get worse if Hamanu decides to keep the rest of Athas at bay forever.

**The Veiled Alliance:** The Veiled Alliance has to be doubly careful in the wake of Hamanu's restrictions, and the preservers' supplies of spell components have become extremely limited. For most of the decade following the war with Tyr, Urik's Veiled Alliance was split into two factions. Its leader, the legendary Morlak, disappeared mysteriously, leaving two preservers to contend for the spot he vacated. When one of the contenders, Leoricus the Untamable, was killed in the Great Earthquake, the other contender worked feverishly to heal the split. This became increasingly important in the wake of Hamanu's newest restrictions. Today, Thania (female half-elf/12th-level preserver/LN) commands a whole Alliance, advocating patience and negotiation instead of the violent confrontations advocated by her one-time rival. Thania has been working to establish a partnership with Tyr's Alliance, but if Hamanu learns of it both groups will undoubtedly suffer.

## Raam

Raam, located east of Urik, has a population around 40,000. Shortly before the day of the Great Earthquake, the sorcerer-queen Abalach-Re was killed in battle with Sadira of Tyr. When the news reached Raam, it was the spark that ignited the fires of anarchy, and now Raam burns. But Raam was a city on the brink of revolution even before the death of its queen. Since Abalach-Re's death, the city has collapsed into chaos. Various factions have grabbed whatever power they could, and Raam teeters on the brink of civil war.





**Government:** The government of Raam still exists, but it has almost no power in the face of the violence and chaos ravaging the city. The templars who haven't fled in fear or tried to hide among the populace as regular citizens continue to administer the city, but it is clear the city no longer functions the way it used to. These templars have only their bureaucratic skills to fall back on, as their ability to use priestly spells vanished with Abalach-Re's demise. The templars continue to call for the worship of Badna, the mysterious (and imaginary) being the sorcerer-queen claimed to receive her powers from. Most people ignore these calls to worship, for they never believed in Badna anyway.


Raam has divided into several armed camps, as noted in the following:

- The main body of templars occupy one camp, centered in the templar quarter of the city. Various rogue templars command smaller parts of Raam, claiming from as little as one building to as many as several blocks as their personal domains. They defend these domains with troops that were once loyal to Abalach-Re but now follow their templar commanders.
- The next largest group claiming dominion over sections of Raam is the noble families. Like the raiding tribes of the sandy wastes, the nobles pillage and plunder for the things they want and need to survive. The nobles have expanded their areas of control. While each family started with a small piece of land and the road adjoining it, those with the power and audacity to press their advantage have grabbed whatever they could hold onto. Like the raiding tribes, the noble camps are savage, ruthless, and have only their own interests at heart.
- The merchant houses have taken one of two tacks regarding conducting business in Raam. The first option, chosen by the vast majority of merchant houses, was to get out of town and take their business elsewhere. The second option, embraced by House M'ke as a prudent enterprise that will ensure its own survival, was to seize control of as much of the city as possible. House M'ke and its army of mercenaries now control most of the merchant district. Armed bands wearing House M'ke's colors periodically sweep through the city, looting and pillaging until they gather enough goods to fill a caravan. This caravan then sets out across the Tablelands to conduct trade as any merchant house caravan would. Only in Raam does House M'ke behave like a conquering army of raiders—because in Raam, that's what House M'ke has become. A few of the more daring (or desperate) merchant houses return to Raam from time to time to test the climate, but they usually wind up losing their goods to one or more of the armed camps seeking dominance in the city.
- The strangest group to stake a claim in Raam's power vacuum is the elf tribe known as the Night Runners. Prior to Abalach-Re's death, the Night Runners maintained a small presence in Raam. Now this group of elves—which specializes in the “shadow arts” of espionage, assassination, and extortion—has decided to take a more active role in Raam society. A large portion of the elf quarter and the tradesmen's district has been taken over by the Night Runners. Besides holding and expanding their own territory, the Night Runners continue to sell their unique services to those who can afford them—including noble houses, merchant camps, and even templar domains. In the end, the Night Runners plan to control the entire city, making it the first elf city in thousands of years. Until then, the elves don't mind working for the bands they're competing with, for it gives them an easy way to keep tabs on how the factions are doing.

**Trade and Commerce:** Trade within the city has become a nightmare. Free citizens, for the most part, can't buy or trade for what they need. Not only have the supplies of goods and services come up exceedingly short, but the various armed bands seeking to carve their own kingdoms out of Raam's dying corpse have taken to hoarding whatever they come across. Free citizens, therefore, have to find what they need and take it by force of arms. In Raam, as perhaps nowhere else in all of “civilized” Athas, only the strong survive and only the most powerful prosper.

Few traders come to Raam anymore, though many will set up markets in the wilderness beyond the city gates. From these markets they can sell basic supplies at





an enormous profit to the trade gangs sent from the city. Trade gangs are armed mercenaries either attached to a particular armed camp or working independently to make profits as middlemen. The wilderness markets also provide an outlet for the goods that Raam's free citizens continue to produce, even in the face of escalating violence and despair.

Beyond these examples, House M'ke is the only evidence of true mercantile activity, albeit with a distinct war-time slant. Raam is a disaster, so for M'ke to function it must apply disaster economics. If terror and violence are the only ways to conduct business in Raam, then House M'ke will adapt to the trade practices of the day. As such, a portion of the city under the merchant house's control has been turned into a heavily protected trade emporium. The traders of House M'ke continue to operate in the rest of the Tablelands as they always have, but in Raam they've become raiders in their own right. The house sends armed "traders" into the streets and out into the client villages to "acquire" goods and supplies by whatever means is necessary. This usually implies plundering from those weaker than themselves. The stolen goods are then loaded into caravans and sent to House M'ke emporiums in other city-states. If the leaders of House M'ke have their way, Raam will become the first city-state to be controlled by a merchant lord instead of a sorcerer-king. Naturally, House M'ke doesn't recognize the situation in Balic, where a trade lord has already laid claim to the reign of the city.


**Conditions in Raam:** The environmental disasters of recent months have had very little impact on Raam. The Great Earthquake was barely perceived, for it caused little damage and no deaths. No Tyr-storm has yet visited the city-state, so Raam's residents have yet to experience the devastation that such a storm can inflict. The death of Abalach-Re and the resulting struggle for power, however, have caused more death and destruction than any force of nature.

Raam has been divided into armed camps controlled by greedy, power-hungry warlords. Some call themselves templars, others nobles, liberators, or merchant lords. All are raiders and bullies, seeking to use strength as a means of control. These armed camps don't even make a pretense of peaceful coexistence. Skirmishes over disputed territories are constantly being fought, as are battles over caches of weapons or supplies—even just to determine which side is stronger! It won't be long before all-out war breaks out to see if one leader and his faction can conquer the others and restore order of some sort to the city. This war, of course, may simply wind up destroying Raam and reducing the verdant belt it occupies to a wasteland.

Understandably, the free citizens live in a constant state of fear. They have nowhere to go, nowhere to turn to, and conditions within the city become more terrible every day. Some citizens have appealed to one faction or another, offering to become indentured slaves for the protection and sustenance offered by the vying warlords. Every day, more and more citizens surrender their freedom in exchange for a safe place to sleep, a cool drink of water, and a bit of food to fill an aching stomach.

The slaves of the city have fared even worse than the free citizens. Their masters have been replaced by heartless owners who treat the slaves no better than living tools that can be replaced when they break. Some slaves, embracing the legends of Rikus, Neeva, and Sadira of Tyr, have rebelled, using the opportunity presented by the chaos. One group has come under the leadership of a gladiator named Korno (male mul/9th-level gladiator/CN). Between Korno's military daring and expertise and the cache of weapons his followers found in one of Abalach-Re's many hidden treasuries, this group of slaves has set itself up as another armed band in a city of gangs. Korno has called for all slaves to join his community, for when they have the numbers to go along with their dreams they will rise up and overthrow all their masters. Korno, however, is as cruel and ruthless as any of the other leaders of the armed bands. The slaves that have flocked to his side continue to be treated as slaves, working to make life easier for Korno and his best warriors.

A terrible plague has begun to spread through the city. It affects all races and classes equally, though the elves seem the most resistant to its debilitating affects.



Dubbed “wind sickness” because the first outbreaks occurred after a violent wind-storm that roared through the city the same day Abalach-Re died, the plague causes purple blotches on the skin and seriously weakens those who catch it. Approximately 10 percent of the population has wind sickness, though only the advanced cases develop blotches. The general population believes the wind to be the cause of the illness, and so they have begun avoiding the out-of-doors. In fact, the plague is spread by touch, and those who have skin blotches are highly contagious. Further, less than 50 percent of those who develop the blotches live to see another week of sunrises. The Raam citizens have responded by calling for the sacrifices of air clerics to appease the evil wind spirits, whom they believe are causing the plague.

With food and water in short supply and violence rampant in the streets, it’s little wonder that the people of Raam are turning to anyone or anything that claims to have a solution. The two most popular sects gaining acceptance among Raam’s citizens are the sect of Dregoth the Savior and that of *Leviath the Calm*.

**Dregoth the Savior** is seen as the salvation of Raam by many of the templars, nobles, and free citizens. The doctrine of Dregoth, preached to the masses by strangers with bizarre accents who hide their features beneath the many folds of their sand-colored robes, calls for the city to put down its weapons and accept Dregoth as its new god. “Dregoth has wandered the many planes of existence,” the preachers claim, “and only he can put an end to the chaos that fills Raam’s streets.” Unknown to the people of Raam, Dregoth is an undead sorcerer-king who once ruled the ancient city of Giustenal. He recently returned to the surface of Athas after spending 2,000 years hiding and gaining power in an underground domain. His plans for Raam have nothing to do with saving the city—in fact, he wants to destroy Raam’s inhabitants and seize the city. Raam will become Dregoth’s new Giustenal, a home for his people and a base from which his armies can conquer the surface world.

**Leviath the Calm** (male half-giant/9th-level psionist/LN), meanwhile, is an unusual half-giant who spreads words of peace and tranquility to all who want to listen. His words are like fire in the ears of the masses, for they are spoken in kindness and with a truth that has rarely been seen beneath the crimson sun. For all his size and great strength, Leviath has never raised his voice in anger or struck a blow to harm another living creature. He believes that violence is a path that leads to death and destruction, as has been shown by the recent situation in Raam. “We must all live together if we are going to survive,” Leviath proclaims. “Lay down your anger and let the serenity of life give you greater strength.” Though he doesn’t seem to want to be a leader, his words have inspired a significant number of free citizens and ex-slaves who now follow him around and preach his message of peace to others.

In this volatile environment, revolution seems to be inevitable. What the outcome of such an event will be is unknown, but by all indications it will be bloody in the extreme.

**The Veiled Alliance:** The turbulent conditions in Raam haven’t made it any easier for the city’s Veiled Alliance. The preservers continue to operate in secret, but the contacts they once had in all levels of government have been lost. Nanda Shatri (female human/20th-level preserver, 8th-level psionist/LG) continues to lead the Alliance and still seeks to become an avangion so that she can help restore Athas’s lost vigor. However, beyond the vague rumors that Urik’s Alliance had created such a being some years back, Shatri is no closer to her goal than she was a decade ago. She has considered siding with one of the armed bands in order to assure the safety of her people, but she has yet to determine which band to approach. Her reluctance to make a decision might be her undoing, for the Prophets of Dregoth have begun making overtures to the Alliance that the members find very appealing. In fact, the Prophets have also promised that Dregoth can help Shatri with her research into the avangion transformation process—a promise that she is seriously considering accepting.


## Draj

Draj, situated on a vast mud flat east of Raam, has a population of approximately 15,000. It was another warlike city-state before its sorcerer-king was killed by Rajaat a few months back. Before the news could cause panic and social upheaval in the city, King Tectuktitlay's templars (called "moon priests") quickly took stock of the situation, trying to find some way to preserve immortal Draj. The templars knew they had no real power without the spells granted by their sorcerer-king, so the Supreme Moon Priests approached the most powerful masters of King Tectuktitlay's psionic academy, the House of the Mind. After numerous secret meetings, a plan was hit upon: The rulership of Draj would pass on to King Tee's "son," a young psionist named Atzetuk.



The masters of the Way altered the teenager's mind, making him believe he was actually the king's son. Then they instructed him on what to say to the city's masses to instill confidence. In reality, the templars and psionic masters would share rulership of the city, working behind the scenes while the populace looked upon young Atzetuk as their new god-king. The transition from one king to another was accomplished quite easily; order had never been a problem in Draj, as its citizens were enraptured with the theocracy and religious trappings Tectuktitlay had surrounded himself with. As such, it was an easy task for the templars to use these rituals to save the city and keep the government running smoothly.

Draj's citizens dress in loose, bright-colored shirts and skirts. All citizens wear headdresses of some sort, usually a roll of cloth or giant-hair braids, though the wealthy go in for more elaborate designs. By law only warriors may wear more than a single feather.



**Government:** Atzetuk (male human/6th-level psionist/NG) apparently rules Draj, but he's nothing more than a figurehead who sits on the throne and carries on the practices and traditions of war set forth by King Tectuktitlay. The youth is paraded before his subjects every day and holds court in the Temple of Two Moons. Although Atzetuk believes he's the legitimate heir to Tectuktitlay's throne and the true ruler of Draj, the business of government is managed by the Moon Priests and the masters of the House of the Mind. The templars have some power in this alliance, but the real leaders of the city are the masters of the Way, who bow to the commands of old Ixtabai the Blind (male human/12th-level psionist/LN). It's in everyone's interest to maintain this illusion. Without the young god-king, the nobles and free citizens would rebel against the rule of templars and mindbenders.

Draj's noble families participate in the governing of the city through special meetings held at the *tecpans*. In these long buildings, noble elders gather to debate and resolve problems considered too ordinary and routine to concern the Moon Priests and the new god-king. The noble elders are all great warriors. They will follow Atzetuk for as long as the warrior traditions and ceremonies are upheld.

**Trade and Commerce:** The commerce Draj has always enjoyed with the cities of the Tyr Region continues under the rule of King Atzetuk, though at a reduced rate due to the limited trade routes leading west and south. The fertile lands around Draj provide the main resources the city-state deals in hemp (with which Draj produces cloth and rope) and grain (which is used to feed the Tablelands' hungry people—for a price, of course).


The merchants of House Tsalaxa conduct most of the trade for the city of Draj. Tsalaxa is known for its ruthless practices, well suited for a warrior culture. These traders regularly engage in espionage and intrigue in order to secure valuable contracts and business opportunities. The new head of the House, Yarsha Tsalaxa (female human/15th-level trader/LN), has some private doubts about the legitimacy of Atzetuk's rulership. However, she's still trying to settle her own position as leader of House Tsalaxa in the wake of her grandfather Ydris's death, and she doesn't want to express her concerns without solid proof to back them up. In the meantime, she'll continue to aggressively control the merchant house and keep the trade routes active and open to benefit the city and fill her own coffers.

The Draji enjoy brisk trade with two cities to the north, Eldaarich and Kurn. These trade partners provide the bulk of Draj's commerce since chaos overtook nearby Raam. Until another trade route to the west and south can be established, or until things settle down enough in Raam to ensure safe passage for caravans, commerce with the cities of the Tablelands will be sporadic at best. The main avenue for reaching the cities of the Tyr Region are the silt skimmers that travel between Fort Firstwatch and the village of Cromlin. This makes Nibenay Draj's main trading partner in the Tyr Region.

**Conditions in Draj:** The war festivals and religious ceremonies dedicated to the twin moons of Athas are the focus of life in Draj. The people have lost a god-king they neither respected nor believed in, but have gained a new god-king that is both well liked and inspires faith and reverence. This has surprised the secret leaders of the city, though not to the point where they have grown concerned. If their plan to replace King Tectuktitlay has succeeded beyond their wildest dreams, so much the better. Life in Draj remains the same as always—only the name of the king has changed.

The natural disasters of the west never reached Draj. Rumors of a Great Earthquake arrived with the passing traders, but not even the slightest tremor or quake disturbed the city. Draj was inundated by one of the first Tyr-storms, however. The mud fields flooded, ruining crops and killing more than a few Draj citizens before the rain stopped falling and the wind and lightning abated.

It didn't take long for the templars to clean up in the wake of the storm or for King Atzetuk to assuage the fears of his citizens. He called for sacrifices to appease the elementals, and the people of Draj approved. Atzetuk sent his warriors out into the wilderness to find captives worthy of dying on Draj's great pyramid, and before



the week had passed rivers of blood washed over the pyramid's stone steps. Because of the relative closeness of the Cerulean Storm and because the Tyr-storms often pass within sight of Draaj as they sweep inland, the sacrifices have become a regular ritual. The citizens believe that the blood will keep the storms at bay-after all, that's what their king has told them.

The problems in Raam have had an effect on Draaj. The templars and psionic masters watch the unfolding events as omens of what could occur in Draaj if the illusion they've woven around Atzetuk ever unravels. Plus, many refugees have fled Raam and sought sanctuary in Draaj. Most of these expatriates found only death, either in the mud flats or atop the bloody pyramid at the heart of the city. At some point, these lost exiles will find a voice and shout their grievances-and perhaps the citizens of Draaj will hear that shout. The secret leaders fear Draaj's society will collapse if the people lose faith in King Atzetuk.

Atzetuk himself poses another problem for Draaj's secret leadership. Every day, the youth gains more and more confidence. His belief in his own divinity strengthens. Soon, the masters of the Way suspect, they will lose control of the youth. While they don't want Draaj to be overcome by anarchy and violence, they also don't want to give up the authority they've gained since Tectuktitlay's death. If Atzetuk continues to assert himself, the masters of the Way and the moon priests might decide to remove the king they put in place. After all, they reason, Draaj survived the death of one king. It will surely survive the death of a second.

**The Veiled Alliance:** Draaj's Veiled Alliance is hampered by poor leadership and indecisiveness. The current leader, Chimali Zaachila (female human/5th-level preserver/LG), pretends to be much more powerful than she really is. Her lack of ability and training makes her reluctant to launch any daring programs that might reveal her secret. As such, the Alliance has no spies in high places, no active programs designed to thwart the king and his templars, and no plans to accomplish anything of lasting importance. The Alliance in Draaj does offer some assistance to visiting preservers, but has little else to make it much more than a secret club for wizards.

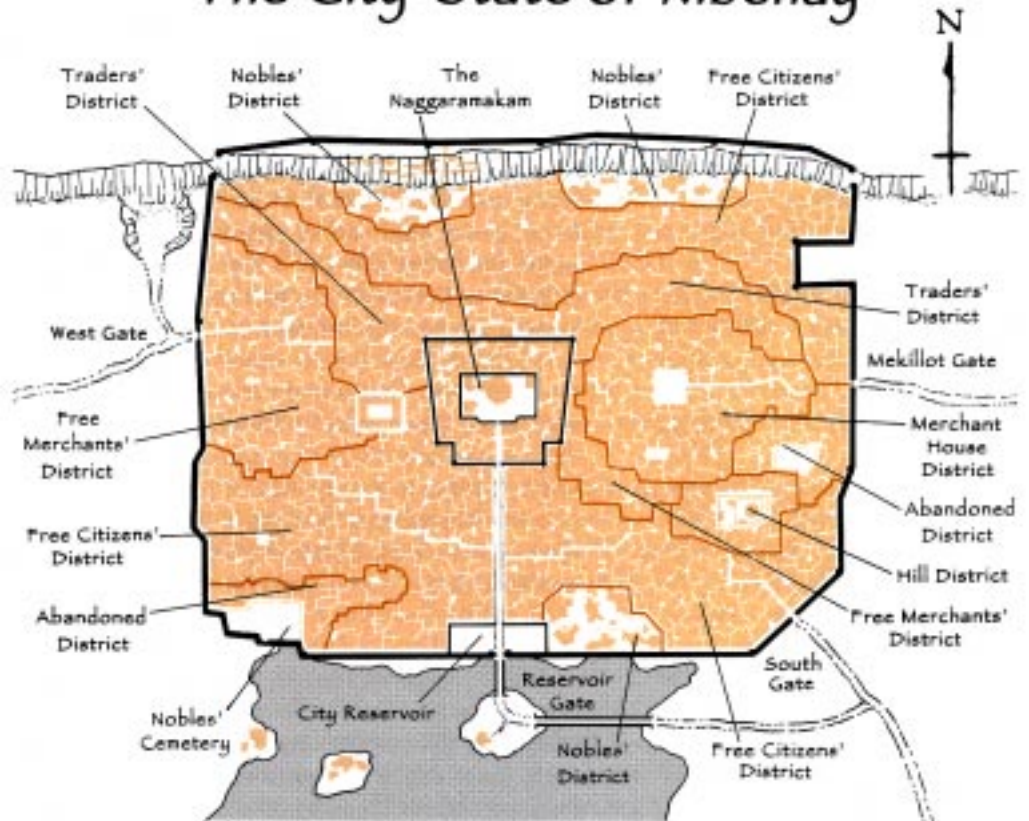
## Nibenay

Nibenay has been affected by the monumental happenings of recent months, for the Shadow King has changed his approach to ruling the masses and dealing with the neighboring city-states. Like Hamanu and Lalali-Puy, Nibenay (who shares the same name as his domain) witnessed the deaths of the Dragon and the other sorcerer-kings. He saw Rajaat reach out from beyond the veil of Athas to wreak vengeance against those who betrayed him. He also saw Rajaat defeated by the efforts of lowly mortals from the city of Tyr. In the wake of these signs and portents, Nibenay realized it was time to reconsider how best to rule his city, for the time for change had come.

The city-state of Nibenay, located east of Tyr at the northern tip of the Crescent Forest, boasts a population of about 25,000. It barely felt the effects of the Great Earthquake, as it was protected by the Windbreak Mountain. Nibenay has also thus far been spared from Tyr-storms and the growing unrest spreading throughout the Tablelands. If the Shadow King has his way, none of these problems will ever reach his domain.

**Government:** The sorcerer-king Nibenay (male human/24th-level dragon/LE) used to stay behind the scenes. He was called the Shadow King because he rarely left Naggaramakam, his walled sub-city. His templars, who are all female, ran the city with skill and great care. Now, however, the Shadow King has become more prominent. In the past, the average free citizen could hope to see King Nibenay once or perhaps twice in an entire lifetime. Since the time of the Great Earthquake, Nibenay has taken a more active role. He still allows his templars to deal with the daily business of government, but now Nibenay has turned his attention away from the mysterious scholarly pursuits that once occupied his time to hold court for the city's nobles and free citizens.

# The City-State of Nibenay




Nibenay's military might was never a question, but it also was never a major concern of the Shadow King. Now he actively seeks to understand his forces and looks for ways to improve their might and readiness. While the city used to appear to be secure in its own position, it now seems to be gearing up to battle an enemy that only the Shadow King knows about. The problem is that the enemy is change, and no army that Nibenay raises will be able to stop its relentless tide.

In the wake of all this upheaval, Nibenay's nobles continue to care for and maintain the bubbling springs that surround the city. They don't know what to make of the Shadow King's sudden interest in the business of the city, but many of them are seeking ways to improve their own positions by getting closer to their once-elusive king.

**Trade and Commerce:** As always, the city-state's main commodity is wood culled from the agafari trees of the Crescent Forest. Nibenay's crafters fashion the wood into shields, spears, and clubs which are then sold throughout the Tyr Region. The wood is extremely hard and the next best thing to metal on Athas.

The merchants continue to conduct a brisk trade with Urik, Tyr, and Balic. Besides wood, copper, rice, fruits, and spices from Nibenay are desired in the other city-states. Nibenay's client village of Cromlin, located on the shores of the Silt Sea, remains one of the only links with Draji. For this reason, Nibenay's merchants have an almost exclusive line for moving trade goods to and from the northern city-state. Dealings with Raam have collapsed (though it is rumored that Nibenay is building up his army to restore order in that troubled city), but conditions between Nibenay and Culg have never been better. In the past, the two city-states competed for the precious resources of the Crescent Forest and often fought battles over control of the woodlands. The two city-states never actually went to war, which was good for Culg. Lalali-Puy's domain would not last long if Nibenay decided to throw its full might at the smaller city-state. Since the events that saw the birth of the Cerulean Storm, the two leaders have set aside their differences and have begun to work together. The sorcerer-



king and sorcerer-queen have met on two separate occasions since they returned to their city-states after participating in the battle against Rajaat. What the final results of these meetings (and even if they will continue) will be remain a mystery, but it is known that Nibenay has begun to show more respect for the forest. For every tree a Nibenese slave pulls from the ground, another slave plants two more.

**Conditions in Nibenay:** Though there have been no major changes to life in Nibenay, enough strange occurrences have been worked into the routine to put a different spin on the city-state. For example, average citizens and even powerful nobles never expected to see the Shadow King, let alone attend one of his courts. Now the Shadow King regularly makes public appearances and shows an active concern for his community. This doesn't mean that life is any harder or easier than it's always been. It's just different. If a citizen or visitor breaks a law and can't afford to bribe a templar, then that citizen or visitor is still going to end up in Nibenay's slave pens.

The other major change is the city's outlook on matters of a martial nature. The Shadow King and his templars seem to be concentrating much of their efforts on bolstering Nibenay's military might. The army regularly practices in the arena and patrols of the surrounding countryside have increased dramatically. In addition, free citizens and nobles have been ordered to serve in Nibenay's defense. Templars are busy organizing them into part-time militias and regimenting training sessions.

What the Shadow King is truly concerned about, besides the unrest and upheaval that seems to be spreading throughout the Tablelands, are the rumors claiming that Dregoth has returned. Nibenay knows how powerful the sorcerer-king of Giustenal was. Dregoth was second only to Borys the Dragon in power. If Dregoth and his city have somehow come back from the dead, Nibenay wants to be prepared. After all, Nibenay's city-state is one of the closest to the ruins of ancient Giustenal, and he has no intention of losing his domain to a rival that was destroyed two millennia ago.

**The Veiled Alliance:** Nibenay's Alliance has an utter hatred of defilers. This has led to a rare commodity beneath Athas's crimson sun-idealism. With the help of an ancient spiritual force known as the zwuun, which resides in the hot springs outside the city, the Alliance does what it can to protect wizards who use preserving magic. The Alliance doesn't feel it can oppose the Shadow King directly, so it directs its activities against lesser defilers. Thagya Phon (male human/17th-level preserver/LN) leads the Nibenese Alliance, though his health has begun to fail him in recent years. He has two goals he wishes to accomplish before he dies: He longs to discover what Nibenay's scholar slaves have been working on in the Naggaramakam, and he has a dream of mounting the Shadow King's head on the obsidian pedestal that rises from the floor of his spartan quarters.

## Gulg

The city-state of Gulg, with its population of 12,000, sits inside the southern portion of the Crescent Forest, almost directly east of Tyr. Being east of the Windbreak Mountains, Gulg was spared the devastation that the Great Earthquake visited on the cities and villages to the west. That doesn't mean that life in Gulg has remained unaffected by the changes sweeping through the Tablelands. In a few significant ways, Gulg has been changed the most.

Gulg's sorcerer-queen, Lalali-Puy (female human/23rd-level dragon/LE), is the absolute monarch of her realm. Her subjects consider her to be the Oba, the forest goddess. Over the centuries that she's been in power, Lalali-Puy has come to relish the worship and adoration her subjects heap upon her. In fact, though she remembers her origins as a Champion of Rajaat and a sorcerer-queen, she prefers to think of herself as the goddess her people believe her to be.

To the Oba of Gulg, the abundance of rain—even the violent rain that accompanies a Tyr-storm—is a blessing to Athas. She has proclaimed this blessing to be a gift from the forest goddess. "No longer will Gulg be solely concerned with the well-

being of Gulg,” the Oba declared to her people. “Wherever the rain falls, there will the forest grow. And wherever the forest grows, the forest goddess will be there, for all the forests belong to the Oba.”

Behind the rhetoric, Lalali-Puy actually wants to help restore the vitality of Athas. The Gulgs have always had an enlightened understanding of the interconnected nature of all life, so they’ve always treated the forest as a precious resource that must be maintained and not depleted. This attitude comes right from the Oba herself, which may seem strange as she is a defiler of extreme power. Since taking over Gulg, however, she has learned to temper her use of defiling magic in favor of keeping her forest healthy.

Of course, this attitude was one of the contributing factors to the problems with Nibenay. The Nibenese saw the forest as a resource to be exploited, not a living thing that cares for its inhabitants as they care for it. Nonetheless, Lalali-Puy has made the first moves toward a peaceful existence with Nibenay, going so far as to teach the sorcerer-king how to preserve the life-giving environment of the Crescent Forest.


The Oba’s motivation isn’t entirely selfless. She believes that when the forests return to Athas she will be deified by all races, just like she’s been in Gulg. “Let Nibenay and Hamanu play as sorcerer-kings,” she has decided, “for in the end I will be as a god to all of Athas.”

**Government:** In many respects, Gulg is not like any of the other city-states of the Tyr Region. It’s a living city, grown from vines and trees instead of constructed from brick and stone. The outer walls of the city, for example, consist of a thick hedge of thorny trees. The Oba lives in the tallest branches of a huge agafari tree, while her templars inhabit the lower branches. There are no paved or cobblestone roads leading through Gulg. Instead, forest paths and trails wind their way between the trees.

## The City-State of Gulg







There have been few major changes in the way Gulg is ruled. The Oba remains the owner of everything, distributing food, water, and other supplies to where they are needed most. Her templars continue to oversee the military, economic, and agricultural aspects of the community on behalf of the forest goddess. Nobility is still an earned position, not one granted by an accident of birth. The nobles hunt the forest for fresh meat, while slaves commanded by the templars gather the wild fruits, nuts, and berries that round out the dietary concerns of the community.

Lalali-Puy is a third-stage dragon king. She uses the Way and her powerful magic abilities to appear before her people as a beautiful young woman with long, silky hair and dark skin. She never appears in public without her illusions in place, for she doesn't want her people to see her in her true dragon form.

**Trade and Commerce:** The strange trade practices of Gulg have not changed in many centuries, so merchants who arrive at the wall of thorns must be prepared to conduct business by Gulg's rules. A templar is assigned to each merchant house emporium, where he or she barter on behalf of the people of the city. House Inika, the only merchant dynasty with direct ties to Gulg, continues to be the primary avenue for exporting goods to other city-states, though other houses can and do maintain emporiums. Visitors to the city must stay in restricted areas, as the Gulgs distrust foreigners. With the destructive ideas emerging from places like Tyr and Raam, the Oba and her templars have taken greater pains to keep visitors away from the average people of Gulg.

What has changed is that Nibenese traders are now tolerated within the confines of Gulg (at least as much as other traders are tolerated). Suspicion and hatred built upon centuries of tension and conflict can't be erased overnight, but since the forest goddess and the sorcerer-king have started cooperating, so have the peoples of the two cities. It is an example that the rest of Athas should try to emulate—if it can be demonstrated that these two have actually built a lasting peace.

**Conditions in Gulg:** Life has always been more tolerable in Gulg than in any of the other city-states under the rule of sorcerer-kings. In some ways, life has actually gotten better for the Gulgs. The Oba's newfound crusade to restore Athas has made her more forgiving and generous to her loyal citizens. In the spirit of cooperation, she has selected her best templars to travel the Tyr Region and spread the word of restoration. These templars have a twofold purpose. First, they help show the rest of the Tablelands how to work in harmony with nature, which Lalali-Puy hopes will hasten the reforestation of the world. Second, her templars pass along the tale that the rain is a blessing from the Oba, thereby increasing the number of people who know of and believe in Lalali-Puy.

Except for the aid these templars have provided to Nibenay, no other city-state has thus far been targeted by the Oba's select force. Instead, the templars visit villages and oasis communities, teaching and preaching as circumstances permit. Some places have welcomed the templars, others have driven them away. Those communities that have actually experienced a Tyr-storm, for example, are quick to attack anyone who claims to be associated with their fearful properties, while those desperately in need of water invite them in.

**The Veiled Alliance:** A significant change in Gulg society concerns the Veiled Alliance of the city. Gulg's Veiled Alliance has always actively worked to restore Athas to its verdant glory, never directly opposing the will of the sorcerer-queen. Now that the Oba has declared her own intentions for restoring Athas, the two seem to have less to fight over. The Oba has even extended a "peace leaf" to the Alliance, calling for the preservers to shed the veil of secrecy and join the forest goddess's quest to save the world. The Alliance hasn't responded yet, but rumors persist that the preservers will soon come out of hiding in the forest city. The Alliance's leader, Aukash-Pad (male human/14th-level preserver, 4th-level cleric/LG), is utterly committed to restoring Athas's life force. If the Oba continues to genuinely work toward that same goal, he may be forced to join with her for the good of the world.




## Balic

The sorcerer-king Andropinis once ruled Balic from the airy confines of the White Palace, not far from the dusty shores of the city's silt harbor. One day in the Year of Friend's Agitation, he boarded his silt armada and struck out for the far side of the Sea of Silt. It was a trip from which he never returned.

The city-state, located southeast of Tyr on the secluded shores of the Forked Tongue Estuary, has a population of approximately 28,000. Balic has suffered on a number of fronts in recent years. In the Year of Dragon's Agitation, when Tyr had refused to pay the Dragon's Levy, it fell to Balic to make up the loss by adding an extra thousand slaves to its contribution. The following year, Mountain's Fury, saw the Peninsula Rampage, a short-lived war in which a small army of giants overran most of the Balican Peninsula. Half of Balic's army and a quarter of its fields were destroyed in the battle. The city-state was still recovering when Andropinis fell to Rajaat's revenge a few years later.

Today the city-state has no sorcerer-king to lead it or protect it from the ravages of Athas. Balic has always had a tradition of the illusion of democracy. Andropinis claimed to have been freely elected to his position, the templars were elected to ten-year terms by the free citizens, and even the nobles (called patricians) were allowed to participate in the governmental process by selecting members to attend the Chamber of Patricians on a regular basis. Though this democracy wasn't real, it still taught the people about one possible way a free society could work. When the news spread that Andropinis was gone (he had been imprisoned in the Black by Rajaat), various factions called for a new election.

The main contenders for the position of dictator of Balic were Oriol of Magestalos, First Speaker of the Patricians (male human/7th-level psionicist/LN); General Zanthiros of the Balican army (male human/13th-level fighter/LE); and First Templar Asthira



(female human/12th-level templar/LE). Before the final votes could be counted, Tabaros, the patriarch of House Wavir, made his move. The merchant house seized the White Palace, the silt harbor, and all of the territory in between and declared Tabaros to be the Trade Lord of Balic. This didn't sit well with House Wavir's rivals. Neither House Tomblador nor House Rees wanted to be cut out of this opportunity, so each of these merchant dynasties took over the remaining portions of the city.

**Government:** Today Balic is divided into three parts, each controlled by a different trade lord. These parts cooperate on one level but battle for supremacy on all others. The largest block of control falls to Lord Tabaros of House Wavir (male human/20th-level trader/NG), while Lord Kaladon of House Tomblador (male human/12th-level trader/LE) and Lady Essen of House Rees (female human/15th-level trader, 4th-level psionicist/LN) control equally sized smaller blocks. The same amount of cooperation that allows the three rivals to jointly maintain the major trading village of Altaruk allows them to keep Balic running as a major city-state.

As far as outsiders are concerned, the three leaders formed a triune council to rule the city after Andropinis fell. While such a council does exist, and the three rivals meet regularly to keep the city-state strong enough to stand against invaders, they each work behind the scenes to build their own power bases up and knock their rivals down.


Each trade lord has a different view of the world and the way Balic should be governed. Wavir, for example, wants to free all slaves, outlaw defilers, welcome preservers into society, and set up a true democratic state. The way to accomplish this, Lord Tabaros believes, is by quick action and harsh measures. Unfortunately, Tabaros is more than 100 years old and may not be able to stay in power much longer. Publicly, the trade lord appears as sharp and healthy as ever, but privately he suffers the weaknesses of age and illness. He had hoped to pass leadership to his son long ago, but his son died when raiders attacked his caravan four years ago. The next likely candidate, Tabaro's granddaughter Tarinne (female human/7th-level trader, 4th-level fighter/NC), isn't ready for the responsibilities yet (or so Tabaros believes). Lord Kaladon wants to resume the dictatorship—with himself as king of Balic. Lady Essen, meanwhile, believes that the city-state should be nothing more than a glorified merchant village, serving to fill the coffers of House Rees and making it the most powerful merchant house in the entire Tyr Region. Needless to say, none of the sides want to see any other gain a significant advantage.

Those templars who agreed to swear allegiance to one of the trade lords have been retained for their bureaucratic skills. However, the merchant houses have their own administrators to fall back on, so any templars who can't be trusted are eliminated. (A small number of templars still loyal to Andropinis have gone into hiding and continue to work in secret, though they have little power and few hopes of gaining any under the current system.)

The patricians are allowed varying degrees of participation in the government, depending upon which merchant house holds sway over the territory their land occupies. Under Wavir's control, the patricians are allowed full participation rights. Under House Tomblador, the nobles are treated barely better than slaves, while House Rees gives them the freedom to handle their own affairs—provided they meet the production quotas Lady Essen has established for each noble family.

**Trade and Commerce:** Because trade lords control Balic, commerce plays an important part in all levels of society. If there is one aspect that has actually increased since Andropinis's demise, it's mercantile activities of all kinds. Balic's major products continue to be salt, silver, livestock, and leather. Each of the controlling merchant houses operates emporiums throughout the Tablelands in city-states and villages, as well as with the city of Celik to the south.

House Wavir maintains good trade relations with Tyr and cordial relations with Gulg and Nibenay (as do the rival houses). House Tomblador has strong ties to Urik, but conducts almost no business in Tyr. Of the three houses, only Rees regularly sends caravans to Raam in hopes of exerting influence in that troubled city.



**Conditions in Balic:** Balic is a clean, comfortable metropolis on the shores of a silt bay. It was untouched by the Great Earthquake, but other disasters have left their marks on the place in recent years. For the most part, however, life under the trade lords is considerably better than it was under the cruel and oppressive Andropinis. Even the territory controlled by House Tomblador, whose lord attempts to pattern himself as Balic's new dictator, is pleasant compared to the atrocities of the previous ruler.

On the surface, the city appears to be one sprawling metropolis, not a divided city. No walls separate one territory from another, no guards wait to collect tolls as citizens move from block to block. To the locals, however, there is a clear delimitation between one lord's domain and the next. Wavir is free and bright, Tomblador oppressive and dark, and Rees is like an extended work camp where everyone labors for the benefit of the trade lord.

Though they appear to cooperate for the good of the city, the trade lords wage a secret war against each other that everyone knows about but few people understand. None of the trade lords are willing to let this conflict escalate into a full-scale civil war, but they have come very close to it in recent months. Caravans have been raided or sabotaged, warehouses plundered or burnt to the ground, and important agents have been killed on all sides. How far each is willing to push before a better solution must be found remains to be seen.

To stave off another war with the giants, House Rees has sent representatives into the silt basin to negotiate a lasting peace. No contracts have been agreed upon, but it seems Balic may soon have an agreement with the usually hostile giants.

The three contenders for rulership of Balic before the trade lords made their moves are still active in the city-state. Oriol the Patrician has dedicated his noble house to Lord Tabaros, though he is ready to step back to the forefront should the old man grow too sick to rule. General Zanthiros has fled the city with a small but significant portion of the city militia. His band operates as a raiding tribe along the peninsula, waiting for an opportunity to return to Balic to seize power. The templar Asthira, meanwhile, has gone into hiding within the city. From her place in the shadows, she continues to keep in contact with many of the templars who still have roles in the government, as well as with those who have taken to hiding. She hopes to eventually overthrow the trade lords, who she feels illegally took power.

Dark rumors persist that Andropinis is able to contact his loyal templars (such as Asthira) from his prison in the dimension known as the Black. These can be neither confirmed nor denied at this time, but the thought of Andropinis continuing to exert influence over the city has the local Veiled Alliance more than a little concerned. If the rumors are true, is Andropinis working with his exiled templars or with someone currently in power somewhere in the city?

**The Veiled Alliance:** Like other organizations in Balic, the city's Veiled Alliance is run by an elected leadership. For this reason, a nonwizard leads the Alliance. Ramphion (male human/11th-level thief/LG) has held his position for 13 years, winning four elections in a row. The next election must occur later this year, and Ramphion may finally give up his role as head of the Alliance. He has strong ties to House Wavir, though House Rees has begun to court the preservers. Ramphion listens to all sides, hoping to play peacemaker if the three factions ever resort to civil war. The Alliance has two other goals at the moment: to turn Balic into a true democratic society, and to find out if the rumors concerning Andropinis are true.

## The Villages

Hundreds of villages dot the Tyr Region, though only a handful are more or less permanent fixtures. The rest spring up overnight, prosper for a time, then fall to the environment, infighting, or the slice of raiders' swords. All of the villages marked on the map fall into this permanent category, but only the most prominent or unique are described here.



## Altaruk

Altaruk is a client village of the merchant houses of Wavir, Rees, and Tomblador. This major trade village is located at the head of Big Fork of the Forked Tongue Estuary. Heavily fortified, a 15-foot wall surrounds the village, and 500 free mercenaries defend it. Altaruk is commanded by Arisphistaneles (male human/15th-level preserver/LG), a powerful preserver who allows the Veiled Alliance to use the village as a meeting place.

The village is regularly attacked by giants from the islands of the Forked Tongue, and the Great Earthquake buried parts of Altaruk beneath rubble from the nearby mountains. As always, the merchant houses of Balic are in the process of rebuilding the village, for it serves as a key deterrent to raiders along this portion of the trade roads. Protection is extended to caravans of other merchant houses, provided they pay the toll as they pass through Altaruk.

## Cromlin

The trading village of Cromlin rests along the shores of the Silt Sea, northeast of the Black Spine Mountains. House Shom of Nibenay runs Cromlin, handling the vast majority of trade from the north since the collapse of Raam. Cromlin traders use silt skimmers to navigate the silt shoals, keeping the trade routes to Break Shore village open. The shoal navigators who work out of Cromlin are in high demand, for they are among a select few who can lead skimmers along the buried paths.

Cromlin is a wild place, full of people who are too untamable to live in the cities. It houses thieves of all sorts, serves as a haven for pirates and other scoundrels, and draws a strange collection of restless souls to its sandy shores. Master Trader Hurdll Crost (male human/15th-level trader/LN) and his agents turn a blind eye toward shady characters as long as they remain to do business in his village.

## Hidden Village

The tribe of ex-slaves known as the Free established the Hidden Village in a remote crater in the foothills between Tyr and Urik. Since the village was originally founded, the tribe has advanced from a band of raiders to a well-to-do small trading house. The village remains hidden to protect it from nearby Urik, but tribe members confidently travel to Tyr on a regular basis and have become a client village of the Free City.


Though "Hidden Village" remains the name of the community, there has been a push to call the village "Freedom." This isn't a high priority on Governor Drog's (male dwarf/8th-level fighter/LN) or Trade Master Bartras's (male human/8th-level fighter, 4th-level trader-KG) list of things to do, however. Opening trade routes to the west is, and the Free have begun negotiating with the pterrann villages of the Hinterlands on behalf of Tyr. House Vordon wants to establish an exclusive trade agreement with the pterrans, however, and may cause trouble for the ex-slaves.

## North and South Ledopolus

The twin villages of North and South Ledopolus sit on opposite sides of the Big Fork of the Forked Tongue Estuary. These dwarf communities employ silt skimmers to cross the estuary, providing a faster trade route between the ivory Triangle and points south. In addition to skimmers, the dwarves are building stone pathways to the mountainous island of Ledo. These pathways are very close to being completed.

## Ogo

Ogo is one of the largest halfling villages in the Forest Ridge. It's built around a massive step-pyramid and consists of a scattered collection of stone buildings. Chief Urga-Zoltapl (male halfling/14th-level ranger, 12th-level psionist/CN) rules the village, and travelers might even find trade opportunities instead of the business end of a cooking



fire here. This isn't to say that Ogo's halflings are less savage, but that they have a history of dealing with "civilized" cultures. The tribe regularly sends halfling warriors to Urik as part of an agreement with King Hamanu, for instance. Chief Urga receives a quantity of obsidian in exchange for the services of 200 halfling warriors every year.

## Salt View

The village of Salt View, nestled in the Mekillot Mountains, is a chaotic sprawl of tents and buildings located within a large cavern on the mountain's eastern face. Ex-slaves of all races fill the community. The tribe originally practiced raiding as its primary occupation, but today it's known for a lavish form of storytelling called theater. Salt View's traveling theater troupes are welcome across the Tyr Region, though they present themselves as free merchants from the independent House Fyra (a cover for Salt View activities). The troupes perform for caravans, at oasis villages, and even in the city-states of Tyr, Nibenay, and Balic.

## Walis

The small village of Walis, hidden in a canyon in the foothills of the Ringing Mountains, controls one of the only active gold mines in all of Athas. It sits atop a high spire of rock that can only be reached via a cargo bucket operated by the villagers. House Tomblador of Balic runs the village and the gold mine, and its mercenaries protect the Gold Road that leads to Altaruk. A company of six defilers live in the village and protect it from attack.

## Other Points of Interest

Other locations in the Tyr Region include oases, islands, ruins, landmarks, and points of special interest. A few of these are described below.

### Silver Spring Oasis

The Silver Hands elf tribe controls Silver Spring Oasis, located along the trade road between Tyr and Urik. Unlike typical elf tribes, the Silver Hands have decided to settle down and establish a small village. There's nothing silver about the oasis, however, with the exception of the coins in the elf chief's coffers. The water is foul-tasting and cloudy, but it is safe to drink and the nearby trees offer some shade from the relentless sun.


The fortified compound around the oasis is controlled by the tribe's chief, Toramund (male elf/10th-level fighter, 12th-level defiler/NE). For the price of two pieces of silver, visitors are admitted into the stone walls where they receive access to the small pond of bad-tasting water. The elves also maintain a small market inside the compound.

### Grak's Pool Oasis

A fortress of mud-brick protects the pond called Grak's Pool. For two copper pieces (or the equivalent), Grak (male half-elf/8th-level fighter/LN) and his mercenaries will let a traveler inside to use the water. Rumors of a hidden vault full of Grak's treasure persist, even though Grak denies the existence of such a vault whenever visitors ask about it.

### Islands of the Forked Tongue Estuary

The islands of the Forked Tongue Estuary, including Ledo, Dragon's Palate, Lybdos, and Mytinene, are home to tribes of giants. The giants come in both Athasian varieties—humanoid and beasthead.



Ledo is a rocky crag whose inhabitants survive by hunting and by trading bags of flint to merchant caravans. While usually friendly, the giants of Ledo believe the nearby dwarf villages want to take control of their flint-laced mountain, so they react violently to dwarves.

Dragon's Palate contains a range of very high mountains that receive a lot of rain. The rain runs down the slopes in three large streams, eventually emptying into mud flats in the estuary. The giant clan here raises sheep and tends olive orchards, and often welcomes visitors who bring things they can't produce for themselves—especially kank nectar.

Siren's Song, an island in the Small Fork, doesn't contain a giant clan. In fact, no one knows what lives on the island, but those who travel nearby often hear a haunting song. The song is magical in nature, and those who hear it find themselves compelled to follow it to its source—even though that means drowning in the silt around the island. Legends proclaim that an ancient sorceress is trapped on the island, and the song is her call for help. The less fanciful insist that it's only the cry of a foul creature. Whatever the source of the song, its melody is as lethal as a wixit's sting.

## Kalidnay Ruins

Kalidnay, located south of Tyr, was one of the city-states taken over by the Champions of Rajaat after the Cleansing Wars came to an end. Ruled by the sorcerer-king Kalid-Ma, Kalidnay was among the richest of the cities of the Tyr Region. An unknown disaster hit the city unexpectedly a few centuries back, and today only a jumble of ruins remains. These ruins have been taken over by a variety of raiding tribes and vicious monsters, so travelers are advised to be wary near the cracked walls.

## Bodach Ruins

The ruins of ancient Bodach sit alongside a dust sink east of the Great Ivory Plain. The city dates back to the Green Age, and its ruins cover many miles of the peninsula. A variety of undead creatures inhabit the ruins, crawling out of dark recesses as the crimson sun sets everyday. Rumors that a powerful defiler controls the undead have never been verified, but new tales claim that the undead have no master—at least not a living one.

## The Pristine Tower

Located east of the Mekillot Mountains, the Pristine Tower is a remnant of the Blue Age—a spire of white rock once guarded by shadow giants. Even after the passage of so many years, a corrupting influence still emanates from its walls. When within the tower's vicinity, any creature receiving even the smallest scratch is changed into a monstrosity called the New Beast. These creatures are horrid and vicious beyond compare.

## Giustenal Ruins

Once a great city on the edge of a sparkling sea, today Giustenal is nothing more than ruins on the shore of the Silt Sea. It's a haunted place, for the death cries of the citizens who died when their sorcerer-king was murdered still echo in the sand-covered streets and alleys. King Dregoth died 2,000 years ago, but he exists today as an undead dragon king. He rules New Giustenal, an underground city located deep beneath the ruins, where he makes mad plans and plots his revenge against the remaining sorcerer-kings.

An entity known as the Caller in Darkness lurks in the ruins above. It seeks out those who use psionic powers within its range of influence and tries to make contact with their minds. If the Caller makes contact, it impels its victims to join with it, leading them to their deaths in the ruins.



## Dragon's Bowl

The Dragon's Bowl is a great basin between Urik and Raam. Legends claim that the basin was formed when the first dragon tore its body free from the living rock, but this is probably just a myth. The floor of the basin consists of sandy wastes and stony barrens, and the Bowl contains the largest body of water in the Tyr Region, Lake Pit. Lush flora and fauna surround the shores of the lake, and the water is clear and pure.

Dragon's Bowl remains a desolate place, for to reach its floor travelers must descend 1,000 feet of steep, treacherous slopes. A mysterious druid named Enola (male mul/12th-level druid/NG) protects the entire area.

## Blacksand Region

East of Silver Spring lies a region of black sand that most travelers and creatures avoid. Legends claim that powerful defiling magic stained the sand, and an air of dread hangs over the area. Deep within the stretch of ebony waste, an ancient ruin houses the tribe of raiders that calls itself the Black Sand Raiders. Led by Zeburon (male human/11th-level gladiator/GE) and his adviser Fevil (male human/12th-level defiler/LE), the Black Sand Raiders engage in an unending spree of murder and plunder.

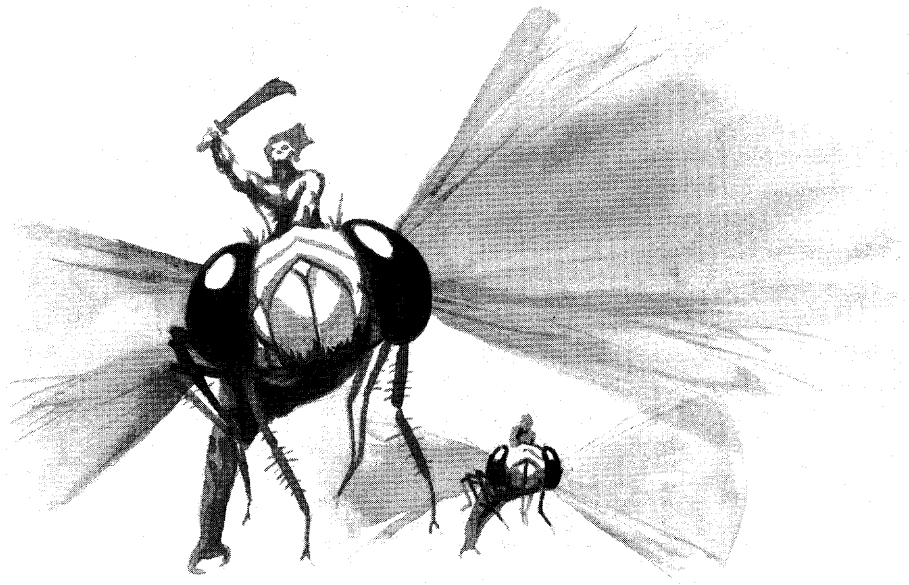
## Estuary of the Forked Tongue

The silt-filled channel called the Estuary of the Forked Tongue slices inland from the Silt Sea for more than 250 miles. Its two forks serve as the primary barrier to travel in the region. Dozens of small islands fill the channels, but only a few are shown on the map. Giants inhabit most of the islands, and many of them wade ashore to conduct raids against villages and caravans.

## Currency of the Region

The scarcity of metal makes coins of all sorts extremely rare. For this reason, barter and the ceramic pieces minted by the city-states and merchant houses remain the primary form of exchange. Of course, no one will turn down gold or silver when it's available, but the average free citizen sees a gold piece as often as rain soaks the scorched wilderness.





DAN  
ELE

# The Wanderer's Journal

*To those who have never left the safety of the city or village of their birth, the word-pictures I have spun of the Tyr Region must seem strange and alien. In that case, my description of the lands beyond Tyr will seem the ravings of a sun-baked mind.*

*The northern territory is both lush and desolate, going beyond anything the Tyr Region has to offer in either respect. There are not many lush places, but where things grow abundantly and water flows freely there exists paradises the likes of which*

*make the oases of our region look pathetically feeble. The desolation, however, stretches across an area as large as the Tyr Region and continues for miles beyond that.*

*Just a few miles north of where the Tyr Region ends, great salt flats and expansive sandy wastes form a barrier that severely hinders travel. If you can make it across the barrier (I suggest going around, but that presents its own dangers), you'll encounter great wounds in the earth that spew forth noxious fumes and geysers of molten lava.*

*Perhaps the most impressive sight is the miles-high Jagged Cliffs. Standing at that edge is like being at the end of the world. . . .*

## CHAPTER 3:

# The Jagged Cliffs Region

## Culture


The Jagged Cliffs Region stretches to the distant north of the Tyr Region. The area features a vast assortment of terrain types and isolated cultures, but very few examples of civilization as it's known among the seven city-states of the Tablelands.

Named for the gigantic rock face that cuts diagonally across the land, the Jagged Cliffs Region is defined as the area bordered by the Silt Sea on the east, the Crimson Savanna on the west, the Tyr Region to the south, and the Burning Plains to the north. This makes for an area of land much larger than the Tyr Region, and it stretches some 700 miles from east to west and almost 400 miles from north to south.

All of the terrain types found in the Tyr Region are in the land to the north, including rocky badlands, stony barrens, sandy wastes, and a scattering of forests. There are also two unique types of terrain: grassland and swamp. Refer to the Jagged Cliffs Region map while reading this chapter.

The culture of the Jagged Cliffs Region, with a few exceptions, is much rougher and less civilized than that of the southern lands. In some respects it's totally alien—as in the case of the kreen imperials and, albeit less so, the halfling cliff dwellers. Otherwise, examples of civilization as it exists in the Tyr Region can also be found throughout the north.

Three cities stand like beacons in this wilderness: Eldaarich, Kurn, and Saragar. Eldaarich and Kurn are like the city-states of the Tyr Region; a sorcerer-king rules



each city, with the usual collection of templars, nobles, free citizens, and slaves. Saragar, meanwhile, is like something out of Athas's distant past. This city hasn't changed in more than 3,000 years, not since the waning days of the Green Age when it turned its back on the rest of Athas. The people of Saragar have a different hierarchy organization, as described later in this chapter.

There are a few other communities whose size classifies them as cities, though no one from the Tyr Region would immediately recognize them as such. In the Crimson Savanna, the cities of the southern reaches of the Kreen Empire rise above the grasslands in alien splendor. L'rax, J'eztere, and Thaythilor stand in the shadow of the Jagged Cliffs, their citizens always active, their streets always alive no matter the time of day or night. In a recessed valley at the top of the Jagged Cliffs, the halflings of the region flock to the city of Thamasku. Here, a society that's more than 14,000 years old carries on the traditions of an age the rest of the world has forgotten. More detailed information is presented later in this chapter.

Villages in the north fall into a few specific classifications, but in general are organized like their southern counterparts. A large collection of villages spreads across the Barrier Wastes. These seven independent communities are known as the Bandit States, for they're populated by outlaws, ex-slaves, and raiders. The city-states of Kurn and Eldaarich operate a few client villages, and the halflings of the Jagged Cliffs maintain ten villages situated along the vertical stone face. Kreen villages loyal to the cities of the grasslands lie along the Imperial Road, and ssurran merchants control the village of Trade Nest in the far north. Finally, the aarakocra of the White Mountains live in a huge village called Winter Nest.

Dynastic merchant houses aren't as prevalent in the north. A few of those operating in the Tyr Region carry on trade with Kurn and Eldaarich, and Kurn has its own native trade company. The kreen and the halflings of the north conduct merchant activities, but their traders don't organize along the lines of the dynastic houses and are considered to be members of their communities. The ssurran merchants, however, are set up like the dynastic houses—or are at least as similar as the elf traders of the south. The legitimate merchant houses that know of the ssurran consider them to be nothing more than glorified junk dealers, trading garbage from one community to another as though it was precious steel.

Herders, raiding tribes, hunting-gathering clans, and hermits also populate the north, though their numbers are less and the distance between meetings is greater than in the Tyr Region. The Jagged Cliffs Region contains large areas that are devoid of intelligent life, and some places that don't even contain animals, plants, or insects.

Kreen imperials are thri-kreen of any variety who are born to one of the nations of the Kreen Empire and grow up in that culture. The Kreen Empire has a very strict caste system based on kreen racial types and the division of labor. The empire has cities, villages, outposts, and forts, all designed to reflect the physiology and psychology of the kreen who inhabit them. More details are provided later in this chapter.

Halfling cliff dwellers are civilized halflings who bear only a physical resemblance to their feral cousins in the south. These halflings live in villages established on the face of the mighty Jagged Cliffs and in a city at the top of the cliffs called Thamasku, an ancient name whose meaning has been lost to the passage of time. The advanced society has a clearly defined, extremely rigid class structure, with an upper, a lower, and a middle class. In addition, a few isolated tribes of feral halflings can be found in other locations, notably the forests west and north of Lava Gorge and on the western side of the White Mountains. There is also a rare desert-dwelling tribe centered around the Small Water Oasis.

## Geography

The geography of the Jagged Cliffs Region can be divided into five general terrain types: The Silt Sea, the Barrier Wastes, the Jagged Cliffs, the Crimson Savanna, and the Scorched Plateau. Each of these terrain types is described below.



## The Silt Sea

The sunken basin of dust and silt continues north along the eastern coast of the Jagged Cliffs Region. It has the same properties as the area east of the Tyr Region, and all of the methods of travel, features, and hazards described earlier apply. Refer to Chapter 2 for complete details.

As in the south, the Silt Sea forms the eastern boundary of the known world. Travel into the Silt Sea can be accomplished, but only with great trouble and at great risk. Giants living on the islands closest to shore can wade to the mainland, and the same shoals that allow silt skimmers to head out into the pearly powder exist in the north, though those with the capability to construct and operate skimmers are few and far between.

## The Barrier Wastes

The Barrier Wastes is a term given to a desolate area that cuts across a massive portion of the Jagged Cliffs Region. Starting in the west just miles from the cliffs, the Barrier Wastes stretches east to the White Mountains, north to the Lava Gorge, and south toward the Tyr Region. Two distinct terrain types make up this area, and each has its own name. The larger of the two is an expanse of sandy wastes known as the Glowing Desert. The smaller is a wide belt of salt flats called the Scorpion Plains.

Generally dry and bleak, the Barrier Wastes are marked by constant wind and extreme temperatures. During the day, the sun turns the land into a skillet, making the sand so hot that it burns unprotected skin. At night, the heat of the day quickly dissipates and the temperature drops below the freezing point.


A near-constant wind howls out of the west, sweeping the land relatively flat. This makes the salt flats as sleek as glass, while the desert's sand dunes are brushed smooth. The dunes have gradual inclines and less severe dips than the sand heaps in the southern wastes.

Life exists in the Barrier Wastes, but not in very great quantities. The largest concentration can be found in Troll Grave Chasm, a crater whose scrub-plains floor surrounds a huge mud flat. In the wastes themselves, the villages of the Bandit States possess most of the permanent oases, though a tribe of feral halflings controls the northernmost stretch of desert.

The worst aspects of the Barrier Wastes are the lack of water, the terrible heat, the bitter cold, and the near-constant wind. Oases appear from time to time, but travelers shouldn't count on them being in the same location from one trip to the next. The few relatively permanent springs that exist are under the control of either a Bandit State or some other hostile and territorial creature.

While the sun blazes overhead, the land burns. Shimmering waves of heat rise off the sand and salt flats, making it hot enough to roast travelers who don't take precautions like finding shelter from the sizzling open spaces. At night, the heat of the day quickly gives way to bone-numbing cold, for there's nothing to retain warmth in the wastes. As soon as the sun drops below the horizon, the temperatures begin to fall. By the time the twin moons have reached the highest point in the night sky, extreme cold grips the land. Travelers prepared for the high temperatures that accompany the daylight hours sometimes freeze to death at night, forgetting to carry garments to protect them from the cold.

If the extreme temperatures or the lack of food and water don't kill travelers, then the wind is sure to drive them mad. It blows out of the west at a regular, steady pace, but occasionally powerful gusts roar across the wastes. The noise never ends, for in the Barrier Wastes the wind is an ever-present, unwelcome companion. Sometimes it screams like a thousand dwarf banshees or rumbles with the thunder of a hundred rampaging mekillots. On days like that, no one can yell above the relentless sound, and some say that even the internal voice of a thinker's mind can't be heard through the din. The steady wind produces a whistle that surrounds travelers. It becomes background noise, a persistent song from which there's no escape.



In addition to the noise, the wind has other aspects that make life intolerable. It carries hot, stinging sand on its currents that can blind, burn, or even cut unprotected travelers. The constant pressure that the wind induces on whatever is in its way can be as maddening as the noise, and sometimes more dangerous. It rips and tears at clothing and equipment, seeking to whisk such items into the air stream that blows ever to the east. When the gusts become roars, they can lift humans and medium-sized animals off the ground and send them tumbling down dunes or into a hidden sink hole. These are called Angry Winds, for it's believed that the elementals send them out of the west when something displeases them.

It's the rare moment when no wind breaks the stillness of the area. In some respects, this is more frightening than the Angry Winds because the sudden silence is so jarring. After days or weeks of driving sound, the absence of noise can be just as maddening to travelers who aren't expecting it. The locals call these periods of quiet Still Winds, and they believe that they are omens of bad things to come.

**Methods of Travel:** As with most other terrain types, the common ways to get around in the Barrier Wastes boil down to *walking* and *riding*. See the notes in the Tyr Region for general comments. Below are some specific things to watch for in the Barrier Wastes.

The same advice about *walking* in the Tablelands applies here, with some added considerations. Water and food are even more scarce in the Barrier Wastes, and the distances that might be covered are considerably greater. It's imperative that travelers carry more than enough of both or they'll never finish their trip. They must also carry two types of clothing: one to protect them from the heat, sun, and stinging wind of the day; and another to keep them warm when the cold of night blankets the land. Travelers must be on guard against wind madness, for the noise and intrusive brush of air can drive even peaceful beings into a killing rage. More than one group has fallen to bloody fights inspired by the wind's song.


**Riding** is definitely the way to cross the Barrier Wastes, but not all mounts handle the wind as well as others. Crodlus seem immune to the relentless noise, though care must be taken to protect their eyes from blowing sand. Kanks react badly to Angry Winds, but otherwise are dependable. Mekillots, however, become nervous the moment they enter the Barrier Wastes and feel the western wind blow across their armored hides. Such beasts may make the trip without incident, but usually the wind drives them into a deadly rampage that often results in their deaths and the deaths of those traveling with them. Travelers must remember to carry enough supplies for themselves and their mounts.

The people of the Bandit States employ unique riding vehicles for crossing the wastes. Called *sail carts*, these small, wheeled vehicles are made of light materials like bone and animal carapaces and carry two human-sized passengers. Sails rise above the carts to capture the wind and propel the vehicles across the smooth terrain.

**Features of the Barrier Wastes:** Four distinct terrain types make up the Barrier Wastes: *sandy wastes*, *salt flats*, *scrub plains*, and *mud flats*. Each is separate and widespread, not intruding on each other's territory as in the Tablelands.

Moving from south to north, the first portion of the Barrier Wastes travelers encounter is the sandy wastes of the Glowing Desert. This huge, open desert covers the largest portion of the Barrier Wastes. Except for its size and the low dunes shaped by the constant wind, this region of **sandy wastes** is much the same as the areas to the south. Surprisingly, sand storms aren't as prevalent here because of the strong wind from the west. Near the southeastern edge of the desert, where the west wind meets breezes blowing in from the south, the cross-current forms billowing walls of sand as thick as those produced by the Silt Sea. The Glowing Desert gets its name from a strange property of the yellow sand found here. At night, the sand glows with a ghostly luminescence as bright as starlight and as cold as the night air.

**Salt flats** make up the northern portion of the Barrier Wastes. This area, called the Scorpion Plains, is baked to ceramic hardness. Travel here is easy, though great cracks occasional block the way. While mostly identical to the salt flats of the south-



ern region, the Scorpion Plains have two significant differences. First, the area isn't lifeless. Insects and small animals are plentiful, living in the many cracks that open above mud flats. Here, travelers can find a variety of plants that can provide nourishment in a pinch. They can also find the creatures that give the area its name. A variety of scorpions live here, including barbed, gold, and purple scorpions. Second, an occasional oasis springs from a crack in the salt plains. Often under the control of a Bandit State or a terrible monster, these rare pools of fresh water bubbling up from the ground can mean the difference between life and death for a thirsty traveler.

**Scrub plains** can only be found in one place in the Barrier Wastes. A great depression has been gouged from the center of the Wastes, its sheer cliffs dropping 500 feet to a lush bed of scrub plains thriving with a concentration of life unlike anywhere else in the area. Called Troll Grave Chasm, the depression features beasts both benign and malignant, a relative abundance of water, and a reputation that gives even the toughest Bandit Lords pause. Otherwise, these scrub plains are identical to those that dot the Tyr Region.

Finally, an extensive **mud flat** fills the very center of Troll Grave Chasm. This swamp is even more mysterious and legendary than the scrub plains around them. Tales proclaim that not all of the terrible creatures called trolls were killed during the Cleansing Wars, and some of them still live within its dark, moist confines.

**Encounters in the Barrier Wastes:** Any creatures native to the terrain types that make up the Barrier Wastes can be encountered within its expansive territory. For the most part, though, encounters with living things are few and far between. In the southeast portion of the Wastes, travelers must contend with raiders from the Bandit States. In the northeast, feral desert halflings are the worst threat. In the west, the environment itself poses the greatest danger, for food, water, and shelter become exceedingly scarce the closer one travels to the Jagged Cliffs.

## The Jagged Cliffs


The known portions of Athas fall into two categories: all the land that exists atop a high plateau alongside the Sea of Silt, and lowlands that stretch to the northwest. Separating these two areas are the massive Jagged Cliffs. Once the Jagged Cliffs served as a natural boundary between the highlands and the lowlands. The Great Earthquake changed all that, opening at least one passage that connects the east to the western expanse beyond.

From the top of the Jagged Cliffs, sheer rock walls drop two miles to the lowlands. These vertical monoliths descend in straight lines. No gradual slopes slide to the bottom, no layered steppes ease the descent. Instead, each portion of the rock wall is as steep as the walls of any city-state, though definitely on a more massive scale. The name of the Cliffs comes from the irregular, jagged nature of the horizontal plane, which from above appears as a rip across the earth.

Powerful currents of air rush over the top of the Cliffs to spill across the highlands. These air currents race at high altitudes and affect the weather patterns farther inland, but the climate around the Cliffs themselves is relatively stable. What is the climate? It can be summed up in three words: hot and humid.

A wall of fog that those who live near the Cliffs call the Misty Border rises from the base of the rock wall to just above its pinnacle, where it dissipates into the sky as long, thinning tendrils of vapor. Produced by a combination of water, magma pools, and ancient magic, the Misty Border clings to the face of the Cliffs. It's dense enough to hide the lowlands from those on or atop the Cliffs. Occasionally a patch of the mist breaks open to reveal the lowlands, but such breaks seal themselves after a few moments.

The temperature of the mist ranges from tropical near the top of the Cliffs to hot and steamy at the bottom. Clouds of scalding steam float within the Misty Border, welling up from hidden sources to pose a hazard to those who dwell along the Cliffs. These clouds of steam normally cool to tolerable levels before reaching the interior of the vertical forests that grow on the rock face, but they can be deadly to climbers on



the barren walls or travelers in one of the living airships of the halfling cliff dwellers. In short, the higher up the rock wall, the more tolerable the hot, humid climate is.

**Methods of Travel:** There are only a few ways to descend the Jagged Cliffs in the northern region. These include *climbing*, *flying*, or via *supernatural means*. No matter what method is chosen, the result is the same: The trip is dangerous, long, and frequently fatal.

**Climbing** is the one method of travel available to the majority of people. Is it the easiest way to get from the top of the Cliffs to the bottom? No, for those who have access to spells or psionics, for example, can make the trip with greater ease. Those who have no other means at their disposal and have a dire need to descend the Cliffs must resort to climbing. This method requires appropriate equipment, such as ropes, spikes, and hammers. Though the rock walls look totally sheer from a distance, there are ledges, handholds, stray scrubs, cracks, and cave openings scattered about the face of the Cliffs. These are separated by vast expanses of sheer, flat rock. Climbers need to bring food and water with them. Except for the vertical forests and the occasional waterfall spilling from a break in the wall, the rock face is as desolate as any salt flat or sandy waste.

The cliff-dwelling halflings are excellent climbers, but their society has given birth to a specialized group of Climbers who travel the Cliffs like others walk across a paved road. These Climbers are greatly respected and extremely necessary to the cliff dwellers' way of life. They maintain the climbing paths between the vertical villages, act as guides and scouts who range far from a village's familiar territory, and provide a fast means for getting messages or other important things from one place to another. It should be noted that the markings used to identify climbing paths and point the way are unrecognizable and incomprehensible to anyone not raised in the cliff dwellers' society-including halflings from other parts of Athas.

Climbing modifiers used to determine success depend on what part of the Cliffs are being climbed. In the vertical forests, there are abundant handholds, thus the modifier is +40%. All other parts of the Cliffs should be treated as slightly slippery due to the condensation produced by the mist (-25% modifier). See the *Player's Handbook*, Chapter 14, for specific rules concerning climbing.


**Flying** as discussed here refers to those with natural powers of flight (like aarakocra), those with flying mounts (like pterrax-riders), or those with access to the airships of the fabled Windriders of the Jagged Cliffs. Strong winds aren't a problem along the cliff face, for the hot currents that rise from the base direct the stream of air blowing from the west up and away from the Cliffs. In fact, these rising currents provide cushions of air on which flying creatures can rest, making flight easier in many respects. However, there are dangers that fliers have to watch out for as well.

The clouds of hot steam discussed earlier are one of the greatest hazards. If a flier accidentally enters a steam cloud or has one catch him by surprise, he can be scalded to death before he's able to find his way out of it. Warm, benign mist can hide deadly steam clouds from view until the very last moment, making it impossible to avoid contact. Additionally, those not familiar with the nature of a steam cloud might fail to recognize the danger before it's too late. Those caught in a steam cloud take 2d4+3 points of damage every round they remain within it. Thick clothing or armor that covers the entire body protects against the scalding steam but does nothing to ease the damage caused by the intense heat inside the dense, engulfing clouds. The same holds true for creatures with natural Armor Classes of 7 or better. In both cases, saving throws vs. death magic reduce damage by half.

Fliers must also contend with poor visibility. The mist clouds everything in vapor, making it difficult to see for any distance. In some places the mist is thinner, with frequent breaks and areas of open air. More often, however, the mist is dense and dark, shrouding the region in dreary gray. In these conditions, visibility drops to only a few feet, and hidden dangers can appear without warning. Poor visibility also makes it easier to get lost, resulting in travelers running out of supplies or getting so turned around that they crash into the cliff face hidden behind an otherwise nonthreatening cloud.







Predators of all descriptions live along the Cliffs, and fliers make excellent meals. Some of these predators use psionics or highly specialized senses to hunt within the clouds, so fliers should remember this adage—just because you can't detect a predator doesn't mean that the predator can't detect you. In general, another rule applies along the Jagged Cliffs: the farther a traveler descends, the more prevalent the dangers become. The mist grows thicker, the temperature rises, and terrible beasts unlike anything known in the highlands appear in greater and greater numbers. This has to do with what lies at the bottom of the Cliffs, as described below.

Finally, the usual problem of finding fresh food is just as prevalent along the Cliffs as it is in other parts of Athas. While there are a fair number of forests, there are even more stretches of barren rock. Water, conversely, isn't a problem—at least not the lack of it. Any cloth can be laid out to absorb moisture from the mist, and waterfalls and pools of standing water are spaced out with abundant regularity. However, those used to the drier climate of the highlands soon grow tired of wringing out clothing and wiping beads of condensation from their faces. The high humidity makes it harder for those from the arid regions to breathe, and they find themselves developing chronic respiratory ailments after extended stays in the mist.


The best advice travelers should heed is to fly straight through the mist, going west or northwest as fast as possible. To linger in the Misty Border is to invite one of the disasters listed above to befall you.

**Supernatural means** of travel include preserver or defiler spells, priest spells, or psionic powers. As with using these methods to travel across the Silt Sea, those employing them must remember to find safe places to rest before the duration of the spell or power expires. An added problem involves the cliff dwellers. The halflings of the Cliffs don't use wizardly magic and have no understanding of its properties. To the halflings, magic used by either preservers or defilers bears an uncomfortable similarity to the forces unleashed in the swamp below. For this reason, the halflings believe that wizards are spawned in the swamp, and those who openly use wizardly magic are cast out of the vertical forests to fall into the swamp from which the halflings believe they were spawned.

**Features of the Jagged Cliffs:** The Jagged Cliffs have a variety of terrain types. Some are similar to those described elsewhere, others are unique to the area, but all have special twists that reflect the nature of the Cliffs themselves. Travelers will encounter *vertical forests, caves, scrub patches, oases, waterfalls, barren rock, and swamp*. Beyond all of these terrains, the most significant feature of the area is the abundance of water. It forms clouds of mist that shroud the Cliffs. It spills from underground sources and runs down the rock face with amazing exuberance. It coats trees and stones with sparkling droplets that grow as large as vel fruit as they slide toward the ground. Water trapped beneath the arid highlands finds freedom at the Jagged Cliffs.

**Vertical forests** are much the same as the terrain found in the Forest Ridge, except that they cling to the side of the Cliffs or rest atop and spill over jutting ledges of rock. These tropical forests range in size from a few dozen square feet to several miles across. All kinds of creatures live within the vertical forests, including the cliff-dwelling halflings native to the region. The forests controlled by the halflings are more or less tame, as the halflings go to great lengths to keep the area around their villages free of dangerous predators. The forests not under the care of the halflings usually house a number of vicious creatures, depending on their size and location.

In a vertical forest, small, sturdy shrubs and vines sprout from cracks in the cliff face, forming a dense undergrowth in which other plants can blossom. From this foundation, tall, twisting trees grow out and up, reaching for the sun and creating a thick canopy to cover the forest below. Plants, bushes, and flowers of all descriptions cling to the roots and branches of the twisting trees, filling the space between the canopy and the undergrowth with thriving vegetation. There is always a source of water running through a vertical forest, usually an underground spring emptying through a crack in the rock wall. Some of this water catches in hollow trunks or in beds of moss to form ponds and lakes. In addition, the moisture carried in the mist



helps the plants survive and keeps everything wet. Sometimes enough condensation develops to produce actual rain, though the wet mist is more common.

**Caves** of all sizes and shapes run through the face of the rock wall. Some are no more than narrow, shallow depressions, others open into elaborate natural mazes that twist and turn for miles toward the Silt Sea. Most caves are dry, providing some relief from the hot, wet mist, but others contain varying amounts of standing water. Depending on the orientation of the cave and the position of its opening, mist might fill the interior and fall as rain within the rock chamber. Others have ponds or lakes. The water in these might be cool and safe to drink, or it could be stagnant and foul. In some instances, running water rumbles through a cave and spills as a waterfall from its mouth. These represent the end of the water's trip beneath the earth, for underground rivers and streams still exist in this otherwise arid world.

The caves serve as lairs for flying and climbing creatures, as havens for travelers, or as homes for those cast out of the cliff-dwelling halflings' society. For this reason, those who decide to explore a cave should first look for signs that it's already occupied. Few things are more dangerous than a creature encountered in its lair.

A few caves appear almost organic in nature, as though shaped consciously by some intelligent being instead of by natural erosion. The cliff dwellers avoid these locations, reluctant to disturb places they believe belong to another age. It's hard to tell if this attitude is the result of fear or reverence, just that it runs through all of the villages and seems to be deeply ingrained in halfling psyche. Interestingly, halflings from other parts of Athas recognize these caves on an instinctual level, as though they belong to some deeply buried racial memory. Like the cliff dwellers, these visiting halflings also tend to avoid these types of caves.

**Scrub patches** resemble the scrub plains of the highlands, though on a much smaller scale. Clumps of grass, thorny bushes, and spindly trees take root in a crevice or furrow, or on a narrow ledge, and cling there for dear life. Rarely more than a dozen large plants, and usually only one or two, make up an individual scrub patch. They provide handholds for climbers and resting places for fliers, and some of the vegetation is even good to eat.

**Oases** found along the Cliffs basically combine scrub patches with sources of fresh water. They're found in depressions or natural basins in the rock wall—anywhere that water can collect and vegetation can take root. These include areas alongside or beneath waterfalls, or basins in regions where rain falls on a regular basis. Powerful creatures often take control of individual oases, setting up a lair within the comfortable confines. Travelers should consider this, as food and water might be as close as a few feet away but as distant as the other side of an angry aviarag.

**Waterfalls** create impressive visual spectacles along the rock wall, but also present many dangers. Like any vital resource on Athas, the fresh water cascading down the rock face is coveted by everything in the area. It attracts predators and docile creatures alike as kank honey draws sting-wings. The falling water can also cause parts of the wall to crumble and slide, create flash floods in the vertical forests, and even burst unexpectedly from the rock to catch climbers by surprise and wash them away. The continuing tremors that have been affecting the land since the day of the Great Earthquake cause natural passages in the Cliffs to shift or collapse, forcing the streams of water to change course and find new paths out of the earth. Some travelers have attempted to ride the falls to the bottom of the Cliffs. Unfortunately, this usually leads to crushing death somewhere deep within the mist.

**Barren rock** is the most prevalent terrain type along the Cliffs. Desolate tracts of bare stone run for miles in every direction before another type of terrain intrudes. This stone can be sheer and smooth, jagged, cracked, or covered by narrow, ledge-like protrusions. The only constant is the wet, slick coating that paints the stone with shiny droplets—a result of the high concentration of water vapor. This condensation makes even the roughest portions of the Cliffs slippery and harder to climb.

At the bottom of the Jagged Cliffs, two miles below the level of the Tablelands, a fetid **swamp** stretches along the base of the rock wall. At its narrowest, the swamp is a couple of yards wide; at its widest point, it extends a mile and a half from the base of the Cliffs. This swamp was once a great forest with a mighty river rumbling


between its trees. That changed long ago, when Rajaat came here to develop defiling magic. Since that time, natural forces and magical reverberations have combined to keep the swamp alive and maintain the ecosystem of the Jagged Cliffs.

The base of the Cliffs acts as a natural drain, collecting water running off from the highlands as well as water emptying from the western lowlands. Hot springs, open lava tubes, and magma pools heat this water, producing clouds of steam and mist that rise toward the top of the rock wall to create the Misty Border. There are other forces at work in the swamp, though, producing twisted creatures and monsters stained by the evil of defiling magic. For this reason, the cliff dwellers hesitate to travel deeper than the one-mile mark, and most refuse to get within one half-mile of the swamp. Not only do the twisted and defiled monsters hunt up to these altitudes, but the halflings believe that anything that gets close to the swamp runs the risk of being altered by the residual magic. (Note that the cliff-dwelling halflings have no understanding of magic, so their fears and concerns are described in other ways.)

In any case, the swamp is a dangerous place. The heat is more intense and deadly, the mist thicker, and the effects of uncontrolled magic greater than anywhere else on Athas—including the Pristine Tower. Fresh water can be found in this region, as can food and plants safe to eat, but there are also things that sane men and women would rather not meet. Unfortunately, those climbing down the Cliffs must then find a way through the swamp before they can reach the grasslands beyond.

**Encounters in the Jagged Cliffs:** The cliff-dwelling halflings live within villages and one city built inside the vertical forests. As the only form of civilization in the area, these are the people travelers are likely to meet. They inhabit that portion of the Cliffs that starts north of the Tyr Region and continues to the vicinity of the Scorched Plateau. Travelers could encounter halfling climbers or the airships of the Windriders, though they might not receive a friendly welcome. The cliff dwellers have never met any intelligent races with a few exceptions: the kreen from the grasslands and the





occasional pyreen who comes to visit. Otherwise, these halflings have never seen humans, elves, dwarves, muls, or the other races of the highlands, and probably won't know what to make of them when they do finally meet them.

Anything that flies or climbs or lives in caves or forests can be encountered along the Cliffs. Near the top, creatures familiar to the people of the highlands might be encountered, though there are many varieties unique to the environs of the Cliffs. As a traveler descends toward the swamp, however, the creatures become nastier and less recognizable due to the affects of uncontrolled defiling magic. The only creatures that seem even remotely similar to these monsters are nightmare beasts, so-uts, and the like—all remnants of the Cleansing Wars. There is no harsher, more lethal region than the swamp at the base of the Cliffs.

## The Scorched Plateau

Where the Barrier Wastes end, the Scorched Plateau begins. This relatively flat plateau extends to the Thunder Mountains and Burning Plains in the north, to the Jagged Cliffs in the west, and to the Sea of Silt in the east. No cities or other seats of civilization can be found in this desolate region, though scattered nomadic tribes and primitive communities do struggle to survive here.

Like most of the highlands, the Scorched Plateau is a hot, dry region made up of the same terrain types prevalent along the rest of the Silt Sea's coast. Rocky badlands make up the majority of the terrain. The hills and twisting canyons of the badlands give rise to a small number of mountain ranges, though none of these can compare to the Ringing Mountains in the south, the White Mountains in the east, or the Thunder Mountains in the north. *Stony barrens*, *scrub fields*, *boulder fields*, and *sandy wastes* comprise the rest of the area, and these are pretty much the same as their counterparts described in Chapter 2. Therefore, the methods of travel used in places like the Tablelands work just as well here.


The Scorched Plateau has two other features that need to be discussed. These are the *Somber Woods* and Lava Gorge. The forest, located near the mysterious ruins of Godshold, is the only one on the plateau. The gorge, meanwhile, is a huge, molten-filled inferno slashing through the middle of this blazing land.

The ***Somber Woods*** clings to the eastern side of a small mountain range and serves as home to related tribes of hunter-gatherers. This forest is a dark, brooding place shrouded in an ancient cloak of antiquity. There are, it seems, as many dead or dying trees as there are vibrant, living ones. Old beyond imagining and twisted with the weight of their years, these trees press in upon themselves, creating a claustrophobic maze.

Adding to the feeling of desolation, most of the creatures and insects living in the forest are nocturnal. During the day, the woods appear to be deserted and eerily silent. Travelers can wander for hours without seeing or hearing another living thing. At night, the opposite is true. As the twin moons rise overhead, the woods become a shadowy, bustling terrain painted with the pallid luminescence of moonlight. Pale creatures with large, glowing eyes emerge to hunt, prowling the forest with vigor. This is also when the tribes inhabiting the woods become active, moving like spirits through this ancient wilderness.

The tribes have customs in common with the Gulgs, though their culture and lifestyle is much more primitive than that of Lalali-Puy's subjects. Their society has developed around the hunt and the forest. Because the creatures of the woods only come out at night, the people of the woods (mostly humans, with an assortment of adopted individuals from other races) have become nocturnal as well. Because of their wilderness skills, their strange activity cycle, and their savage, mystical customs, many weird legends concerning the Somber Woods' tribes have developed. Others inhabiting the Scorched Plateau believe that the forest is haunted and that the members of the forest tribes are the ghosts of the ancients. The tribes do nothing to discourage these beliefs, as such legends work to their benefit in most situations.

To the east of the Somber Woods, ***Lava Gorge*** is a deep depression with sheer cliffs that drop almost 1,500 feet to a lake of molten lava. The heat rising from the



gorge keeps most creatures away from its jagged edges, but those who stray too close often find themselves riding crumbling stone into the boiling rock below. Travelers need to avoid getting too close to the gorge. Temperatures within a half mile of the lava lake are as much as 30°F to 100°F higher than the normal temperature of the day. This increase in temperature isn't always gradual, and an errant breeze can feel like a blast furnace if it blows in across the burning lake of rock. The intense heat can blister exposed flesh, burn the lungs, and cause even the strongest half-giant to be knocked unconscious.

Luckily, the red glow of the bubbling lava can be seen from a great distance as one travels the stony barrens surrounding it. During the day, the air over the gorge shimmers with rising heat and the sky above takes on a slight reddish glow. At night, the lava lights up the sky and sets fire to the horizon for miles around, making it impossible to miss. When travelers spot the gorge, they should turn toward the east or west to go around it. To continue toward it is to risk an extremely painful death.

**Encounters in the Scorched Plateau:** Creatures that exist in regions with similar terrain types can be found in this area, so they won't be repeated here. Instead, this section details creatures unique to the Scorched Plateau.

Travelers moving through the rocky badlands that wind around the northeastern portion of the Glowing Desert must contend with feral halflings from the Small Water Oasis. These rare, desert-dwelling halflings leave the sandy wastes to hunt in the labyrinthine canyons of the badlands where game is more plentiful. They're as deadly and dangerous as the halflings of the Forest Ridge, actively stalking even intelligent creatures for food and plunder. These raiders deserve the same levels of fear and respect that travelers in the south give the Black Sand Raiders and the Silt Stalkers, for they revel in mayhem and bloodshed. It doesn't pay to try to reason with the Small Water halflings. They would have the same reaction as a merchant lord would if his erdlu egg breakfast suddenly begged for mercy—they'd eat you anyway.

Among the many small tribes of nomads and primitive settlers living throughout the Scorched Plateau are a number of elf tribes. Like the elf tribes to the south, these elves are wanderers who disdain walls, houses, and other permanent structures. Some of these tribes operate as raiders, some as herders, and at least one engages in limited mercantile endeavors. Travelers should approach the northern elf tribes with\* the same caution they use with the tribes in the south—keeping one hand on their purse strings and one on their swords.

The largest of these tribes is the Moon Runners. Led by Jesiv Moonsong (male elf/8th-level fighter/CG), the Moon Runners engage in two major activities: They hunt and they raise kanks. All of the inhabitants of the area know the Moon Runners, and most respect them as neighbors who never try to take advantage of a situation. Some might consider this to be peculiarly non-elflike behavior, but it fits with Jesiv's philosophy. He only cares that his hunters have prey to stalk and his herders have grazing land and water. Beyond that, his tribe is more interested in festivals and fun than in raiding or stealing.

The tribe does have one possession it considers sacred. An oasis near the coast of the Silt Sea called Moon Runner's Rest is held as a holy place by the tribe. The elves make regular pilgrimages to the site to stock up on water and relax. As long as the oasis isn't harmed or abused, anyone may use it while the Moon Runners are away. When they return, anyone found at the lush site is attacked and driven off or killed. This custom relates to the legend of the tribe's founder. When Moon Runner finished his race across the desert, this oasis was waiting for him. It was a gift of the water elementals, promised to him when his thirst became so great he almost gave up running. When he arrived, a herder and his animals were watering at the site. Furious that his gift had been used before he had a chance to slake his thirst, Moon Dancer killed them all. To this day, the Moon Dancers continue this tradition, though most of those familiar with the area know enough to leave the oasis before the tribe returns.

Ssurran traders operate in the region, dealing with everyone from the largest nomadic tribes wandering the scrub plains to the smallest clans hiding in the rocky badlands. These northern ssurrans aren't as wild and savage as their southern coun-

terparts. For example, the desert-dwelling lizard men of the southern regions are raiders who enjoy the flesh of halflings and other humanoid creatures. The ssurrans of the Scorched Plateau, however, don't eat intelligent creatures and rarely resort to raiding. Instead, the individual tribes have formed a loose confederation of trading houses, though on a less formal and more primitive scale than the dynastic houses of the Tyr Region.

As adapted to the heat of Athas as other ssurrans, those of the Scorched Plateau are friendly pack rats who love making deals. They collect anything, behaving more like glorified junk men than dignified agents of a merchant house. Still, they provide a key component to survival on the Scorched Plateau by bringing news and much-needed goods and supplies from one settlement to the next. Because the heat doesn't bother ssurrans, their caravans travel near the Lava Gorge. They take advantage of the protection the gorge affords, as the intense heat it gives off keeps most predators away. A typical ssurran caravan consists of everything the individual lizard men can carry, a few carts (either pulled or drawn by kwilits, large insects as adapted to the heat as their masters), and sometimes even a massive fortress beetle. Fortress beetles grow to a length of 25 feet, carrying sturdy, 15-foot-tall protective shells atop their backs. Much of the upper portion of these shells is hollow, with intricate and beautiful chambers formed during the growing process. Ssurran use these docile insects as beasts of burden, filling their hollow shells with their most precious trade goods.

The ssurrans maintain a common village, called Trade Nest, that's governed by the ancient OverChief of all the ssurran trading tribes. The OverChief Ssuss'ess (male ssurran/7th-level trader/LN) is as proud of his traders as any merchant house patriarch, though he takes great offense at anyone who calls his people "primitive." If travelers don't mind being bombarded by hagglers and deal-makers, then Trade Nest can be a welcome respite from the harshness of the Scorched Plateau. For a price, supplies, information, and even guides can be acquired at this ramshackle village.

Ssurran guides make excellent companions for travelers crossing the Scorched Plateau, and ssurran caravans can be life-savers when all other options have been exhausted. They can appear at anytime, emerging from a canyon or walking out of a sandstorm with a load of wares. The quality might not be what those from the Tyr Region are used to, but the water and food they carry can sustain a thirsty and hungry traveler until he reaches his destination.





## The Crimson Savanna

The lowlands beyond the Jagged Cliffs are made up almost exclusively of a vast, seemingly endless grassland called the Crimson Savanna. Tall grass bursts from fertile red soil, reaching nearly 8 feet into the sky. The heat of the day turns a fine layer of the topsoil into dust, which the wind carries everywhere. This dust clings to the blades of grass and hangs in the sky, painting the area red and giving the savanna its name.

Temperatures across the savanna aren't as sweltering as those in the highlands. It rarely gets hotter than 110°F, and never rises above 130°F. Besides the abundance of thick, lush grass, water is more readily available. It's not as wet as the Jagged Cliffs, but the savanna experiences more rainfall than the highlands, has a few wetlands, and even has some rivers coursing through its jungle of grass.

It rains an average of twice a month across the savanna. None of the violent Tyr-storms make it past the Jagged Cliffs, but that doesn't mean that every rainfall is idyllic. Some storms on the savanna produce flash floods, or turn the soil into thick, sucking mud, or carry a frenzy of lightning that dances from sky to ground with destructive force and often sets the grass aflame.

The savanna endured more of the Great Earthquake's jolting power than the Tyr Region did, mainly because it lies closer to the quake's epicenter, located hundreds of miles to the west. The aftershocks and tremors continue to shake the grasslands, but luckily there aren't as many places or things to be destroyed. What has sustained damage (and in some cases massive amounts of it) are the cities and villages of the Kreen Empire. This collection of civilized insect-men has a few frontier communities near the Jagged Cliffs, but the heart of the Empire is farther to the west.


The savanna sustains many types of grazing creatures and the usual variety of predators they attract. While there are mammals, birds, and reptiles, the majority of creatures living in the grasslands are insectoids. From the highly civilized kreen to giant k'cin crawlers to tiny clear-wing fliers, thousands of insect species fill the sky, the tall grass, and the red soil below.

**Methods of Travel:** Because most of the grasslands are flat, travel isn't all that difficult. The tall grass and patches of soft dirt and mud can make it tough for wheeled vehicles, but walking isn't too much of a problem. Travelers can also find paths stamped through the grass by the large grazers that inhabit the area, and roads maintained by the kreen that connect their cities and villages together.

There are hazards that could end a trip very quickly if a traveler isn't careful. The grass limits visibility, growing in thick clumps that rise to heights of 6 feet or more. It hides unfriendly creatures, mud sinks, and other dangers behind its curtain of red and green. When the wind blows, the jungle of grass sways and ripples, making it difficult to hear predators moving nearby. The wind also coughs up clouds of red dust, making it even harder to see for any distance. Those walking through the tall grass must also watch out for rainstorms. They can appear without warning, scorching the ground with lightning and possibly producing a flood of water that could wash travelers away in a slide of mud. In these situations, drowning is a very real possibility.

The grass itself poses a danger to those who don't have a tough carapace or armor protecting their frail flesh. The individual blades have sharp, daggerlike edges that easily slice flesh that brushes against the grass. Those without either natural or protective armor of at least AC 7 take 1d4 points of damage per hour of travel through the grass if they're being careful (walking at half their movement rate). It increases to 1d8 points of damage per hour if they travel at their normal movement rate, and 1d12 if they move faster than that.

If a tremor rumbles through the savanna, travelers shouldn't be too concerned. The open, flat terrain is one of the safest places to ride out a passing tremor. The worst danger comes from a cart or wagon overturning, or from a fissure opening beneath them. This latter occurrence doesn't happen very often, but it's worth noting. Nothing is more frightening than having the ground gape beneath one's feet, plunging body and equipment dozens or hundreds of feet into a dark hole. Sometimes the



bottom of the hole is dry and rocky, but it could be filled with water or, in rare instances, even molten rock.

The greatest danger, by far, comes from the creatures that stalk the savanna for prey. Humans and humanoids are unknown in the grasslands, but that doesn't mean a few won't serve as hearty meals for hundredclaws or tangle bugs. The imperial kreen also count as a major hazard. They believe that the savanna belongs to their empire, and that everything living in it is theirs. The kreen don't recognize nonkreen as intelligent creatures, and even the thri-kreen from the Tablelands are looked upon as backward cousins at best. Humans and humanoids can expect to be treated as slaves at best-or, at worst, as potential meals.

**Features of the Crimson Savanna:** The savanna is made up of the following types of terrain-grasslands, *swamp*, *rocky badlands*, *stony barrens*, and *mountains*. These terrain types are described below.

**Grasslands** make up the majority of the savanna. Each blade of grass grows to about 6 feet tall and as much as a foot wide. The grass is a deep green in color, though it may appear red due to the clinging dust. The edges of each blade are as sharp as knives, and the slightest touch can cut and draw blood from those without protective coverings of some sort. A less prevalent variety, identified by a purple vein running vertically through the blade, carries a deadly poison which it delivers when it cuts (1d10+2, save vs. poison for half damage).

Plants, flowers, and weeds grow among the tall blades of grass, providing different sources of nourishment to the creatures who come here to graze. Few creatures can readily eat the tall grass, but the younger blades (those shorter than 2 feet) have not yet developed the razor edge that makes them so deadly.

The tall grass hides pools of standing water, small streams, and patches of mud from casual observance. Travelers should be on guard for the mud patches, for many of these are actually mud sinks. A mud sink is a deep puddle of mud that sucks whatever wanders into it below the surface. Like quicksand, a mud sink pulls its victims beneath the mud, trapping them and killing them by suffocation.

At least two **swamps** exist in the savanna closest to the Jagged Cliffs. One has already been discussed. That's the one that occupies the base of the cliff face. The second divides the known portion of the savanna. It's called Kano, a kreen word meaning cold that also has connotations relating to the kreen's cold hell. A mighty river cascades out of a western mountain range toward the Jagged Cliffs. On its way, it pools in a depression that has become the Kano Swamp. The kreen of the area avoid this swamp, for its excessive wetness can cause a variety of illnesses in the insectoids, not the least of which is chitin rot.

Swamps contain mud, water, plants of all descriptions, and a multitude of creatures. Kano Swamp, for example, houses a vast collection of reptiles not found anywhere else in the savanna. Travelers can escape some of the insectoid terrors of the grasslands by plunging into Kano Swamp. However, the predators in its dark interior are as deadly—or deadlier—than most of the predators stalking through the tall grass outside.

**Rocky badlands** of the Crimson Savanna resemble the badlands already discussed in the Jagged Cliffs and Tyr Regions. Like those found elsewhere, these badlands usually surround mountain ranges or other rises of land, like Kazin's Bluff in the extreme north. The greatest differences revolve around the types of creatures inhabiting the twisting canyons. As the badlands aren't the important sources for food and water or the refuge for slave tribes and hermits that they are in the highlands, they instead become lairs for predators who hunt the grasslands.

**Stony barrens** and **mountains** also have much the same characteristics as those found in other parts of Athas. Stony barrens, however, are extremely rare. The only known tract of this type of terrain in the Crimson Savanna surrounds the mountains northwest of Kano Swamp. Mountains aren't plentiful, but a few ranges burst up from the sea of grass to scrape the sky. The tallest of those near the Jagged Cliffs are the peaks of the Koschak Mountains. The river that runs through Kano Swamp starts in the heights of these barren thrusts of rock. The name comes from the kreen lan-





guage and means “holder of knowledge in the sky.” The other ranges are little more than piles of jagged stone rising from the badlands.

**Encounters in the Crimson Savanna:** Insects of all types and sizes inhabit the savanna, and if travelers don’t find them, they’ll find the travelers. The majority of these insects have the cunning of predators or the fear-induced survival instinct of grazers, but only the kreen and a few slave-race insectoids have true intelligence.

To’ksa, a subspecies of kreen who resemble the thri-kreen of the Tyr Region, will probably be the first of the imperial kreen that travelers will encounter. These barbaric nomads live outside the cities and villages of the empire, constantly hunting for food and sport. If they encounter nonkreen travelers, they won’t recognize them as anything but strange mammals. They’ll be curious, of course, but in the end they’ll hunt them down and kill them. If the travelers taste particularly good, the to’ksa might take the leftovers to one of the imperial settlements to share with the *i’haaz* (imperial leader).

The tohr-kreen of the city of Thaythilor actively seek to explore the land at the top of the Great Rift (the Hinterlands west of the Ringing Mountains). Not officially a part of any kreen nation, Thaythilor is an imperial city far from the heart of the empire. It was established to find a route to the highlands and, thanks to the Great Earthquake, it has. Tohr-kreen and modified zik-trin warriors and scouts from this city are most often encountered—near the Cliffs, especially in the area nearest the mouth of the Rift.

Members of the j’ez and j’hol nations can be encountered near the cities and villages of their nations, while any kind of kreen can be met on the Imperial Road. Except for the kreen of Thaythilor (who have seen “talking mammals” up close), the kreen of the other nearby communities have heard only the vaguest rumors concerning intelligent mammals to the east. For this reason, no encounter with the kreen will be easy—and most will end in slavery or death.



# The Lost City-States

The city-states of Kurn and Eldaarich are referred to as “the Lost City-States” because they’re generally removed from the activities of the Tyr Region. Besides the sorcerer-kings, certain highly placed templars, a handful of nobles, the patriarchs and senior agents of the merchant houses, and the people of Draj, few inhabitants of the Tyr Region know the names of the northern cities—let alone that they even exist. For most, rumors of cities to the north are just that—tales told by adventurers as they empty bottle after bottle of kank honey wine.

Stories aside, the two city-states do exist, filling a fertile region east of the White Mountains, on the coast of the Silt Sea. The society model outlined for the cities of the Tyr Region apply here, with modifications as detailed below. In other words, Kurn and Eldaarich have hierarchies that feature a sorcerer-king at the top and then descend through a strict system of templars, nobles, free citizens, merchants, and slaves, as in the southern city-states.

The two sorcerer-kings, Oronis and Daskinor, were Champions of Rajaan before ascending to their thrones. Since the day 2,000 years ago when the Champions betrayed Rajaan, both rulers have distanced themselves from the events in the Tyr Region, albeit for vastly different reasons. Today, Oronis is the benevolent ruler of Kurn, while Daskinor rules Eldaarich like a prison state. The sorcerer-kings and their city-states are detailed below.

## Kurn


Kurn is actually two city-states: an ancient, public metropolis, and a utopian city hidden from the rest of the world. Old Kurn sits in a lush meadow on the eastern side of the White Mountains. The trade road running north out of Draj connects Kurn to the Tyr Region, and the city welcomes merchants from the south. New Kurn lies in a fertile valley hidden among the White Mountains themselves. A secluded road protected by a towering fortress keeps the valley safe from unwanted visitors—and New Kurn doesn’t want any visitors.

Old Kurn was a prosperous but relatively small city from the Green Age that suffered great devastation in the early days of the Cleansing Wars. Once situated in a vast forest that has long since faded from the landscape, the elf city of Kurn was destroyed by the Champion called Albeorn, Slayer of Elves. When the Champions finally turned against Rajaan and became the dragon kings, the one named Keltis decided to build his city-state on the ruins of Old Kurn. He changed his name to Oronis, but decided to retain the name of the city he was building over.

The ruins weren’t in as bad a shape as Oronis originally thought. He was able to build upon many of the foundations, and a few whole structures were still fit for use. Within a decade, Oronis’s Kurn was established. Within five decades, it was thriving. For five hundred years, Kurn followed the same course as the other sorcerer-king domains. Throughout that time, Oronis was troubled by something few of his peers possessed—his conscience.

When he was Keltis, Lizard Man Executioner, he succeeded at the task Rajaan handed to him. He eliminated the entire race from the face of Athas. As the years passed and Keltis the Champion became Oronis the sorcerer-king, images of the atrocities he committed started to haunt him. After Oronis advanced to a second-stage dragon king, his problems intensified. Now he had the deaths of his subjects on his head, for he had to use a specified amount of life force to power his transformation. He decided that none of this was what Rajaan originally promised him. Where was the restoration of the world? Athas hadn’t gotten better because of the Cleansing Wars. It had gotten worse. What’s more, the sorcerer-kings were continuing the downward spiral, slowly killing the world by their actions. Oronis refused to be a part of that trend any longer. He renounced his defiling skills and his status as a dragon king and sought a different path.

That was when Kurn broke off relations with the other city-states. Mercantile



activities continued, of course, but at a reduced rate. After a time, Kurn became one of the forgotten cities—just as Oronis had hoped. In the meantime, he set the next part of his plan for redemption in motion. Oronis wanted to make amends for the horrors of his past.

The first step was to change the rules of society in Kurn. Though the city had to maintain an illusion of normalcy to keep the other sorcerer-kings from detecting treachery or weakness, Oronis secretly freed all slaves and instituted fair and just practices at all levels of society. He swore his citizens to secrecy, for if word got out he was sure his one-time peers would flock to Kurn like gith to a dying braxat. The second step was to begin construction on the utopia he envisioned. Like all ex-Champions, Oronis originally wanted to return Athas to the glory of the Blue Age. He decided to once more strive for that goal. In a hidden valley among the peaks of the White Mountains, the foundation stones of New Kurn were laid.

As his templars and citizens worked to build New Kurn, Oronis went in search of a better path to power. Using the techniques and practices of preserving magic, Oronis looked for a way to combine magic with psionics in a more positive way than through dragon magic. It took nearly 1,000 years of study and experimentation for Oronis to develop the *preserver metamorphosis* spell. With it, the reformed sorcerer-king could become an advanced being aligned to goodness instead of another force for evil.

Today, the twin cities of Kurn continue along their parallel courses. Old Kurn displays a typical sorcerer-king's domain to the other inhabitants of the region, at least on the surface, while New Kurn works to complete Oronis's experiment in regressing a small portion of Athas back through time. Between the two cities, Kurn has a total population of 18,000 people. The majority live in the new city, as each year more citizens are moved from the old city to the new. Old Kurn has such a small number of residents that it appears to be almost a ghost town, and one day Oronis plans to completely abandon it in favor of his secluded valley.

**Government:** Oronis the Avangion (male human/24th-level avangion/LG) guides the paths of the twin cities. Oronis spent centuries redeeming himself, going so far as to change his very nature from evil to good, though he still feels he has a long way to go to make up for his acts as a Champion of Rajaat and a sorcerer-king. For this reason, he has dedicated himself and his citizens to working toward the eventual restoration of all Athas.

While in Old Kurn, Oronis wears the guise of a normal human. In this psionically and magically induced disguise, he appears as a tall, lanky, middle-aged man with short golden hair, pale-blue eyes, and a close-cropped blond beard. He covers himself in the trappings of a sorcerer-king, wearing a golden circlet on the crown of his head and carrying an obsidian-topped walking staff. In New Kurn, however, such disguises aren't called for. There he openly displays his true avangion form—a tall, thin, hairless humanoid with golden skin, silver eyes, and gossamer wings.

Though Old Kurn appears to run like any other city-state, Oronis long ago abandoned a monarchical form of government. He allows his subjects to govern themselves via a democratic system he developed. In this system, nobles and all citizens except templars may hold public office. Elections are held at regular intervals and term limits are set. The highest elected official is called the *Presider*, who sits at the head of a body called the *Tribunal*. Members of the Tribunal are referred to as *Tribunes*. Together, the Presider and the Tribunes draft the laws that keep the city-state running smoothly. The current Presider is Ulali of Prusicles (female half-elf/&h-level preserver/LG), now in the second year of a five-year term.


Oronis refuses to hold an official position, though he does pretend to be sorcerer-king in the old city. He acts as an adviser when the Presider or Tribunal requests his presence, but otherwise, he's more concerned with advancing as an avangion and keeping the valley restoration project on track. Oronis's templars don't serve as administrators in Kurn, either. Instead, they are the keepers and dispensers of knowledge, serving as teachers and advisers to local officials and businesses. It's also their job to oversee and handle the restoration process, under Oronis's supervision.

**Trade and Commerce:** Old Kurn has a limited but active mercantile exchange that regularly welcomes aarakocra traders from Winter Nest and elf merchant tribes from both the north and south. Occasionally, ssurran traders wander down from the Scorched Plateau to make deals and gather goods to take back to their usual clients. House Tsalaxa of Draj makes regular trips to the north to conduct business with Kurn and Eldaarich. This is the extent of the major mercantile activities going on in Old Kurn, though scores of dune traders pass through the walls of the city every week.

Kurn has its own merchant house, House Azeth. By the standards set by the merchant dynasties of the Tyr Region, Azeth is small. By the standards of the northern region, its wealth is beyond compare. Led by Corik Azeth (male human/9th-level trader/LN), the house has holdings in the White Mountains, maintains villages near Eldaarich and along the trade road to the south, and keeps an emporium in far-off Draj. Though Corik suspects that some sort of deception is being played out in Kurn, business is too good for him to want to dig so deeply as to disturb the status quo. The merchant lord also has his suspicions about what's going on past the walls of Fort Protector, but he's sure that satisfying his curiosity will only ruin the position he commands.

Azeth's two client villages, Azeth's Rest and Silt Side, serve important roles in the daily business of the house. Azeth's Rest, built around a lush oasis along the trade road that connects the north to the south, provides a stop-over point for caravans going to and coming from the Tyr Region. This walled village features a sizable legion of mercenaries to guard against the frequent raids from the west. Raiders from the Bandit States of the Barrier Wastes often target caravans traveling on the road and sometimes even strike at the village when their need is particularly great. Azeth's Rest, by the way, welcomes all traders-provided they can pay the fees for using its services. Silt Side, meanwhile, is an open village on the coast of the Silt Sea. Few raiders enter the area due to the frequent patrols sent out by Fort Protector, so the villagers don't worry about attacks from the west. Giants from the silt aren't even a problem, as nearby Fort Holz keeps them at bay. Silt Side handles trade with





Eldaarich, which doesn't have any merchant house of its own. In fact, this village is the only connection with the outside world that Eldaarich maintains. Otherwise, the city-state is secluded from the rest of Athas.

**Conditions in the City:** The state of life in Kurn depends on which of the twin cities is being considered. Old Kurn, on the surface, appears to be much like any city in the Tyr Region still ruled by a sorcerer-king. Surface appearances, however, can be deceiving. Travelers who stay for any length of time might notice a few oddities. For example, the slaves seem to have a sparkle in their eyes and a bounce in their step that isn't seen in the other city-states, and templars aren't given as wide a berth as their counterparts in Urik or Nibenay. Additionally, while the merchant and tradesmen districts are always crowded, the rest of the city is as empty and desolate as the ruins of Giustenal.

Old Kurn maintains its illusion of business-as-usual through the cooperation of its citizens and the advanced powers of its sorcerer-king. If visitors notice that the noble and templar quarters of the city are practically deserted, they usually attribute it to the rumors that Kurn is slowly dying. Dying or not, the city is far from defenseless. More than one raiding tribe has attempted to take advantage of the "dying" city only to discover that its defenders were more than capable of driving them off.


Through the efforts of House Azeth and the commerce provided by other traders, Kurn maintains a modest economy. While most of the inhabitants of the Tyr Region have forgotten that this northern city exists, Kurn interacts with its closest neighbors on a regular basis. It has good relations with the aarakocra of Winter Nest, the merchants of Draji's House Tsalaxa, and the elves of a few of the local tribes. Except for the contact between House Azeth and the trade templars of Eldaarich, Kurn has little interaction with its neighboring city-state. On the other hand, Kurn sometimes has trouble with raiders from the Bandit States. The raiders don't come to the gates of the city (at least not very often), but they do attack travelers on the trade road and even plunder the client villages on rare occasions.

New Kurn is a different matter. The high, sturdy walls of Fort Protector block the eastern entrance to the hidden valley, while the tall, steep peaks of the White Mountains make the other directions inaccessible. The only approach that might be open is by air, though flying creatures loyal to Oronis nest in the vertical peaks. Within the valley, Oronis's restoration project is in full swing. He has turned the valley into a place from the past, recreating the conditions of the Green Age in its sheltered space. A thick forest surrounds a lush clearing where the city of New Kurn has been built beside a small, clean lake. Oronis hopes to eventually regress the valley to conditions as they were in the Blue Age, but that's still many years away.

The new city resembles Oronis's vision of utopia. Airy buildings with tall, elegant spires grace wide, open streets paved with white stone. Here, the people govern themselves through a system of fair laws and majority rule. Everyone has a say in the workings of the city, from the poorest laborer to the highest elected official. And if someone doesn't like the way things are going, they're free to run for a position when the current terms of office expire.

Thanks to the fertile valley and the lush forest, no one goes hungry or thirsty in New Kurn. No creatures are hunted out of existence and no plants are plucked completely from a given area. The templars monitor the forest on a daily basis to make sure the delicate balance is maintained. For this reason, no defilers are permitted within the ranks of the templars or anywhere in the twin cities. It is strictly against the laws of Kurn to practice defiling magic.

Oronis continues to advance as an avangion, and he tries to instill the same serene, peaceful, life-giving properties of his new form in the city and people who follow him. Where once there was a man of evil, now Oronis is a force for good in the world. His templars work to promote his plans and prepare to someday strike out from the valley with the knowledge of how to restore all of Athas. Until then, they'll work to finish the restoration of the valley and to perfect the society that Oronis has inspired.



**The Veiled Alliance:** Kurn has no Veiled Alliance. Preservers are a welcome and significant part of the society, so there's no reason for them to hide behind a veil of secrecy. In fact, preservers from other Alliance factions sometimes come to Kurn to study with Oronis. One preserver, Korgunard of Urik, even learned the steps to become an avangion and followed the path forged by Oronis. It's conceivable that more avangions will appear in the future, though when and how many is hard to say. Like dragons, avangions are exceedingly rare. Only the best, most powerful preserver/psionicians can even hope to take the first steps as an avangion, let alone achieve the level of advancement that Oronis has thus far attained.

While preservers are accepted and integral to Kurn society, defilers are considered enemies of everything Oronis stands for. The avangion is reluctant to allow his followers to make defiling magic punishable by death, as he himself was once a defiler of the highest order. However, he knows that in most cases defilers can't make the mental and spiritual changes necessary to reject that path, so he has agreed that known defilers must be banished from the society.

## Eldaarich


Eldaarich occupies a small island in the Sea of Silt, just off the mainland. Here, isolated and protected from the rest of Athas, the city-state's 21,000 citizens huddle in the paranoid delusions of their mad sorcerer-king. Daskinor, ruler of Eldaarich, believes that unknowable forces in the world are trying to destroy him. Every few years he puts a new name to these forces—the Order, the Veiled Alliance, Rajaat, pyreen, a merchant house, a lowly slave, or some other identifiable target becomes the imagined source of his fears for a time. Daskinor does his best to destroy these imagined enemies, and anyone who has even a passing resemblance to the target is persecuted until the next delusion grips him.

Daskinor was never a stable ruler. From the beginning of his reign as sorcerer-king of Eldaarich, he was tormented by unfounded fears and nameless terrors that preyed upon his mind. For the first few centuries of his reign, he was able to function more or less normally despite his growing paranoia. As time passed, genuine bouts of panic began to intrude upon his psyche. These bouts lasted longer and longer, paralyzing Daskinor for hours, days, sometimes even months at a time.

Eldaarich was constructed to protect Daskinor from his fears. Fortified walls, a strong military, devoted templars, retractable bridges, a series of keeps and forts—the entire city-state and surrounding area was secured against outsiders. Over time, it became less of a fort and more of a prison, locking king and citizens alike behind sturdy gates and high walls. Seven centuries ago, the sorcerer-king's paranoia became acute. He completely sealed his city, cutting off all ties to the other city-states. That was the way things remained until about 10 years ago, when limited trade was resumed with House Azeth of Kurn.

Today, Eldaarich remains an isolated prison of a city. Daskinor's fears have become the fears of his citizenry, making everyone who lives under his rule as paranoid as he is. No one ever leaves Eldaarich, and no one ever enters its massive gates. It's a closed society—figuratively and literally.

**Government:** The same model of government evident in the other city-states exists in Eldaarich. The sorcerer-king Daskinor (male human/22nd-level dragon/CE) stands atop the societal hierarchy, his troubled delusions coloring every aspect of life in the city-state. His chaotic tendencies and often overwhelming paranoia infuses everyone he comes in contact with, making the city almost as wild and frenzied as Raam. The only thing that allows the city to function is that the citizens are a subdued lot, living in quiet fear instead of in rambunctious anarchy. Daskinor constantly watches over his shoulder for assassins that don't exist, and so do his templars and nobles. No one trusts anyone else in Eldaarich. This works out for the best, as the troubled atmosphere has fostered a society where the fear of murder and betrayal has encouraged the periodic use of such techniques by those who prefer to strike first.



Templars and nobles regularly kill each other to keep the same from happening to them, or to gain power or position, or just because the tension of living behind heavy locks and being constantly on guard eventually drives even the most peaceful beings to violence. In Eldaarich, fear permeates everything—fear of the sorcerer-king, fear of outsiders, fear of each other, and fear of the unknown. Because the society is closed off to the rest of the world, everything on the other side of its walls and locked gates is, by definition, unknown.

If Eldaarich is a prison, Daskinor is its most prominent prisoner. The sorcerer-king lives in a walled sub-city and rarely ventures into other parts of his realm. His constant paranoia sometimes intensifies to such a fevered pitch that he ceases to function. In such a state, which may last as long as months at a time, Daskinor is cared for by his senior templars. At other times, his paranoia drives him to give a name to his fear. When this occurs, the entire city mobilizes to combat this supposed threat to the realm. Currently, the use of psionic abilities has been outlawed, as Daskinor believes that the Order has initiated a campaign against his rule. Even low-powered psionicists and wild talents who openly display their abilities are subject to imprisonment or death because of the current edict. Only Daskinor, a psionicist of the highest caliber, is exempt from the terms of the edict.

Daskinor's templars serve as administrators to the city, and also act as the sorcerer-king's eyes and ears in all corners of the domain. They are charged with watching for signs of treachery among the masses—and with dealing with such treachery before it gets out of hand. The templars are as paranoid and delusional as Daskinor, giving in to their fear whenever it overwhelms them. For this reason, Eldaarich has become a police state, and the templars are the police. They command the military. They oversee all records and the distribution of goods and services. They hold the power of life and death for the rest of the citizenry in their terrified hands.

**Trade and Commerce:** After centuries of total isolation, Eldaarich has finally resumed contact (albeit limited contact) with the outside world. The High Templar Kerrilis (female human/14th-level templar/LE) has allowed House Azeth of Kurn to set up the small village of Silt Side for the express purpose of conducting trade with Eldaarich. Daskinor's trade templars only interact with agents of House Azeth, and that interaction only takes place in Silt Side. No outsiders are permitted into Eldaarich or any of its holdings.

All other merchants must go through House Azeth if they want to acquire Eldaarish goods or get their own wares into the closed city. Azeth makes a healthy profit as the middleman, but the house doesn't unduly hike prices to fill its own coffers. The course of performing the normal functions of business pays well enough to satisfy the merchant house. The relationship has benefited both Azeth and Eldaarich, and a level of trust that few in Daskinor's domain possess has begun to develop between Kerrilis and Corik Azeth. Where this trust will lead has yet to be determined, and it's possible that Daskinor might still order his troops to destroy Silt Side when the next delusion overtakes him.

Eldaarich grows the majority of its food in the protected village of South Guard, and in the farms set up in the fertile fields around the city-state. It acquires additional food stores from the traders, but has a more pressing need for iron, obsidian, textiles, and other staples of Athasian life. Its most sought after export is gold and silver, which it culls with great difficulty from nearby mountains rising out of the Silt Sea.

**Conditions in the City:** Every outsider wants to destroy their city-state and their sorcerer-king, and everyone who lives within the walls waits for an opportunity to betray you. That's what the people of Eldaarich believe, for that's what their leaders believe. No where else in all of Athas is there such an underlying current of genuine, unattributable fear. It filters down from Daskinor himself, making citizen and slave alike tremble with uncontrollable paranoia.

The citizenry is a subdued, cowering lot, given to unexpected bursts of violence once the fear inside them becomes too much to contain. In many cases, the ever-

crushing weight of terror and oppression keeps the masses down, but sometimes a delusional artisan will strike out at a templar or noble, causing the level of paranoia to rise even higher.

The quality of life isn't good in Eldaarich. Because Daskinor doesn't trust anyone, he allows his templars to dispense only the barest essentials to the free citizens and slaves. With just enough food and water to sustain them and few personal possessions, the people of the city are a sad, pathetic lot. They have no hope of a better life and no concept that a better life exists outside the walls of Eldaarich. If anyone even suggests such a notion, the ingrained fear of the unknown kicks in and makes everyone else dismiss the idea.


While the class structure of noble, free citizen, and slave exists in Eldaarich, the truth is that everyone beneath the templars is a slave to Daskinor's all-pervasive fear. The sorcerer-king sees threats to his rule on every face and in every dark shadow. For this reason, he permits no freedoms of any sort, not even the token rights given to the citizens of other cities. Freedom, Daskinor believes, is just an opportunity to betray his trust. So he orders his templars to oppress the people of his city, to make their lives so miserable they don't have time or strength to contemplate treachery. The templars don't have it much better. They're kept in line by the high templars who, in turn, are subject to Daskinor's brutal whims.

The majority of the population consists of humans, though there are also dwarves, half-giants, and muls in significant numbers. There are also a few aarakocra wasting away in the slave pens. Daskinor has a particular hatred of the winged people and gives his templars special compensations for capturing aarakocra from the nearby White Mountains.

If travelers were to find themselves in Eldaarich or one of its holdings (which isn't very likely), they'd feel the weight of oppression and smell the stench of mental illness that hangs in the hot, stifling air. The citizens are a cowed, quiet lot, though







an occasional individual will be gripped by a fever of madness and strike out at anyone within reach. Every year the darkness in Daskinor's soul grows deeper, his paranoia more acute. This mental deterioration is reflected in the city itself, as though each citizen were a part of the sorcerer-king's diseased mind.

**The Veiled Alliance:** Eldaarich has no Veiled Alliance. Daskinor rooted out the Alliance and destroyed it 400 years ago when the group of preservers became his imagined enemy of the moment. Some preservers still live in the city, but they remain hidden and are relatively weak due to a lack of adequate training. Preservers from Kurn sometimes sneak into the closed city to provide training and to see what the conditions are, but they don't do this very often. If they get caught, they're put to death, and if their city of origin is discovered, it could mean war between the two cities. No one, especially Oronis the Avangion of Kurn, wants a war to break out. He does, however, feel the pain that both Daskinor and his citizens project, and often contemplates finding a solution to Eldaarich's problems.

## The Last Sea

The Last Sea is a great body of salt water hidden behind the peaks of the Thunder Mountains. A large butte juts from the sea, which takes up most of the secluded vale. A field of coarse, hearty grass surrounds the sea. This grass is used to make rope and other fibers, but isn't very good for grazing. It has adapted to survive in the salt-water-soaked soil, but its high saline content makes it unappetizing to most creatures. A fertile band of scrub plains beyond the grassland, however, supports ample vegetation for grazing and growing selected crops. It has the same characteristics as the scrub plains to the south, though the abundance of water (provided by rain from the mountains) makes it more lush than a typical scrub plains. Rain clouds form in the Thunder Mountains and are carried into the vale, providing a regular source of fresh water.


An ancient city thrives beside the Last Sea. Saragar, which dates back to the period of time known as the Green Age, looks like a paradise compared to the city-states of the sorcerer-kings. Appearances, however, can be terribly deceiving.

## Saragar

The Thunder Mountains and the Burning Plains surround Saragar, the city by the Last Sea. This metropolis isn't related to the city-states of the sorcerer-kings in any way. Its origin dates back to more ancient times. Saragar was one of the great centers of civilization in the middle period of the Green Age. At its height of power and influence, Saragar suddenly cut all ties to the outside world and isolated itself behind formidable natural barriers. The battles of the Cleansing Wars never reached the shores of the Last Sea, and today it remains a place of legend that has been forgotten by most of the rest of Athas.

The Green Age was marked as a time of powerful psionics, and Saragar boasted some of the best in the world. As the center of a long-forgotten domain, Saragar was a seat of rulership, and its lawmaker was served by a trio of psionics advisers. When the lawmaker asked his advisers to look into the future and decide on a course for the ancient city, the trio combined their powers and peered through the veils of time. They saw the end of the Green Age, the start of the Time of Magic, the coming of the Cleansing Wars, and the onset of a bleak period that would be known as the Age of the Sorcerer-Kings. If nothing was done to preserve it, Saragar would be destroyed.

The three powerful psionics decided that Saragar's lawmaker wasn't capable of saving the domain. At the same time, they weren't willing to publicly overthrow him either, as he was a popular and beloved ruler. Instead, they reached into his mind and took control. Though it appeared that they were still acting as the law-



maker's advisers, they were in fact ruling the domain through him. On that day, the Mind Lords took over and Saragar began to prepare for its future.

All of the best, most important members of the society were moved from the various holdings of the domain to live in the city by the Last Sea (though it wasn't called that in those days). Humans, elves, and dwarves, who had been living separately throughout the domain, were brought together in Saragar. Contacts with other domains and even with loyal holdings were severed, and Saragar literally disappeared from the world. If travelers tried to find the city, they discovered nothing but harsh terrain and terrible monsters produced by the mental powers of guardians placed at regular intervals around the vale. These guardians were talented psionics whose psyches were imprisoned within obsidian spheres for the express purpose of producing hallucinations or otherwise distorting the senses of those trying to reach Saragar. After a while, the city was assumed to have been destroyed and travel in that direction ceased.

As the years passed and the Mind Lords grew older and physically weaker, they made a decision that would have repulsed others of the Green Age had they been aware of it. Secretly, the three psionics had their psyches placed within obsidian orbs. The orbs were hidden in a vast, protected chamber deep below the city. Using mental constructs that never grew older, the Mind Lords continued to rule Saragar as each succeeding century faded into history. Before a generation had ended, however, they became more than simple rulers. They became the Triune Mind Lords of Saragar.

**Government:** The basic mode of government common to all of the domains of the Green Age still functions in Saragar. This hierarchy features a lawmaker at its head (or a council of lawmakers, as in Saragar), lawkeepers to enforce the domain laws, and lawtenders to handle the bureaucracy. This model, with additional roles depending on a domain's needs, was prevalent throughout the societies set up along the coast of what is now the Silt Sea.

To the general public, a trio of ageless lawmakers rule Saragar. Thesik (male human/29th-level psionist/LE), Barani (female human/28th-level psionist/NE), and Kosveret (male elf/27th-level psionist/CE) look as they did at the height of their physical prowess—which was approximately 9,000 years ago. In reality, they are mental constructs projected from the bodiless minds of these ancient psionics.

In the Green Age, it was a common practice to place enslaved psyches in spheres of obsidian from which they would constantly perform a specific function. For example, one psyche was designated a Mover, controlling traffic within a psionic transportation system, while another was charged with watching an area or serving as a communication device. In an age of plenty, psionic slaves were used to make life easier for the upper classes. That's why it was inconceivable for the lawmakers to place their own psyches into orbs. It was perceived as something the upper classes did to the lower classes for their own convenience—not something they did to themselves. The lawmakers wanted to continue to exist, however, and the orbs (along with almost unlimited psionic mastery) gave them that opportunity.

The psyche-filled orbs call themselves the Triune Mind Lords. They rule jointly as lawmakers of equal status. No one in Saragar knows that their rulers are disembodied minds. They believe them to be immortal psionic gods with physical bodies (which are actually mental constructs without physical substance used to appear in public). The Mind Lords aren't particularly benevolent, nor are they completely sane. Thousands of years without the solace of bodies or the comfort of physical sensations has twisted and corrupted these minds. They can barely stand each other, but they continue to work together to keep the horror of the vision they shared from encroaching on their domain.

Lawkeeper Efkeny (male elf/12th-level fighter, 13th-level psionist/LN) protects Saragar by enforcing the laws set forth by the Mind Lords. He is the senior lawkeeper in the realm, with a legion of lesser lawkeepers (called proctors) serving beneath him. Efkeny believes that the law is above all other concerns. He defends every code and edict with equal vigor, from the lowliest litter violation to the most terrible crimes of treason and murder. Luckily, there isn't a great deal of violent crime on the




streets of Saragar—the Mind Lords see to that. Efkeno is mostly concerned with making sure the public remains happy, for that's one of the Mind Lords' most cherished edicts: "Happiness must be maintained." To this end, Efkeno and his proctors constantly watch for signs of discontentment, sadness, or discord. In addition, Efkeno also remains vigilant against outsiders, as all Saragar citizens are taught that things from beyond the vale of the Last Sea are evil and extremely dangerous.

With the lawmakers and lawkeepers busy with the tasks before them, it falls to the lawtenders to handle the administrative role of government. Lawtender Uruapi (female human/4th-level psionist/LG) oversees an army of bureaucrats who keep Saragar running smoothly. Like the templars of the sorcerer-kings, the lawtenders maintain records, distribute goods and services, and promote the welfare of the domain.

Lawkeepers and lawtenders are usually drawn from Saragar's nobility, though it's possible for free citizens to receive government posts. Like most of the civilizations from the Green Age, Saragar doesn't condone slaves—at least not physical slaves. The city does have psionic slaves, though most of them are from before the current age. Obsidian orbs filled with the mental essences of powerful psionists or wild talents perform such tasks as turning mill wheels with telekinetic pushes, moving sail boats with psychic winds, or providing quick message relays by sending thoughts from one side of the city to the other.

**Trade and Commerce:** For the most part, Saragar maintains a closed, self-sufficient society. There are two exceptions to this rule.

First, client villages set up along the coast of the Last Sea mostly operate as independent communities. The citizens of Saragar consider the people of these villages to be unenlightened cousins who aren't permitted to bask in the glory of the Triune Mind Lords. These villagers, however, have grown to appreciate life outside



the influence of Saragar's lawmakers. Lawkeepers from the city regularly visit the villages to make sure the codes and edicts are being followed, but these communities tend to be wilder and more frontier in nature. The villagers have become expert sailors, navigating the reaches of the Last Sea to trade with Saragar.

Second, the Mind Lords permit ssurran traders to journey through the Border of Guardians twice each year to bring goods and news from the outside world. At such times, the traders aren't permitted to pass beyond the crescent of scrub plains or set foot in the vale itself. They meet with lawtenders who have the authority to deal for the Mind Lords. It should be noted that not all of the obsidian orbs that make up the Border of Guardians still function. Some have been shattered by natural disasters or violent creatures. Others have simply lost the ability to retain the mental essences housed within them. This being the case, the border isn't as seamless as it was 3,000 years ago. There are holes through which predators of all types can pass without hindrance, and as the psionic defense system continues to break down, more will follow.

**Conditions in the City:** To visit Saragar is to step into Athas's Green Age. People dress in tabards and gowns befitting a less savage age than currently exists. The relatively cooler climate in the secluded vale makes such clothing practical and comfortable. There's an abundance of metal in Saragar—weapons, armor, tools—though its mostly ancient and showing signs of wear. Some new sources of ore exist in the surrounding mountains, but few members of the society still know how to extract it, let alone forge it into new items.

There are approximately 30,000 people living in Saragar, with another 10,000 scattered throughout the seaside villages. There are also an undisclosed number of hermits, druids, and hidden communities within the surrounding mountains, though all are in some way related to Saragar and the society established by the Mind Lords.

Someone from the Tyr Region might consider Saragar to be a paradise, and that's certainly the perception the Triune Mind Lords try to propagate. However, the Mind Lords are insane. They generate laws to bolster the illusion of happiness and serenity but do nothing to truly address those concerns. The lawkeepers enforce these rules, watching for the least signs of discontentment in the populace. For this reason, the Saragar dwellers have learned to constantly display serene attitudes.

If a lawkeeper or a Mind Lord detects unhappiness or rebellious thoughts, the guilty individual is brought to a harmonizer for conditioning. Harmonizers are psionics who reach into a subject's mind to sift and shape thoughts back to the track the Mind Lords have dictated. Mental intrusion by the lawkeepers or the Mind Lords doesn't happen very often. More often, an individual's facade of contentment slips and alerts a lawkeeper to a deeper problem.

There are no wizards of any sort in Saragar or the vale of the Last Sea. Wizardly magic is considered evil, and most citizens in Saragar who witness its use don't have any idea what they're seeing. Psionics exist and are the true power of the domain. Elemental clerics and druids can be found in the villages around the sea, and a small number of clerics actually serve as lawkeepers and lawtenders in Saragar itself.

Though the Mind Lords have a very far reach, their own madness and inner squabbles make it easy to avoid their wrath. Those who truly feel restricted by the society go to live among the villages where the laws are more lax. Visitors are more likely to find a warm reception in one of the seaside villages; though they might have to first convince the villagers that they aren't spies for the lawmakers or lawkeepers of Saragar.

**The Veiled Alliance:** Saragar has no Veiled Alliance, as it has no wizards of either type. A different sort of secret society exists, however. Made up of the sailors who ply the currents of the Last Sea, this secret group provides safe passage out of Saragar to the villages for those who want to get out from under the influence of the Mind Lords. They have to be careful about how often they help so that the lawkeepers don't notice. Someday they hope to actually break the tyranny-disguised-as-happiness that marks the Mind Lords' rule, but that day is still a long time off.

# Thamasku


On the western end of the Glowing Desert, the land drops to form a fertile ledge on the edge of the Jagged Cliffs. Primeval forest surrounds a large lake and a lush clearing where the halfling city of Thamasku resides. This mecca for the cliff-dwellers is recognizably a city to those of the Tyr Region due to the abundance of people and structures. However, that's where the similarities end. Thamasku is formed from the porous, almost-organic stone of the ancient halflings and shaped by those members of the community who still possess at least a small fraction of the power once wielded by the nature-masters.

The city is built partially into the lake, though visitors from other parts of Athas might notice that, in general, it's more vertical than it needs to be. The cliff-dwellers have a vertical view of the world due to their long association with the rock walls of the Jagged Cliffs. Their horizon is up and down, while most other people have a horizontal orientation. So, buildings in Thamasku are tall and narrow, stretching toward the sky instead of from side to side.

Thamasku is the crown in a sophisticated halfling society. Like all of the cliff-dweller communities, the city has a rigid social structure comprised of an upper, middle, and lower class. The upper class consists of clan leaders, life shapers, and wealthy criminals. The middle class is mostly made up of merchants and artisans. Members of the lower class are menial laborers toiling at the tasks considered to be beneath the members of the higher classes.

Life shapers are those halflings who retain at least a small portion of the knowledge of the ancient nature-masters. They can create and maintain a vast array of living tools unlike anything else in all of Athas. The life shapers form an almost religious sect among the halflings, receiving the respect and admiration of the rest of the cliff-dwellers. The possible exception to this nearly universal devotion comes from the criminal element, which seeks to steal life-shaped items for its own gain.





Though the cliff-dwellers make good use of life-shaped tools and weapons, the techniques employed by the life shapers fall more into ritual and repetition than into knowledge and true understanding. The halflings can trace back an oral tradition concerning the art of shaping living things, but much of the mastery has been lost to the past. What remains plays an important part in the lives of the cliff-dwellers, though even the most gifted life shapers are like children before the ancient nature-masters of the Blue Age.

Two informal societies also receive varying amounts of respect. The Windriders and the Climbers are made up of elite members of the community. The Windriders are those halflings who command the living airships that ride the winds along the face of the Jagged Cliffs. They are more respected than the Climbers due to their association with life-shaped vessels. The Climbers, meanwhile, are scouts and trail-blazers who navigate the rock face itself, finding paths between the vertical forests so that others can follow after them.

Like other civilizations harkening back to a more ancient age, the cliff-dwelling halflings have no wizards. Indeed, they have had almost no contact with wizardly magic and have no idea what it is. Elemental priests do exist, but they're extremely rare and not respected very much. Life shapers fill their role in cliff-dwelling society. Druids fare better than priests, but as they tend to be loners it doesn't much matter. There are no halfling psionics among the cliff-dwellers, though all halflings have wild talents. Because of the rules of their society, however, the halflings tend to repress their psionic abilities.

The cliff-dwellers have had almost no contact with the outside world. With the exception of the occasional thri-kreen raid from the west or the rare visit by a pyreen, the halflings have no concept of what exists beyond the Misty Border of their domain. When they do finally meet a human or an elf or a dwarf, their reactions could range from extreme curiosity to fear to immediate violence against unknown beings, as nothing in their myths or legends can prepare them for such an encounter.

## The Kreen Empire

Beyond the Jagged Cliffs, past the veil of the Misty Border, a vast empire of kreen nations dominates the Crimson Savanna. Unlike the thri-kreen of the Tablelands, the imperial kreen have a civilization that, in many ways, outclasses the city-states of the sorcerer-kings. Much of the details concerning the Kreen Empire remain a mystery, but glimpses into the workings of this alien society have been revealed.

Kreen, in the language of the mantis-men, means people—specifically, sapient insect-people with mantislike qualities. *Thri-kreen*, more specifically, means nomad people. So, the thri-kreen of the Tablelands are wanderers, while the Kreen Empire of the northwest encompasses all types of mantis-people. Note that all of the kreen of the north are *tohr-kreen*, which simply means the settled people.

The Kreen Empire is called *G'lathuk*, the family of nations. It's a loose confederation of kreen nations which pay tribute of one sort or another to the Haazi, the kreen emperor. The cities closest to the *Haazi'sa*, the emperor's home, contain a mixture of different kreen types. The cities farthest from the *Haazi'sa*, on the other hand, are usually devoted to a single kreen nation and therefore feature a majority of one specific type of kreen.

There are six types of true kreen: *j'ez*, identified by black chitin and four-fingered hands; *j'hol*, who have red chitin and an almost humanoid form; *jeral*, sandy-yellow in color (one of two subspecies common to the Tyr Region); *to'ksa*, marked by sandy-yellow chitin and four-fingered hands (the other subspecies found in the Tyr Region); *t'keech*, who are dark green; and *tondi*, who have an unusual mottled purple-pink chitin.

The kreen cities and villages closest to the Jagged Cliffs (which appear on the maps included with this boxed set) lie on the frontier of the empire. The *j'ez* city of *J'eztere* and its satellite villages (*Ko'teg* and *Z'aythar*) control a region of the savanna south of Kano Swamp. North of the swamp, the *j'hol* nation controls the city of *L'rax*

and a few connected villages (namely Dezig and Awthuuk). In the same area, one city and two villages are considered to be imperial holdings, with mixed kreen populations. These are Thaythilor, Nirik, and Kakikix.

## G'lathuk Society

The Kreen Empire has a firmly established caste system in which everyone has a specific function. At the top is the Haazi. The current kreen emperor is a male j'hol who rarely leaves the sanctuary of the Haazi'sa (the imperial capital). Beneath the emperor, the individual kreen subspecies fall into the following hierarchy: j'ez, j'hol, jeral, t'keech, to'ksa, and tondi. There are ranks and positions of status within each subspecies, as well, though no to'ksa will ever earn the positions or privileges available to a j'ez.

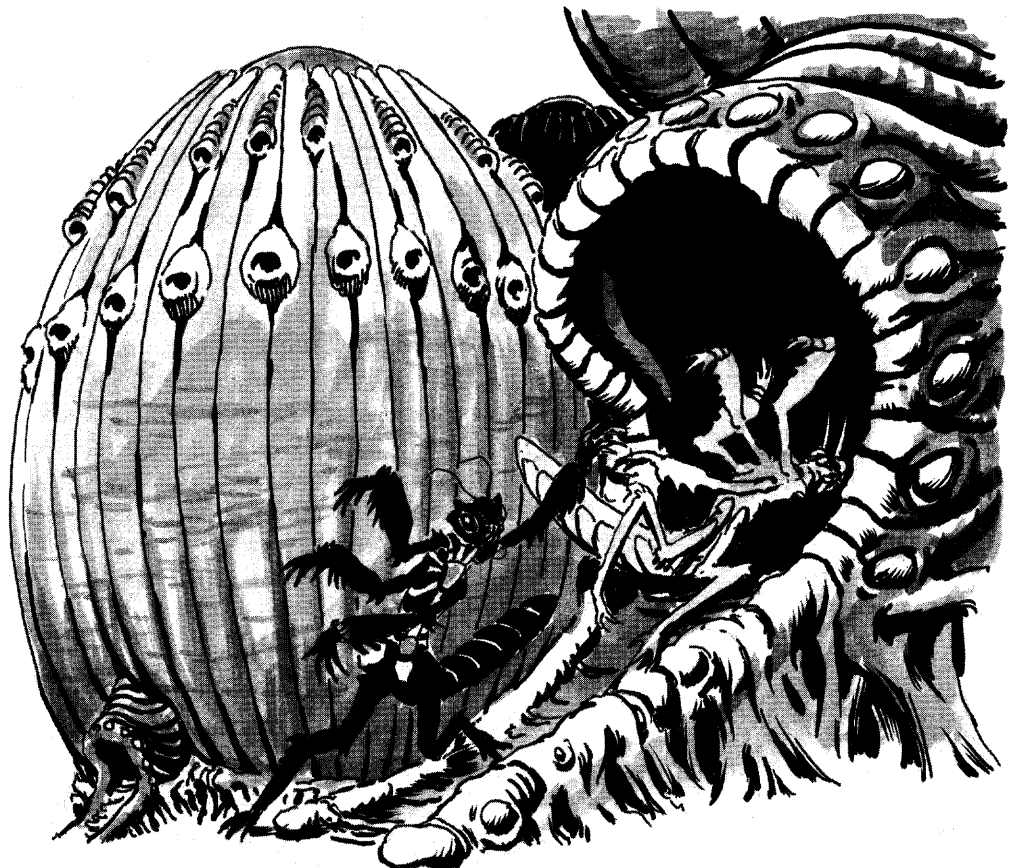
Members of the j'ez subspecies are lawful in nature and tend to fill roles as leaders and bureaucrats. They command legions, oversee work details, rule imperial holdings, and perform the administrative functions necessary to keep the empire running smoothly.


J'hol, in general, have an evil bend. They make up the majority of the empire's military base, though they also make good builders and crafters.

Those of the jeral subspecies tend to be of good alignment. In the empire, they serve as teachers, though a few also own ranches and farms. The *haazik*, priests dedicated to the service of the Haazi, are culled from this kreen type.

T'keech generally fall into either the neutral good or neutral evil camp. In imperial society, these kreen are the laborers, performing tasks that the other subspecies consider beneath them but that are too complicated for any of the enslaved insectoid races to be trusted with.

Members of the to'ksa subspecies are chaotic in nature. They're the shock troops and gladiators of the empire. In general, they don't hold a firm position in imperial





society. The place they do have is considered to be the bottom rung on the societal ladder. They are wanderers in a settled society, barbarians among the civilized kreen. They are nomads and hunters who fill the wilderness between imperial holdings. When the empire prepares to go to war, it gathers clans of to'ksa to use as the first line of attack.

If the to'ksa are at the bottom rung of the imperial caste system, then the tondi don't even make it onto the ladder. These kreen are neutral in nature, though they can have either a lawful or chaotic bend. They are loners who have a great love of nature and usually follow the druidic path. This subspecies is extremely rare, and they almost never enter the imperial cities or villages.

Another type of kreen needs to be discussed, as its members play an important role in G'lathuk society. While not of the same evolutionary track as the tohr-kreen, zik-chil are members of a distantly related offshoot race. Their name literally means the priests of change, and their function is to change kreen into biologically engineered super creatures. Pale in color and cold and manipulative in nature, zik-chil are lawful evil scientists. Through biological processes that alter the exterior of a kreen, zik-chil create the zik-trin (altered near-persons who are engineered monsters modified for specific tasks: scouting, retrieving information, combat, climbing, etc.).

The zik-chil serve the emperor. They are revered and feared by other kreen, and their work and position gives them religious overtones that can't be ignored. In specific, they oversee an inquisition that roots out anyone who interferes with the business of the emperor and empire.

## Current Endeavors

The cities and villages of the Kreen Empire appear alien to people from the Tyr Region. Built with excreted material from enslaved insectoids, the design of each structure has an organic and definite insectlike quality that disturbs most humans and humanoids. Each looks as if it was grown instead of constructed, made up of a macabre, almost disturbing series of spires, domes, and membranous walkways, and filled with kreen of many different shapes and colors.

The various nations get along through the common tribute they all pay to the Haazi. However, the G'lathuk has grown too large to support itself. The time is coming for the family of nations to add new nations to itself. One of the most promising directions for this expansion is east-up the Great Rift and into the highlands.

To facilitate this expansion, the zik-chil have been creating elite combat specialists called zik-trin'ak and sending them into the Tablelands to explore and gather intelligence. As the tohr-kreen of the empire don't consider anything other than kreen to be intelligent, they have no problem contemplating moving in to territory currently controlled by humans and humanoids. If the G'lathuk does decide to colonize the areas east of the Jagged Cliffs, it will mean a terrible war between insect- and mammal-based life forms.

Not everyone in the empire desires a violent solution to the overcrowding in the savanna. Many factions within each kreen nation seek to break ties with the empire, or at least to change the direction that things have been heading. For example, the zik-chil have such close ties to the Haazi that some say they are controlling him. When such talk reaches the ears of the inquisition, the offenders disappear into the temple-laboratories of the priests of change. Others believe that the current cycle is nearing an end, and a new Haazi will need to be selected to lead the G'lathuk.

One particular group of malcontents gather at the sacred site called Kazin's Chak'sas (Kazin's Heads). Located on a northern rise, this site features a series of stone edifices shaped like giant kreen heads. The zik-chil have ordered this location off limits to the general public and has created an elite guard force from to'ksa gladiators to protect it. This hasn't stopped the dissidents, who call themselves Kazin'tek (Kazin's pack). The Kazin'tek believe that the way of the empire has corrupted the kreen. It's time to return to a simpler way of life, like the one embraced by the nomadic thri-kreen.





# The Bandit States

A particularly rugged type of raider has developed in the harsh environment of the Barrier Wastes, though some attribute this ruggedness to the fact that the constant wind that blows across the region drives them insane. Seven separate raiding tribes control five permanent oases in the Glowing Desert and two in the Scorpion Plains. A village has grown up around each oasis, and these have become the basis for the seven Bandit States.

Each of these seven communities is an independent entity, though they've come to be known collectively as the Bandit States. The large villages are populated by outlaws, ex-slaves, and other outcasts who've found a place with the charismatic and powerful men and women who lead each tribe. These tribes exist in a near-constant state of war, fighting each other for territory, to gain prestige, or just for the thrill of battle.

When not fighting each other, the Bandit States engage in raids against caravans plying the nearby trade routes or the settlements scattered throughout the region. Using fast riding beasts and unique sail carts, the tribes sweep down out of the wastes to strike quickly, plunder what they can, and escape back the way they came. It doesn't matter which tribe travelers encounter, as each has a similar approach to the business of raiding—strike like the wind, take what you want by force and fear, intimidate every victim so that the next time will be easier, commit as much violence as it takes to accomplish the raid, and satisfy the blood lust that courses through every raider's veins.

## Villages and Tribes of the Barrier Wastes

There are seven villages that each serve as the capital of a different Bandit State. These villages are *Pillage*, *Plunder*, *Ravish*, *Ravage*, *Kel's lot*, *Wrath*, and *Spoil*.


The village of **Pillage** surrounds an oasis located north of the Troll Grave Chasm, in the portion of the Barrier Wastes known as the Scorpion Plains. While most raiding tribes contain members from a variety of races, the people of Pillage are mostly humanoids, with only a few humans and demihumans thrown in the mix. Chilod (male terek/8th-level fighter/LN) leads this Bandit State, commanding a community of tareks, ssurran, thri-kreen, nikaal, silt runners, some humans and dwarves, a couple of braxat, and a few b'rohgs. All classes except wizards are welcome among Chilod's ranks, as the terek has no tolerance for defilers or preservers.

Only Chilod's intimidating presence holds Pillage together. The mixture of races makes a volatile brew, but Chilod turns his followers' angry flames outward instead of allowing them to explode within the village. To accomplish this, the leader has declared war on the nearby village of Plunder, making it a target for his tribe's natural aggressive tendencies.

The raiders from Pillage make periodic excursions into the Scorched Plateau. There, they seek out ssurran trade caravans to attack. The ssurran traders have gone so far as to make a practice of leaving a small caravan behind for the raiders while their primary caravan continues on its appointed route.

**Plunder** is the second of two village oases in the Scorpion Plains. Its raiding tribe consists mainly of elves who have been cast out of their tribes for a variety of transgressions, though there are also the assorted collection of muls, humans, and a few humanoids. The tribe calls itself Evertu's Ghosts, because according to elven tradition those who are cast out from the elf community are dead. If their one-time families have set them adrift in the land of the dead, then the outcasts feel justified taking on the roles of ghostly avengers.

Evertu (male elf/12th-level fighter/NE) leads the Ghosts of Plunder in terrifying, often violent, fashion. While the tribe attacks any travelers it comes across for spoils and sport, the Ghosts especially enjoy striking at the elf tribes of the Scorched Plateau. When they go on a raid, the Ghosts wear the trappings of the elven death myths—tattered clothing, burial paint, and weapons decorated with blood. This adds to their frightful image and often unnerves even the strongest elf warriors.



When targets are particularly scarce, the raiders from Plunder don't hesitate to attack the dwarf fortress at the nearby oasis of Foul Puddle. While the mud-brick fortress is formidable, the dwarves usually "pay tribute" to the Evartu's raiders after a short, bloody battle. However, Evartu never sends all of his warriors away from Plunder at the same time, as he must guard against attacks by the raiders of the village of Pillage.

**Ravish** is one of five oasis village located south of Troll Grave Chasm, in the section of the Barrier Wastes called the Glowing Desert. The community based in the village is a typical tribe of raiders-all ex-slaves from Draj. The tribe is ruled by Akive (female mul/10th-level gladiator/GE), a powerful mul with no leadership skills beyond great strength, excellent combat prowess, and the ability to intimidate and bully her subordinates. This village is the poorest, least organized of the Bandit States, and its raiders blunder their attacks as often as they successfully gain plunder. The targets they strike at with most frequency are the halfling villages of the White Mountain forests and Kurn's client villages.

The village of **Ravage**, on the other hand, is, one of the largest, best organized, and wealthiest of the Bandit States. It resembles a large trade village more than a struggling ex-slave community. Its leader, Talid the bandit lord (male mul/13th-level gladiator/LN), has a vision that keeps Ravage on a path of growth and could mean big things for all of the Bandit States. However, few of his fellow bandit lords are willing to cooperate at the level necessary for Talid's plans to succeed.

Talid wants to unite the Bandit States into one nation that stretches across the entire Barrier Wastes. Of course, the ex-gladiator from Raam sees himself as the head of this nation of outlaws, a vision that causes the other bandit lords lots of trouble. They don't trust Talid or his grand promises of wealth and power. When the mul calls for a conclave of bandit lords (which he does on a regular basis), most of the tribal leaders answer. These meetings routinely break down as each leader tries to get the best deal for his or her own tribe. Talid is never able to get them to understand the value of cooperation or the strength a united front will give all of the tribes.


Though they all distrust Ravage in the extreme and are jealous of its wealth, none of the competing tribes are willing to attack the village directly. As it's extremely well fortified, direct attacks against the village often end in victory for the defenders and loss of life for the attackers. The other tribes have no qualms about occasionally striking at returning raiding parties, however. Such a strike isn't easy either, but it stands a better chance of succeeding than a suicide raid against the main village.

**Kel's Lot** is the westernmost oasis village in the Glowing Desert. This Bandit State is unique as it's the only one that isn't simply a glorified slave tribe. In fact, with the exception of a few individuals, the members of this community have never known the bonds of slavery. Kel's Lot's members are all dwarves who settled this village decades ago. The village was already in place when the slave tribes started to move in, and it has a long history of using raiding as a means to survive.

The ancient dwarf named Kel (male dwarf/11th-level fighter, 11th-level priest/LN) serves as the leader of this Bandit State. Of all the bandit lords, he most clearly understands Talid of Ravage's vision. Unfortunately, his prejudice against the mul (and all muls in general) causes him to dismiss it as beneath the notice of his tribe. To Kel and his followers, dwarves are the greatest of all races, worthy of ruling the entire world. Muls, however, have been rendered impure by their mixed heritages and are considered less than dwarves. The fact that Talid's tribe prospers above Kel's makes the dwarf bandit lord even more spiteful toward the mul.

The village of **Wrath**, led by Lady Cesti (female human/10th-level gladiator/LE), features a mix of humans and demihumans living in a fantasy of their leader's construction. Cesti, an ex-gladiator from Urik, grew up enamored of the nobles who owned her. Even in the slave pens of Urik, she withdrew into dreams of being a noble to escape the tribulations of the arena. When she gained her freedom and established Wrath, she did so with the illusion that she was of noble birth.

The village is set up along the lines of a noble house-or at least Cesti's version of one. All of her advisers and raiding captains have noble titles, and the parties



that follow a successful raid look more like a noble festival than a slave tribe celebration. Most of Cesti's followers enjoy the illusion that the ex-gladiator has created, though a few sometimes wonder about her sanity. Lady Cesti (as she prefers to be addressed) can often be heard talking about returning to Urik to participate in one noble function or another, and she appears to believe that Hamanu himself will grant her an audience if she so desires.

**Spoil**, the oasis village located in the southernmost corner of the Glowing Desert, is another community of ex-slaves who use the village as a base from which to launch raids on nearby trade routes. A powerful defiler named Densis (male human/14th-level defiler/LE) leads the tribe. He's protected by Gorzu (male half-giant/11th-level fighter/C?) and Urtke (female half-giant/9th-level psionicist/L?), half-giants devoted to the defiler.

Densis hates Talid of Ravage with a passion. If anyone is going to rule a united bandit nation, the defiler believes, it should be him and not some muscle-bound half-breed. Densis doesn't dare send his smaller and weaker tribe against Talid's, but someday he plans to destroy the mul and take command of wealthy Ravage.

While his tribe conducts raids or ambushes members of the other Bandit States, Densis travels north to the ruins of the Buried City. He has been exploring the site for almost three years, and each time he returns to Spoil he has a bit more power at his command. Few of his followers will accompany him to the ruins, for they believe that the place is haunted by terrible spirits and undead creatures. The fact that Densis regularly communes with these beings makes him more important in their eyes-and that much more frightening.

## Other Points of Interest

A few other locations need to be mentioned before this exploration of the Jagged Cliffs Region comes to an end. These locations are Nexus, Pyreen Grove, Godshold, and *Winter Nest*. Each place is described below.

### Nexus

Nexus is an academy of the Way located high within a small range of mountains northeast of Kurn. The hidden site is hard to reach and well-protected by a group of powerful psionicists and their students. Gulem the Gray (male dwarf/22nd-level psionicist/LN) runs the academy. It's said that he constantly scans the reaches of Athas for psionicists worthy to study at Nexus, and that these hopefuls receive mental summons to come to the hidden facility.

Built within the mountain peaks themselves, Nexus appears as a gray monolith beneath the crimson sun. Due to the safeguards put in place by the psionicists who serve the academy, no one can find the actual location if they aren't permitted to. In fact, making it up the mountain to Nexus itself is one of the first tests used to determine the worth of a particular perspective student.

The most powerful users of the Way can circumvent the safeguards if they really want to reach the academy, but doing so alerts Gulem and his teachers. In this way, Gulem may not be able to prevent a member of the Order from visiting, but at least he'll be aware of that visitor's approach.

Everyone who comes to Nexus is sworn to absolute secrecy concerning its location and true function. While studying with Gulem and the other psionic masters, the neophytes must immerse themselves in the principles of the Will and the Way. Body, mind, and spirit must be forged into a single unit at Nexus, and the only neophytes to finish the grueling training are those destined for great things. Many are returned to apply their talents for the good of their communities. Others are sent into the wilderness to accomplish specific tasks. A select few are charged with teaching others in the use of the Will and the Way.

There are rumors that Nexus has binding ties to the mysterious Order. In fact, Gulem is an entrant of the Order, but his agenda is his own. He had no part in the



recent plot involving the psionatrix, and he has cautioned his colleagues to keep a low profile in the wake of those events. It appears that Gulem remains an influential member of the Order despite his low status thanks to his words of wisdom and his prudent actions.


## Pyreen Grove

A particularly lush oasis in the scrub plains east of the Thamasku Ledge goes by the name of Pyreen Grove. Here, amid a sparkling blue lake and clumps of long-leaved crying trees, legends claim that the pyreen gather to discuss the plight of the world. If these mysterious beings can truly call a single location in all of Athas "home," then this oasis is that place.

Animals of all types live within the grove, though no intelligent or malignant beings shelter here for long. Some unseen force drives them out, keeping the oasis pure and pristine. Visitors who do make a brief stop at the grove are encouraged to treat every living thing there with the utmost respect. After all, it's said that pyreen can take any form.

The pyreen, or the peace-bringers, are an ancient race with ties to the Age of Rebirth that preceded the Green Age. These psionist/druids travel the world in an effort to restore the vitality of Athas. In their natural form, they have physical characteristics of all the demihuman races, though they almost never appear that way. Instead, they wander in the form of animals or as humans or demihumans. They are solitary, noble beings with a high purpose: to protect and restore the land.

While no visitors are likely to meet (or realize they're meeting) pyreen in the grove, their presence can be felt just the same. Just the fact that the oasis exists at all should be enough to convince even the most skeptical mul that something powerful watches over it. If a visitor attempts to harm the oasis, the grove itself is said to rise up and attack. The other amazing thing about the grove is that no defiler is ever permitted to step within its bounds. The land twists, heaves, and even cracks open to prevent a defiler from getting closer. If that fails, powerful creatures emerge from



the grove to drive the offending wizard off. Travelers' tales claim that everything from a lirr to a jhakar has been seen defending the grove.

At least one pyreen regularly visits the grove. From this vantage point, the peace-bringer can travel to the nearby city of the cliff-dwellers to check on the progress of the halflings who live there. The pyreen have definite ties to the ancient halflings, and as the halflings of the Jagged Cliffs are the closest to those of the Blue Age, it makes sense that the pyreen would watch over them.

## Godshold

The ruins of Godshold lie near the Somber Woods, on the western side of the Lava Gorge. The ancient temple and its surrounding buildings date back to the middle Green Age. Forgotten gods were gathered into a pantheon by the domains of the lawmakers, and one northern domain was dedicated to preserving this pantheon. All that remains of this domain is the jumbled ruins of Godshold.

The main temple is mostly intact, with gold-covered walls and ornately carved icons that almost glow with the beliefs of a long-dead society. A powerful raag guards the temple, keeping its secrets from all but the most stubborn and able adventurers. It's said that the mysteries of the Green Age and the ancient gods lie in the temple's depths, waiting to be discovered. To retrieve them, adventurers must get past the spirit who guards the site—and past whatever other traps and defenses wait within.

The surrounding buildings aren't in wonderful condition. These have been looted and explored mercilessly over the centuries, and natural disasters have added to the damage and decay. Little of worth remains in these structures, but who knows what small treasure might be hidden beneath a pile of rubble or on the other side of a secret door?

## Winter Nest

The White Mountains, near the shores of the Silt Sea, are named for the pearly white snow that covers their uppermost peaks. This snow cover lasts the year round, for it's always cold and wet at the mountain's highest elevations. It's among these frozen peaks that the village of Winter Nest can be found.

A large tribe of civilized aarakocra settled Winter Nest long ago. They call themselves "silvaarak," the people of the silver wing. These bird-people believe themselves to be superior to all other creatures due to their ability to fly above the world. This perspective naturally gives them great confidence and pride in themselves, and they possess a certain amount of sympathy for all land-bound creatures.

Winter Nest is formed from a mixture of ice, stone, and shaped bricks. The combination creates an amazing spectacle that is unlike any other place in Athas. The use of ice alone makes it a strange and fascinating place. Like the structures of the halflings of the Jagged Cliffs, everything in Winter Nest has a vertical orientation. As home to flying creatures, it doesn't matter where doors are placed, and walkways and ladders aren't necessary. Instead, buildings are surrounded by a series of landing platforms and resting perches that only vaguely resemble the streets and market places of human cities.

For the most part, the aarakocra of Winter Nest stay in the peaks of the White Mountains. Traders from the village travel to Kurn a few times each year, but otherwise the community tends to keep to itself. Problems with the Bandit States and Eldaarich make such a policy seem reasonable. Many young bird-people, however, want to explore the world beyond the mountains and interact with other civilized cultures. If the vocal and persistent segment of the population is successful, Winter Nest may completely abandon its isolationist ways.

Traaka (female aarakocra/7th-level air cleric/LG) leads the village. She prefers to keep Winter Nest separate from the lower lands in order to maintain its safety. However, she also understands the call of the sky that makes the young aarakocra want to soar beyond the summits and explore the world. She's desperately trying to define a policy that allows such exploration without endangering the whole community.



# The Wanderer's Journal

*The land immediately beyond the Tyr Region can be divided into three parts: those regions to the west, to the south, and to the east. No matter which of these directions you may choose to travel, you'll have to overcome the boundaries that have kept the people of the Tablelands secluded in their little parcel of Athas all these centuries.*

*The Ringing Mountains, the Hinterlands, and then the Jagged Cliffs themselves stand as barriers to the west. To the south, the Endless Sand Dunes*

*cover the land like a blanket of burning grit. And the east, of course, is filled from one end of the horizon to the other by the Sea of Silt.*

*Though I have traveled beyond these barriers, there is little to attract average people. Cross over the Jagged Cliffs, and a savanna of deadly grass and deadlier tohr-kreen await you. Make your way through the Endless Sand Dunes, and you wind up on an obsidian plain that is—literally—a land of the dead. And everyone knows the troubles you'll encounter in the Silt Sea.*

*Maybe the recent changes to the land will call to you. The Great Rift and the Cerulean Storm, for example . . .*

## CHAPTER 4:

# Beyond the Tyr Region

The lands immediately surrounding the Tyr Region are some of the harshest, most unforgiving areas beneath the crimson sun. To each side of the Tablelands, the land forms natural boundaries that have effectively isolated the area for centuries. There have always been those adventurous—or desperate—individuals willing to leave the comfort and safety of familiar territory to explore the great beyond. However, traffic has never been so frequent as to make the people of the seven city-states knowledgeable about what lies on the other side of the boundaries. With the recent changes in the land, inspired by both natural disasters and political upheaval, this reluctance to travel is coming to an end.

The areas beyond the Tyr Region fall into three categories: the lands to the east, west, and south. The Sea of Silt lies to the east, stretching north and south past the limits of the land as the Wanderer knows them. It's not just a great basin of dust. Islands and mountains rise from the silt like the backs of giant beasts, and the valley once called Dust and Fire is covered by the Cerulean Storm. The Hinterlands dominate the area to the west, and beyond the apparently endless scrub plains await the southern reaches of the Jagged Cliffs. Travel to the south starts out like a trip across the Tablelands, but then the Endless Sand Dunes appear. Travelers who think it's difficult to cross a patch of sandy wastes will find it impossible to trek over the dry rises and falls of sand heaped in every direction. When it does end, the vast obsidian plain called the Dead Land begins.

Each of these areas and their important features are detailed below. Refer to the Tyr Region and Beyond map while reading this chapter.



# Culture

The areas surrounding the Tyr Region are vast wastelands with only an occasional civilized society. The most prominent of these societies are the strange beings of the Silt Sea island called Euripis, the merchant city of Celik, the civilized pterrans of the villages of Pterrann Vale and Lost Scale, and the otherworldly culture that haunts the Dead Land.

There are also a scattering of lesser villages, the typical (though scarcer) tribes of herders, raiders, and hunter-gatherers, the everpresent hermits and outcasts from other societies, and various communities of monsters and humanoids, like the giants of the Silt Sea.

# Geography

The areas surrounding the Tyr Region can be geographically divided into three large regions: *east*, *west*, and *south*. Each of these large regions, in turn, can be broken down into their component terrain types, just like other places described in earlier chapters.

## East of the Tyr Region

What lies east of the Tyr Region? Every child of the cities or wilderness, from the highest man or woman of noble birth to the lowliest tari beggar, knows that the only thing east of the Tablelands is the Silt Sea. For all intents and purposes, the descriptions of the Silt Sea provided in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 apply here. Every method of travel discussed earlier, and every terrain feature and deadly hazard found near the coast exists farther east and south. There are two additional features that need to be addressed. These are *bare stone* and *stark crags*.

**Bare stone** appears whenever the wind sweeps areas of shallow silt down to the bedrock. These bare patches aren't very big, and they don't appear on maps because they don't last very long. The wind that clears the dust from the bedrock one day will bury it the next. Most of these patches are either knolls or low rises in the floor of the sea. Bare stone is only exposed near the coast, as the silt farther from the shore is too deep for even the strongest gales to clear away. An exposed patch is always barren; no animals live on these temporary respites, no plants find purchase on their solid surfaces.

In very rare instances, a ruin will be uncovered that sits atop the bare stone. Unexpected appearances and hard-to-reach locations leave these types of ruins unspoiled by looters. If a traveler is in the right place at the right time, he may be lucky enough to reap rewards like metal weapons or other treasures.

**Stark crags** pierce the cover of silt in dramatic fashion, jutting high into the sky like the tips of buried spears. These sheer pinnacles of rock are usually found in the deep silt, rising barely 10 feet above the dust or reaching majestic heights of hundreds of feet. Crags that have been worn away by centuries of blowing sand have level crowns, while those newly uncovered are cracked and pointed at the top.


Most crags have no benefits for travelers except as places for fliers to land. Few have sources of water, and most have no vegetation of any sort clinging to them. Some crags do serve as homes to flying creatures who hunt the Sea of Silt for prey, and thus should be avoided.

Important locations in the Sea of Silt are described later in this chapter.

## West of the Tyr Region

Traveling west from the Tyr Region, the Ringing Mountains and Forest Ridge give way to the Hinterlands. This wide band of scrub plains ends at the edge of the





Jagged Cliffs. The information presented for these locations in Chapters Two and Three holds true for the expanses covered by the southern map. One important feature of the area that was produced by the Great Earthquake is the Great Rift. The Rift and other important locations are discussed later in this chapter.

## South of the Tyr Region

Three distinct land types form parallel bands as a traveler moves south from the Tyr Region. The first band is a continuation of the Tablelands, made up of the familiar stony barrens, sandy wastes, rocky badlands, and scrub plains terrain types. The second band is a huge expanse of sandy wastes that stretches from east to west. This area is called the Endless Sand Dunes for obvious reasons. The third band, which continues on to the south past the limits of the known world, is an obsidian plain known as the Dead Land. In addition, the Great Salt Flat separates the Dead Land from the Sea of Silt and creates another natural barrier for travelers.

Important locations south of the Tyr Region, including the haunted plains of the Dead Land, are discussed later in this chapter.

## Eastern Locations

The Sea of Silt and the shores it touches contain a number of important locations. Some can provide solace to weary travelers. Others are dangerous and should be avoided. These locations are *Ket*, the *Road of Fire*, *Shault*, the *Mountains of the Sun*, the *Silt Archipelago*, and the *Valley of the Cerulean Storm*. Each is detailed below.

### Ket

The remote village of Ket lies just north of the Tyr Region, in a dust basin near the trade road that connects Draji to Kurn. Ket is a client village of Draji, sitting on a mud flat surrounded completely by silt. A narrow, mile-long causeway provides the only access to the village. Approximately 500 people make their homes here.

The merchant houses of Draji maintain outposts in Ket. They do lucrative business buying the excess food grown in the fertile mud flat and transporting it to other locations. A garrison protects the merchant outposts (and, subsequently, the village) from giants and raiders.


### The Road of Fire

A chain of volcanic islands stretches into the Sea of Silt. These islands are collectively known as the Road of Fire, though each one has its own name. The three major islands, named in the giant tongue, are Dhuurghaz (Furyfire), Avegdaar (Hellglow), and Morghaz (Dawnfire). These islands are mostly desolate and lifeless. Choking ash and black, smoking lava plains bathe them in dust and fire. Despite the terrible conditions, small clans of giants struggle to make homes on these islands. The recent creation of the Cerulean Storm adds to the hardships, as clouds of steaming mist sometimes drift toward the island chain. The mist cools significantly by the time it hits land, but it still sizzles with burn-inducing steam.

Dhuurghaz is inhabited by several small clans of beasthead giants. These giants have short tempers and foul dispositions. They often wade through the silt to the mainland in order to raid small settlements and isolated traders.

Avegdaar houses a tribe of desert giants who actually welcome visitors to their island. These giants are starved for trade with the outside world, and brave merchants willing to make the trip can reap large rewards.

No giants live on the island of Morghaz. In fact, most giants believe the place is haunted. This was the most fertile spot in the island chain, as its volcanoes have been silent for a long time. However, its proximity to the steaming clouds of the



Cerulean Storm make it a hellish place to visit. Ruins near the island's southern shore are named for the preserver who once lived there. Haakar overlooks the Silt Sea and now houses the undead spirit of the preserver. The spirit continues to defend the ruins and the secrets they contain, but it has also been known to give aid to groups of good adventurers—especially those fighting against defiling magic.

## Shault

The green, forested isle of Shault is one of the most pleasing locations in the entire Silt Sea. The powerful druid Mearedes (female human/16th-level druid/N) and a clan of good giants protect the island, making sure its resources aren't abused. Legends claim that Mearedes came to the island when its forest was all but dead and has since nurtured it back to vibrant health. Whatever the history of the place, travelers should be warned that the druid and the giants eagerly attack those who would despoil the island paradise.

A mysterious ruin of white marble sits at the heart of the forest. The overgrown ruin is all that remains of a once large and strikingly beautiful city. The druid and the giants avoid the ruin, as dangerous predators infest it.

## The Mountains of the Sun

The ancient range of mountains called the Mountains of the Sun are rounded domes of granite that block out the view of a large portion of the Cerulean Storm. Most of the peaks and valleys are barren, and little sources of fresh water exist. Separated from the mainland for thousands upon thousands of years, the mountains can only support the toughest, most tenacious creatures. Wyverns and rots make homes in the highest peaks, while hardy erdlus cling to the areas where sparse vegetation still grows. There are predators as well, including a wide variety of spiders.

Scattered groups of intelligent beings struggle to survive in these worn, dying mountains. Small clans of aarakocra inhabit the high crags, living as primitive hunters. Tribes of monstrous hej-kin live underground and guard many of the hidden water sources. A few groups of feral dwarves, remnants of civilized colonists trapped here long ago, have degenerated into savage cannibals who are at war with the spiders and hej-kin.


Since the appearance of the Cerulean Storm, the eastern side of the mountains have become uninhabitable. Clouds of boiling steam smash into the mountains on a regular basis, killing whatever is out in the open at the time. All of the creatures living in the mountains have learned to migrate to the western slopes in order to avoid the deadly clouds of steam.

## The Silt Archipelago

Shallow silt and mud flats make up the region known as the Silt Archipelago. Existing here is the last remnant of the fabled sea of water that once filled the basin. The area is marked by the Vanishing Lake at the north and three islands surrounded by mud flats, which range in depth from thick-crust, waist-deep puddles to central areas so wet that crust never forms and the depths reach as much as 30 feet.

The Vanishing Lake is more than 20 miles long and 5 miles wide at the peak of its cycle. The lake, as its name implies, actually vanishes as time goes by. Then, when conditions come full circle, it returns. The open water of the lake is surrounded by a silty mire that seems to consume the lake as the cycle progresses. Even when the water disappears, the silty mire remains, forming one of the most fertile mud flats on all of Athas.

Parts of the mud flat have a crust solid enough to support villages and crop fields. Humans, dwarves, and giants live in the region, and the druid known only as the Old One (male human/19th-level druid/N) guards the lake from defilers and others seeking to spoil the land.



The people who live among the mud flats and islands of the archipelago tend to cooperate over the distribution of the area's resources. Trade between the villages is a way of life here. They even team up to defend themselves against slavers and raiders from the Tyr Region. While intruders are frowned upon, traders are usually welcomed by the villages. Balic's small trading houses, for example, trade mekillot hide and bone, kank honey, and finished goods for food, wood, hemp, and giant hair.

Humans in the region maintain farming communities, trade villages, and hunting tribes. Nomadic traders wander the mud flats in silt skimmers, while the hunters make use of domesticated pteraxes that they use as flying mounts.

Dwarves of the archipelago are primarily traders who have refined silt-skimmer construction techniques into an art form. They maintain a few villages, but mostly travel in small family groups aboard their skimmers. When the Vanishing Lake is at the height of its cycle and travel is most difficult, four to six family groups join up to perform repairs on their vehicles and raise crops for a time.

Giants live on the three islands of Darna, Muln, and Vaas. These are among the friendliest and most peaceful giants on Athas. Most raise livestock on the islands, but some sell their services as silt waders and cargo haulers. Their frequent dealings with humans and dwarves have formed a special bond of friendship that often surprises visiting traders.

The southern portion of the island of Muln used to be cut off by a wide trench of silt. The changes in the earth have subtly altered the island, making it much larger than it once was. The giants of Muln always left the southern reaches alone, but now that the connection is more permanent they have begun making overtures to the people living there—the people of the village of Euripis.

Euripis is a society of *ukoven*, or half-elementals. Like the lesser genies of other worlds, the half-elementals of Euripis have abilities and powers that give them an edge over the other races of Athas. These abilities, however, can only be used if the *ukoven* maintain contact with the element that sustains them. In addition, if they range far from their island home, the *ukoven* slowly die. For every day they stay away, they must spend six days rejuvenating themselves in the elemental springs of Euripis. If any *ukoven* fails to return to the springs after more than ten days, he risks death and the permanent loss of his abilities.

The inhabitants of Euripis are philosophers and artisans. They welcome friendly visitors who truly want to admire the half-elementals' work or learn whatever knowledge they feel like teaching at the time. They aren't a violent people, but they will use their powers to defend themselves against attacks. Currently, the half-elementals are establishing peaceful relations with their neighbors to the north.

## The Valley of the Cerulean Storm

Once the Valley of Dust and Fire was home to Ur Draxa, the city-state of the Dragon, all surrounded by a vast sea of seething lava. A giant rainstorm formed by the last battle with Rajaat the Warbringer has severely changed the face of this region. The raging blue storm, known as the Cerulean Storm, now covers the entire valley with lightning and thunder, roiling clouds and torrential rain. The storm has been raging for four months, and it shows no signs of venting its energy any time soon.

As the constant rain strikes the sea of lava, great clouds of scalding steam rise high into the sky. This boiling steam has made the valley's deepest interior uninhabitable. Even the rim of the valley is deadly, because lightning flashes dance across the ground and scalding steam drifts upon every breeze. Ur Draxa and its citizens are dead, and only the most suicidal adventurers would attempt trying to reach its gates while the cold, stinging rain continues to fall over the sea of lava.

Those who are brave enough to reach the valley's outer rim might encounter the disembodied form of Tithian of Tyr, who was permanently tied to the Cerulean Storm. He can only interact with the physical world through the storm, as his body has been trapped in the dimensional space known as the Black. He has become, in effect, a spirit of water, haunting the valley and inadvertently protecting the Dark Lens that could otherwise be used to free him.



## Western Locations


The Hinterlands that lie on the western side of the Forest Ridge are mostly devoid of civilized societies. As with every rule, there are exceptions. To the southwest, civilized pterrans live in the villages of *Pterrann Vale* and *Lost Scale*. These advanced lizard men seek to establish trade routes with the Tyr Region since the devastation wrought by the Great Earthquake. That natural disaster formed the Great Rift, a wound slicing deeply through the Jagged Cliffs to the Crimson Savanna beyond. At the bottom of the rift, evidence of another civilization has been put in place—*Si'jidzak (the Battle Wall)*, a massive fortified wall set up by the tohr-kreen of the north. Each of these locations is detailed below.

### Pterrann Vale and Lost Scale

The villages of the civilized pterrans of the Hinterlands are known as *Pterrann Vale* and *Lost Scale*. In addition to the twin villages, a few smaller settlements are scattered around the area. There are approximately 10,000 pterrans living in the Hinterlands communities.

*Pterrann Vale* is by far the largest settlement, with 4,000 permanent residents. The pterrans live in lodges built over hollowed out pits. The lodges are made using bones and hides taken from the larger creatures wandering the Hinterlands, including mekillots and inixes. The pterrans farm, hunt, and raise herds. They are also fine crafters, making some of the best bone weapons and tools in the known world.

*Lost Scale* consists of only 2,000 villagers. Originally, the community was established after the pterrans had a split along religious lines. Some continued on toward the Tablelands and became the primitive pterrans that still reside there today. Others settled the village of *Lost Scale*. The disagreements that led to the split have long since been



settled, and today the two villages form the basis of civilization for the pterrans of the Hinterlands.

The people of Lost Scale are recognized for their legion of pterrax riders. The best warriors of the village must travel far to the southeast to reach rocky badlands where the flying creatures reside. There, they search the canyons for pterrax eggs. Each warrior is responsible for securing one egg, and for raising and training the baby pterrax that eventually emerges.

The civilized pterrans follow the same three Life Paths as their primitive cousins to the east. The Warrior's, Druid's, and Psionist's Paths make up the foundation of pterran society. However, the civilized pterrans have lesser paths as well. Farmers, herders, crafters, and traders are all honorable, if lesser, roles for pterrans to embrace. Still, the primary paths produce the society's leaders and hold more prestige than the lesser paths.

As in the more primitive pterran societies, the ceremonies and celebrations of their religion feature prominently in every aspect of pterran life. They revere Athas, the Earth Mother, and the Great Earthquake and subsequent aftershocks are believed to be a call to the Earth Mother's children to get more involved in the affairs of the planet. To this end, explorers have been sent to the east to make contact with other civilizations. Diplomatic relations have already been established with the Free City of Tyr, and negotiations are under way with a number of adventurous merchant houses.

Each pterran village is led by a Triumvirate, comprised of the eldest tribal member from each of the primary Life Paths. In smaller communities, the entire tribe is consulted before a decision is made, but in the larger villages the Triumvirate is empowered to decide for the entire community.

## The Great Rift

Formed by the violent upheavals of the Great Earthquake, the Great Rift is an irregular crevice that's wide at the Jagged Cliffs and narrows to a point just south of the Dragon Crown Mountains. The rough walls drop straight down to a gently declining floor that reaches almost the level of the Hinterlands, then slowly dips the two miles necessary to reach the level of the Crimson Savanna as it runs toward the west. At its widest point, the Rift opens for 25 miles.


The gentle incline makes for an easy climb from the highlands to the lowlands. At the bottom of the Rift, the foul swamp that stretches along the base of the Cliffs waits, though as luck would have it the Rift's mouth opens at the swamp's narrowest location. A few strange monsters from the swamp have moved into the Rift, and gaping holes in the Rift's walls allow some subterranean horrors to emerge. As such, the Rift isn't a safe place to travel.

Tohr-kreen loyal to the Kreen Empire are using the Rift as a means for reaching the highlands. So far, only exploratory teams have made it into the highlands, but the kreen are definitely investigating the possibility of launching a full-scale invasion in preparation for expanding their empire.

## Si'jidzak

A few miles into the Rift but still near the bottom of the incline, the kreen have built a fortified wall and stronghold they call the Si'jidzak. Literally translated as "the Battle Wall," the Si'jidzak is made of sand and the exuded resins of slave insects. The wall is nearly 500 feet tall. The sand has been piled and shaped, then coated with a hard, smooth, crystalline material. A rounded building constructed in the same fashion stands against the wall. It's about 40 feet tall, serving as a silent sentry beside a pair of massive gates.

The Si'jidzak serves two functions. First, it allows the kreen to monitor what gets to enter the Rift, thereby keeping the creatures of the swamp from migrating into the highlands. Second, it serves as a base for exploration teams sent into the highlands to discover the lay of the land. Additionally, the warriors assigned to protect the



Battle Wall are also on hand to keep highlanders from invading the Crimson Savanna. The kreen don't recognize nonkreen societies as threats (or even as civilizations), but they do know that wild beasts can cause a degree of harm if allowed to run free.

## Southern Locations

The lands south of the Tyr Region start out fairly hospitable, but quickly turn harsh and even deadly. Still, there are places of interest that travelers may try to reach. Their reasons may be simple curiosity or outright greed, but the routes they must cross contain all kinds of unique hazards. The locations of the southern lands include *Celik*, the oases of *Durg's Puddle* and *Last Drink*, a stone edifice called the *Crimson Monolith*, the obsidian plain called the *Dead Land*, a ruin known as *Small Home*, and lastly, *The City of a Thousand Dead*. All are described below.

### Celik

Celik is an ancient city that was one of the jewels in the crown of Green Age domains. Now mostly a jumble of ruins, it nevertheless continues to function as a city thanks to those who live there. The citizens of Celik are a mixture of retired adventurers, outcasts from other societies, ex-slaves, and humanoids from the wastes who have gathered in the city for the protection, resources, and wealth the location promises.

Korsun (male human/16th-level trader/LN), the patriarch of the merchant house of Mareneth, controls the city. All of its assets and citizens belong to him. Mareneth was the primary merchant house of the city-state of Kalidnay. When that city was destroyed, the members of the house who were away at the time decided to set up their own community in order to survive. After a little bit of searching, the house's agents found the ruins of Celik. The call went out for brave warriors to help clear out all vermin and dangerous creatures, and within a year a small portion of the ruins were made habitable. Today, almost 60 percent of the city is occupied by the merchant house and its retainers. The rest of the ruins remain wild and dangerous, sealed behind walls and fences thrown up to keep whatever resides there from emerging into the living city.

In Celik, the merchant house holds the same position as the sorcerer-kings of the cities to the north. Patriarch Korsun rules like a king, with his family, agents, and caravan troops serving as the city's nobility. Everyone else in the city is considered to be free citizens, though they're actually indentured servants who must earn their freedom by laboring for the house. Any intelligent, healthy being is welcome in Celik, provided he or she agrees to the terms of servitude. As long as the terms are being met, the citizens receive food, water, a place to live, and small amounts of spending money to use in the taverns and gaming halls run by the elf tribes who occupy a district within the living city.

The city is divided into two portions: the living city and the ruins. The living city is where all of the merchants and citizens live. Like other cities, this portion has markets and other amenities. The ruins remain untamed. Foul humanoids and even undead creatures roam within the ruins, though every year Korsun's troops absorb more of the ruins into the living city. Adventurers can make good money taking on hunting contracts for the merchant house, provided they can survive what waits within the ruins. Of course, they have to be careful about the terms of their employment. Many adventurers wind up as indentured servants of House Mareneth.

House Mareneth's traders deal with the communities living in the southern reaches of the Tyr Region, as well as with a few of the smaller elf tribes. Caravans flying the house's colors make regular trips to the seven cities of the north, though they mainly trade with Balic and North and South Ledopolus. In general, the traders try to keep a low profile, as Korsun prefers that his city remain mostly a mystery to the people of the north.



## Durg's Puddle

Located in the western portion of the Endless Sand Dunes, to the southwest of Celik, Durg's Puddle is a tiny oasis with a small but clean pond at its center. The place wouldn't deserve mention if not for the fact that the trade caravans from Celik use it as a resting point on the route that House Mareneth maintains to the southwest. Though Durg's Puddle is an independent facility, the merchant house and other travelers provide the tribe that runs it with plenty of supplies and enough wealth to pay for the troops that defend it.

The half-giant Durg (male half-giant/9th-level fighter, 9th-level water cleric/?G) leads the small band that runs the oasis. Though he never talks about where he comes from, Durg is otherwise very friendly and outgoing. Like all half-giants, he tends to emulate the attitudes and customs of those that stop at the oasis for a visit. Durg, as a water cleric, has chosen this site as his temple and home. Though friendly, he can become savage when called upon to defend the oasis.

Durg's followers never number more than 20, and they're mostly ex-gladiators who escaped from the arenas to the north. The half-giant also keeps an additional 20 hired warriors on hand to help protect the oasis. Even though the Puddle's defenders aren't numerous, most of the raiders and predatory tribes in the area know that troops loyal to House Mareneth also watch over the oasis.

## Last Drink

The oasis village of Last Drink lies in the eastern portion of the Endless Sand Dunes. The bubbling spring and small patch of fertile land around it appear incongruous in the middle of the sandy waste, but the sight can also be very welcome to thirsty travelers. Unfortunately, the location has been claimed by a clan of desert giants who refuse to let anyone else near the oasis.

There are about a dozen adult giants in the clan, with a similar number of children. The clan's chief, Ogflo, led his people to this spot two years ago. After a short battle, the giants killed or drove off the dwarves who used to maintain the village. Ogflo and his clan have no desire for ceramic pieces or silver, so travelers shouldn't hope to purchase food and water. In fact, they should prepare for combat, as the giants tend to attack anyone who comes close to the village.

However, the clan will trade food and water for goods and supplies. Travelers must survive the combat before such negotiations can be opened, but afterward Ogflo will entertain all reasonable offers. Weapons, materials that aren't available in the wastes, and finished goods from the cities and villages of the north all appeal to Ogflo and his people. How much water a cord of mekillot bones is worth depends on the current needs of the giants, though Ogflo tends to be fair once actual trading commences.

## The Crimson Monolith


The blood-red needle called the Crimson Monolith rises from the eastern dunes, piercing the blazing sky like a stone sword blade. The needle is made of an unknown red stone. It's smooth and warm to the touch, and some claim it even pulses like a living thing. The base is about 15 feet around, and it tapers to a point about 40 feet above the ground. It has no seams, no obvious doors or windows, and no apparent function. No one knows who built it or how long ago it was constructed. It simply stands alone amid the rises and falls of the sand dunes like a lonely trail marker.

Travelers claim that on nights when the twin moons are high in the sky, strange creatures emerge from the monolith to explore the nearby dunes. These creatures simply step out of the solid stone, for no doors appear to open the way. When the moons begin to disappear, giving way to the crimson dawn, the beings step back into the monolith as silently and mysteriously as they arrived.









Accounts of these beings vary wildly. Some tales say they are either tanar'ri or baatezu from another plane of existence. Others claim that the beings are the ghosts of some ancient age, returning to haunt the place where they once lived. The most likely stories describe the beings as unknown denizens of another part of Athas who use either magic or psionics to travel to the site of the monolith. Whatever the case, the tales concerning these beings grow each time another group of travelers return from a trip across the Endless Sand Dunes.

## The Dead Land

The Endless Sand Dunes eventually give way to a steep drop in the land. At the bottom of sheer, jagged cliffs, a vast plain of blackest obsidian stretches beyond the limits of the known territory. Most of the plain is smooth, flat, black glass, though in places the plain is shattered and great jagged chunks of glass jut into the sky. Other areas appear to be flat and smooth, but are actually covered with sharp grooves and rivulets that can slice even the toughest boots to shreds.

No living creatures inhabit this desolate area. There's nothing to eat on the obsidian plain, little to drink, and few places to find shelter from the wind and sun. There are no breaks in the glass where vegetation can thrive. No fresh sources of water bubble up among the cracks and fissures. Some water does collect in depressions when a rare rainstorm explodes over the plain, but the water quickly stagnates and turns bad before the heat of the day causes it to evaporate completely. A few clumps of bushes and groves of trees rise out of breaks in the obsidian, but whatever foul magic formed the plain has also turned these once-living plants into black stone.

An ancient, terrible battle of the Cleansing Wars was fought at this site. In the battle, the land was slain and hundreds of thousands of beings were killed. Now undead creatures of all descriptions roam the plains and canyons of ebon glass. Most of these undead creatures are the remains of the slaughtered races, beings that no longer exist on Athas—at least not as living creatures. Strange beings with stranger names haunt the plains, wailing over the injustices they suffered and calling for revenge against Rajaat and his infernal Champions. In life they were called kobolds and ogres, orcs, lizard men, and trolls. They had names like gnomes and pixies and goblins. Now they're spirits, skeletons, and other forms of corporeal and incorporeal undead. The hatred they hold for all living things sustains them, keeping them tied to the physical world long after their bodies have died.

In some places, mindless undead continue to reenact the desperate battles they fought in life against the armies of the Champions. If living travelers come across one of these battle sites, the undead will attack them as though they were their ancient foes. In other places, solitary spirits moan for a world that has long since faded from view. There are intelligent undead on the plains as well, usually acting as leaders for the hordes of mindless zombies and skeletons that have lost their way. In all cases, when a being with the spark of life is detected, the undead flock to that spark for the warmth and sustenance it can provide. Such life sparks are as water is to a living man, and the undead of the haunted plains are very, very thirsty.

Somewhere in the center of this haunted plain, an Obsidian Citadel rises over the fields of glass. From this bleak fortress, a powerful undead creature gathers the lost spirits and troubled souls into a massive army. The thing plans to eventually lead its army out of the Dead Land and into the realms where the living creatures of Athas still hold sway. On that day, this undead lord hopes to gain revenge against Rajaat and all others who still draw breath beneath the crimson sun.

## Small Home

The ruins known as Small Home sit on the western edge of the obsidian plain. In the Green Age, this place of small buildings with ornate decorations was the home of beings called gnomes. Now the place has been covered by the same layer of black glass that coats everything in the Dead Land, and hordes of short undead

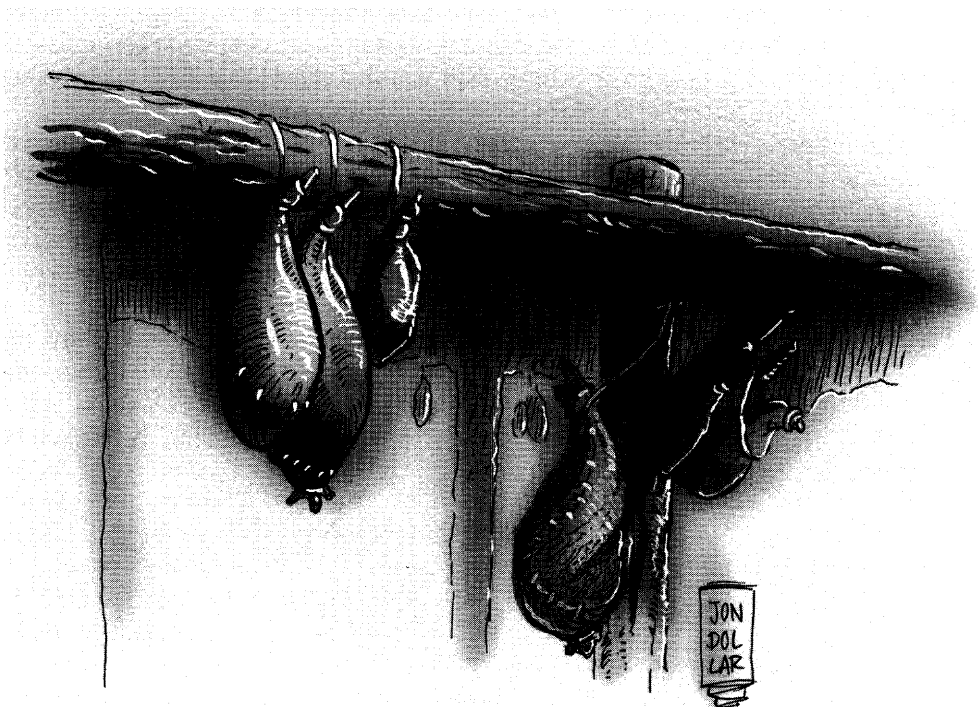
creatures roam the area. If any living beings approach the ruins, the sparks of life within them draw the undead like caravans draw raiders. The undead are as unique as all the undead of Athas, though there are large hordes of zombies and skeletons. All of the undead in Small Home were once either gnomes or pixies, though few of Athas's current inhabitants know what gnomes or pixies are.

## The City of a Thousand Dead

A massive city of obsidian stretches for more than a mile in every direction from its center in the eastern portion of the Dead Land. Hordes of mindless or near-mindless undead follow the commands of troll kaishargas, gnome raaigs, and new forms of undead unique to the haunted plains. While miles of the glass plains seem deserted and devoid of both living and undead creatures, the area around this ruined city is literally crawling with undead beings of all descriptions. They appear at night, emerging from the shadows to resume their dances of misery and songs of revenge.

This city was once a massive demihuman and humanoid metropolis, where all races lived in peace. It was, however, an abomination in Rajaan's eyes, so it was one of the first places targeted by the crusades of the Cleansing Wars. As few living beings have explored this city since it fell to the Champions, many secrets and treasures remain hidden within the glass-coated buildings. Unfortunately, most of the treasures have been tainted by the obsidian coating, and none of the undead creatures will allow living beings to enter the city anyway. In the rare instances when treasures have been liberated from the city, tales of horrible curses have been associated with them.

One legend claims that a huge undead creature resides beneath the obsidian city. According to the tale, the beast was created by the inhabitants of the city to defend it against the Champions' troops. This happened late in the battle, so it was never released to fight like it was designed to. Instead, it has become as undead as those it was created to defend. The legend goes on to say that the creature doesn't follow the commands of any of the undead lords. It has its own agenda that could even mean the destruction of the undead of the city-if it were to get loose from whatever binds it to its subterranean lair.



# The Wanderer's Journal

*Life is a mysterious and resilient thing. Even in the starkest wastes of Athas, the careful observer finds it clinging to the horns of sand dunes, peeking out from beneath wind-racked boulders, and creeping along the cracked plains of sun-baked clay.*

*To survive, almost every form of life has become a monster in one sense or another. These adaptations have taken an almost diabolical turn. Because the world is so barren, to some extent every creature is both predator and prey.*

*Be cautioned, traveler. For even the most passive beast and sweetest flower is often deadly on Athas. In a world where creatures must kill or be killed, this is only logical. Still, many people forget this rule when they see a brightly colored plant or a seemingly friendly ball of scales roll by.*

*Some monsters are simple beasts, with no more intelligence than the cunning necessary to stalk prey or elude predators. Others are geniuses with powers and abilities far beyond the means of the average people struggling to survive. I can report that some monsters, like the Dragon, have been destroyed, but others rise up to take his place.*

...

## CHAPTER 5:

# Monsters of Athas

Strange and terrifying monsters populate the world of Athas. There are beasts and races that exist nowhere else, as well as unique undead creatures that make the ghosts and vampires of other campaigns pale in comparison. There are also creatures with familiar names that have evolved into totally unrecognizable monsters beneath the crimson sun.

For a broad selection of Athasian monsters, look to the two DARK SUN MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM appendices available: *Terrors of the Desert* (2405) and *Terrors Beyond Tyr* (2433). Between them, these two accessories contain more than 150 monsters to use in this setting. In addition, with a little work, many of the creatures appearing in the *MONSTROUS MANUAL* tome can also be placed in an Athasian environment.

In this book, we can only include a few monsters. We've selected those that should be readily available for play. Thus, domestic animals that serve as mounts for adventurers are a must, such as kanks and mekillots. Dregoth, the new villain most likely to replace the Dragon as the true terror of Athas, is also included, as is an entry on the unique giants that live in the wastes beyond the few centers of civilization that still cling to the ruins of this world.

Besides the normal statistics provided on all MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM pages, the monsters that follow include two psionics listings that are compatible with both *The Complete Psionics Handbook* (2117) rules and the new psionics rules included with this boxed set. Statistics printed in color relate specifically to the new rules.

# Animal, Domestic

## Erdlu

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Tablelands/ Hinterlands
FREQUENCY:	Common
ORGANIZATION:	Flock
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Day
DIET:	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Animal (1)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
No. APPEARING:	50-500 (5d10x10)
ARMOR CLASS:	7
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	3
THACO:	17
No. OF ATTACKS:	2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d6/1d4
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Speed
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (7 feet tall)
MORALE:	Average (10)
LEVEL/XP VALUE:	65
PSIONICS SUMMARY:	Nil
<i>Player's Option:</i>	MAC 8

## Inix

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Tablelands/ Hinterlands
FREQUENCY:	Uncommon
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Day
DIET:	Herbivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Animal (1)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
No. APPEARING:	1 or 2
ARMOR CLASS:	6
MOVEMENT:	15
HIT DICE:	6
THACO:	15
No. OF ATTACKS:	2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d6/1d8
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Crush
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	H (16 feet long)
MORALE:	Steady (12)
LEVEL/XP VALUE:	650
PSIONICS SUMMARY:	Nil
<i>Player's Option:</i>	MAC 8

**Erdlus** are large flightless, featherless birds covered with flaky scales that range in color from pale gray to deep red. An erdlu can weigh as much as 200 pounds and grow to a height of 7 feet. Its massive, round body has a pair of useless wings that fold in at its sides. A snakelike neck rises to a small round head with a huge, wedge-shaped beak. A pair of powerful, lanky legs extend down from the body and end in four-toed, razor-clawed feet.

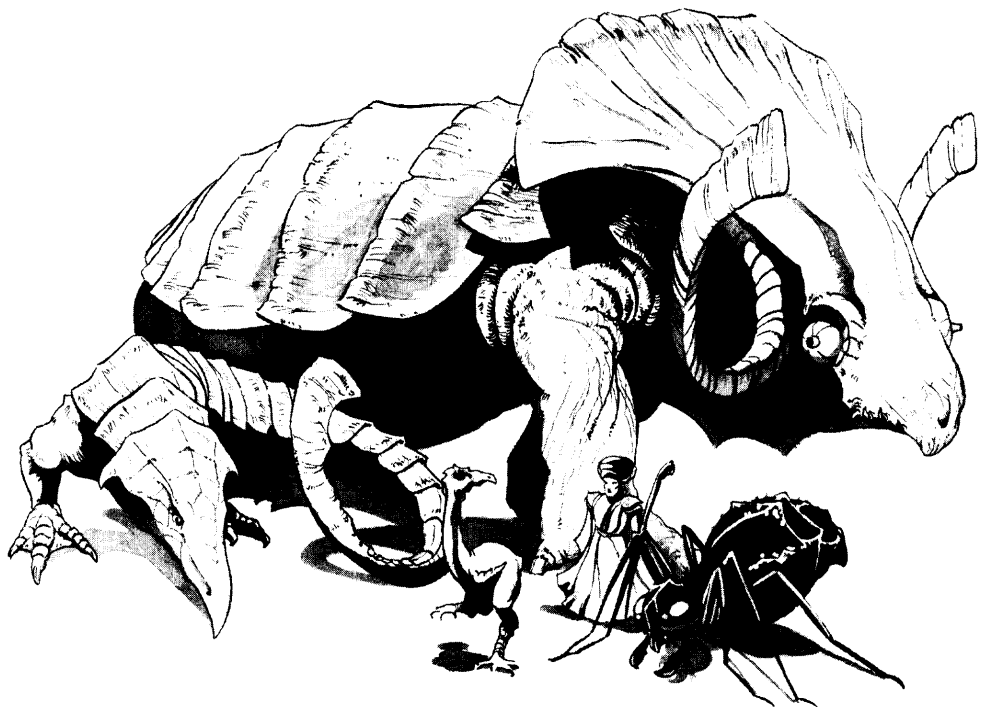
Erdlus make ideal herd animals because of their temperaments and ability to survive on a variety of foods. They can eat many forms of tough vegetation, as well as snakes, reptiles, and insects. The eggs that erdlus provide are an excellent source of nutrition. A diet of erdlu eggs can keep a human or demihuman alive for months at a time, for the eggs are packed with a variety of nutrients and essential vitamins. If an erdlu egg is eaten raw, it is a substitute for one gallon of water. However, this substitution isn't perfect and can only be used successfully for no more than one week. The meat of an erdlu also makes an excellent meal.

In groups, erdlus instinctively flock together for protection. If threatened, these creatures usually flee. For short distances of no more than half a mile, erdlus can race along at great speeds (movement rate 18). Their normal walking pace is much slower (movement rate 12). When escape isn't possible, the flock turns and fights as a group. They strike first with sharp beaks (inflicting 1d6 points of damage) then rake with one of their claws (causing 1d4 points of damage).

The hard scales of an erdlu's wings can be fashioned into shields or even armor (with an AC of 6), its beak can be used to make fine spearheads, and its claws can be crafted into daggers or tools.

An **inix** is a large lizard that falls between kanks and mekillots for sheer size. It weighs about two tons and grows to lengths of 16 feet. The inix's back is protected by a thick shell, while flexible scales cover its underside.

Inixes make spirited mounts. They move at a steady pace for as much as a full day and night without needing rest (movement rate 15), and can reach speeds equivalent to a kank (movement rate 18) for short distances (one mile). They can carry as much as 750 pounds of passengers and cargo. Inix riders often travel in *howdahs*, small boxlike carriages strapped to the lizard's back. The major drawback to the inix is that it needs large amounts of vegetation and must forage every few hours to maintain its strength. If an inix doesn't get enough to eat, it becomes nearly impossible to control. For this reason, these lizards aren't used on trips where forage land is scarce.



# Kank

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Tablelands/ Hinterlands
FREQUENCY:	Common
ORGANIZATION:	Hive
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Animal (1)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
No. APPEARING:	50-500 (5d10x10)
ARMOR CLASS:	5
MOVEMENT:	15
HIT DICE:	2
THACO:	19
No. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d6
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Poison
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	L (8 feet long)
MORALE:	Elite (14)
LEVEL/XP VALUE:	35
PSIONICS SUMMARY:	Nil
<i>Player's Option:</i>	MAC 7

# Mekillot

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Tablelands/ Hinterlands
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Day
DIET:	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Animal (1)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
No. APPEARING:	1 or 2
ARMOR CLASS:	7 (9)
MOVEMENT:	9
HIT DICE:	11
THACO:	9
No. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d8
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Swallow, crush
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	G (30 feet long)
MORALE:	Steady (12)
LEVEL/XP VALUE:	6,000
PSIONICS SUMMARY:	Nil
<i>Player's Option:</i>	MAC 5

An inix can attack with its tail, slapping for 1d6 points of damage, and deliver a powerful bite (1d8 points of damage) in a single round. On a natural roll of 20 when making a biting attack, the inix grasps any human-sized or smaller target. This target receives an additional 1d20 points of crushing damage.

Inix shells make very good armor (AC 5), while the flexible scales of an inix's underside can be woven into a fine leather mesh (AC 7).

**Kanks** are large docile insects often used as mounts by the people of the Tablelands. A black exoskeleton of chitin covers their segmented bodies. The three body sections are the head, thorax, and abdomen. They weigh as much as 400 pounds, grow to heights of 4 feet at the back, and as long as 8 feet from head to abdomen. Around their mouths they have multijointed pincers that they can use to carry objects, feed themselves, or fight. Six lanky legs descend from their thoraxes. Each ends in a single flexible claw that allows them to grip the surfaces they walk upon.

Kanks are often used as caravan mounts. They can travel a full day at their top speed, carrying a 200-pound passenger and 200 pounds of cargo. Kanks make decent herd animals, but usually only elves employ them as such. As kanks can digest almost any sort of organic matter, they can thrive in most terrain types. In addition, these creatures require little special attention. A kank hive instinctively organizes itself into *food producers*, *soldiers*, and *brood queens*.

Food producing kanks secrete melon-sized globules of green honey. These are stored in their abdomens and used to feed the hive's young. (When other sources of food are scarce, this honey is also used to feed the rest of the hive.) Humans and demihumans can live exclusively on this nectar for up to three weeks before their bodies begin demanding other sources of nutrition, such as meats and vegetables. The sweet taste of the nectar is the only thing that attracts herders to these creatures, and domesticated kanks produce more globules than those living in the wild.

When the brood queens prepares to lay eggs, the hive digs into an area of extensive vegetation. Each queen can lay 20 to 50 eggs. While the hive waits for the eggs to hatch (it won't move from the spot until they do), the soldier kanks ferociously defend the area from all predators. Herders must wait as well or abandon the hive.

A kank's pincers cause 1d6 points of damage. In addition, a target hit by the pincers must save versus poison or be paralyzed in 2d12 rounds. The effects of the poison wear off after 2d6 hours. Note that only soldier kanks produce poison. Food producing kanks can fight if necessary, but brood queens never join in a battle—even to defend themselves or their young.

While the globules of honey produced by kanks are sweet and good tasting, only the most desperate carrion eater will consume kank flesh. When a kank dies, its body produces chemicals that drench the meat with a foul-smelling odor that can make even the hungriest giant sick.

Kank chitin can be fashioned into armor (AC 5), though its brittle nature makes it susceptible to shattering. Every time the armor is hit, there's a 20% chance it will shatter and be rendered useless.

**Mekillots** are mighty lizards weighing up to six tons. They have huge, mound-shaped bodies growing to lengths of 30 feet. A thick shell covers the back and head of a mekillot, providing protection from the sun and good defense (AC 7) against attacks. Its underside has a softer shell that's more vulnerable to damage (AC 9).

Mekillots have savage dispositions, but their size and great strength make them excellent caravan beasts. A hitched pair of mekillots can pull a wagon weighing up to 20 tons at a slow, plodding pace. Caravan leaders must be prepared for their unpredictable natures, however. As they can never be truly tamed, the stubborn creatures have been known to turn off the road and go wandering for no apparent reason—still drawing their loaded wagons. Mekillots are also noted for eating their handlers and other members of a caravan team. Psionicist handlers are best equipped to deal with these difficult beasts.

In combat, a mekillot's long tongue strikes with amazing speed and power (inflicting 1d8 points of damage). On a natural roll of 20, the tongue grasps the target it hit and pulls it toward the mekillot's gaping maw. The target must save versus paralyzation or be swallowed whole. Swallowed beings are nearly helpless. They can't use any attack forms except for psionics, and after 2d6 hours they are consumed by the beast's digestive juices.

Mekillots have a second special attack form, but it's used as a purely defensive reaction. When something crawls beneath a mekillot, the creature instinctively drops to its belly to protect its softer undershell. The weight of the mekillot causes crushing damage (2d12 points), but the beast may also sustain injury depending on what it falls upon.

# Dregoth, the Undead Dragon King



CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	New Giustenal
FREQUENCY:	Unique
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Nil
INTELLIGENCE:	Supragenius (20)
TREASURE:	H
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic evil
No. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	- 8
MOVEMENT:	15, Fl 18 (C)
HIT DICE:	29th-level dragon (173 hit points)
THACO:	- 1
No. OF ATTACKS:	3
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	2d10/2d10/4d12
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	40%
SIZE:	G (30 feet tall)
MORALE:	Fearless (20)
LEVEL/XP VALUE:	28,000
PSIONICS SUMMARY:	Dis 5/Sci 28/Dev 60; PS 18; PSPs 327 Att: all; Def: all
<i>Player's Option:</i>	#AT 3/2; MTHACO 1; MAC -5

**Clairsentience:** *Sciences*— aura sight, clairaudience, clairvoyance, object reading; *Devotions*— combat mind, danger sense, feel sound, know direction, know location, psionic sense, see magic, spirit sense.


**Psychokinesis:** *Sciences*— create object, detonate, disintegrate, molecular rearrangement, telekinesis; *Devotions*— animate object, animate shadow, ballistic attack, control body, control flames, control sound, control wind, inertial barrier, levitation, magnetize.

**Psychometabolism:** *Sciences*— complete healing, death field, energy containment, life draining, metamorphosis, shadowform; *Devotions*— aging, biofeedback, body control, cat-fall, cause decay, chameleon power, displacement, double pain, enhancement, heightened senses, mind over body, prolong, suspend animation.

**Psychoportation:** *Sciences*— banishment, summon planar creature, summon planar energy, teleport, teleport other; *Devotions*— astral projection, blink, dimensional blade, dimensional door, dimension walk, dream travel, ethereal traveler, phase, shadow walk, summon object, teleport trigger, wrench.

**Telepathy:** *Sciences*— aura alteration, domination, empower, mass domination, mindlink, psychic crush (**mindwipe**), tower of iron will (**probe**), ultrablast; *Devotions*— aversion, awe, conceal thoughts, contact (**identity penetration**), ego whip (**attraction**), ESP, id insinuation (**psychic messenger**), inflict pain, intellect fortress (**false sensory input**), invisibility, mental barrier (**life detection**), mind thrust (**psionic vampirism**), phobia amplification, psionic blast (**synaptic static**), psychic drain, send thoughts, thought shield (**mind bar**)

The Dread King Dregoth was killed almost 2,000 years ago by the combined powers of seven sorcerer-kings. Shortly thereafter, Dregoth rose as the undead dragon king. While Dregoth is a unique being, his new state is very similar to that of a *kaisharga*, a lichlike creature native to Athas. He has existed in this state since the day of his return, neither dead nor alive, neither fully human nor fully dragon.



In life, Dregoth was a 29th-level dragon, on the verge of achieving the final stage of metamorphosis. He had been a champion of Rajaat the Warbringer, a general in the devastating Cleansing Wars that laid waste to the world. When it became clear the Warbringer was going to betray his Champions, Dregoth helped imprison Rajaat. Once Rajaat was safely locked away, Dregoth helped the other champions (now sorcerer-kings) turn Borys into the Dragon of Tyr to guard over the Warbringer's prison.

The sorcerer-kings decided to destroy the Dread King of Giustenal, who was next in line of the remaining Champions to become a full Dragon. They feared that the insanity that had affected Borys shortly after his transformation would soon affect Dregoth. They ambushed Dregoth in his own palace, battering him with the Way, pounding him with spells, and even striking him with weapons and fists. Dregoth fought bitterly, but the seven struck without warning. He died, and his city died with him.

Dregoth now rules a city far removed from the light of the crimson sun: the city of New Giustenal. He looks much as he did in life, one step removed from a full dragon. He is 30 feet tall and weighs 20,000 pounds. He has a dragon's form, with wings, scales, a tail, claws, and a devastating breath weapon. Dregoth's physical shape was badly damaged by the attack of the sorcerer-kings. So, his wings are torn, his body still wears the wounds inflicted upon it, and gaping holes show exposed bone in many places. The armored skin that remains is stretched thinly over the skeleton beneath. His eyes, like the eyes of all kaisharga, burn with green fire.

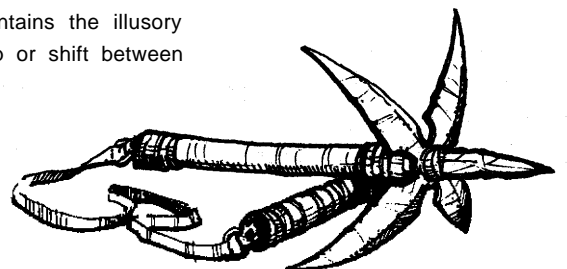
Dregoth can understand and speak all languages.

**Combat:** In addition to the psionics and spells of a 29th-level dragon, Dregoth has the abilities of a kaisharga. He uses a devastating claw/claw/bite attack that inflicts 2d10/2d10/4d12 points of damage. (The claw attacks receive an additional 10 points of damage because of Dregoth's great strength.) He can unleash a breath weapon that causes 20d12 points of damage to everything in its path. The searing cone is 5 feet wide at the base, 50 feet long, and 100 feet wide at the end. He can attack with his tail, causing 5d10 points of damage. Dregoth's undead nature gives him a chilling touch that does 1d10 points of additional damage. Characters touched need to save versus paralyzation or be paralyzed until the condition is dispelled.

The undead dragon king projects an aura of fear. It has a 60-foot range and affects creatures of 8 HD or less. These must make saving throws versus spells or flee in terror for 5d4 rounds. Dregoth can only be hit by +2 or better magical weapons. He is immune to *charm*, *sleep*, *enfeeblement*, *polymorph*, *cold*, *electricity*, *insanity*, and *death* spells. He makes all saving throws as a 21st-level wizard. Even though he's an undead creature, Dregoth can't be turned.

**Habitat/Society:** Dregoth rules the city of New Giustenal, which is located far below the ruins of the ancient city of Giustenal. He created two types of dray, one of which serves him and worships him as a god. When Dregoth isn't locked inside his Dread Palace, he wanders the planes seeking ways to become a true god. This is his quest, though he doesn't realize that godhood is impossible to achieve on Athas.

Dregoth never appears to his citizens in his true form. Instead, he wears one of two false forms in front of the masses. The first of these forms is that of a tall, regal dray. This is what most of the people of New Giustenal believe their godking to be. The second form, used on very rare occasions, is that of a living 29th-level dragon. This form is modeled after Dregoth's true form before it was corrupted by undeath. A combination of magic and psionics, much of it imbued in the amulets and rings Dregoth wears, maintains the illusory forms, though the Dread King can drop or shift between them at will.





# Giant, Athasian

	Beasthead	Desert	Plains
CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Silt Sea	Silt Sea/ Tablelands	Silt Seal Tablelands
FREQUENCY:	Rare	Uncommon	Uncommon
ORGANIZATION:	Clan	Clan	Clan
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Day	Day	Day
DIET:	Omnivore	Omnivore	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Average (8-10)	Low (5-7)	Low (5-7)
TREASURE:	0 (C)	J (I)	K (H)
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral evil	Neutral evil	Chaotic good
NO. APPEARING:	3-6 (1d4+2)	5-10 (1d6+4)	5-10 (1d6+4)
ARMOR CLASS:	3	4	5
MOVEMENT:	15	15	15
HIT DICE:	15	14	16
THACO:	5	7	5
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1	1	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	2d8+8	2d8+8	2d6+7
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Psionics, hurl rocks, bite	Hurl rocks	Hurl rocks
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Psionics	Nil	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil	Nil	Nil
SIZE:	H (20 feet tall)	H (25 feet tall)	H (25 feet tall)
MORALE:	Steady (12)	Elite (14)	Steady (12)
LEVEL/XP VALUE:	9,000	6,000	8,000
PSIONICS SUMMARY:	Dis 2/Sci 3/Dev 10; PS 12; PSPs 45 Att: EW, II, PB/ Def: MBk, IF, TW	Nil	Nil
<i>Player's Option:</i>	#AT 1; MTHACO 16; MAC 6	MAC 3	MAC 2

Athasian giants are huge, lumbering creatures who commonly inhabit the islands of the Silt Sea. The most common varieties of Athasian giants are desert, plains, and beasthead. All of these types are savage in nature. The alignments listed above reflect racial tendencies; individual giants can have any alignment.

## Beasthead Giant

**Clairsentience:** *Sciences*— aura sight, clairvoyance; *Devotions*— combat mind, danger sense, feel moisture, know direction.

**Telepathy:** *Sciences*— tower of iron will (*mindlink*); *Devotions*— conceal thoughts, ego whip (*life detection*), id insinuation (*empathy*), intellect fortress (*reptile mind*), mind blank (*sight link*), psionic blast (*beast mastery*).

Beasthead giants are the rarest of the Athasian types. They live on islands in the Sea of Silt in small clans. These humanoid giants grow to about 20 feet tall, but their heads are those of some type of beast. Some bear the head of a goat, others a lion, eagle, kirre, or wild boar. They have pale complexions with pink or alabaster skin.

As beastheads are shorter than other giants, they rarely wade into the silt. They use rocks and spears like desert giants, but have also developed a sling that tosses rocks up to 500 yards away and causes 2d8 points of damage. In melee, they employ clubs. They can also deliver a bite instead of a normal melee attack, which inflicts 2d10 points of damage.

Beasthead giants tend to be more hostile than other giant types. They treat all nongiants with the same attitude as humans have toward vermin. They, in turn, are treated as inferiors by other giant races.

## Desert Giant

Desert giants are 25-foot-tall humanoids with exaggerated facial features: huge noses, jutting jaws, protruding brows, and so forth. The flesh of a desert giant is usually dark red, though some have skin that's jet black. Desert giants have Strength scores of 24 (which provides a damage bonus of +8). They speak their own language and sometimes the languages of the human and demihuman communities nearest their islands.

If desert giants have ample warning of an attack (or are waiting in ambush), they first hurl rocks at their targets. Hurling rocks inflicts 2d10 points of damage. Sometimes these giants fashion dead trees into huge spears that they hurl for 3d10 points of damage. Both types of hurled weapons can be thrown up to 250 yards. In melee, the desert giants employ huge spiked clubs (inflicting 2d8 points of damage).

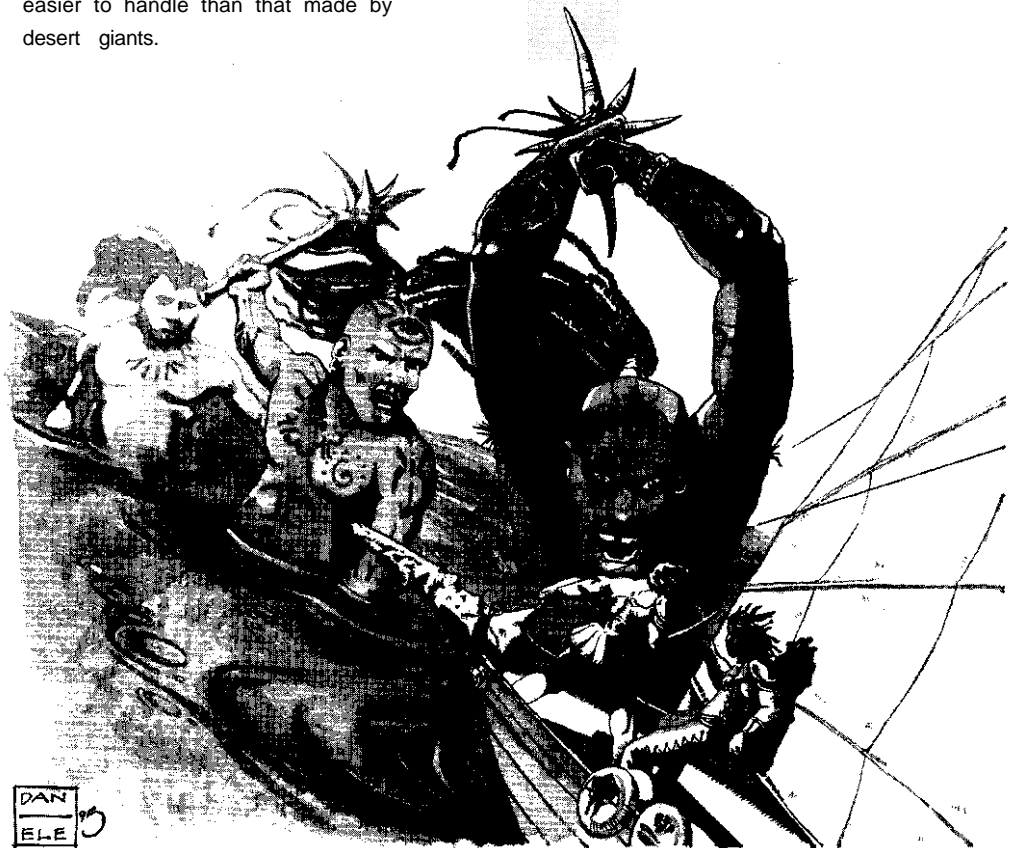
These giants live in clans on the islands of the Silt Sea that most resemble the sandy wastes of the Tablelands. They eat almost anything, though they prefer meat over vegetables. They can cross the shallow silt by wading through it. The desert giants often supplement their herding activities by crossing to the mainland to sell ropes made of their hair, or to raid caravans and villages.

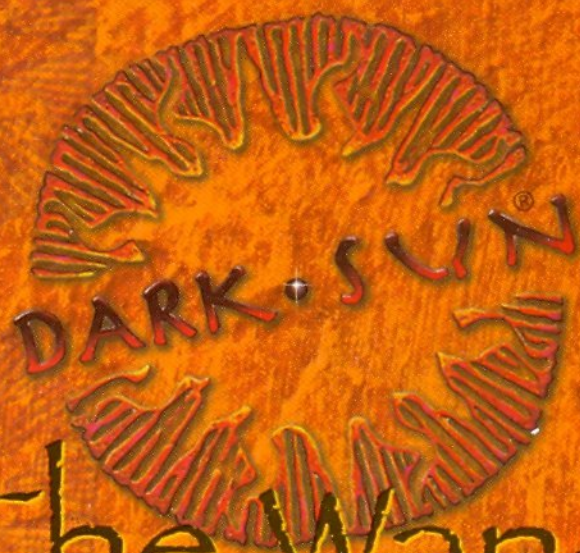
## Plains Giant

Plains giants are 25-foot-tall humanoids with skin ranging from the color of deep rust to dark brown. Their facial features are thinner and less exaggerated—more like an elf's than a human's. They have Strength scores of 23 (providing a damage bonus of +7). These giants can hurl rocks at ranged opponents, just like the desert giants. In melee, they use huge stone daggers that inflict 2d6 points of damage.

Plains giants live on islands in the Silt Sea that have scrub plains for terrain. They gather in clans and usually raise herds of kanks and erdlus. A small number of these giants turn to raiding when disaster befalls their clans, and a few individuals hire themselves out as mercenaries (which most clans consider as dishonorable), laborers, or salvage workers.

The hair from these giants usually makes a superior rope, as it's longer, thinner, and easier to handle than that made by desert giants.





# The Wanderer's Chronicle

By Bill Slavicsek

All you need on your journey is a sharp bone sword, a full waterskin, and the Wanderer to guide you...

2438XXX1901



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# The Age of Heroes:

Rules for Conquering the Savage Land





# The Age of Heroes:

Rules for Conquering the Savage Land

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## Product Summary

Take a look at the material that comes in this boxed set. Each item is described below.

### ***The Age of Heroes:***

The book you're reading now. It contains all the rules needed to turn a regular AD&D® campaign into a DARK SUN® campaign. You need copies of the core AD&D rules to properly use this book (including the *Player's Handbook [PHB]* and *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide [DMG]*).

### ***The***

***Wanderer's Chronicle:*** The campaign book for the world of Athas. It details the land, the people, and places of interest.

### ***The Way***

***of the Psionicist:*** A primer on psionic abilities and powers, featuring new rules for use in a DARK SUN campaign.

***Mystery of the Ancients:*** A full-length adventure to introduce new players to the world of Athas or to get experienced players caught up to the new timeline.

***Poster Maps:*** Three poster maps detailing the Tyr Region (updated from earlier versions) and showing a huge portion of the world of Athas—much of which has never been depicted before. The

northern map explores the Jagged Cliffs Region; the southern map explores the area beyond the Tyr Region.

***DM Screen:*** All of the tables pertinent to a DARK SUN campaign gathered in one place.

## CHAPTER 1:

# Creating Characters

If you're even a little familiar with the world of the Dark Sun (either you've played in the original campaign or have skimmed through *The Wanderer's Chronicle* included with this set), then you know that the characters who populate it are a cut above those of other campaigns. Athas is a harsher, deadlier, more dangerous world than most, and as such it breeds hardier, more savage life forms. As you work your way through this chapter, you'll quickly begin to see what this means.

Some might ask: Why did we revise the DARK SUN Rules *Book*? First, there were some points we had to clarify from the original version, and there were a number of topics that needed to be addressed after watching the campaign develop over the past four years. Second, there were rules introduced in other DARK SUN products that deserved to be incorporated into the core campaign rules. Third, new topics have developed that need to be made available to DARK SUN players and Dungeon Masters (DMs) everywhere. Just as the campaign book required an overhaul and a massive influx of new material, so too did the rules.

## The Ability Scores

Athasian characters have the same six ability scores used in every AD&D game: *Strength*, *Dexterity*, *Constitution*, *Intelligence*, *Wisdom*, and *Charisma*. In a DARK SUN campaign, characters have an ability score range of 3 to 24 (as opposed to 3 to 18), depending on the ability in question. When creating a character, players roll dice to generate scores from 5 to 20. Character racial adjustments can then boost high rolls beyond the score of 20 or drop lower scores as low as 3.

There are some changes to the rules in the *Player's Handbook* regarding Strength, Constitution, Intelligence, and Wisdom attributes for Athasian characters, as discussed below. Note that only Strength and Constitution abilities have revised tables.



## Strength Scores

TABLE I: STRENGTH

Ability Score	Hit Probability	Damage Adjustment	Weight Allowance	Maximum Press	Open Doors	Bend Bars/Lift Gates
	-3	-1	5	10	2	0%
4-5	-2	-1	10	25	3	0%
6-7	-1	None	20	55	4	0%
8-9	Normal	None	35	90	5	1%
10-11	Normal	None	40	115	6	2%
12-13	Normal	None	45	140	7	4%
14-15	Normal	None	55	170	8	7%
16	Normal	+1	70	195	9	10%
17	+1	+1	85	220	10	13%
18	+1	+2	110	255	11	16%
19	+2	+3	135	280	12	20%
20	+2	+4	170	315	13	25%
21	+2	+5	255	375	14	30%
22	+3	+6	360	475	15 (3)	35%
23	+3	+7	445	600	16 (6)	40%
24	+3	+8	515	700	16 (8)	50%
25	+4	+9	635	810	17 (10)	60%

All of the rules concerning the Strength score presented in the *Player's Handbook* apply to the DARK SUN setting. However, TABLE I: STRENGTH (right) replaces the table in the *Player's Handbook* and must be used by all Athasian characters. The major change is that the exceptional Strength percentage range has been eliminated, as any Athasian character can reach the exceptional range.

## Constitution Scores

Table II: Constitution

Ability Score	Hit Point Adjustment	System Shock	Resurrection Survival	Poison Save	Regeneration
3	-2	35%	40%	0	Nil
4	-1	40%	45%	0	Nil
5	-1	45%	50%	0	Nil
6	-1	50%	55%	0	Nil
7	0	55%	60%	0	Nil
8	0	60%	65%	0	Nil
9	0	65%	70%	0	Nil
10	0	70%	75%	0	Nil
11	0	75%	80%	0	Nil
12	0	80%	85%	0	Nil
13	0	85%	90%	0	Nil
14	0	88%	92%	0	Nil
15	+1	90%	94%	0	Nil
16	+2	95%	96%	0	Nil
17	+2 (+3)*	97%	97%	0	Nil
18	+2 (+4)*	99%	98%	0	Nil
19	+3 (+5)**	99%	99%	+1	Nil
20	+3 (+6) †	99%	99%	+1	1/4 hours
21	+3 (+6) †	99%	99%	+2	1/3 hours
22	+4 (+7) ††	99%	99%	+2	1/2 hours
23	+4 (+7) ††	99%	99%	+3	1 /hour
24	+4 (+7) ††	100%	100%	+3	1/3 turns
25	+4 (+7) ††	100%	100%	+4	1/2 turns

All of the rules concerning the Constitution score presented in the *Player's Handbook* apply to the DARK SUN setting. However, TABLE II: CONSTITUTION (right) must be used instead by all Athasian characters.

\* Parenthetical bonuses apply to warriors only.

\*\* All 1s rolled for Hit Dice are automatically considered 2s.

† All 1s and 2s rolled for Hit Dice are automatically considered 3s.

†† All 1s, 2s, and 3s rolled for Hit Dice are automatically considered 4s.



## Intelligence Scores

The DARK SUN campaign setting uses the proficiency rules as a standard part of play (they're not optional). Therefore, the number of languages a player character can speak is strictly governed by proficiencies. The "Number of Languages" column on Table 4: INTELLIGENCE in the *Player's Handbook* translates directly into additional nonweapon proficiency slots. They can be used for any nonweapon proficiency, not just new languages.

Also, DARK SUN characters ignore the last column of that table, "Spell Immunity." No Athasian player character is immune to illusion spells. Only advanced beings (either dragons or avangions) are immune to spells.

## Wisdom Scores

DARK SUN characters ignore the last column of Table 5: WISDOM from the *Player's Handbook*. No Athasian character is immune to the spells listed there, with the exception being advanced creatures (either dragons or avangions).

## Rolling Ability Scores

The six ability scores are determined randomly by rolling dice to obtain a score from 5 to 20 (before any adjustments are applied). These numbers are, on average, higher than those for characters in other campaign worlds. Athas has produced beings that are generally superior, with greater levels of strength, endurance, and intelligence than those found elsewhere. However, if an Athasian character ever finds a way to travel to another campaign world (a practice we greatly discourage!), the rules of that world apply. Thus, ability scores are reduced to the highest number allowed for PC races in that world.

When rolling ability scores for player characters (PCs) or nonplayer characters (NPCs), use the following methods.

- **Rolling PC ability scores:** Roll 4d4+4 six times, once for each ability score. Write down the totals in the order they are rolled and apply them to the six abilities in that order.
- **Rolling NPC ability scores:** Roll 5d4 six times, once for each ability score. Write down the totals in the order they are rolled and apply them to the six abilities in that order.

There are other options, of course, for rolling ability scores. The following methods may be used instead to generate characters, if the DM sees fit.

- **Method I:** Roll 5d4 twice for each ability score, keeping the higher of the two rolls.
- **Method II:** Roll 5d4 six times and assign the rolls to the abilities as desired.
- **Method III:** Roll 5d4 twelve times and assign the six best rolls to the abilities as desired.
- **Method IV:** Roll 6d4 six times, discarding the lowest die each time. Assign the six totals to the abilities as desired.
- **Method V:** Start each ability with a score of 10. The player then rolls 10d4. Each of the 10 dice must be applied to a specific ability, and all of the points on a single die must be added to the same ability score. All of the dice must be used, though no ability score can exceed 20.

## Racial Overview

Athas is a world where the essential, fundamental nature of things has been twisted through generations of unchecked, environmentally abusive magic. Many Athasian creatures may be recognizable from other AD&D campaigns, but in most cases they'll be familiar in name only. This includes player character races. The dwarves, elves, half-elves, and halflings of Athas are bizarre mutations when compared to those of other settings. Further, there are additional player character races that aren't available anywhere other than the burning world.

The ten races available to players are *aarakocra*, *dwarf*, *elf*, *half-elf*, *half-giant*, *halfling*, *human*, *mul*, *pterran*, and *thri-kreen*. Each race is described in the following section called "Player Character Races." Presented below, however, are the specific rules for using them in the campaign setting. Note that most of the PC races are M (medium) size or smaller (7 feet tall or less) and don't have to worry about taking special damage. Half-giants and thri-kreen,

however, are considered size L (large) creatures (more than 7 feet tall or long). They take L damage from all weapons (see Chapter 6 in the *Player's Handbook*).

Role-playing notes are included to help run these kinds of characters, but players are urged to see these only as guidelines. Develop each character's aims, attitudes, and personalities as you and your DM see fit.

## Minimum and Maximum Ability Scores

After a player has finished rolling the ability scores for his DARK SUN character, check the racial ability requirements presented in TABLE III: RACIAL ABILITY REQUIREMENTS (below). If he wants a nonhuman character and the character's ability scores fit all of the requirements for a given race, the player may select that race for his character. These requirements must be met before consulting TABLE IV: RACIAL ABILITY ADJUSTMENTS (below) and making adjustments to the ability scores.

Note that humans have no special ability requirements and receive no racial ability adjustments.

**Table III: Racial Ability Requirements**

Ability	Aarakocra	Dwarf	Elf	Half-Elf	Half-Giant	Halfling	Mul	Pterrann	Thri-Kreen
Strength	5/20	10/20	5/20	5/20	17/20	5/20	10/20	8/20	8/20
Dexterity	8/20	5/20	12/20	8/20	5/15	12/20	5/20	5/18	15/20
Constitution	6/18	14/20	8/20	5/20	15/20	5/20	10/20	8/20	5/20
Intelligence	5/20	5/20	8/20	5/20	5/15	5/20	5/20	5/20	5/20
Wisdom	5/19	5/20	5/20	5/20	5/17	7/20	5/20	7/20	5/20
Charisma	6/20	5/20	5/20	5/20	5/17	5/20	5/20	5/17	5/17

## Racial Ability Requirements

**Table IV: Racial Ability Adjustments**

Race	Adjustment
Aarakocra	-1 Strength, +2 Dexterity, -1 Constitution
Dwarf	+1 Strength, -1 Dexterity, +2 Constitution, -2 Charisma
Elf	+2 Dexterity, -2 Constitution, +1 Intelligence, -1 Wisdom
Half-elf	+1 Dexterity, -1 Constitution
Half-giant	+4 Strength, +2 Constitution, -2 Intelligence, -2 Wisdom, -2 Charisma
Halfling	-2 Strength, +2 Dexterity, -1 Constitution, +2 Wisdom, -1 Charisma
Mul	+2 Strength, +1 Constitution, -1 Intelligence, -2 Charisma
Pterrann	+1 Strength, -1 Dexterity, +1 Wisdom, -1 Charisma
Thri-kreen	+2 Dexterity, -1 Intelligence, +1 Wisdom, -2 Charisma

## Class Restrictions and Level Limits

In DARK SUN, as in other AD&D game settings, there are restrictions imposed upon the classes available to a particular character based on that character's race. There are also restrictions concerning the level to which that same character can advance, also based on race. These restrictions are different from those imposed in other campaigns because of the unusual nature of Athas's demihumans.

Use TABLE V: RACIAL CLASS AND LEVEL LIMITS, below, when checking which classes are available to a race and what-if any-are the maximum levels that can be reached for that race. Note that humans suffer no restrictions regarding class selection or level advancement; a human character can select any character class and has a natural unlimited advancement potential. TABLE V also lists the standard abbreviations used throughout this boxed set for each class (ie, "F" for "Fighter").

In addition to the changes shown on TABLE V (next page), the "Exceeding Level Limits" optional rule from Chapter Two of the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide* is mandatory in DARK SUN campaigns. This rule allows all characters who have high prime requisite scores to exceed their racial maximum levels. The number of additional levels that can be gained is noted at left.

Some of Athas's races have natural tendencies toward higher or lower physical and mental abilities. For example, half-giants are naturally stronger, on average, than elves, so characters of this race receive an ability bonus to reflect this. Apply these adjustments after consulting TABLE III: RACIAL ABILITY REQUIREMENTS, above. No adjustment can raise a score above 24 or lower it below 3.

### EXCEEDING RACIAL LEVEL LIMITS

Ability Score	Additional Levels
16, 17	+1
18, 19	+2
20,21	+3
22,23	+4
24	+5

**Table V: Class and Level Limits**

Class	Aarakocra	Dwarf	Elf	Half-Elf	Half-Giant	Halfling	Human	Mul	Pterrann	Thri-Kreen
<i>Warrior:</i>										
Fighter (F)	14	16	14	*	16	12	*	*	16	16
Gladiator (GI)	†	*	10	*	14	12	*	*	14	15
Ranger (R)	12	†	16	14	8	16	*	†	12	12
<i>Wizard:</i>										
Defiler (De)	†	†	16	*	†	†	*	†	†	†
Preserver (Pr)	13	†	15	12	†	†	*	†	†	†
<i>Priest:</i>										
Cleric (C)	16	12	15	16	12	12	*	10	†	12
Druid (D)	12	†	†	14	†	16	*	12	*	16
<i>Rogue:</i>										
Bard (B)	†	†	†	*	†	†	*	†	†	†
Thief (T)	12	12	12	12	†	16	*	12	10	†
Trader (Tr)	14	14	16	12	†	†	*	†	14	†
<i>Psionicist:</i>										
Psionicist (Ps)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

\* Unlimited advancement.

† Not available.

## Languages

Each intelligent race—with the exception of half-elves, half-giants, and muls—has its own language and sometimes even its own approach to language and communication. The three exceptions don't have their own societies or cultures to draw upon, so they speak the language of the society they live in. For example, a mul raised in the gladiator pits of Urik would speak the language of that city. Thri-kreen, on the other hand, use a combination of clicks and whines that come naturally to their pincer mouths, a speech humans find impossible to imitate. Language barriers therefore present a major obstacle for adventures set in Athas. Characters must rely heavily on magic, psionics, or interpreters for communication.

There is a standard trade language used throughout the Tyr Region, called common or the *trade tongue*. All dwarf, elf, half-elf, half-giant, human, and mul characters from the Tyr Region automatically speak common as a bonus proficiency. Characters of other races or from other parts of Athas must use an available proficiency slot to obtain the trade tongue.

All other languages are identified by their racial name (gith, halfling, thri-kreen, etc.) or location of origin (Saragarn, Raamin, Imperial Kreen, etc.). Characters begin the game knowing only their racial tongue and, in some cases, common or a location language. Other languages a character wants to know must be assigned proficiency slots. The DM has the final say over which languages may be available to starting characters.

## Other Racial Characteristics

DARK SUN characters are very different from those in other AD&D games. The following tables for height and weight, age, and aging effects replace those in the *Player's Handbook*. Note that in TABLE VI the measurements are given for males first, followed by females. TABLE VII lists the ages that a new PC typically starts at, as well as the maximum age that PC can attain naturally. TABLE VIII lists the effects aging has on Athasian races; note that effects are cumulative from one age bracket to the next.

**Table VI: Height and Weight of Athasian PC Races**

Race	— Height in Inches —		— Weight in Pounds —	
	Base	Modifier	Base	Modifier
Aarakocra	78/75	2d8	90/75	2d10
Dwarf	50/48	2d4	180/170	4d10
Elf	78/72	2d8	160/130	3d10
Half-elf	70/68	2d6	120/95	3d12
Half-giant	125/125	3d10	1500/1450	3d100
Halfling	36/34	1d8	50/46	5d4
Human	60/59	2d8	140/100	6d10
Mul	66/65	2d6	220/180	5d20
Pterrann	60/59	2d8	170/160	4d10+10
Thri-kreen*	82/82	1d4	450/450	1d20

\* Thri-kreen are 48 inches longer than they are tall.

**TABLE VII: AGE OF ATHASIAN PC RACES**

Race	— Starting Age —	— Maximum Age —
	Base + Variable	Base + Variable
Aarakocra	10 + 1d4	34 + 1d8
Dwarf	25 + 4d6	200 + 3d20
Elf	15 + 3d4	100 + 2d20
Half-elf	15 + 2d4	90 + 2d20
Half-giant	20 + 5d4	120 + 1d100
Halfling	25 + 3d6	90 + 4d12
Human	15 + 1d8	80 + 2d20
Mul	15 + 1d6	80 + 1d10
Pterrann	12 + 1d8	40 + 1d10
Thri-kreen	6	25 + 1d10

**TABLE VIII: EFFECTS ON ATHASIAN PC RACES**

Race	Middle Age*	Old Age**	Venerable Age†
Aarakocra ††	—	-	36
Dwarf	100	133	200
Elf	50	67	100
Half-elf	45	60	90
Half-giant	60	80	120
Halfling	45	60	90
Human	40	53	80
Mul	40	53	80
Pterrann ††	—	—	40
Thri-kreen ††	—	—	25

\* -1 Str/Con; +1 Int/Wis upon reaching middle age.

\*\* -2 Str/Dex, -1 Con; +1 Wis upon reaching old age.

† -1 Str/Dex/Con; +1 Int/Wis upon reaching venerable age.

†† -1 Str/Dex upon reaching venerable age

## Player Character Races

Intelligent creatures inhabit every harsh, desolate corner of the world of Athas. Giants roam the Silt Sea, gith wander the mountains and canyons, and braxats and belgoi stalk the deserts, but few of these cultures have made a lasting impact on the Tyr Region and its nearby environs. The ten races that have are all prominent racial types, as detailed in this section. All are available as player characters.

Note that the races of Athas receive only the benefits and penalties described below. Don't apply bonuses or penalties from other campaign settings to DARK SUN characters if they aren't specifically mentioned here.

### Aarakocra

Of all the aarakocra who live beneath Athas's crimson sun, only the silvaarak of the White Mountains can be used as player characters. The bird-people born to the village of Winter Nest grow to an average height of 7½ feet tall with wingspans of 20 feet. Males weigh about 100 pounds, while females weigh about 85. With gray beaks, black eyes, and plumage that ranges from purest white to silver to shades of pale blue, the aarakocra of Winter Nest look much different than the bird-people of the deep desert.

Aarakocra who leave Winter Nest to become player characters are seen as young rebels by the rest of their community. They are adventurous, seeking higher purpose and a way to help the beleaguered world. In all cases, aarakocra have a deep and abiding respect for the gifts of nature and little patience for those who abuse those gifts.

As beings intimately connected to high mountain peaks and the open sky, aarakocra have a great love of freedom. In some ways, this love is even more intense than a similar emotion

experienced by elves. They prefer to always be above a situation, either flying or perched above the rest of a group so that they can have a bird's-eye view. Aarakocra are claustrophobic and will only enter an enclosed building or cave if absolutely necessary.

Aarakocra make excellent fighters and good rangers, but their fear of enclosed places makes them wither in captivity, so they can never develop into gladiators. The silvaarak send a select number of their village to learn preserving magic from Oronis of Kurn, but no bird-person can develop the skills necessary to be a defiler. All other character classes, except for bard, are open to aarakocra PCs. Like all character races, they can excel as psionics.

The following game statistics apply to the aarakocra player character:

- An aarakocra PC has a natural Armor Class of 7. However, because his bones are light and fragile, any damage caused by a bludgeoning weapon is increased by 1d4 points.
- Each bird-person has the ability to fly; movement rate is 36, with maneuverability class C. Base movement rate on land is 6.
- An aarakocra can use his talons instead of a weapon during combat, striking twice in a round for 1d3 points of damage with each successful hit. When using a javelin (if the character is proficient in its use), an aarakocra can make a special diving attack that gets a +4 bonus to attack and causes double damage.
- When forced to fight in an enclosed area (any area where the aarakocra can't spread his wings and fly), an aarakocra receives a -2 penalty to all attack rolls.
- The silvaarak are slightly longer-lived than their primitive cousins. Even so, the oldest aarakocra known lived to only age 42.



## Dwarves

Short and powerful, dwarves stand between 4½ and 5 feet tall. Their frames are nevertheless extremely massive, and an average dwarf weighs in the vicinity of 200 pounds. Life in the Athasian wastes make them rugged, tanned, and callused.



Dwarves seek out meaningful work to occupy their time. A dwarf is never happier than when he has a cause to work or fight for. A stoic race, dwarves love to approach tasks with a single-minded intensity. They devote their very beings to these tasks, laboring for weeks, years, even decades to the exclusion of other endeavors. Once a dwarf is committed to a particular task, it takes a great deal of coercion to make him set it aside for even a limited amount of time. A dwarf strives for the personal fulfillment he achieves upon completing a lengthy, difficult task.

A dwarf's present task is called his focus. No simple job can become a focus. A focus must be a feat that requires at least one week to complete. While performing actions that are directly related to his focus, a dwarf receives a +1 bonus to all saving throws and a +2 bonus to all proficiency checks (or +10 to any percentile rolls). The concept of the focus is integral to a dwarf's makeup and is even tied to his physiology—so much so that those dwarves who die before completing their foci become undead banshees who wander the wastes haunting their unfinished works.

A dwarf character reacts to other characters based upon his current focus. If another character is actively committed to the dwarf's focus, the dwarf considers that character to be a sensible and dependable companion. If, however, a character vehemently opposes a dwarf's focus, the two are irrevocably at odds until one or the other is dead. There's very little room for compromise in a dwarf's mind.

Dwarves are nonmagical by nature. They can't use wizard magic of any sort, though they can employ priestly magic. Their nonmagical nature gives them a resistance to wizard spells that translates into saving throw bonuses for attacks from magical wands, rods, staves, and spells of a wizardly nature, as shown below on TABLE IX. Likewise, dwarves also have exceptional resistance to toxic substances. They receive bonuses to saving throws versus poison using the same table.

**TABLE IX: DWARF SAVING THROW BONUS**

<b>Constitution Score</b>	<b>Saving Throw Bonus</b>
4-6	+1
7-10	+2
11-14	+3
15-18	+4
19-21	+5
22-24	+6

Unlike in other AD&D campaigns, Athasian dwarves don't receive combat bonuses against larger opponents, and they don't have any natural abilities to detect sloping passages or other underground discrepancies. They do have infravision (the ability to see varying degrees of heat in darkness) to 60 feet, and on Athas their base movement rate is 6. The maximum age a dwarf can hope to live to is 260.

## Elves

The elves of Athas are long-limbed sprinters who lead lives of thievery, raiding, trading, and warfare. They stand between 6' and 7' feet tall, with slender yet muscular builds. They have deeply etched features, with skin that has been made rugged by the baking sun and the scouring sand. The color of their skin is as varied as that of the other races of Athas, and as affected by the rays of the sun. They grow no facial hair, but the locks atop their heads come in shades of lightest blond to darkest black. They dress in garb designed to protect them from the desert and the elements.

Elves are tireless wanderers forged in the endless desert—burned dark by the sun, toughened by the swirling sand, and given strength and speed by the constant wind. There's no racial unity among them. Within a given tribe, all elves are brethren, but outsiders—even other elves—are regarded as potential enemies. Outsiders can be accepted and perhaps even become friends, but trust takes time to develop and is often associated with tests and great sacrifice.

Elves are seen as lazy and deceitful, and in most ways they are. They desire to lead short, happy lives as opposed to long, sad ones. The future, to an elf, is a dark, deadly place. This



compels them to strive to make every moment as full and enjoyable as possible. They call this concept of the moment “the now.” Elves do work, however, and in some ways they work harder than members of other races. They won’t farm, but they’ll spend a lot of time and energy hunting and foraging. They detest hard labor, but they’ll spend hours on end haggling and negotiating with potential customers.

Elves crave free, open spaces in which to run, so elf slaves wither in captivity if they can’t escape. Travelers often see whole tribes of elves running swiftly across the sandy wastes. Only rarely will a member of this race ride an animal. To do so is dishonorable unless wounded and near death. The custom of the elves is to keep up or be left behind.

Most elf tribes make a living through herding, but merchants and raiders also ply the desert roads. Elf culture, while savage, is also rich and diverse. They have turned celebrating into an art form, and elf song and dance is some of the most beautiful and captivating in all of Athas.

When found in the company of others, elves tend to keep to themselves. They fabricate tests of trust and friendship constantly until such time as they are ready to bond with their companions—or leave them for other pastures.

Elf PCs can be of any class except druid and bard. They also have access to a variety of multiclass combinations. They receive the following bonuses:

- When using long swords or long bows crafted by his or her tribe, an elf receives a +1 bonus to all attack rolls made with these specific weapons.
- An elf character gains a surprise bonus when in the desert or steppes of Athas. Alone or in the company of other elves, the elf moves with great stealth—nonelves or mixed groups suffer a -4 surprise roll penalty.
- Elves have infravision to 60 feet.
- Elves have a natural resistance to extreme temperatures and aren’t adversely affected by the heat of the day or the chill of the night. However, this resistance doesn’t extend to magical or supernatural heat and cold.

In addition to these bonuses, elves have an inbred swiftness. The elf character receives a bonus to his base movement rate (12) according to his Dexterity score, as noted below. The fastest, most dexterous elf has a movement rate of 21.

<b>Dex</b>	12-13	14-15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
<b>Bonus</b>	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7	+8	+9


The elf run is a state of mind that causes adrenaline to flow, inhibiting the tiring nature of the elf’s weaker Constitution. When the elf run flows through an elf, he can run as many as 50 miles in a single day and keep up the grueling pace for a maximum of seven days in a row before fatigue sets in. To engage in the elf run, an elf adds his Constitution score to his base movement rate for overland travel to determine the distance he can cover in miles (or points) per day. (Note that overland travel rates are at twice the base movement rates.) Thus, in the example above, the dexterous elf has an overland travel rate of 42; if his Constitution is also the maximum at 18, he has a greater possibility of engaging in the elf run for the seven-day period without penalty.

An elf can induce an elf run with a minimum of concentration (one turn) and a successful Constitution check. The Constitution check also determines how many days the elf run lasts until fatigue sets in, as noted on TABLE X below. Once fatigue sets in, the elf suffers a -1 penalty to all attack rolls for each day (cumulative) he engages in the elf run beyond the predetermined limit. A full day’s rest removes one day’s penalty. Rules for mass elf runs are described in Chapter 8: DM Material.

**TABLE X: ELF RUN**

<b>Roll Equal to</b>	<b>Days Before Penalties Begin</b>
Failure/No preparation	1
Con score to Con -3	2
Con -4 to Con -7	3
Con -8 to Con -10	4
Con -11 to Con -13	5
Con -14 to Con -16	6
Con -17 or lower	7





Athasian elves receive no other special abilities beyond those described above, and they live to a maximum age of 140 years. Specifically, these elves don't receive the special abilities common to elves of other campaign worlds, including the following:

- No special resistance to any types of spells.
- No ability to find secret or concealed doors.
- No attack or surprise bonuses beyond those described above.
- None of the special abilities from *The Complete Book of Elves*, including communion, manifestation, and reverie.

## Half-Elves

Half-elves are produced through the union of elves and humans. These characters of mixed breeding combine features of both races to create something unique. Indeed, half-elves can even produce children, unlike muls. Half-elves grow taller than humans but don't reach the height of elves, averaging about 6½ feet. They are also bulkier than elves, making it easier to pass themselves off as full humans than as full elves. Even so, all half-elves have telltale features that hint at their elven heritage. Despite their unique nature, half-elves don't form their own communities. They live in human societies, either in the city-states or among the tribes and villages that fill the wilderness.

A half-elf's life is typically harder than either a human's or an elf's. Intolerance from others is the main cause for this difficult existence, which often shapes and defines a half-elf's nature. As such, a half-elf rarely finds acceptance in either parent's society. Elves have no tolerance for children of mixed blood; their traditions demand that such children and even their mothers be cast out of the tribe. Humans aren't quite as harsh, and half-elves born into human society have a better chance of survival, but life isn't particularly enjoyable or easy. Humans will accept half-elves as allies or partners, but seldom will they accept them into their homes or families, and few will call a half-elf friend.

Humans have no faith in a half-elf's elven side, and elves distrust the human in these crossbreeds. Because of this, a half-elf goes through life as an outsider and loner. He wanders from situation to situation without a people or a land to call home. Thus, he is forced to develop high levels of self-reliance in order to survive. This self-reliance is a half-elf's greatest asset, and a half-elf prides himself on it. He learns not only the skills of survival but methods for dealing with loneliness as well. This may make a half-elf seem detached and aloof, but he will cooperate with companions when necessary. This air of indifference often hides a desire to gain acceptance from one side of a half-elf's heritage or the other, a pursuit that's usually in vain. Fortunately, however, other races don't have a basic dislike of half-elves, so these characters typically find companionship among dwarves or thri-kreen. Some half-elves also turn to the animal world for company, training creatures to be servants and friends.

Half-elves can select any character class; a number of multiclass options are available to them as well. These characters receive the following bonuses:

- All half-elf characters have infravision to 60 feet; their base movement rate is 12.
- At 3rd level (the starting level for all DARK SUN PCs), a half-elf receives a bonus proficiency: survival. This proficiency is free; it doesn't fill up any of the character's available slots. The player must specify the terrain type his character is proficient in. Terrain types for the world of Athas include stony barrens, sandy wastes, rocky badlands, mountains, scrub plains, forests, salt flats, and boulder fields. Note that the terrain type selected must make sense for the character. A half-elf who grew up in Tyr, for example, shouldn't select swamp survival.
- At 5th level, a half-elf can befriend one creature. The creature can be any animal native to the half-elf's survival terrain type, but it can't be larger than a human (medium size). The half-elf must find the creature while it's young and spend a full week with it to train it. After that time, the creature follows the half-elf everywhere and obeys simple commands. A half-elf can only befriend one creature at a time, and he must wait 100 days after the death of one befriended creature before beginning to train another. Choice of a half-elf's befriended creature is always subject to the DM's approval.

Like their elven counterparts, half-elf characters have no special resistance to any type of spells, nor do they have the ability to find secret or concealed doors. They have been known to live as long as 130 years.



## Half-Giants

Half-giants are a relatively new addition to the races of Athas. The union was originally the result of magical experiments conducted by the sorcerer-kings. When the sorcerer-kings first took control of the cities of the Tyr Region, they used their arcane powers to cross humans with giants, striving to create warriors and laborers of gigantic proportions. Because of this turbulent beginning, the half-giants of today's Athas have no culture of their own to draw upon, no ancient traditions to turn to for inspiration.

From giants, this race inherited tremendous size and strength, as well as low intelligence. (Half-giants average 10 to 12 feet high and weigh upwards of 1,600 pounds.) From humans, they received curiosity, an interest in cooperation and communication, and a general tendency toward kindness. Although half-giants have human features, these tend to be exaggerated in some way. All existing half-giants are the descendants of the original magically created half-giants. They can only produce offspring by mating with other half-giants; they cannot reproduce with either giants or humans. Likewise, there's no natural way for giants and humans to mate and produce children in today's Athas.

Like half-elves, half-giants don't gather in communities of their own. Instead they live in the human cities or in the wilderness tribes, absorbing the culture of those around them. They are friendly and eager to please whoever they meet. If they are accepted in turn, the half-giants quickly adopt the lifestyles, skills, and values of those they've come in contact with. A half-giant character presented with a new situation should examine the roles of the people there, determine how he best fits in, and then start performing tasks accordingly. For example, a half-giant who happens upon a dwarf quarry might watch for a time, then start quarrying stone. He won't necessarily work with the dwarves, but he'll continue to perform like his neighbors for as long as he can make a decent living.

Half-giants aren't strictly bound to perform as those they see around them, nor are they restricted from moving on when they see fit. If a situation isn't beneficial, or if a half-giant can't perform well in a given environment, he won't imitate the nearby culture. In all cases, half-giants simply aren't as emotionally attached to objects or work as are other races.

Players running half-giant characters should be ready to switch goals and lifestyles quickly, usually according to charismatic individuals their characters might meet. They also need to remember that their characters have great size and strength, and so must play accordingly. For the most part, Athas is a human-sized world. Half-giants often have trouble with things that other characters take for granted, such as doors, chairs, and even buildings.

Characters of this race can select any warrior class, or they can opt to be clerics or psionicists. Half-giants also have a few multiclass options to choose from.

Half-giants switch attitudes very quickly, taking on new values to fit new situations. This malleable attitude is handled by a changing alignment. A half-giant character selects one aspect of his alignment to remain fixed at the time the character is created (either the "lawful/neutral/chaotic" side, or the "good/neutral/evil" side). The other aspect is determined at the start of each day of game time. The character is bound to that alignment combination until he sleeps and wakes again. For example, if a half-giant has a fixed "good" side, then each morning he chooses to be either lawful good, neutral good, or chaotic good. Half-giant psionicists must have a fixed lawful or neutral aspect; they can't be chaotic.

Although this alignment change isn't mandatory, it should certainly be invoked in role-playing situations as a reaction to extreme changes in a half-giant's environment. A half-giant's nature is to switch his alignment aspect to imitate or otherwise react to a significant change around him. Of course, there needs to be a good reason for a half-giant's flexible alignment aspect to change, and DMs are free to disallow any change that doesn't fit the current storyline. This shifting alignment should be a hindrance as often as it serves to help a half-giant character. It's up to the DM to make sure both good and bad events occur throughout a campaign.

A half-giant character doubles his Hit Die rolls, no matter what his character class is. Add any bonuses for high Constitution scores after doubling the roll of the die. For example, a half-giant cleric rolls 1d8 and multiplies the result by 2 to determine his hit points at each level.

All personal items, such as clothing, armor, weapons, and food, cost double for half-giant characters. Transportation and lodging, when they're available at all, are also considerably more expensive. Most things aren't built to support the weight of a half-giant, and even



in the cities half-giants tend to camp outside for their own comfort and to avoid causing any damage.

Half-giants can live to a maximum age of 220 years.

## Halflings

In the ancient past, halflings were the masters of the world. All other demihuman and humanoid races— including humans— are descended from the ancient halflings. Today, however, halflings, are primitive savages who control only limited areas of Athas. In most cases, player character halflings come from the Forest Ridge. DMs may allow players to create characters using the more advanced halflings of the Jagged Cliffs if they so desire, but a good reason must be developed for why a cliff-dweller has left home and community to take up adventuring.

Halflings grow as tall as 3½ feet and weigh between 50 and 60 pounds. and proportioned like humans, though they have wise, childlike faces that never succumb to the rigors of age. They always appear to be in peak physical condition.

Ritual and custom control every aspect of halfling life. They have a rich culture expressed in art and song. They remember their history through oral traditions—unfortunately, however, much of it has deteriorated into half-accurate legends and fanciful fables. Still, halflings remember the deep and abiding respect their forefathers had for the world, and this remains an important part of each halfling's psyche.

Halflings strongly believe in racial unity. Though the halfling race is divided politically and geographically into separate villages and tribes, each halfling respects his race as a whole. Disputes between members of different tribes are settled peaceably whenever possible through ritual and custom. These customs are often directed by each tribe's shamans, the elemental clerics or druids who hold positions of honor and respect above all other halflings.

On a personal level, halflings relate to each other extremely well. A considerable culture of art, song, and other expressive means of communication has developed that crosses the political and geographical bounds separating the tribes. Even such diverse halfling groups as





the cliff-dwellers of Thamasku and the desert raiders of Small Water can communicate on a basic level with halflings of other regions.

Because of this, halflings rely on their culture to express abstract thoughts and to relay complicated concepts quickly. A typical halfling assumes that whomever he's talking to has the same culture to draw upon and therefore understands everything passing between them. It's difficult for a halfling to compensate for a listener who isn't intimately familiar with the culture. As such, it's easy for halflings to become frustrated with outsiders. However, halflings who travel widely have a greater tolerance of those who "lack culture." These halflings can communicate without an immediate sense of frustration.

Halfling culture cares for each individual's inner well-being and spiritual unity with race and environment. They have little concept of conquest or monetary wealth, and vices that other societies take for granted—such as greed and avarice—are particularly discouraged.

Halfling player characters should role-play difficulty in adjusting to other customs and points of view. As a generally open-minded race, halflings tend to be curious or confused by the actions of others rather than initially combative. Halflings will attempt to learn all they can about other cultures, but will almost never adopt those cultures as their own. Halfling clerics teach that the customs of others are no threat to their own, so a halfling player character will welcome the chance to learn another point of view, rather than instantly try to change it.

Treasure that appeals to other character races holds little interest to a halfling PC. He's more concerned with promoting halfling culture, his own knowledge, or his inner well-being. He'll never lie to or betray another halfling. Lastly, he sees his own size as not a detriment but an advantage. Stealth and speed, for example, is better than bulk any day.

Halfling PCs can select any warrior or priest class, as well as the thief and psionicist class. They can also choose from a few multiclass options. Their base movement rate is 6.

Halflings date back to an age before the advent of magic, and thus they have a natural resistance to wizard spells. This translates into saving throw bonuses for attacks from magical wands, rods, staves, and wizard spells, as shown in TABLE XI. This bonus is also applied to saving throws against poisons.

**TABLE XI: HALFLING SAVING THROW BONUS**

<b>Constitution Score</b>	<b>Saving Throw Bonus</b>
4-6	+1
7-10	+2
11-14	+3
15-18	+4
19+	+5

Halflings gain a +1 attack roll bonus when using thrown weapons and slings. They also receive the same surprise bonus described in the *Player's Handbook*. Unlike halflings in other campaign worlds, Athasian halflings gain no additional initial languages, they don't have infravision, and they aren't divided into subraces. Halflings live to a maximum age of 138 years.

## Humans

Humans are the predominant race on Athas. Human player characters aren't limited in either the classes they can belong to or the levels they can attain. High-level humans can easily become the most powerful characters in a campaign, and all of the advanced beings (dragons and avangions) are human. Humans can't be multiclass characters, but they can be dual-class (see the rules in Chapter Three of the *Player's Handbook*).

An average human male stands between 6 and 6½ feet tall and weighs around 200 pounds. An average human female is somewhat smaller, between 5½ and 6 feet in height and weighing around 140 pounds. Skin, eye, and hair color varies widely across the human spectrum, though most humans are tanned and weathered by the harsh elements.

Humans can be found at all levels of Athasian society. From the highest sorcerer-king to the lowest slave toiling in the obsidian mines of Urik, humans are everywhere. On average, they aren't as strong as some of the other prominent races, but what they lack in strength they



more than make up for with cunning, persistence, and adaptability. Humans tend to be impulsive and driven toward great daring, especially when the lure of adventure permeates their souls.

The Cleansing Wars aside, humans are generally tolerant of other races. They often serve as the intermediary or binding element when different races interact.

## Muls

Muls are the results of crossbreeding humans and dwarves. Each mul is sterile; the only way to create a new mul is through the union of a human and a dwarf. This race of mixed heritage has existed since the two primary races first came in contact with each other, but muls have only achieved great numbers since the city-states of the sorcerer-kings began breeding them for specific purpose and profit. Most muls are born in the slave pits of the merchant houses and city-states and then set to work as laborers or gladiators.

A mul has the height and adaptability of his human heritage and the raw strength and durability of his dwarf side. Adult muls stand between 6 and 7 feet tall and weigh as much as 300 pounds. They have a high metabolism that makes them lean and muscular, with broad shoulders and very little body fat. Muls look like large humans with a few obvious differences: prominent eye ridges, pointed ears, and no body hair.

This race, like the half-giants and half-elves, doesn't have a culture of its own. With few exceptions, muls are slaves or ex-slaves who live in the city-states or among the slave tribes that inhabit the wastes. Born to the slave pens, the taskmaster's whip takes the place of loving parents and family. For this reason, muls often have gruff personalities and tend toward violent reactions. Many never seek friends or companionship, living out their lives of servitude in hatred and spite.

Some muls learn the ways of the slave pits, figuring out who to trust, who not to, and gaining favor and reputation among the other slaves. Muls who perform well in the arenas receive the most pampered treatment of any slaves. For this reason, some don't see slavery as that great a hardship. However, those who have tasted the sweet air of freedom will fight to retain it.

Player character muls have either escaped, been set free, or otherwise won their freedom and now live independent lives. Free muls usually take advantage of the combat skills they've acquired and work as soldiers or guards. A smaller number turn away from violence to follow other paths, such as psionic disciplines or priestly devotions. A few even learn the skills necessary to become thieves. As demihumans, mul characters can select from a number of multi-class options.


Because of their amazing level of endurance, muls can work harder and for longer periods of time before needing rest than most other races. This is shown on TABLE XII below; a mul's Constitution score is added to the type of labor, which results in the total number of hours (or days) he can work before he must rest. Regardless of the type or length of exertion, eight hours of undisturbed sleep allows a mul to awaken fully rested and ready to begin work again. Perhaps this durability takes its toll in other areas, for the average mul lives only to a maximum age of 90. His base movement rate is 12.

**TABLE XII: MUL EXERTION**

<b>Exertion</b>	<b>Time Before Requiring Rest</b>
Heavy labor (stone construction, quarry work, running)	24+Con (hours)
Medium labor (light construction, mining, jogging)	36+Con (hours)
Light labor (combat training, walking encumbered)	48+Con (hours)
Normal activity (walking, conversation)	Con (days)

## Pterrans

Pterrans are reptiloids with light brown, scaly skin who grow to be about 6 feet tall. A pterrann stands upright in the humanoid configuration, though his two arms end in three-fingered, talon-clawed hands with opposable thumbs, and his two legs end in three-toed feet. A finlike growth juts from the back of a pterrann's head, and he has a short tail and two shoulder stubs—remnants of wings that vanished generations ago.



All player character pterrans come from two villages in the Hinterlands, Pterrann Vale and Lost Scale. They revere the world of Athas as their Earth Mother, believing themselves to be her first, best children. They see the recent earthquake and aftershocks as the Earth Mother's call to action, and now the bravest of these beings have left their homes to aid Athas in her time of need.

Pterrans are a wary, subdued race at first sight, but when others earn a pterrann's trust, they see an open, caring, friendly individual. In particular, a pterrann engages in many celebrations throughout the day. Each celebration gives thanks to the Earth Mother and reinforces a pterrann's beliefs and faith.

In initial role-playing situations, a pterrann character should be unfamiliar with the customs and practices of the societies of the Tyr Region. However, these pterrans aren't primitive by any definition of the word. They'll look upon differences with curiosity and a willingness to learn, as long as the custom doesn't harm the Earth Mother or her works.

A pterrann PC must select a "Life Path" to follow. In one respect, a Life Path is little more than another term for class; in the role-playing aspect, however, Life Path signifies a pterrann's deep devotion to a chosen way of life. The main Life Paths are the Path of the Warrior (fighters, gladiators, or rangers), the Path of the Druid, and the Path of the Psionicist. Lesser Life Paths allow pterrans to become thieves, traders, or multiclass characters.

Civilized pterrans have a natural Armor Class of 8. They usually employ weapons, but they can attack with their claws in dire situations (two attacks in a round, 1d4 points of damage for each successful strike). They live to a maximum age of 50 years, and their base movement rate is 12.

## Thri-Kreen

The insectoid thri-kreen is the least "human" of the player character races. The average thri-kreen stands 7 feet tall and grows 11 feet long from end to end. With six limbs, a sandy-yellow exoskeleton, and large, multifaceted eyes, a thri-kreen looks like a huge, intelligent mantis. While there are at least six kreen subspecies, the two most prominent in the Tyr Region are jeral and to'ksa kreen. Of these, player characters tend to be drawn from the ranks of the jeral.

A thri-kreen's hind legs are its most powerful limbs, allowing him to walk, run, and leap at phenomenal speed. (A thri-kreen's base movement rate is 18.) The four forward limbs end in three-fingered hands that can manipulate tools and weapons as effectively as a human's hands.

Thri-kreen gather in packs that roam the Athasian wastes. There are no permanent thri-kreen communities, which may account for why they have little understanding of human society or customs. Thri-kreen don't need sleep and are thus never idle. Most thri-kreen are obsessed with the hunt, the daily ritual that makes up much of their life. They strive to become skilled and wise hunters capable of stalking and catching what they need and then moving on before a region is depleted of game.

Nonkreen sometimes view this preoccupation with gathering food and maintaining traveling supplies as a bit strange, especially considering that thri-kreen hunt throughout the night while other races "lazily lie around." Further, thri-kreen care nothing for money or other items that are usually considered as treasure. In fact, a thri-kreen owns only what he can carry on his person.

Carnivores, thri-kreen will look toward other intelligent races as sources of food in extreme emergencies. Some kreen have a particular taste for elves, which puts both races in uneasy positions when forced to cooperate. However, thri-kreen won't turn to other members of their "packs" for food—no matter how desperate the situation. A thri-kreen PC adopts his adventuring companions as his pack, regardless of their mix of races; this includes whoever he is with at the time danger strikes. He'll instinctively leap to protect his companions, regardless of personal danger. The pack mentality is so ingrained in thri-kreen culture that they apply it to every situation they find themselves in.

Thri-kreen PCs can select from any warrior, priest, or psionicist class, as well as a number of multiclass options. They have no ability or understanding of wizardly magic and can't develop the skills or mind set necessary to be rogues. A thri-kreen PC is immune to charm *person* and *hold person* spells.

A thri-kreen PC has a natural Armor Class of 5. He makes and uses a number of weapons, such as *gythka* and *chatkcha*, fashions clothing and bodily decorations, but never wears armor. He can use most magical items available to his character class, though items specifically designed for the humanoid form (rings, cloaks, girdles, bracers, armor, etc.) won't function for him.

A thri-kreen's antennae help him maneuver through brush and grassland in the dark. They also lessen the effects of darkness and blindness on melee combat by 1. Ranged combat isn't affected, however. If fighting without weapons, a thri-kreen can make four claws and one bite attack every round (1d4x41d4+1 damage). If using a weapon, he can strike with the weapon and apply a bite in the same round. Multiple attacks allowed by higher levels only apply to weapons.

Upon reaching 3rd level, a thri-kreen develops a powerful leap that allows him to jump 20 feet straight up or 50 feet forward. He can't leap backward.

Upon reaching 5th level, a thri-kreen develops a venomous saliva. When a victim receives a bite, he must save versus paralyzation or be paralyzed for a number of rounds as follows: smaller than medium-sized creatures, 2d10 rounds; medium-sized creatures, 2d8 rounds; large creatures, 1d8 rounds; huge and gargantuan creatures, 1 round. Also at 5th level, a thri-kreen receives the *chatkcha* proficiency as a bonus. (If the character already has the proficiency, he gets nothing.) Those proficient with the throwing weapon can hurl it for 90 yards. If it misses its target, it returns to the thrower.

Upon reaching 7th level, a thri-kreen develops the ability to dodge missile fire on a roll of 9 or better on 1d20. Only physical missiles can be dodged, not magical effects (such as the *magic missile* spell). Physical missiles that have been enchanted modify the dodge roll by their plus. Thus, a thri-kreen can dodge an *arrow* +3 on a roll of 12 or better (9+3=12).

Thri-kreen live to a maximum age of 35 years.



# Class Overview

Player characters on Athas fall into the same general groups found in the traditional AD&D game: warrior, wizard, priest, and rogue. DARK SUN characters can also be psionics. There are, however, minor modifications to all classes, as outlined in this section and the ones that follow.

Note: Athas is a world of powerful psionics. Every player character is at least a wild talent, as are many of the nonplayer characters and monsters. Some opponents even develop into full-fledged psionics or the monstrous equivalent. A thorough understanding of *The Way of the Psionicist*, included in this boxed set, is required to fully detail a DARK SUN campaign. However, DMs may opt to use the compatible psionics system presented in *The Complete Psionics Handbook* (2117), though all future DARK SUN products will be written from the point of view of the new rules.

## Class Ability Score Requirements

Characters must have minimum ability scores to join a particular class. These minimums are shown in TABLE XIII below.

TABLE XIII: CLASS ABILITY MINIMUMS

Class	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
<i>Warrior:</i>						
Fighter	11	—	—	—	—	—
Gladiator	13	12	15	—	—	—
Ranger	14	14	15	—	15	—
<i>Wizard:</i>						
Defiler	—	—	—	9	9	—
Preserver	—	—	—	9	11	—
<i>Priest:</i>						
Cleric	—	—	—	—	11	—
Druid	—	—	—	—	13	15
<i>Rogue:</i>						
Bard	—	13	—	14	—	16
Thief	—	9	—	—	—	—
Trader	—	—	—	10	15	12
<i>Psionicist:</i>						
Psionicist	—	—	11	12	15	—

## Creating New Characters

In a DARK SUN campaign, player characters don't begin adventuring as novices. Rather, they start with some experience to call upon and receive a few other benefits not available to characters in other campaigns. Those benefits are outlined in the following text.

- **Starting Level:** All single-class player characters start the campaign at 3rd level. A player character begins his adventuring career with the minimum number of experience points needed to attain 3rd level in his class. The PC has the THAC0 and saving throws of a 3rd-level character, plus any class or race benefits that apply to that level. This rule reflects the fact that life on Athas is much harsher than it is on other AD&D worlds, which forces characters to mature more quickly in order to survive.
- **Starting Hit Points:** Beginning PCs determine hit points in the normal fashion. Roll a hit die for each of the character's first three levels of experience, apply any Constitution modifiers to the rolls, and then total them to determine the character's starting hit points.
- **Starting Proficiencies:** New PCs receive initial weapon and nonweapon proficiencies, plus any additional slots that may become available at 3rd level. Thus, 3rd-level warriors receive an additional weapon and nonweapon proficiency (for a total of 5 and 4, respectively); 3rd-level wizards and priests receive an additional nonweapon proficiency (for a total of 5); and 3rd-level psionicists likewise receive an additional nonweapon proficiency (for a total of 4). Note: For those not familiar with the proficiency rules, remember that





the “Number of Languages” column from Table 4: INTELLIGENCE in the *Player’s Handbook* lists a number of bonus nonweapon proficiency slots that characters receive.

- **Starting Money:** PCs who start the campaign as free citizens use TABLE XXVII in Chapter 3: Money and Equipment to generate starting funds. Slaves, however, start with no money.
- **Multiclass Player Characters:** Player characters who are multiclass start the campaign at different levels of experience. A multiclass character begins with just enough experience points to be 2nd level in his most “expensive” class. For example, a fighter/preserver would have 2,500 experience points in each class—the minimum to be 2nd level as a preserver. This is enough experience to let him start the campaign at 2nd level in each class. A fighter/preserver/thief would also start with 2,500 experience points in each class. This makes him 2nd level as both preserver and fighter, but 3rd level in his thief class.
- **Nonplayer Characters:** While PCs start the campaign at higher levels, nonplayer character be 1st or 2nd level, as determined by the DM. Remember, PCs are truly exceptional individuals while lower-level NPCs make up the majority of common folk.

## Alignment

DARK SUN campaigns call upon players to role-play their characters according to alignments, just as in other AD&D campaigns. The alignment scheme is the same, combining an outlook toward order (law, neutrality, or chaos) with an attitude toward morality (good, neutrality, or evil). All Athasian characters and creatures have an alignment.

Like it says in the *Player’s Handbook*, “consider alignment as a tool, not a straightjacket that restricts the character.” Encourage players to motivate their Athasian characters, using alignment to enhance role-playing opportunities and add realism and enjoyment to each game session.

Life-threatening circumstances always put a character’s alignment to the test. How he acts, how he treats the other characters in his group, and how he controls his own actions can change drastically in a desperate situation. Although the example below uses a shortage of water to precipitate a crisis, DMs can adapt the rules to a variety of other situations. The commodity in short supply could just as easily be food in times of famine, the antidote to a poison, the cure for a widespread disease, or air in a collapsed tunnel.

# Severe Desperation Rule (Optional)

Severe desperation sets in when one member of the party (either a PC or an NPC) dies from dehydration and the situation shows no signs of improving. At such times, the DM makes a Wisdom check for each character every day. Success allows a character to stay in control for another day. Failure indicates that the character has succumbed to madness.

The madness caused by water deprivation forces a character to adopt a chaotic-evil alignment with regards to obtaining water (for that day only). The DM informs the player of this temporary alignment change for his character. The player, in turn, should do his best to role-play this madness as it affects the character. Thus, a gladiator might simply draw his sword and demand water, whereas a bard might poison some of his fellows in secret to eliminate bodies and increase his share. If a player is unwilling to play the madness out, the DM controls the character as an NPC until the madness wears off.

Alignment-related class abilities are lost during the period of madness.

Once a character makes a successful Wisdom check (the earliest attempt can be made at the start of the next game day) or is rehydrated, the madness ends.

A party of player characters facing a potentially deadly shortage of water has to take several things into consideration. Individually, each character should react based on his alignment, as noted below. As a group, they have to examine which of their number is strong and capable, and which is weak and in need of assistance. However, plans may be made to give more water to certain individuals so they can survive to cast spells or fight foes. The guidelines listed here should also help players determine how their characters might react to such plans.

- **Lawful Good:** A lawful-good character insists that everyone in the party gets an equal share of whatever water there is. This fairness even extends to those who seem beyond hope. He readily conceives of and accepts plans that call for unequal distribution of water for the good of the group, but never lets the weak or dying go without water.
- **Lawful Neutral:** A lawful-neutral character insists that everyone in the party gets an equal share of available water, but doesn't care one way or the other about characters who are beyond hope. He accepts plans that call for unequal distribution of water for the good of the group.
- **Lawful Evil:** A lawful-evil character insists that available water be evenly distributed among the able-bodied of the group, but won't offer any to those who seem too far gone. He accepts plans that call for unequal distribution of water for the good of the group, especially if that means more water for him.
- **Neutral Good:** A neutral-good character insists that everyone in the group gets an equal share of the remaining water, even the severely dehydrated. He considers plans calling for unequal water distribution, but has to be convinced that the plan will ultimately benefit the party and not hurt him personally.
- **True Neutral:** A neutral character wants a fair share of water for himself and won't necessarily come to the aid of the very weak. He considers plans that call for unequal water distribution, but only if he and the party will benefit in the short term.
- **Neutral Evil:** A neutral-evil character insists on his fair share of water and is against giving water to the very weak. He considers plans for unequal water distribution, but only if he personally benefits in the short term.
- **Chaotic Good:** A chaotic-good character insists that everyone in the party gets an even share of the available water, even the very weak. He won't consider plans calling for unequal water distribution unless he and those he likes personally get more water as part of the plan.
- **Chaotic Neutral:** A chaotic-neutral character insists on his fair share of the available water and won't concern himself with the plight of the very weak. He won't consider plans calling for unequal water distribution unless he personally gets more water as part of the plan.
- **Chaotic Evil:** A chaotic-evil character freely lies, cheats, or even kills to get all the water he can. He constantly suggests plans calling for unequal water distribution that grant him additional water immediately.

The sections that follow provide detailed information about each character class. Those unique to DARK SUN are detailed fully while those found in other campaigns are presented so that the contrasts to similar characters in other settings can be made clear.

## Warrior Class

There are three different types of warriors on Athas: *fighter*, *gladiator*, and *ranger*. Each has a slightly different approach and a particular style of combat. Note that there aren't any paladins on Athas, because the idea of serving good and right for the simple rewards of inner peace and faith faded from Athas long ago.

- The *fighter* is a skilled warrior, trained for both individual combat and warfare in military formations. Characters of this type are the mainstay of any organized military force.
- The *gladiator* is a specialized warrior trained for combat in the arenas. He's skilled in the use of many obscure weapons and combat techniques, including those peculiar to specific combat games and popular blood sports. He is forged in the blood and excitement of the arenas of the city-states, trained to fight and kill for the enjoyment of others. When



a gladiator earns his freedom and becomes a player character, he demonstrates skills and abilities that make him a deadly opponent.

- The *ranger* is a warrior knowledgeable in the ways of the wilderness, skilled in surviving the rigors of the wild oases and the brutal stretches of desert between them. Many tribes have at least one ranger in their ranks.

**Note:** Upon creation of a character and after racial adjustments have been made, a player may choose one of the three warrior classes for this character. If so, he rolls an additional 1d4 and adds these extra points to his character's Strength score. These points can take a character's Strength score as high as 24, but no higher. This one-time addition takes place only at the creation of the character.

## Fighter

**Prime Requisite:** Strength  
**Races Permitted:** All

On Athas, the fighter is a trained warrior, a soldier skilled in mass warfare. Every society on Athas maintains an army of fighters to protect itself from attack or to wage wars of plunder and annihilation against its neighbors. Fighters are both the commanders and soldiers in these armies, and at higher levels are experts in both individual and formation combat, leadership, and morale. They can be of any alignment, use magical items, gain weapon proficiencies and specializations, and advance in level according to the rules in the *Player's Handbook*.

As a fighter increases in experience levels, his reputation as a warrior and leader grows. As word spreads, less experienced warriors who are eager to fight for the same causes seek him out. These followers remain loyal to the fighter for as long as they are not mistreated and there are battles to be fought. A fighter need not have a stronghold to attract these confederates. Followers are always gained in a group of ten individuals, which is called a *stand*. All ten are of the same race and experience level and have the same equipment. A *unit* consists of some number (usually 2d10) of identical stands.

Once a fighter reaches 10th level, he attracts his first unit of followers. This first unit always consists of warriors of the same race and background as the fighter (that is, if the fighter is part of a slave tribe, so is his first unit of followers). The first unit consists of 1d10+2 stands (30-120 individuals). Roll 1d2+1 to determine the level of the unit. As the fighter gains each new level beyond the 10th, he attracts another unit of followers. Roll dice to determine the number of stands in the unit and the level of the followers. These subsequent followers may be of very different backgrounds than the fighter himself.

A fighter can't avoid gaining followers. The desperate peoples of Athas constantly look for great commanders, warriors who will lead them. TABLE XIV, below, lists a fighter's followers. These are merely the automatic followers that a fighter gains. In the course of a campaign, a player who wishes to role-play such situations might raise huge armies of former slaves or gain control of an entire thri-kreen tribe for his character.

**TABLE XIV: FIGHTER'S FOLLOWERS**

Fighter's level	Stands Attracted	Stands' level	Special*
11	1d10+4	1d3+1	5%
12	1d12	1d3+2	10%
13	1d12+2	1d4+1	15%
14	1d12+4	1d4+2	20%
15	1d20	1d6+1	25%
16	1d20+2	1d6+2	30%
17	1d20+4	1d8+1	35%
18	1d20+6	1d8+2	40%
19	1d20+8	1d10+1	45%
20	1d20+10	1d10+2	50%

\* Percentage chance that the unit is of an unusual nature. Examples include kank cavalry, thri-kreen, elves, aarakocra, or human fighters of exceptional equipment or morale. The DM decides all special characteristics beyond the number of stands and level of followers.



A fighter has the following special benefits:

- A fighter can teach weapon proficiencies when he reaches 3rd level and can train students in the use of any weapon in which he is specialized. The fighter may train a number of students equal to his level in a single “training class.” A training class requires eight hours of study each and every day for one month. At the end of that time, each student must make an Intelligence check. Those who pass gain a bonus proficiency slot in that weapon. A student may only be trained once, regardless of success, with a specific weapon. Students can learn any number of new proficiencies in this manner, even beyond those slots normally allowed for a character of that level.
- A fighter can operate heavy war machines when he reaches 4th level, including bombardment engines (such as ballistae, catapults, and trebuchets), crushing engines (such as rams and bores), and siege towers.
- A fighter can supervise the construction of defenses when he reaches 6th level. These include ditches and pits, fields of stakes, hasty stone and wooden barricades, and even semipermanent stone fortifications.
- A fighter can command large numbers of troops when he reaches 7th level. In role-playing terms, the fighter has mastered the skills and techniques to take charge of 100 soldiers per level. This includes terminology, use of messengers and signals, use of psionic and magical aids to communication, etc.

In all cases where the rules here don’t contradict them, the rules governing fighters in the *Player’s Handbook* should be used.

## Gladiator

**Prime Requisite:** Strength  
**Races Permitted:** All except aarakocra

Gladiators are slaves of the city-states or merchant houses, specially trained to participate in brutal physical contests for the enjoyment of the masses. Disciplined in many diverse forms of hand-to-hand combat and skilled in the use of dozens of different weapons, gladiators are among the most dangerous warriors on Athas.

A gladiator character gains levels as per the Paladin/Ranger experience table in the *Player’s Handbook*. If he has a Strength score (his prime requisite) of 16 or more, he gains a 10% bonus to the experience points he earns.

Gladiators can be of any alignment. They can use most magical items (including potions, protection scrolls, and most rings) and all forms of enchanted armor, weapons, and shields. Gladiators abide by all warrior restrictions that apply to magical items.

Gladiators have the following special benefits:

- A gladiator is automatically proficient in all weapons. He never receives a nonproficiency penalty for using a weapon, not even one he has never used before.
- A gladiator can specialize in multiple weapons. As a reward for years of training and discipline, a gladiator becomes the ultimate master of weapons. He may specialize in any number of weapons, provided he has the number of proficiency slots required. He must pay the initial slot to become proficient with the weapon, as well as the additional slots required to specialize in it.
- A gladiator is an expert in unarmed combat. He receives a 4-point bonus to modify all punching and wrestling attack rolls; these can be used as pluses or minuses to the roll. The gladiator’s player may consult the Punching and Wrestling Results Table in the *Player’s Handbook* after making the roll before stating how he wants to use the bonus.
- A gladiator learns to optimize his armor when he reaches 5th level. He learns to move and position armor so it absorbs blows better than it normally would. With every five levels of experience, the gladiator gains a +1 bonus to his Armor Class. Thus, at 5th level the bonus is +1, at 10th level it’s +2, and so on. This benefit doesn’t apply to gladiators who aren’t wearing armor, however. Also, *armor* spells or *rings of protection* don’t gain the bonus, but more substantial magical protection, such as *bracers* and *cloaks*, do.
- A gladiator attracts followers when he reaches 9th level. The followers arrive in the same manner as for fighters. A gladiator’s first unit always consists of other gladiators who have come to study his fighting style and “learn from a true master.”



## Ranger

**Prime Requisites:** Strength, Dexterity, Wisdom

**Races Permitted:** All except dwarf and mul

The role of the ranger is largely unchanged—even in the alien wilderness of Athas. Harsh and unforgiving, this world calls for skilled and capable people to master its ways. The ranger more than answers that challenge, living a rugged life through clever mastery of his surroundings.

A ranger's motivations can vary greatly. For instance, human rangers are often former slaves forced into the wilderness where they must learn to survive. Halfling rangers, on the other hand, play an integral part in their aboriginal society as advisers and trackers. Whatever their origin, all ranger characters are of good alignment.

Govern the creation and play of rangers as presented in the *Player's Handbook*, using the following exceptions:

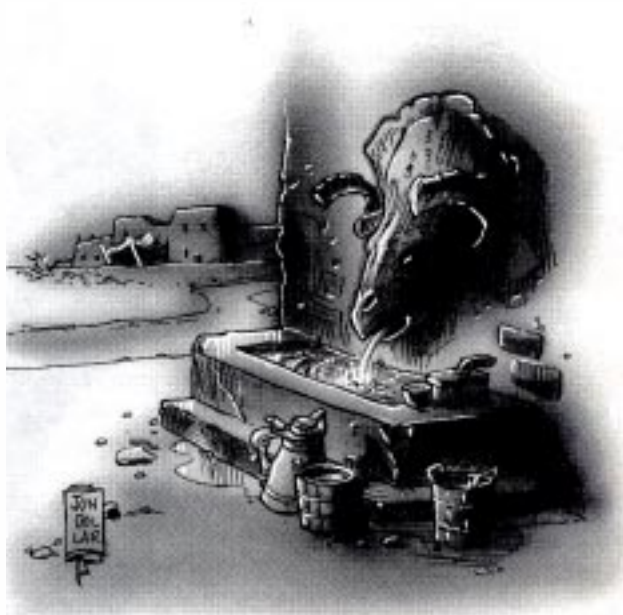
- A ranger can use any weapon or wear any armor; he can fight two-handed; and he advances in level as described in the *Player's Handbook*.
- A ranger gains the tracking, move silently, and hide in shadows abilities as described in the *Player's Handbook*.
- A ranger must choose an enemy species, gaining a +4 bonus to attack rolls when fighting against such a creature. Consult Chapter 7: Encounters for a list of possible enemy species.
- A ranger is skilled at animal handling. His adeptness with both trained and untamed animals is as presented in the *Player's Handbook*.
- A ranger can learn priest spells when he reaches 8th level. At that time, he must decide upon a single elemental plane of worship and choose spells from that sphere (he can't use spells from the Sphere of the Cosmos, however). A ranger never gains bonus spells for a high Wisdom score, nor is he ever able to use priest scrolls or magical items unless specifically noted otherwise in the item description. Further, while he can't enchant magical potions on his own, he can reproduce them using *botanical enchantment* (see Chapter 5: Experience and Treasure).



- At 10th level, a ranger attracts 2d6 followers, but his followers are far different from those granted to a fighter or gladiator. To determine the type of follower acquired, consult TABLE XV and roll once for each follower.

TABLE XV: RANGER'S FOLLOWERS

1d100 Roll	Follower
1-4	Aarakocra
5-8	Anakore
9-12	Ant Lion, Giant
13-18	Baazrag
19	Behir
20-25	Belgoi
26-30	Cat, Great
31	Dragonne
32-35	Druid
36-39	Ettin
40-46	Fighter (elf)
47-52	Fighter (human)
53-58	Fighter (thri-kreen)
59-62	Giant
63-68	Kenku
69-78	Lizard
79-82	Preserver
83	Psionicist (human)
84-90	Roc
91-95	Thief
96-98	Wyvern
99	Yuan-ti
100	Other wilderness creature (chosen by the DM)



## Wizard Class

In a DARK SUN campaign, magic is irrevocably linked to the environment. The casting of magical spells and the enchantment of magical items draws energy directly from the living ecology in the vicinity, destroying the life there. A wizard is able to capture and master these magical energies, though at the expense of affecting the ecosystem. Wizards can choose the degree to which they damage the environment in their effort to gain mastery of magical energy.

The *defiler* activates tremendous magical energy without regard to the havoc such actions play on the land. With the casting of each spell, a defiler destroys a portion of the world's ecosystem, rendering the land dead and sterile. This vicious and brutal method of wielding magic requires little study, and so defilers advance through levels relatively quickly as far as wizards are concerned.

The *preserver* learns to tap—rather than destroy—magical energies so as to minimize or even cancel the destruction of life. He uses magic in concert with the environment, doing so by balancing his quest for power with in-depth study, which requires that his level advancement proceed slowly.

There are no specialist wizards on Athas. The study of magic has been so restricted over the centuries that wizards have a hard enough time learning spells, let alone specializing in a specific field of study.

Like wizards in other campaigns, Athasian mages are restricted in their use of weapons and armor (as explained in the *Player's Handbook*). In this world, a wizard's spell book is very rare—perhaps found only as an artifact. Instead of a “book” made with flat pages bound along one edge between heavy covers, Athasian wizards write their spells on paper or papyrus scrolls, weave them into small tapestries or the fringes of their robes, carve them into bone staves, or—in extreme cases—use complicated knot and string patterns or stone tablets. All of these collections of spells are referred to as “spell books” and function accordingly.

## Defiler

**Prime Requisite:** Intelligence  
**Races Allowed:** Elf, half-elf, human

Defilers are wizards who have decided to take the faster, darker approach to mastering the use of magical spells. In the give and take of spell casting, defilers are well versed in the taking, but give nothing in return. With every spell cast, a defiler leeches the life energy out of the plants and soil around him, leaving behind a lifeless zone. The actual amount of damage done to the environment by a defiling spell depends upon the level of the spell and the nature of the land. (The rules governing this process are presented in Chapter 4: Magic and Spells.) It seems natural that defilers can have only neutral or evil alignments; a defiler can never be of good alignment.

Because a defiler destroys life as a natural matter of course, his aura has a permanent taint that increases with every rise in level. At low levels, this taint is simply a bad feeling that others sense dimly. At higher levels, the taint becomes a malignant air of death that even the dullest half-giants can detect. In game terms, this is reflected with a Charisma penalty that's applied whenever a defiler interacts with other characters. At 1st–5th level, Charisma is at -2; at 6th–10th, Charisma is at -4; at 11th–15th, Charisma is at -6; and at 16th–20th, Charisma is at -8.

A defiler who has an Intelligence score of 16 or higher gains a 10% bonus to all experience points earned. A defiler can use any magical item normally available to wizards. He advances in level as per TABLE XVI.

In most cases, defilers are outlaws (even in the eyes of the corrupt sorcerer-kings), so they keep their magical skills hidden. Unlike preservers who have a loose organization in the underground Veiled

Alliance, defilers tend to be loners, keeping their ambitions and powers to themselves. A sorcerer-king tolerates a select few defilers in his employ to carry out day-to-day magical tasks that he has no patience for, but that's all. These defilers are always at the beck and call of their master, and the sorcerer-king himself oversees the training of new recruits. A sorcerer-king's defilers are feared and hated far and wide.



TABLE XVI: DEFILER EXPERIENCE LEVELS

Level	Defiler	Hit Dice (d4)
1	0	1
2	1,750	2
3	3,500	3
4	7,000	4
5	14,000	5
6	28,000	6
7	42,000	7
8	63,000	8
9	94,500	9
10	180,000	10
11	270,000	10+1
12	540,000	10+2
13	820,000	10+3
14	1,080,000	10+4
15	1,350,000	0+5
16	1,620,000	0+6
17	1,890,000	0+7
18	2,160,000	0+8
19	2,430,000	0+9
20	2,700,000	0+10

## Preserver

**Prime Requisite:** Intelligence  
**Races Allowed:** Aarakocra, elf, half-elf, human

The preserver is a wizard who seeks to maintain the environment while drawing magical power from it. In the give and take of spell casting, preservers have mastered the balance. A preserver's magical spells are cast in harmony with nature, and there is no damage to the surrounding environment.

A preserver who has an Intelligence score of 16 or higher gains a 10% bonus to the experience points he earns. He follows all other rules presented in the *Player's Handbook* and advances in level as noted on Table 20: WIZARD EXPERIENCE LEVELS in that book.

## Game Effects of Preserving and Defiling Magic

Defilers gain levels faster than preservers because preservers opt to proceed slowly so as not to destroy the fragile ecosystem around them. Defilers have no regard for such niceties. Other game mechanic differences are described below.

There are two steps to casting a spell on Athas. First, a wizard must gather the energy to power the spell from the plant life around him. Then he performs the actions necessary for releasing the spell—the usual somatic, verbal, and material components of the spell come into play in the second step.

To gather energy for a spell, a wizard holds out an open hand and taps into the life force of nearby plants. How much power the wizard receives depends on what path of magic he follows. Preservers always receive the amount of energy they need to cast their maximum number of spells per level. They take this energy slowly so as not to deplete the life they're drawing it from. Defilers, on the other hand, absorb energy quickly, killing everything in the vicinity until they're filled up. The defiler's method isn't as refined or careful, and so it involves the possibility for both a certain degree of failure and a higher level of success.

This gathering of energy occurs outside of game time, during the same period of time as a wizard is memorizing his spells. No roll is required for a preserver; this class of wizard automatically gathers the energy necessary to cast all the spells allowable at a given level of experience. Defilers make an Intelligence check based on the type of terrain they're in at the time of spell memorization. The effects of this check are noted on TABLE XVII.

TABLE XVII: GATHERING SPELL ENERGY THROUGH DEFILING MAGIC

Terrain Type*	Intelligence Check		
	Failure (More than Int)	Int to Int-7	Int-8
Lush	-1 spell/level	Usual spells/level	+3 spells/level
Abundant	Failure (More than Int-2)	Int-2 to Int-7	Int-8
	-1 spell/level	Usual spells/level	+2 spells/level
Fertile	Failure (More than Int-3)	Int-3 to Int-7	Int-8
	-1 spell/level	Usual spells/level	+2 spells/level
Infertile	Failure (More than Int-5)	Int-5 to Int-8	Int-9
	-2 spells/level	Usual spells/level	+1 spell/level
Barren	Failure (More than Int-7)	Int-7 to Int-9	Int-10
	-2 spells/level	Usual spells/level	+1 spell/level

\* *Lush terrain* includes forests, large gardens, and parks. *Abundant terrain* includes verdant belts, grasslands, and mud flats. *Fertile terrain* includes oases and scrub plains. *Infertile terrain* includes stony barrens, rocky badlands, and bare mountains. *Barren terrain* includes boulder fields, sandy wastes, and salt flats.

As the gathering of spell energy takes place during the "off stage" time between adventures when wizards memorize spells, any bonuses or penalties toward the number of spells per level should be taken into account when players make up their characters' lists of memorized spells for a game session.

**Example:** The defiler Hepulto has an Intelligence score of 16. In lush terrain, a roll of 17 or higher is a failure, while a roll of 8 or less (Int 16-8=8) provides the best result. In fertile terrain, however, Hepulto fails on a roll of 13 or higher (Int 16-3=13).

If a preserver wants to turn to defiling magic (rolling on TABLE XVII), he may do so once per level of experience without any penalty. Even if the check fails, the attempt constitutes the use of defiling magic methods for a given level. Each use of defiling magic beyond that one use could have serious consequences for a preserver, for he moves closer and closer to a very fine line. Each additional use of defiling magic requires the preserver to make a saving throw versus death magic, modified by a cumulative penalty of -2 per each additional use. A failed saving throw means the process for drawing life energy didn't come from the plants, but from the preserver himself. He suffers a permanent 1d4 point loss from his Constitution score and becomes a defiler immediately. The character has demonstrated a willingness to resort to defiling magic to gain more power, and an alignment change may be necessary.

A preserver who switches to the defiler class becomes a defiler of the same level, with the minimum number of experience points for that level (thus losing experience points). To regain his former station, the character must 1) stop drawing energy as a defiler; 2) not advance in level until he has accumulated enough experience to reach the next level as a preserver; and 3) perform a great personal sacrifice or undertake a momentous quest to demonstrate his commitment to the preserving way. A preserver who returns from being a defiler has just one chance. If the character crosses the line again, he remains a defiler until his dying day.



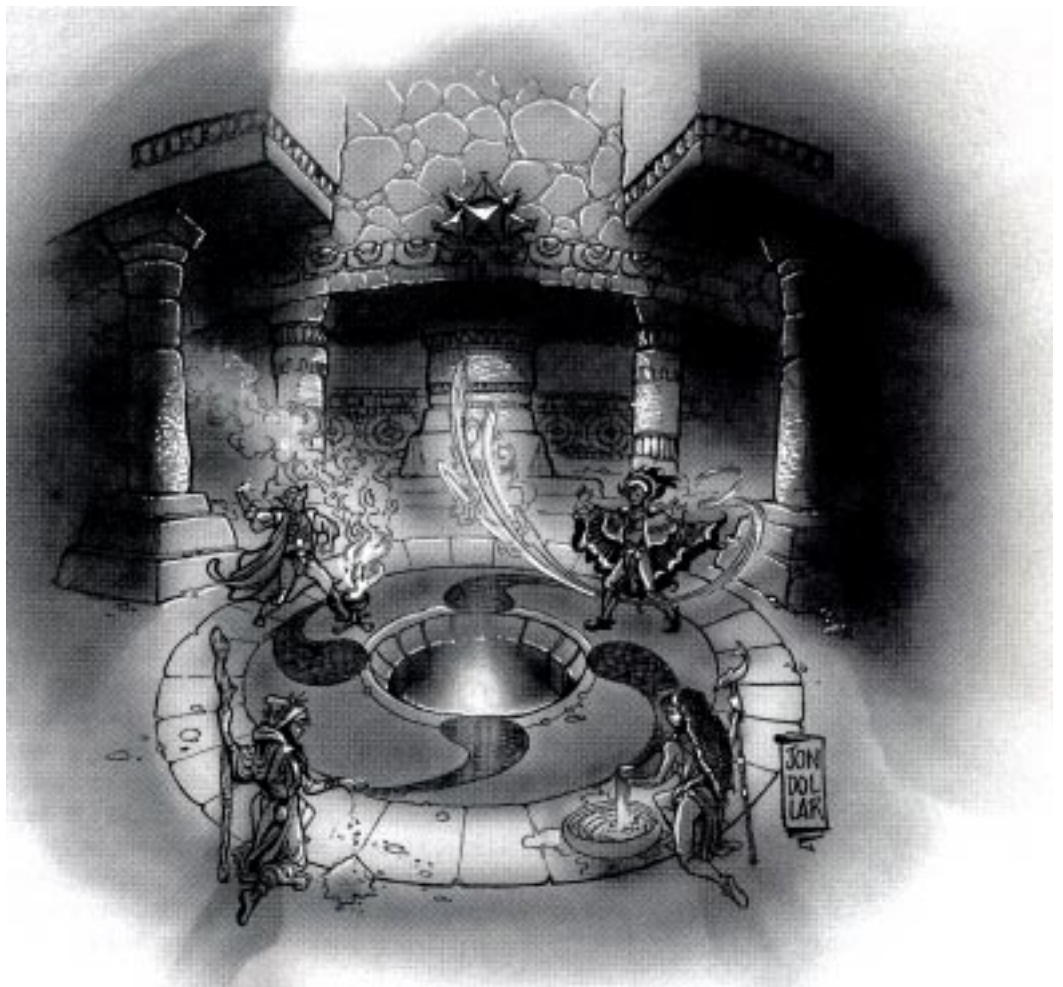
# Priest Class


Athas is a world without true gods. Powerful sorcerer-kings often masquerade as gods and demigods but, though their powers are great and their worshipers many, they aren't true gods. The world does, however, provide sources of priestly magical power. Such belief-inspired magic is separated into two distinct areas, each with a class suitable to its application. Note that the use of priestly magic *never* adversely affects the ecosystem in and of itself. The net result of the spell may affect the environment (such as *summon insects* or *lower water*), but the use of the magical energy itself doesn't destroy the environment like defiling magic.

*Clerics* are priests who tend to the needs of the local people with their particular talents. They worship one of the four elemental forces: earth, air, fire, or water. They call upon magical energies from the associated planes, specializing in one element's magical application on the Prime Material plane of Athas. Like the elements themselves, the power they draw upon isn't benevolent or malevolent—it only cares that its natural form in the material world is preserved.

The spells available to a cleric depend upon his elemental plane of worship. To reflect this, the spheres of clerical spells have been reorganized into five spheres: the Spheres of Earth, Air, Fire, and Water, and the Sphere of the Cosmos (a general sphere). Spells are received directly from the elemental sphere (even the Cosmos spells). A cleric need not restrict his activities to supporting his element on Athas, but direct opposition may cause spells to be withheld, at the DM's option. For example, an elemental water cleric who goes out of his way to poison or otherwise damage a watering hole might suffer for such an action.

*Druids*, the second type of Athasian priests, associate themselves with the spirits that inhabit special geographical locations on Athas. Every oasis, rock formation, stretch of desert, and mountain has a spirit that looks over it and protects its use. A druid allies with a particular spirit, acting as that spirit's earthly counterpart and drawing magical energy from it. For example, an oasis has its own spirit and a single druid who lives there to protect it and preside over its use by humans, demihumans, and animals.





**Note:** A cleric gains access to all spells within his chosen elemental sphere and to all spells in the Sphere of the Cosmos. Druids choose their spheres based upon the geographic feature with which they are associated. The new lists of priest spells by sphere is given in Chapter 4: Magic and Spells.

Other than these spell parameters, priest characters are created and used just as described in the *Player's Handbook*. Restrictions to armor and weaponry vary according to class.

## Cleric

**Prime Requisite:** Wisdom  
**Races Permitted:** All except pterrann

Outside the city-states, away from the bureaucracy of the sorcerer-kings and their templars, the most common type of priest is the cleric. All clerics worship the elemental planes and draw their magical energies directly from them. However, the backgrounds and motivations for clerics may be vastly different—the shamans of the halflings, the elemental singers of the elf tribes, and the healers among the herding communities are all dissimilar, but they're all still clerics.

Every cleric must choose one elemental plane as his focus of worship. This choice dictates what spells he can call upon and what types of weapons he prefers to use. A cleric has major access to the sphere of his element of worship and minor access to the Sphere of the Cosmos.

Clerics concentrate their efforts on magical and spiritual pursuits, generally leaving combat to others. However, Athas is a violent world, and practicality dictates that they train in combat as well. Clerics aren't restricted with regard to the armor they may wear. Their weapons of choice are related to their particular elemental plane of worship, as in the following:

- **Elemental Plane of Earth.** Clerics of the earth are usually the best armed since they can use stone and metal in their weapons. Wood is also acceptable to them since it originally grew in the ground. They may use any weapons made of these materials that are listed in this book or the *Player's Handbook*.
- **Elemental Plane of Air.** Since the air doesn't easily lend itself to being made into an offensive weapon, clerics of the air rely instead on weapons that are guided by the air. They may use any sort of bow, blowgun, or sling, regardless of the material used to construct it. Spears are also acceptable and are used as either melee or missile weapons.
- **Elemental Plane of Fire.** Clerics who worship this plane rely on flaming weapons. Favored weapons include flaming arrows, burning oil, and magical weapons enchanted to somehow burn or scald. Heating metal weapons (when they're available) to cause searing damage is another acceptable practice among fire clerics. Because it was once fused under great pressure and heat, weapons made from obsidian are also acceptable.
- **Elemental Plane of Water.** Clerics who draw power from this plane recognize water as the bringer of life to the wastes, the originator of all that grows. Therefore, elemental water clerics may use any weapon that is organic in origin, usually wood or bone. They may use bows, clubs, maces, javelins, quarterstaves, spears, and warhammers made from these substances.

Athasian clerics aren't strictly forbidden from using weapons that don't conform to those listed above. However, clerics don't gain their share of group experience awards for creatures they helped defeat using weapons outside those noted in this scheme.

Clerics in the DARK SUN world who have a Wisdom of 16 or more gain a 10% bonus to the experience points they earn. Likewise, clerics conform to many other rules in the *Player's Handbook*. For instance, elemental clerics have power over undead, just as described in the *Player's Handbook*. In a DARK SUN campaign, however, undead are classified as either *controlled* or *free-willed*, but the cleric's ability to turn or dispel them is the same unless stated differently in an undead monster's description. As undead are outside the natural cycle of life and death, elemental clerics consider them to be abominations (though evil clerics can control them, as stated in the *Player's Handbook*).

Unlike warriors, Athasian clerics never gain followers simply as a reward for advancing in levels, nor do they ever gain official approval to establish a stronghold. If the DM wishes, however, any of these things may come about as a result of good role-playing. Fortunately,



clerics do gain certain powers with regard to their elemental planes of worship as they advance in level, as follows:

- Elemental clerics can ignore the physical effects of the element they worship upon reaching 5th level. The duration of this power is a number of rounds equal to the cleric's level, and it can only be used once per day. Thus, a water cleric may move through water freely, and an earth cleric may pass through stone walls as if they weren't there. Force exerted on the cleric by the element may also be ignored—a great wind won't affect an air cleric, for example, nor would flames burn a fire cleric. This protection extends to everything that the cleric carries on his person at the time.
- A cleric can gate material directly from his elemental plane upon reaching 7th level. The amount of material gated is one cubic foot per level above 6th. The material is a pure specimen from the plane in question: earth, air, fire, or water. The exact nature of the material is in its purest, most basic form. Earth arrives as dense stone, water as pure liquid, fire as cleansing flame, and air in the form of a tremendous cyclonic wind that's capable of knocking down all huge or smaller creatures and lasts one round. The shape of this gated material may be dictated by the cleric (a stone wall one inch thick, a sheet of flame surrounding an altar, etc.), but it can't be gated to a distance more than 50 feet from the cleric. Material may be gated only once per day.
- Though not a granted power, a cleric can conjure elementals from his elemental plane when he reaches 9th level, since *conjure elemental* is a 5th-level spell in the DARK SUN campaign. The 6th-level spell *conjure fire* elemental and the 7th-level spell *conjure earth* elemental have been removed from the DARK SUN priest spell lists.

In all cases where the rules here don't contradict them, the rules for clerics in the *Player's Handbook* apply.

## Druid

**Prime Requisites:** Wisdom, Charisma

**Races Permitted:** Aarakocra, half-elf, halfling, human, mul, pterrann, and thri-kreen

Druids are independent priests who ally themselves with various spirits of the land. A druid shares power with the spirit he worships, nurturing and protecting the geographical feature to which the spirit is tied. Virtually every feature of the land has a druid to protect it, but druids seldom interact with others of their kind. They serve independently, living patient, solitary lives devoted to guarding the land.

Every druid must choose one geographic feature to be his *guarded lands*. The geographic features that a druid might make his guarded lands can vary widely. For instance, one may watch over a particular stretch of open desert, another may protect a belt of scrub grass within it, while still another might watch over a small oasis that borders on both.

Lower-level druids may travel widely in the world. During his *time of wandering*, a young druid learns about the world, its ecology, the balance of nature, and the ways of its creatures. Although he has already chosen lands to guard and cherish, he may spend as much or as little time on his guarded lands as he sees fit. Learning the ways of the world will ultimately help him better protect his guarded lands, for upon reaching 12th level his time of wandering comes to an end. From that time forward, the druid must spend half of his time on his guarded lands, watching over them and protecting them. The rest of the time, the druid must again travel to keep tabs on events that might threaten nature in general and his guarded lands in particular.

Some possible guardian lands for the *Sphere of Earth* include a particular mountain or hill, a rock outcropping, an expanse of desert or steppes. For the *Sphere of Air*, a druid might opt to protect the sky over a particular area, the winds of a canyon, or any prevailing wind pattern. For the *Sphere of Fire*, dry grasslands, a volcanic vent, hot springs, or boiling tar pits are appropriate guardian lands. Lastly, the *Sphere of Water* might include a spring or pool, an oasis, or a natural cistern.

When in his guarded lands, a druid has several powerful granted powers, including the following:

- A druid can remain concealed from others while in his guarded lands. This is proof against all normal forms of detection (sight, hearing, etc.) but won't protect the druid from



magical detection (including a *detect invisible* spell). The druid can't move or cast spells while concealed.

- A druid may *speak with animals* in his guarded lands when he reaches 3rd level. He can speak with all animals when he reaches 7th level.
- A druid may *speak with plants* in his guarded lands when he reaches 5th level. He can speak with all plants when he reaches 9th level.
- A druid can live without water or nourishment in his guarded lands when he reaches 7th level. From that point on, the druid draws his life energy directly from his guarded lands. However, when he leaves his lands to learn more of the world, he must take sustenance in the usual fashion.
- A druid can *shapechange* into creatures common to his guarded lands when he reaches 10th level. The druid can perform this *shapechange* up to three times per day. The size of the animal isn't restricted, provided the animal is native to the druid's guarded lands. When assuming the shape of an animal, the druid takes on all of its characteristics: movement rate and abilities, Armor Class, number of attacks, and damage per attack. The druid's clothing and one item held in each hand also become part of the new body; these reappear when the druid resumes his normal shape, and they can't be used while the druid is in animal form. Since many animals wander over wide ranges on Athas, druids often have a large number of creatures to choose from. However, they can't *shapechange* into creatures totally alien to their guarded lands. Consult Chapter 7: Encounters for a list of possible creatures; use the terrain indicated for each creature when considering whether it's native to the druid's guarded lands. The druid retains his own hit points, THACO, and saving throws while in animal form.

Druids tend not to bother or even encounter those who use their guarded lands without damaging them. Travelers who stop at an oasis to water their animals and then move on will probably never know there is a druid watching their every move. It's a druid's firm belief that the lands are for all to use, human and animal alike. He watches to see that his guarded lands aren't abused in any way, but otherwise he leaves most visitors alone—with the possible exception of wizards. Understandably, druids tend to be very apprehensive about wizards who venture into their realms, as any wizard might turn out to be a defiler. Nothing can destroy the land faster than a defiler drawing power for his spells.

Unlike in other AD&D campaigns, there's no worldwide organization of druids on Athas. As such, there are no rules limiting the number of druids that may exist at a given level, and there are no special druidic titles such as Archdruids and the Grand Druid. These don't exist in a DARK SUN campaign.

A druid who has both a Wisdom and Charisma score of 16 or more gains a 10% bonus to the experience points he earns. Further, he has no restrictions as to what weapons he may use. He may never wear armor, but may don items that give magical protection (bracers, cloaks, etc.), and he can use any magical item normally available to druids.

A druid has access to spells from up to two spheres associated with his guarded lands—one at major, the other at minor. For instance, a druid whose guarded land is a stream might be restricted to spells from the Sphere of Water. A more exotic druid might choose as his guardian lands the "howling winds of the north" and use spells from the Sphere of Air. Still another druid, whose guarded land is a desert spring, may draw spells from both the Sphere of Water and the Sphere of Earth, though one must be of major access and the other of minor, as decided by the DM. At most, a druid may claim two spheres to be related to his guarded lands, and they must meet the approval of the DM. In addition, a druid has major access to spells from the Sphere of the Cosmos.

In all cases where the rules here don't contradict them, the rules about druids in the *Player's Handbook* should be used.

## Rogue Class

Athas is a world of intrigue and treachery, of shady deals and secretive organizations. In short, it's a rogue's paradise. Beyond the cities, in the wasteland villages and among the slave tribes, thieves live by their wits and skills. Within the secure walls of the city-states, many typically roguish occupations have become institutions unto themselves. Thieves and bards have



become pawns of the wealthy, deployed in deadly games of deceit between noble families, merchant houses, and even other sorcerer-kings. There are still those, however, who use their disreputable talents toward noble ends, but they are especially rare.

The *bard* is a rogue who uses songs and tales as his tools of trade. He's a person of wit and camaraderie. Despite having few other talents to offer, the bard is a welcome source of entertainment and information across Athas. However, bards are noted to be extremely untrustworthy and even ruthless—they often sell their skills as assassins and poison alchemists to the highest bidder.

The *thief* is a rogue whose strengths lie in stealth and pilfering. On Athas, the thief can be regarded as a talented individual for hire. Some city-states don't even consider the thief to be a wrongdoer; only the person who hired him is guilty of a crime. The thief may also be a simple robber seeking personal wealth or redemption.

The *trader* is a rogue who specializes in commerce and mercantile endeavors. Hagglers of great skill and procurers of fertile imagination, traders are welcome throughout Athas by ordinary citizens for the goods they deal in.

## Bard

**Prime Requisites:** Dexterity, Charisma

**Races Permitted:** Half-elf, human

The bard is a member of a bizarre class of entertainers and storytellers prized by the aristocratic city dwellers. Free citizens all, bards tour through cities in groups or individually, then travel on, making a living with their wits and talents. It's also widely accepted that many bards lead double lives as notorious blackmailers, thieves, spies, and even assassins.

As described in the *Player's Handbook*, the bard must remain mostly neutral in alignment; that is, a bard character must have "neutral" as one of the aspects of his alignment. The bard's profession puts him in touch with all sorts of people and situations, so he can't afford to have a strong polarity of alignment to complicate his interaction with them.

Athasian bards have no restrictions to their armor or weapon choices. However, they tend to wear no armor, favoring more festive clothing, and their weapons are often small enough to be easily concealed.

Bards are first and foremost entertainers. Each has some skill as a singer, actor, poet, musician, and juggler. Every bard character specializes in one particular mode of performance, which should be noted on his character sheet. This skill may become pertinent in some role-playing situations.

In the cities, bards often become tools of the nobility. They're commonly hired by one noble house and sent to another as a gift. The bards are sent not only to entertain, but usually to perform some other subtle task as well (such as robbery, espionage, or even assassination). Nobles consider it rude to turn down the gift of a bard or bard company. However, when presented with a troop of bards from one's worst enemy, it's sometimes better to be rude and turn them away, for the consequences of their visit could be downright deadly. To get around this, the noble who hired them sometimes disguises their approach by having another noble send them. A very complicated collage of intrigue and deceit is often woven wherever bards are involved.

A bard has a bewildering variety of benefits, as noted in the following:

- A bard can use all thief abilities, including pick pockets, open locks, find/remove traps, move silently, hide in shadows, hear noise, climb walls, read languages, forge documents, bribe officials, and escape bonds. The initial values of each skill is given on TABLE XIX: THIEVING SKILL BASE SCORES (page 35), and is modified by race, Dexterity, and armor worn. Unlike thieves, bards add nothing to these base values at 1st level. Each time a bard advances a level in experience, the player receives another 20 points to distribute to his character. No more than 10 of these points can be assigned to a single skill, and no skill can be raised above 95%.
- A bard can influence reactions, as described in the *Player's Handbook*.
- Music, poetry, and stories performed by the bard can be inspirational, as described in the *Player's Handbook*.
- Bards learn a "little bit of everything," as described in the *Player's Handbook*.

- A bard is a master of poisons, knowledgeable in both their use and manufacture. Each level, the bard rolls 1d4, adds the result to his level, and consults TABLE XVIII below to determine which new poison he has mastered. If the bard has already mastered the poison indicated, he gains no new poison at that level. If the total is 18 or higher, the bard may choose any poison on the list. Once mastered, the bard can make a single application of the poison every day, using easily obtained materials. The methods of application are presented in Chapter 9: Combat in the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide*.

**TABLE XVIII: BARD POISONS**

1d4 +	Level	Class	Method	Onset	Strength
	2	A	Injected	10-30 minutes	15/0
	3	B	Injected	2-12 minutes	20/1-3
	4	C	Injected	2-5 minutes	25/2-8
	5	D	Injected	1-2 minutes	30/2-12
	6	E	Injected	Immediate	Death/0
	7	F	Injected	Immediate	Death/0
	8	G	Ingested	2-12 hours	20/10
	9	H	Ingested	1-4 hours	20/10
	10	I	Ingested	2-12 minutes	30/15
	11	J	Ingested	1-4 minutes	Death/20
	12	K	Contact	2-8 minutes	5/0
	13	L	Contact	2-8 minutes	10/0
	14	M	Contact	1-4 minutes	20/5
	15	N	Contact	1 minute	Death/25
	16	O	Injected	2-24 minutes	Paralytic
	17	P	Injected	1-3 hours	Debilitative
18+	*	*	*	*	*

\* Player's choice.

Unlike bards in other campaigns, Athasian bards don't gain the use of magical spells at higher levels, and they never gain the ability to use magical devices of a written nature. In all cases where the rules here don't contradict them, the rules about bards in the *Player's Handbook* apply.

## Thief

**Prime Requisite:** Dexterity  
**Races Permitted:** All except half-giant and thri-kreen

Athasian thieves run the gamut of society. They range from gutter snipes who prey upon the merchants and free citizens of the cities to vagabonds who steal what they can from passing caravans or merchant trains. At their best, thieves can be in the employ of the nobility, plying their trade by contract in the name of a royal household, or they can be men or women of principle and honor who steal only from the corrupt and wealthy. Perhaps because of their corrupt nature, thieves can choose any alignment except lawful good. However, they can be from any social class: slave, free citizen, or noble.

There is no thieves' cant used on Athas, nor do thieves attract followers. However, at 10th level a thief can attempt to attract a patron. A patron is a noble who will sponsor the thief and protect him under his house and name. The thief is expected to perform certain tasks for his new master in return—including theft, spying, and even assassination.

The base chance of finding a patron is a percentage roll equal to 5% per level of the thief beyond 9th. Once a patron is obtained, the thief doesn't need to roll anymore—the thief is now in the employ of one noble family or merchant house dynasty from one city of the DM's choice. However, a thief doesn't have to seek out a patron if he doesn't want to, and many prefer taking their chances without such protection. Note that once a thief has a patron, the only way to leave his benefactor's service is through death. A hired thief knows

too many of his patron's secrets to be allowed to "resign" in a less permanent way.

In the campaign, having a patron means several things. First, the DM can assign the thief jobs from the family. The thief must perform these jobs or be targeted for assassination. Second, the thief can never be personally held responsible for his crimes while working for a patron. Typically, patrons have powerful friends among the defilers and templars of a city-state to protect both themselves and their thief employees from the law.

A thief's skills are determined as described in the Player's Handbook. However, racial and Dexterity modifiers for Athasian thieves are different than modifiers for thieves in other campaigns, so a thief's skills should be determined using the following tables instead. TABLE XIX lists the base scores for a thief's standard skills, plus the three new skills available to Athasian rogues (see below). TABLE XX lists adjustments to be made, depending on the race chosen for the character, and TABLE XXI lists the correct Dexterity adjustments for DARK SUN thieves.

**TABLE XIX: THIEVING SKILL BASE SCORES**

Skill	Base Score
Pick pockets	15%
Open locks	10%
Find/remove traps	5%
Move silently	10%
Hide in shadows	5%
Detect noise	15%
Climb walls	60%
Read languages	0%
Forge documents	10%
Bribe officials	5%
Escape bonds	10%



**TABLE XX: THIEVING SKILL RACIAL ADJUSTMENTS**

Skill	Aarakocra	Dwarf	Elf	Half-Elf	Halfling	Mul	Pterran
Pick pockets	-10%	—	+5%	+10%	+5%	—	-5%
Open locks	-5%	+10%	-5%	—	+5%	-5%	-5%
Find/remove traps	—	+15%	—	—	+5%	—	—
Move silently	+10%	—	+5%	—	+10%	+5%	+5%
Hide in shadows	—	—	+10%	+5%	+15%	—	+5%
Detect noise	+5%	—	+5%	—	+5%	—	—
Climb walls	-15%	-10%	—	—	-15%	+5%	-5%
Read languages	—	—	—	—	-5%	-5%	—
Forge documents	-10%	+5%	+5%	—	-10%	—	-5%
Bribe officials	—	—	+10%	-10%	-5%	-5%	—
Escape bonds	—	—	—	—	+10%	-5%	—

**TABLE XXI: THIEVING SKILL DEXTERITY ADJUSTMENTS**

Dexterity	Pick Pockets	Open Locks	Find/Remove Traps	Move Silently	Hide in Shadows	Forge Documents	Escape Bonds
9	-15%	-10%	-10%	-20%	-10%	-15%	-20%
10	-10%	-5%	-10%	-15%	-5%	-10%	-15%
11	-5%	—	-5%	-10%	—	-5%	-10%
12	—	—	—	-5%	—	—	-5%
13-15	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
16	—	+5%	—	—	—	+5%	—
17	+5%	+10%	—	+5%	+5%	+7%	+5%
18	+10%	+15%	+5%	+10%	+10%	+10%	+10%
19	+15%	+20%	+10%	+15%	+15%	+15%	+12%
20	+20%	+25%	+12%	+20%	+17%	+17%	+15%
21	+25%	+27%	+15%	+25%	+20%	+20%	+17%
22	+27%	+30%	+17%	+30%	+22%	+22%	+20%
23	+30%	+33%	+20%	+33%	+24%	+24%	+22%
24	+33%	+35%	+22%	+35%	+27%	+27%	+24%



A thief's selection of weapons isn't limited; a thief character can use any weapon he becomes proficient with. A thief's choice of armor, however, is limited, as described in the *Player's Handbook*. Note that there's no such thing as elven chain armor on Athas.

Athasian thieves can employ the backstab attack and use scrolls, as described in the *Player's Handbook*. Likewise, a thief character who has a Dexterity score of 16 or more gains a 10% bonus to the experience points he earns. In all cases where the rules here don't contradict them, the rules about thieves in the *Player's Handbook* apply.

The world of Athas has three new thieving skills available to members of the rogue group: *forge documents*, *bribe officials*, and *escape bonds*.

- **Forge Documents.** This skill allows a thief to mimic the handwriting of another character to produce false-but-passable forms and documents, including items made of paper and papyrus, stone tablets, signet rings, etc. Success depends on the thief's skill, his familiarity with the original, and the examiner's level of scrutiny.

A thief attempting to forge a document needs an example of the original on which to base his work. Without such an example, the thief suffers an automatic -10% penalty on every skill roll. Having more than one example can improve the thief's chances by a +5% bonus, at the DM's option.

Every time the forgery is examined, the thief must make a skill roll. A forged pass that lets a slave travel at night, for instance, might be examined by several different guards and templars through the course of an evening. An examiner inspects a document in a manner that reflects his attitude toward the holder; if appropriate, the DM can either choose how the examiner should react or consult Table 59: ENCOUNTER REACTIONS from the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide*. Then check the reaction against the following list to determine what modifier (if any) to apply to the thief's skill roll. Success means the forgery is accepted as genuine.

Attitude	Modifier
Friendly	+15%
Indifferent	+5%
Cautious	—
Suspicious	-10%
Hostile	-20%


- **Bribe Officials.** The second new skill allows a thief to sway the reactions of NPCs with "gifts" (money or items). Success depends on the thief's skill, the NPC's initial reaction, and the value of the bribe (in ceramic pieces) being offered. In no way should this skill be used instead of good role-playing, but it can act as a barometer that takes into account the character's skills.

When a situation may call for a thief character to make a bribe, the DM should roll the NPC's reaction in secret (noting the exact roll and the reaction), using Table 59: ENCOUNTER REACTIONS from the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide*. If the reaction is friendly, no bribe is necessary for the PC to achieve a desired result. If the reaction isn't friendly, the PC might change it by offering a bribe.

The original reaction roll must be modified down to friendly through the use of bribes. Determine the modifier by subtracting the original roll from the highest number that receives a friendly reaction. For example, if the player character is being friendly and the DM's reaction roll for the NPC was 15 (cautious), then 7 is the highest friendly result in that column. The roll must be modified by 8 (15-7=8). Next, determine the station of the NPC to be bribed using the list below. The number of ceramic pieces indicated under "Bribe" is the minimum needed for each point of modifier.

NPC's Station	Bribe
Peasant, slave	2d4 cp
Free citizen, soldier, low-level templar	3d8 cp
Merchant, officer, mid-level templar	5d10 cp
Noble, general, high-level templar	5d100 cp





Using the example above, if the NPC is a mid-level templar, then the minimum bribe that must be offered is 5d10 cpx8. Of course, only the DM knows the initial reaction and actual station of the NPC, so the thief has a chance of offering less than the minimum bribe. For every cp the thief is short, his skill roll receives a -1% penalty. If the skill roll fails, the bribe doesn't work and the NPC's reaction becomes hostile. A successful roll (and the correct amount of bribe) means the NPC's reaction becomes friendly.

A bribed NPC performs reasonable services for the PC that fall within the confines of his job or station. Of course, unusually corrupt NPCs might accept the PC's bribe and then betray him anyway. Bribes may also be material goods of an equal value of ceramic pieces. However, material goods only work as a bribe if the NPC wants them. Services can also be offered as bribes, but these situations need to be role-played carefully.

- **Escape Bonds.** The last new skill offered to Athasian thieves is the ability to free himself of ropes and chains through contortion. The skill allows a thief to attempt to free himself from tied ropes or leather bonds, manacles, chains, and other mundane restraining devices. It offers no help against magical bonds.

The thief must make a successful escape roll against every item binding him. For example, if a thief is bound at the wrists and ankles, he needs to make two successful rolls to get free. Locked items also require a successful open locks roll. One failure indicates that the thief can't slip these bonds, and no further roll can be made for them.

The thief using this skill requires 5 rounds per roll to adequately work free. He can hurry his attempts, but he suffers a -5% penalty for each round omitted (to a minimum of one round).

## Trader

**Prime Requisites:** Wisdom, Charisma

**Races Permitted:** Aarakocra, dwarf, elf, half-elf, human, pterrhan

Individuals capable of providing the basic necessities of life wield enormous influence in a world where everything is in short supply. Traders as a class specialize in finding the impossible and getting it to market for the maximum profit. Because of their ability to provide goods otherwise unattainable, traders are tolerated everywhere, from the cities of the sorcerer-kings to the slave tribe villages in the distant wastes.

All traders aspire to become masters of major trading houses, but most have to start much lower on the scale. On their rise to power and riches, they have no problem accompanying adventurers. A trader PC acts as a negotiator, interpreter, and diplomat for his group, appraising the treasure they find and bargaining for the supplies they need. Those adventurers who travel with a young trader often form the core of a new merchant house, get adopted into the trader's family, or earn spots as senior agents after the trader becomes successful.

Traders have no restrictions as to the weapons or armor they can use, but any armor heavier than leather prevents the use of thief abilities. In daily life, traders usually wear ordinary clothes and carry weapons that can be easily concealed. Traders may be of any alignment.

A trader learns the arts of stealth, double-dealing, and thievery from an early age, for intrigue and espionage are normal parts of everyday business on Athas. A trader PC may use all thieving abilities as per the normal thief rules. These are modified by the character's race, Dexterity score, and armor being worn. Like a bard, a trader adds no points to the base values at 1st level. Each time the trader PC advances a level, he receives 20 points to distribute among the skills. No more than 10 points can be assigned to a single skill at one time, and no skill can ever be raised above 80%. As PCs start play in a DARK SUN campaign at 3rd level, a trader PC receives 40 points to distribute among his thieving skills.

Unlike thieves, however, traders don't get the backstab attack ability, though he does learn languages as a matter of course. At every three levels of experience, a trader PC gains a bonus slot that must be used to add a new language (and only a new language) to his list of proficiencies. Likewise, a trader PC who has Wisdom and Charisma scores of 16 or higher gains a 10% bonus to the experience points he earns.

A trader develops a natural ability to fast-talk through situations. Fast-talking is the verbal equivalent of slight of hand, the art of distraction and misdirection. It's the ability to con another into a certain course of behavior. The uses of fast-talk range from outright fraud, to



talking one's way out of a sticky situation, to simply getting a better price for a particular piece of merchandise. The success of a fast-talk attempt is determined by a Charisma check, applying any penalties and bonuses from the target's Intelligence and Wisdom to the score needed, as well as a situation penalty (if desired). Note that all modifiers are cumulative.

**Example:** A trader whose Charisma is 16 attempts to fast-talk an official whose Intelligence is 17 and his Wisdom is 8. The situation is routine. The trader needs to roll a 15 or less ( $16-2+1+0=15$ ). A roll of 20 is an automatic failure, regardless of the check needed.

Target's Attribute Score	Intelligence Modifier	Wisdom Modifier
3 or less	na	+5
4-5	+3	+3
6-8	+1	+1
9-12	0	0
13-15	-1	-1
16-17	-2	-3
18	-3	-5
19	-5	na
20+	na	na

Note that targets who have an Intelligence score of 3 or less are so dim that attempts to fast-talk succeed automatically, while those who have high Intelligence or Wisdom scores are impervious to the skill. Like the skill bribe officials, fast-talk should never be used in place of good role-playing, only to show the skills a character might possess beyond the player running him. Further, fast-talk can't be used on other player characters.

Situation	Modifier
Routine	0
Moderate	-3
Very difficult	-6

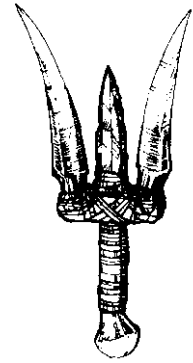
Of course, the modifiers shown above are guidelines only; the DM is free to assign any modifier he or she sees fit. Situational modifiers are also determined by the DM, and they are defined as follows:

- A *routine* situation is a normal transaction for a trader, including receiving up to 10% more or paying 10% less for an item than it's worth, or persuading a target to believe a plausible exaggeration or falsehood.
- A *moderate* situation isn't beyond a trader's ability, but it isn't one he wants to find himself in on a regular basis. Such events include getting as much as 30% more or paying 30% less for an item than it's worth, persuading a target to believe an implausible falsehood, or convincing a band of raiders of equal or lesser level not to attack.
- A *very difficult* situation is probably beyond the skills of the trader in question, but the payoff is such that he has to try. These include receiving 50% more or paying 50% less for an item than it's worth, convincing a target of an outright and obvious lie, or talking higher level opponents out of making an attack.

Once a trader reaches 10th level, he starts to attract agents. These agents are individuals of exceptional ability, rather than the groups of low-level characters that a high-level fighter attracts. A trader PC never has to accept the services of a given agent, but if an agent is rejected the player can't roll again for a new agent until his character earns another level. Using TABLE XXII below, check the number of followers gained at each level, roll for their levels, and check to see if any of them are special agents by rolling the given percentage or less. If the roll does not succeed, roll on TABLE XXIII for the agent's race and class. If the roll succeeds, roll on TABLE XXIV for that follower.



Trader's Level	Number of Agents Gained	Agent's Level	% Special*
10	1	1d4+1	0
11	1	1d4+2	5
12	1d2	1d6+1	10
13	1d2	1d6+2	15
14	1d4	1d8+1	20
15	1d4	1d8+2	25
16	1d6	1d10+1	30
17	1d6	1d10+2	35
18	1d8	1d12+1	40
19	1d8	1d12+2	45
20	1d10	1d12+3	50



\* Roll the given percentage or less; if successful, check for type of special agent against TABLE XXIV: TRADER'S SPECIAL AGENTS.

**TABLE XXIII: AGENT'S RACE and CLASS**

1d100 Roll	Agent's Race	1d100 Roll	Agent's Class
1-5	Aarakocra	1-5	Bard
6-14	Dwarf	6-15	Cleric (roll 1d10):
15-26	Elf	1-3	earth
27-39	Half-elf	4-5	air
40-46	Half-giant	6-8	fire
47-49	Halfling	9-10	water
50-75	Human	16-20	Defiler*
76-92	Mul	21-25	Druid
93-95	Pterrann	26-40	Fighter
96-100	Thri-kreen	41-48	Gladiator
		49-55	Preserver
		56-65	Psionist
		66-70	Ranger
		71-86	Thief
		87-100	Trader

\* Accepting this agent is considered an evil act and is subject to rulings by the DM.

**TABLE XXIII: TRADER'S SPECIAL AGENTS**

1d100 Roll	Agent's Type
1-15	Fighter or gladiator and followers (if any)
16-25	Agent is a multiclass character (as designed by DM)
26-35	Roll for agent as normal, but add 1d6 levels
36-45	Belgoi*
46-55	Genie, jann
56-65	Gith*
66-81	Kenku
82-86	Pseudodragon
87-96	Tarek
97-100	Exceptional situation † (roll 1d20):
1-4	Friendship of a thri-kreen pack
5-11	Friendship of an elf tribe
12-13	Friendship of a halfling tribe
14-18	Friendship of a slave tribe
19	Favor of an official (in a city or village)
20	Service of a planar creature ‡

\* Accepting this agent is considered an evil act and is subject to rulings by the DM.

† Subject to DM's approval.

‡ Usually a one-time event.

# Psionist Class

The *psionist* uses the forces of his own mind to affect his environment. Psionic powers aren't magical in nature. Rather, they come from within the psionist whose entire essence is in perfect harmony. What's more, psionic powers in no way affect the world's ecosystem other than by direct interaction.

Any human or demihuman character who meets the ability requirements may elect to be a psionist. However, those who don't choose the psionist class still roll for a wild talent. See below and *The Way of the Psionist* for more information on wild talents.

## Psionist

**Prime Requisites:** Wisdom, Constitution

**Races Permitted:** Any

All intelligent creatures on Athas have some measure of psionic power. However, only those player characters who so devote themselves (and have the necessary ability scores) can be of the psionist character class. All player characters with lesser ability are *automatically* wild talents, as described in *The Way of the Psionist*. Roll for their powers as discussed in that book.

There are no racial restrictions or racial level limits for psionist characters. Any human character who meets the ability requirements may become a psionist or a dual-class psionist. Any demihuman character who meets the ability requirements may be a psionist or multiclass psionist. The psionist class may be combined with any other class or classes.

Use the rules presented in *The Way of the Psionist* book provided in this boxed set. It replaces *The Complete Psionics Handbook* in all DARK SUN campaigns. However, if a DM chooses, *The Complete Psionics Handbook* can be used either as an alternative psionics system or to expand the number of powers available to psionists and wild talents; if the latter, the DM should use the Psionics Power Summary found in *The Way of the Psionist* to determine new costs and MACs.

**NPCs:** Nonplayer characters can be psionists if they meet the eligibility requirements, or they can be wild talents. However, NPCs aren't automatically wild talents as are PCs. Use the rules presented in *The Way of the Psionist* to determine if an NPC has a wild talent.





# Dual—and Multiclass Characters

DARK SUN characters can be dual- or multiclass, as described in the *Player's Handbook*. Human characters are free to become dual-class characters on Athas, just as they are in any other AD&D campaign world. (The rules governing this are fully detailed in the *Player's Handbook*.) As in other campaigns, demihuman characters who meet the ability requirements may elect to become multiclass characters, subject to the restrictions presented in the *Player's Handbook*. TABLE XXIV lists the possible character class combinations available for multiclass demihumans, based on that character's race.

**TABLE XXIV: MULTICLASS OPTIONS FOR DEMIHUMANS\***

<b>Aarakocra</b>	
Fighter/Cleric	Fighter/Thief
Fighter/Psionicist	Thief/Psionicist
Cleric/Thief	Cleric/Psionicist
<b>Dwarf</b>	
Cleric/Psionicist	Thief/Psionicist
Fighter/Cleric	Fighter/Cleric/Psionicist
Fighter/Psionicist	Fighter/Thief/Psionicist
Fighter/Thief	
<b>Elf or Half-Elf</b>	
Fighter/Mage	Fighter/Mage/Cleric
Fighter/Thief	Fighter/Mage/Thief
Fighter/Psionicist	Cleric/Mage/Thief
Fighter/Cleric	Cleric/Fighter/Thief
Cleric/Mage	Fighter/Mage/Psionicist
Cleric/Psionicist	Fighter/Thief/Psionicist
Cleric/Thief	Fighter/Cleric/Psionicist
Mage/Psionicist	Cleric/Mage/Psionicist
Mage/Thief	Cleric/Thief/Psionicist
Thief/Psionicist	Mage/Thief/Psionicist
<b>Half-Giant</b>	
Fighter/Cleric	Cleric/Psionicist
Fighter/Psionicist	
<b>Halfling</b>	
Fighter/Thief	Cleric/Psionicist
Fighter/Cleric	Fighter/Psionicist
Thief/Psionicist	Fighter/Thief/Psionicist
Cleric/Thief	
<b>Mul</b>	
Fighter/Thief	Cleric/Thief
Fighter/Cleric	Psionicist/Thief
Fighter/Psionicist	Fighter/Thief/Psionicist
Cleric/Psionicist	Fighter/Thief/Cleric
<b>Pterran</b>	
Fighter/Thief	Psionicist/Thief
<b>Thri-kreen</b>	
Fighter/Cleric	Cleric/Psionicist
Fighter/Psionicist	Fighter/Cleric/Psionicist

\* *Defiler* or *preserver* may be substituted for any *mage* entry.

*Ranger* may be substituted for any *fighter* entry under elves, half-elves, half-grants, halflings, and thri-kreen.

*Bard* may be substituted for any *thief* entry under half-elves.

*Druid* may be substituted for any *cleric* entry under half-elves, halflings, muls, or thri-kreen.

*Gladiator* may never be a part of a multiclass combination for demihumans.



# Character Trees (Optional)

DARK SUN campaigns are set in a violent world. Powerful magic and psionics, desperate hordes of raiders, and the unforgiving environment conspire against player characters. This makes death a very real possibility for player characters. To offset this in DARK SUN campaigns, players are encouraged to use *character trees*. Although they play with only one character at a time, they have four to call upon at the beginning of any particular game session—thus minimizing the time needed to start up a game after a PC's death.

A character tree consists of one *active* character (which the player is using as his player character) and three *inactive* characters. The active character takes part in the adventure, performing actions in the campaign world. When a new adventure begins, the player may switch to one of his inactive characters or keep playing his previously active character.

The character tree's chief purpose is to give every player a pool of adventurers to choose from for different situations or when one of his characters dies. The player is familiar with these characters and can apply their strengths more readily than he might be able to with freshly created characters. If care is taken, the character tree can be a valuable tool for the player in an extended campaign.

To create a character tree, a player completely rolls up four characters, using the rules presented earlier in this chapter. Once this is done, the player selects the character that he intends to run for the first adventure, making that one his "active" character. The other three are considered inactive.

The four characters that make up a player's character tree are unrestricted as to class or race; any combination is acceptable. However, the alignment of these characters is restricted. All of the characters in a character tree must be like-aligned as to good, neutral, or evil. Devotion to chaos or law makes no difference, however.

For example, one character tree might have a chaotic-good dwarf gladiator, a lawful-good thri-kreen fighter, a neutral-good human bard, and a chaotic-good elf preserver. The thri-kreen couldn't be lawful evil or even lawful neutral and still be a part of this character tree.

If a character is forced to change alignment so that it no longer fits within the tree, that character must be discarded (or, optionally, the player may discard the other three, inserting three new characters into his tree and adopting this new alignment). Discarded characters should be given to the DM for use as NPCs.

## Changing Characters

A player may switch his active character between adventures, during an adventure, or upon an active character's death, as noted in the following:

- **Between adventures.** When the DM concludes an adventure (he'll announce this in campaigns using the character tree rule), a player may switch his active character for an inactive one. The player isn't obligated to do so, and he may keep one character active through any number of consecutive adventures.
- **During an adventure.** Calling upon an inactive character to replace an active character requires time and energy—after all, the PCs on a character tree aren't following each other around at any given moment. In the scope of a campaign, messages must be sent, journeys must be made, and sometimes even searches must be launched for the transient inactive characters. Such a request could spur an adventure of its own. (Psionics and magic may make the task of summoning an inactive PC easier, but they can't and shouldn't solve all problems.)

DMs should be sparing in allowing players to switch active characters during an adventure, and they should impose a 3d6 day delay on campaign time. Obviously, a DM should never allow switching during critical or dangerous scenes of an adventure. Any switching of characters during an adventure is subject to the discretion of the DM, who may freely disallow this option.

- **Upon an active character's death.** When an active character dies, one of the inactive characters on the tree is assumed to arrive on the scene within one day (if possible) to fill his spot. The player picks which inactive character will arrive and must subsequently



roll a new 3rd-level character to occupy the vacated spot on the tree. If circumstances make it difficult for a new character to arrive, the DM may be forced to extend the period before the newly activated PC can be worked into the story.

## Character Advancement

The active character in a campaign receives experience points and advances in levels just as described in the *Player's Handbook*.

Every time the active character advances a level, the player may also advance one of his inactive characters one level. The selected inactive character must be of a lower level than the active character. Adjust the experience point total on the inactive character's record sheet to the minimum number necessary to attain the new level.

As only one inactive character gains a level of experience every time the active character does so, deciding which character to advance might be a decision based on which direction the campaign seems to be taking. If, for instance, a large war is in progress, a player may wish to use his fighter as his active character. If the war winds down, he might want to advance inactive nonfighter characters for the post-war adventures to come.

For purposes of character tree advancement, inactive multi- and dual-class characters may only advance in one class. As active characters, multiclass PCs cause inactive characters to advance when they increase one level in *each* of their classes. A dual-class character causes one inactive character to advance with every level he attains.

For inactive multiclass characters, care must be taken that a single experience point total can correctly yield the level combination. In general, an inactive multiclass character should never be more than one level different in each class (3/3/4 is okay; 3/3/9 is not).

## The Status of Inactive Characters

*Inactive characters aren't NPCs or followers.* They aren't involved in an adventure at any time, unless they're switched to active status. At no time will a player's active and inactive characters come into contact in a game session. Inactive characters are assumed to be "elsewhere" on Athas, performing other tasks appropriate to their classes and concerns.

All characters in a character tree are assumed to know each other and are working toward similar ends. The player may invent connections: the characters are all sons of the same noble, distant cousins, friends from the slave pits, etc. However, there's no need to have any relationship between them—the player may decide that the individuals in his character tree have no more than a passing acquaintance with one another.

Even though characters are on the same tree, they can't freely exchange equipment, magical items, wealth, or personal possessions. Keep separate lists for all such items. If there's a compelling reason to do so, however, characters may exchange important items or information between adventures. DMs need to be careful—this option can be easily abused. As a general rule, items stick with their original possessor.





## Proficient and Specialized Use

In a DARK SUN campaign, the use of any weapon that a character isn't proficient with results in a penalty.

This penalty, shown on Table 34: PROFICIENCY SLOTS of the *Player's Handbook*, is applied to a character's attack roll and is based on what group the character's class belongs in. Proficiency with a weapon makes the weapon far more useful in battle and eliminates any non-proficient penalties.

Being proficient with a weapon means that the character has been trained to use it. Weapons are assigned to a character's open proficiency slots—each individual weapon requires its own proficiency. A character can only become proficient with weapons allowable to his or her class.

Fighters and gladiators can also specialize in specific weapon types. Specialization is only available to these classes; multiclass characters can't use weapon specialization. Specialization costs two proficiency slots: one to become proficient with the weapon and one to specialize in its

use. See Chapter Five of the *Player's Handbook* for the exact effects of weapon specialization.

If the DM agrees, other effects can be added to specialization. These include such possibilities as causing a weapon (the *cahulaks*) to entangle a target or using two similar weapons (tortoise blades) with no penalty.



# CHAPTER 2: Proficiencies

In the DARK SUN campaign, the use of proficiencies isn't optional; it's part of the standard rules of play. Both weapon and nonweapon proficiencies follow the rules presented in the *Player's Handbook*. Any exceptions to those rules are detailed in this chapter.

Athasian characters often have higher ability scores than characters in other AD&D campaigns. As a result, proficiency checks (which are based upon attributes) succeed more frequently. Even so, a roll of a natural 20 still results in failure, regardless of a character's ability scores.

## Weapon Proficiencies

Weapon proficiencies and specializations work according to the rules in the *Player's Handbook* for all Athasian character classes except the gladiator class. A gladiator begins play proficient in all weapons. He can specialize in any number of weapons, provided he has enough slots available to purchase the specializations. A gladiator spends two slots to specialize in any melee or missile weapon except a bow, which requires three slots. He gains all the benefits for every specialization he has, suffering no penalty for multiple specializations. (See Chapter 1: Creating Characters for more details.)

## Nonweapon Proficiencies

In addition to the new nonweapon proficiencies presented here and in *The Way of the Psionicist*, most of the proficiencies found in the *Player's Handbook* can be used in a DARK SUN campaign. However, these proficiencies have certain modifications that must be applied to them because of the nature of Athas. The modifications are detailed later in this chapter.

The nonweapon proficiencies available to the psionicist group appear in *The Way of the Psionicist* book, included in this boxed set. Players using psionicist player characters must refer to that book for specific information, rules, and proficiency descriptions.

New nonweapon proficiencies are listed in TABLE XXV, below, and TABLE XXVI lists proficiency group crossovers. Descriptions of the proficiencies follow. As in the *Player's Handbook*,

the new proficiencies are listed alphabetically and include descriptions and rules for using them in a campaign.

**TABLE XXV: NEW NONWEAPON PROFICIENCIES**

Proficiency	Slots	Ability	Modifier
<b>General Group</b>			
Bargain	1	Wisdom	-2
Contact*	1	Wisdom	0
Heat protection	1	Intelligence	-2
Mental armor	1	Wisdom	-2
Psionic detection	1	Wisdom	-2
Sign language	1	Dexterity	0
Water find	1	Intelligence	0
<b>Warrior Group</b>			
Armor optimization	1	Dexterity	-2
Tactics	1	Intelligence	-1
Weapon improvisation	1	Wisdom	-1
<b>Wizard Group</b>			
Somatic concealment	1	Dexterity	-1
<b>Priest Group</b>			
Bureaucracy	1	Charisma	-2
Somatic concealment	1	Dexterity	-1
<b>Rogue Group</b>			
Information gathering	1	Intelligence	Special

\* Psionicist bonus proficiency and wild talent general proficiency. See *The Way of the Psionicist* for more details.

**TABLE XXVI: NONWEAPON PROFICIENCY GROUP CROSSOVERS**

Character Class	Proficiency Groups
Defiler	Wizard, General
Gladiator	Warrior, General
Preserver	Wizard, General
Psionicist	Psionicist, General
Trader	Rogue, Warrior, General

## Armor Optimization

This proficiency allows a character to use his armor to best advantage against a particular opponent (much like the gladiator special ability). A successful proficiency check in the first round of any combat situation gives a -1 bonus to the character's Armor Class until that combat comes to an end.

A situation is a series of rounds in which a particular character engages in one bout of combat. Once the character allows two full rounds to pass without engaging in combat, the situation ends.

A character must be wearing some type of armor or employing a shield in order to use the armor optimization proficiency. The bonus granted by the successful use of the armor optimization proficiency adds to the Armor Class provided by the armor or shield. The bonus for the proficiency also adds to that gained by a gladiator character's special ability.

## Bargain

A character who has the bargain proficiency can haggle over monetary, service, and barter transactions to gain a better deal, as follows:

- In a *monetary transaction*, a successful check allows the character to purchase an item for 10% less or sell one for 10% more than the going rate.
- In a *simple barter transaction*, a successful check improves the perceived value of the bargainer's goods by 10%. In a *protracted barter*, a successful check allows the bargainer to roll 3d6 instead of 2d6 for that round of barter; a separate check initiates every round. (Simple and protracted barter are fully explained in Chapter 3: Money and Equipment.)
- In a *service transaction*, a successful check provides the bargainer 10% more than the going rate for his services.

The DM should require players to role-play the bargaining session to gain the benefits of this proficiency.

## Bureaucracy

The bureaucracy proficiency helps characters in situations involving officials, rules, and established routines. For example, a successful check shortens the time a character spends in a city lockup awaiting judgment. A successful check can also speed the process of gaining an audience with an important templar or other official.

The bureaucracy proficiency helps a character understand political hierarchies and who to consult to get a job done. A successful check also allows a character to pay 10% less on a tax levied against him; two successful checks in a row allow him to avoid the tax completely.

In addition to these examples, the bureaucracy proficiency functions in other ways (as allowed by the DM) to let a character understand and use (or abuse) bureaucratic systems with which he's familiar.

## Contact

Contact is a proficiency that functions for psionics and psionic wild talents. Psionist PCs receive contact as a bonus proficiency, while wild talents must spend an available nonweapon proficiency slot to receive it. For full details on the uses and benefits of this proficiency, see *The Way of the Psionist* book.

## Heat Protection

A character who has the heat protection proficiency has learned to pace himself and use clothing to optimize endurance against the rigors of Athas's heat. With a successful check, the character need only consume half the normal amount of water per day to avoid dehydration.

In combat, the heat protection proficiency allows a character wearing metal armor to battle better and longer. A successful check each round allows him to avoid the THACO penalty for that round. In addition, when he reaches his Constitution score limit to rounds of combat, a successful check allows him to fight for five more rounds. This check can be made at the end of every subsequent five-round period, but once it fails the character collapses from exhaustion.

Dehydration is explained in Chapter 8: DM Material. The effects of using metal armor in combat appear in Chapter 3: Money and Equipment.

## Information Gathering

This proficiency allows a character to rapidly gather information from underworld sources and from the word on the streets of the cities and villages. A character who has this proficiency can spend a day becoming aware of all the major rumors circulating on the streets of a particular area. No check is needed for this use of the proficiency, but the time must be accounted for.

A successful check is needed to gather specific information about a person or place. The roll is modified by the character's reaction adjustment (determined by his Charisma score). In addition, the character must spend 1d10 ceramic pieces to pay for small bribes, to buy drinks, and to otherwise loosen the lips of those in the know.

If the character uses this proficiency outside familiar territory, the check receives a -3 penalty. If the character doesn't spend the ceramic pieces, the check receives an additional -3 penalty.



## Mental Armor

This proficiency allows a character to improve his Mental Armor Class (MAC). Each time this proficiency is placed in an available nonweapon slot, the character's MAC improves. Nonpsionicists improve by +1 for each slot; psionicists improve by +2. This proficiency may only be slotted once per level of advancement. Before receiving the benefits of this proficiency, a successful check must be made. If the check fails, the character must wait 24 hours before trying to engage his mental armor. Once the check succeeds, however, the MAC improvement is permanent. For more information about Mental Armor Class, see *The Way of the Psionicist*.

## Psionic Detection

The psionic detection proficiency works much as the psionic sense devotion, but it is much weaker. With this proficiency, an Athasian character uses his latent psionic ability to detect the expenditure of psionic strength points (PSPs) around him.

When employing this proficiency, a character must clear his mind and concentrate, taking at least one full round to prepare. A successful check allows the character to detect the expenditure of any PSPs within 50 yards of his location, regardless of intervening material objects. A character can maintain use of the proficiency for successive rounds, but during that time he can't move or perform any other actions. The proficiency check, however, must succeed on the round the PSPs are expended or the character detects nothing.

This proficiency can only inform a character that PSPs were expended within 50 yards, telling nothing more. The detector can't determine the number of PSPs, their source, the powers drawn upon, or the purpose of the expenditure (whether to initiate a power or to maintain one). Psionic detection isn't cumulative with other detection techniques.

A player whose character has the psionic detection proficiency should remind the DM about that fact every so often. The DM might sometimes secretly roll the proficiency and inform the player of results.

## Sign Language

Those who have mastered the use of sign language can communicate among themselves without words, provided they can see each other's hands. Signing is a language unto itself. It conveys ideas that any other character who has the sign language proficiency can understand, regardless of his or her native language.

To use sign language for an entire round, all parties involved must make a successful check. Characters who succeed can converse together for an entire minute; those who fail can't listen. When a PC signs successfully with an NPC, the DM should speak freely with the player for one minute per round. Every round of conversation requires another check. A failed check means that the speaker didn't perform his finger movements accurately, the listener wasn't watching the speaker closely enough, or something else blocked communication.

On Athas, many groups employ sign language for covert conversations. In some city-states, using sign language can be grounds for imprisonment. Though sign language throughout Athas is generally consistent, some secret societies employ special codes so that unwanted eyes can't decipher specific conversations.

## Somatic Concealment

Though spellcasters can mumble verbal components and hide material components in their hands or robes, somatic components are harder to hide. The somatic component of any spell, magical or clerical, is apparent to any character watching the spellcaster. On Athas, where spellcasting is often illegal, the ability to hide the necessary gestures becomes important. If movements can be concealed, a spell can be unleashed without calling attention to the caster.

A character using the somatic concealment proficiency must announce to the DM his intention to do so at the beginning of the round. Then, when the character casts his spell, the DM makes the check in secret. A successful check indicates that anyone who can see the wizard doesn't recognize his gestures as being magical in nature. A failed check means that all who can view the casting wizard see his movements for what they really are.

## Tactics

This proficiency gives a character who makes a successful check a +1 bonus on all attack or initiative rolls (player's choice) for the duration of a specific combat situation. It requires that the character spend one round studying his opponent's movements before making the check. A successful check made after that round indicates that the character has some idea of what his opponent is planning to do in the combat and can act accordingly (hence the bonus). If the combat situation changes in any way (an opponent is eliminated or a new opponent enters the field), the character must take another round to analyze the situation and make another check to maintain the bonus.

During the round when the character is studying his opponents, he may not make any attacks of his own. This includes using a psionic power of any type.

If a character devotes a second slot to this proficiency, he specializes in the study of one particular race in order to better understand its tendencies in combat. When using this proficiency against an opponent of that race, the character receives a +2 bonus on all attack or initiative rolls. This bonus can also be split, adding +1 to both types of rolls. A character can specialize in as many races as he wants, but the maximum bonus gained for any one of them is +2.

This proficiency doesn't give any bonuses against groups of four or more opponents unless they are all of a race in which a character has specialized. Even then, it can never be used against more than five opponents of that racial type. Furthermore, the bonus never applies to a character's companions—just to the character himself.

## Water Find

Even the most barren desert yields water to those who know how to find it. Small animals burrow in the ground and store water there; some rare plants store water in cistern roots beneath the soil; and seemingly lifeless trees sometimes have moist heartwood.

The water find proficiency can only be used once per day and takes an hour to perform. During this time, the character can only move half his normal movement rate. A successful check



indicates he's found sufficient water to sustain himself for one day. It doesn't mean that he's found enough water to rehydrate, but he won't dehydrate further that day. The character can only find enough water for himself. If he shares his find with others, none of them gains any benefit.

## Weapon Improvisation

On Athas, virtually anything can be (and has been) used as a weapon. A character who has this proficiency makes a check to spot a usable weapon in the surrounding vicinity. A successful check means the character has found a club that does 1d6+1 damage to human-sized and smaller creatures, or 1d3+1 to larger opponents.

The DM may assign modifiers for the ease or difficulty of finding such a weapon: a market might warrant a +2 bonus, a barren grassland a -2 penalty, and a sandy desert might negate the proficiency.

## Using Existing Proficiencies

Because Athas differs drastically from other AD&D campaign worlds, some of the existing proficiencies from the *Player's Handbook* don't apply as written. For example, the navigation and seamanship proficiencies are out of place on a world without oceans. The following clarifications modify existing proficiencies in a DARK SUN campaign.

**Agriculture:** On Athas, the low humidity makes grain storage extremely easy, but raising crops far more difficult. This proficiency covers the best use of land and water for a given crop and how to keep that crop alive through the dry growing season.

**Armorer:** The lack of metal on Athas means armorers must concentrate on other materials, namely chitin, bone, and stiffened leathers. Metal is so rarely used to construct armor that such an undertaking is usually handled by a team of armorers and blacksmiths—and often under extremely controlled circumstances (like in the guarded palace of a sorcerer-king).

**Artistic Ability:** This proficiency remains unchanged in its description, but its usefulness on Athas may be more far-reaching. Slaves who have artistic ability are sometimes brought out of the pits and placed in the homes of nobles where they might learn to read. If they fall out of favor, however, these literate slaves can't be returned to the pits. They're either executed or sent to the arena.

**Blacksmithing:** As with the armorer proficiency, blacksmiths perform the same functions as described but have shifted their main material from metal to other durable substances.

**Fishing:** Obviously, fishing is only useful in the places where pools of water support fish.

**Navigation:** The methods of direction finding common to naval voyages prove equally useful for caravans crossing the trackless seas of sand.

**Religion:** Large, organized religions have never developed on Athas, though sorcerer-kings make themselves out to be gods or godlike and have surrounded themselves in religious mystique. On a local level, cities and villages have ancient lore about mysterious beings or demigods, but consistent mythic systems are never widespread.

**Seamanship:** This proficiency is only studied by the mad, fools, the preternaturally ancient, and the people living around the Last Sea.

**Swimming:** This proficiency is applicable only in rare situations (for example, in the decadent pools of nobles or small bodies of natural water in exotic locales).

**Weaponsmithing:** Again, this proficiency is unchanged except for the materials used.

## Using the Survival Proficiency

As described in the *Player's Handbook*, each slot of survival proficiency must be applied to a specific type of terrain. Terrain types that can be selected by PCs originating in the Tyr Region include the following: sandy wastes, stony barrens, rocky badlands, salt flats, mountains, forests, and scrub plains. Terrain types from other parts of Athas include mud flats, swamps, and grasslands.

The survival proficiency gives a character a chance to locate food and water in a particular terrain, but only in minuscule amounts. A successful check allows a character to find enough water to avoid losing any Constitution points from dehydration. The character won't rehydrate, and he will continue to dehydrate on subsequent days that he doesn't receive water. The same check allows a character to find enough food to sustain him for a day.

The survival proficiency also helps a character avoid poisons. A successful check informs the character whether a plant or animal is poisonous, provided the food source is native to the proficiency's terrain type.

## What Things Are Worth

The equipment lists in the *Player's Handbook* show how much items cost in a typical AD&D game setting. On Athas, however, the rarity of metal increases the value of metal items, making the lists in the *Player's Handbook* somewhat inaccurate.

Coins themselves are worth more, so fewer are needed to purchase things that aren't made of metal. However, metal-item costs are relatively the same as on other worlds.

When Athasian characters make purchases from the equipment lists in the *Player's Handbook*, the following rules apply:

- All nonmetal items cost 1% of the price listed.
- All metal items cost the price listed.

Prices listed in DARK SUN products compensate for the rarity of metals. Prices listed in other AD&D game products aren't adjusted, and the rules of conversion must be applied.

## CHAPTER 3:

# Money and Equipment

To understand commerce and the availability of equipment in the DARK SUN campaign, one must understand that Athas is a metal-poor world. In game terms, all metal items—including swords, armor, and coins—are worth considerably more than they are in other AD&D campaign settings.

Virtually all Athasian city-states issue coins minted in tribute to their sorcerer-kings. Also, some independent dwarf communities and some wealthy merchant families mint their own coins when the precious metals are available to them. Though the currencies vary (a gold coin minted in Tyr might be a bit heavier than square gold coins bearing the Ryharian family crest), they all fall under the standard exchange rates given in the *Player's Handbook*.

The standard unit of measurement is not the gold piece, however, but the ceramic piece (cp). On Athas, 100 cp = 10 sp = 2 ep = 1 gp = 1/5 pp. Ceramic coins can be manufactured from the most common clay available, then glazed in specific colors and kilned to discourage forgery. The molded shape of ceramic pieces allows them to be broken into 10 separate pie-shaped bits. Each of these bits is worth 1/10th of a ceramic piece.

## Starting Money

All PCs (except those starting play as slaves) begin the game with a specific amount of money. The player should use this starting money to equip his character; campaign time need not be spent to role-play these purchases unless the DM deems it important to the adventure.

TABLE XXVII, below, indicates how much money each character starts the campaign with, based on the character's class group. These figures are for starting 3rd-level characters. Characters generated as inactive members of a character tree also get starting money. The owning player may equip inactive characters at any time prior to using them as active characters.

TABLE XXVII: INITIAL CHARACTER FUNDS

Character Group	Die Range
Warrior	5d4 x 30 cp
Wizard	(1d4+1) x 30 cp
Rogue	2d6 x 30 cp*
Priest	3d6 x 30 cp
Psionicist	3d4 x 30 cp

\* A trader PC doubles this total.

## Monetary Systems

Societies on Athas exchange goods and services in three ways: coin, barter, and service. In both barter and service exchanges, the DM must make certain that the goods or services offered for exchange are needed or desired. (For example, desert nomads need neither a barge nor a stonemason.)

### Coin

Transactions where goods or services are purchased with money are quite common on Athas, despite the lack of metals; after all, Athas is metal-poor, not metal-depleted. Coins are a readily accepted means of payment and, considering the increased value of coins, are less bulky to carry than other forms of payment.

### Barter

Barter is the exchange of goods for other goods—no coins change hands. By its very nature, barter is an age-old ceremony of negotiation. Characters in a DARK SUN campaign can enter either a *simple* or *protracted* barter.

- In a *simple barter*, characters compare the costs of the items to be exchanged and then match the quantities until they are approximately even. For example, Kyuln wishes to exchange his crop of rice for a metal bastard sword. On Athas, Kyuln's rice is worth 2 bits (2/10 cp) per pound, and the metal bastard sword is worth 25 gp (2,500 cp). Kyuln would have to trade 12,500 pounds of rice (his entire harvest) to the weaponsmith in exchange for a metal bastard sword. The weaponsmith might not be that hungry.
- In a *protracted barter*, dice are thrown and costs recalculated in three separate rounds before a final exchange of goods is made. Because of its complexity, protracted barter works best for items that cost more than 100 gp. For a protracted barter, the Charisma scores of the people involved must be known (usually a player character and a non-player character controlled by the DM).

In the first round of protracted barter, each participant rolls 2d6 and adds the result to his Charisma score; the higher roll wins the round, and he talks down the price of the loser's barter item by 10%. If either party decides to end the barter, it's finished here. If neither party decides to end the barter, it continues to a second round, and then to a third. Protracted barter can last no more than three rounds. Once a protracted barter has commenced, a transaction will take place—neither party can back out of a deal once the barter has started.

If Kyuln (Charisma 13) were to enter into a protracted barter with the weaponsmith (Charisma 7), he might get a better or worse deal. For example, say Kyuln rolls a 7 (+ 13 = 20) and the weaponsmith rolls a 10 (+ 7 = 17); Kyuln wins the first round. He has talked the weaponsmith down 10%, so the metal bastard sword in question is now worth 22 gp and 5 sp. Suppose both men wish to continue a second round. Kyuln rolls a 4 (+ 13 = 17) and the weaponsmith rolls a 10 (+ 7 = 17); the tie indicates that neither cost is adjusted. In the third and final round, Kyuln rolls a 10 (+ 13 = 23) and the smith rolls a 7 (+ 7 = 14); Kyuln wins again, deducting another 10% from the sword's cost. He has talked the weaponsmith down to 20 gp for the metal bastard sword, so needs exchange only 10,000 pounds of his rice for it. Of course, the weaponsmith still might not be that hungry, but the rice is his anyway.



## Service

The services a character renders—from those of unskilled laborers to those of prized engineers—all have an asking price, as noted on TABLE XXVIII below. A character may receive payment for his services in other services, goods, or coins, depending upon the situation.

**TABLE XXVIII: COMMON WAGES**

Service	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
<i>Military:</i>			
Archer/artillerist	1 bit	1 cp	4 cp
Cavalry, light	1 bit	1 cp	4 cp
Cavalry, medium	2 bits	1 cp, 5 bits	6 cp
Cavalry, heavy	3 bits	2 cp, 5 bits	1 sp
Engineer	5 cp	3 sp, 5 cp	15 sp
Footman, militia	—	1 bit	5 bits
Footman, light	—	2 bits	1 cp
Footman, heavy	112 bit	5 bits	2 cp
Shieldbearer	—	1 bit	5 bits
<i>Professional:</i>			
Unskilled labor	—	2 bits	1 cp
Skilled labor*	1 bit	1 cp	4 cp
Classed labor †	3 bits	2 cp, 5 bits	1 sp

\* Available only to a character who has a proficiency related to the job.

† Available only to a character who is being employed to function as his character class.



# The Merchants' Code

All merchant houses follow a strict code of behavior known as the Merchants' Code. Anyone wishing to join a merchant house must agree to abide by this code. Failure to abide by the code results in immediate expulsion. While the code varies from house to house, in most cases it conforms to the following principles:

- By joining a merchant house, an agent forsakes citizenship in any city-state or membership in any tribe.
- Agents swear an oath of allegiance to their merchant house.
- Agents promise to perform in the best interest of their merchant house in exchange for a salary.
- Agents promise to deal honestly with stranger, friend, and foe.
- Agents promise not to flaunt the wealth they gain through their association with their house.
- Agents agree to uphold the laws of the city-state in which they are stationed and to do nothing to attract the wrath of the local officials.
- Agents promise to cooperate with other merchants to make life very expensive for any person who unjustly imprisons, blackmails, or otherwise harasses any merchant.

## Weapons

The weapons commonly found in the brutal lands of Athas are made of obsidian, bone, and wood; rarely are there weapons of metal. Because they can be easily made without metal, the following weapons can be purchased for 1% of the price listed in the *Player's Handbook*: blowguns (with barbed dart or needle), all bows, clubs, all crossbows, harpoons, javelins, all lances, quarterstaves, scourges, slings (with sling stones), spears, staff slings, and whips. Note that these weapons can all be used normally.

The remaining weapons, because they can be constructed from a variety of materials, vary in cost, weight, damage, and hit probability: battle axes, all arrows, all quarrels, daggers or dirks, darts, footman's flails, footman's maces, footman's picks, hand or throwing axes, horseman's flails, horseman's maces, horseman's picks, knives, mancatchers, morning stars, all polearms, sickles, sling bullets, all swords, tridents, and warhammers. TABLE XXIX below indicates the percentage cost and weight of weapons, as well as modifiers to damage and hit probability for the statistics in the *Player's Handbook*.

Note that the arquebus is not available on Athas.

TABLE XXIX: WEAPON MATERIALS

Material	cost	Weight	Damage*	Hit Probability †
Metal	100%	100%	—	—
Bone	30%	50%	-1	-1
Stone, obsidian	50%	75%	-1	-2
Wood	10%	50%	-2	-3

\* The damage modifier subtracts from the damage normally done by that weapon, to a minimum of one point.

† Not applicable to missile weapons.

Nonmetal weapons detract from the wielder's hit probability as well, much in the same way a cursed weapon does. Note the hit probability reduction on the character's record sheet. Such weapons can be enchanted, however, though the enchantment is cumulative with the weapon's hit probability modifier. Thus, the net modifier for a *bone dagger* +2 is actually +1.

Obsidian, bone, and wood weapons are prone to breaking. Whenever a successful attack inflicts maximum damage, there is a 5% chance that the weapon will break, which is a roll of 1 on 1 d20. For example, Bruth is sent to the arena armed with a bone battle axe. In the first round of combat, Bruth cleaves through the skull of an opponent (making a successful attack roll) and takes him down (rolling an 8 on his 1d8 die for damage). Unfortunately, the shock of



the blow splinters the bone of the axe head. (Checking for breakage, Bruth's player rolls a 1 on 1d20—indicating a break.) This leaves Bruth weaponless as his other opponents close in.

In the DARK SUN game and in corresponding text, weapons are always referred to with their material and make: wood broad sword, bone sickle, metal dagger, and so forth. As well as adding flavor to battle scenes, this indication helps the DM keep track of what type of weapon is being used. TABLE XXX, below, lists unique Athasian weapons, their costs, weights, sizes, speeds, and damages inflicted against opponents. Refer to the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide* for explanations of types, speed, and so forth. Descriptions of these weapons follow.

**TABLE XXX: ATHASIAN WEAPONS**

	Cost †	Weight ‡	Size	Type	Speed	— Damage* —	
						S-M	L
Alhulak	9 cp	9	M	B	5	1d6	1d6
Bard's friend	10 cp	3	S	P/S	3	1d4+1	1d3
Cahulaks	12 cp	12	M	P/B	5	1d6	1d6
Carrikal	8 cp	6	M	S	5	1d6+1	1d8
Chatkcha	1 cp	1/2	S	S	4	1d6+2	1d4+1
Crusher	24 cp	9	L	B	10	1d4	1d3
Datchi club	12 cp	10	L	B	4	1d6	1d4
Dragon's paw	15 cp	9	L	P	8	1d6	1d6+1
Forearm axe	2 sp	4	S	S/P	3	1d6	1d6
Gouge	6 cp	12	L	P/S	8	1d8	1d10
Gythka	6 cp	12	L	P/B	9	2d4	1d10
Impaler	4 cp	5	M	P	5	1d8	1d8
Lotulis	15 cp	10	L	P/S/B	8	1d10	1d12
Master's whip	6 cp	3	M	P	8	1d3	1d2
Puchik	6 cp	1	S	P/S	2	1d4+1	1d4+1
Quabone	1 cp	4	M	P/S	7	1d4	1d3
Singing sticks	5 sp	1	S	B	2	1d6	1d4
Tortoise blade	9 cp	5	M	P/S	5	1d6	1db+1
Trikal	4 cp	1	S	P/S/B	2	1d6	1d6-1
Weighted pike	6 cp	15	L	P/B	12	1d6	1d12 or 1d4
Widow's knife	5 cp	4	M	P/S	3	1d4	1d4
Wrist razor	1 sp	1	S	S	2	1d6+1	1d4+1

\* Damage is shown as a base rate. Modifiers must be employed based on the materials used.

† Costs are for items made from stone or obsidian. Change to reflect the use of other materials.

‡ Weights are for items made from stone or obsidian. Change to reflect the use of other materials.

**Alhulak:** This weapon consists of a 5-foot length of rope with a four-bladed grappling hook on one end. The other end is secured to a 2-foot-long handle, which can be used to block attacks. The bladed head is commonly carved from mekillot bone, while the handle is wood or bone.

**Bard's friend:** Popularized by the bards of Balic, this weapon sports several blades and prongs. The blades are carved from obsidian, then strapped and mounted to a wooden grip. The prongs are made of sharpened wood, though fangs can be used to similar effect. The grip either has finger holes or leather straps for gripping. Bards normally coat the blades with poison.

**Cahulaks:** A pair of four-bladed heads tied to either end of a 12-foot length of rope, this weapon can be employed in melee or as a thrown weapon. As a melee weapon, the wielder holds one blade cluster in each hand and swings them in unison or in succession at his opponent. As a thrown weapon, cahulaks tangle around its target and also cause damage when the blades strike. The blades are carved bone, usually, mekillot, while the hafts are solid lengths of wood or sturdy bone.

**Carrikal:** By lashing a length of mekillot bone to the jawbone of any sharp-toothed creature, a kind of battle axe is created. Sharp ridges of teeth run down half the length of the bone



handle, and the hinges of the jaw are sharpened to a keen edge. This gives the weapon two deadly axe heads oriented in the same direction. A leather thong connected to the bottom of the bone shaft ensures it remains with its wielder.

**Chatkcha:** This thri-kreen throwing weapon is common among the steppes tribes. It's a crystal wedge that can be thrown up to 90 yards and, due to its spin and effect upon the air, returns to the thrower if it misses the target.

**Crusher:** A spiked stone (or, rarely, metal) ball at the end of a 20- to 25-foot-long flexible pole makes up this unique melee weapon. The user plants the end of the pole into the ground, then whips the weighted end back and forth until it nearly strikes the ground in front and behind. This weapon is difficult to use in individual combat, but it makes a formidable weapon in troop battle.

**Datchi club:** This specialized arena weapon inflicts horrible wounds. A 4- to 5-foot-long head made of either dried insect hive or dried roots is attached to a 3-foot-long wood or bone handle. Teeth, claws, or (rarely) metal razors are embedded into the head, which is then swung with lightning-quick strokes.

**Dragon's paw:** This weapon, made popular in the arenas of Tyr and Urik, has two blades, one attached to either end of a 5- to 6-foot-long wood shaft. The blades can be fashioned from any suitable material. A centrally located curved bar or basket protects the wielder's hand and features a protruding blade that juts perpendicularly to the shaft.

**Forearm axe:** Worn on the forearm like a buckler, this weapon consists of a large, double-bladed axe on either end of a bracer with a spike protruding perpendicularly from the upper sheath. This weapon is particularly formidable in close-quarter fighting.

**Gouge:** The shoulder-strapped gouge was developed by the army of Nibenay for use by its infantry. A wide bone, obsidian, or chitin blade is mounted on a 3-foot-long wood shaft. The weapon requires a two-handed grip: a small handle bar that protrudes from the shaft, just behind the blade, and a grip at the rear of the shaft.

**Gythka:** This thri-kreen polearm has wicked blades at either end. The weapon's thick shaft allows it to be used like a quarterstaff against similarly armed opponents.

**Impaler:** An impaler is a weapon developed for arena combat. It has a single shaft about 4 feet long with a pair of long pointed blades, splitting to each side and forming a deadly  $\_$ . The weapon can be swung horizontally or vertically over the head.

**Lotulis:** Crescent blades with barbed spikes near the points and mounted at either end of a long shaft make this a particularly nasty melee weapon.

**Master's whip:** Used by task masters and arena guards, the master's whip has a carved bone or ivory handle inlaid with decorative elements appropriate to the rank of the wielder. The whip is fashioned from leather or giant's hair (the latter increasing the cost by 15 cp). A bone head sports five separate hollow-tipped barbs, setting this weapon apart from normal whips.

**Puchik:** This punching and parrying weapon is designed for close-quarter fighting. It's a 2-foot-long dagger with hand guards and a grip positioned perpendicularly to the length of the blade.

**Quabone:** This weapon is constructed from four identical shanks of bone, lashed together to form a radially symmetrical, sword-length rod. With its lightness and crudely sharpened end, the quabone is a fairly ineffective weapon. However, it's often used in arena situations where combat is intended to be drawn out for a long period of time.

**Singing sticks:** Singing sticks are used in pairs, one wielded in each hand. Each stick is made from a springy, straight wood and measures 1 inch in diameter and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet long. The ends are slightly wider than the center. Extremely light, singing sticks rely more on agility and ability than on brute force. When twirled, the sticks produce whistling and moaning sounds, thus giving them their name.

**Tortoise blade:** This weapon is basically a small shield with a protruding blade. Though named for a specific creature, its protective shell can be carved from bone or chitin, or fashioned from hardened leather. The blade, made from stone, bone, or sometimes metal, is mounted to the underside of the shell, and the entire ensemble is worn on the forearm. The shell counts as piecemeal armor and provides a one-point bonus to the wearer's Armor Class.

**Trikal:** This small polearm is a 6-foot-long, mostly wood shaft. The uppermost 12 inches consist of three blades projecting from a central shaft. Beneath the blades is a series of serrations, generally extremely sharp. The other end of the shaft is weighted to increase the momentum of the weapon.



**Weighted pike:** This weapon combines the effectiveness of a pike with the impact damage of a mace. The 8-foot-long shaft has a blade of bone or fang at one end and a weighted, spiked bail at the other, usually made of baked ceramic.

**Widow's knife:** Named for a similar-looking harvesting tool used in the verdant belts, this weapon has a wide blade on one end of a wood or an ivory handle. Hidden within the handle are two spring-loaded prongs. A thumb latch on the handle releases the prongs. It takes a full round to reload them. The widow's knife can also be thrown as a missile weapon.

**Wrist razor:** Wrist razors consist of a trio of blades that protrude from a heavy arm band. The razors project out over the back of the hand, are extremely sharp, and can be up to 6 inches long. Wrist razors can be worn on one or both forearms.

## Armor

All forms of armor listed in the *Player's Handbook* are available to Athasian characters, though the high price of metal and the extreme heat make metal armor less than desirable on Athas. A suit of field plate armor costs 2,000 gp on Athas, the equivalent of 200,000 gp on other AD&D campaign worlds. Simply put, a sorcerer-king can either purchase several suits of field plate or build a substantial addition to his city walls.

Likewise, the intense heat across Athas's barren surface makes metal armor a liability. In any daytime combat situation, a character wearing metal armor suffers a +1 penalty to his THACO for every round of combat beyond the first. That same character collapses, exhausted from the heat, in a number of rounds equal to his Constitution score.

Fortunately, however, many types of armor can be constructed without metal on Athas, using more readily available materials. All forms of armor afford the same Armor Class rating as in the *Player's Handbook*, with the following notations.

**Shields:** Shields are mostly constructed with layers of leather stretched over a wood or bone frame and hardened. Effective shields can also be constructed of chitinous materials scavenged from dead insectoids. Though made of alternate materials, shields on Athas come in the typical varieties: bucklers and small, medium, or body shields.

**Leather armor:** Perhaps the most common type of armor used on Athas, leather armor is shaped to the individual wearing it and then hardened.

**Padded armor:** As described in the *Player's Handbook*, this armor is made from heavy cloth and batting. Many Athasian warriors prefer padded armor woven from giant hair.

**Hide armor:** Hide armor on Athas is usually constructed from mekillot or braxat hide.

**Studded leather, ring mail, brigandine, and scale mail armor:** These varieties of armor are constructed using pieces of bone or chitin.

**Chain, splint, banded, bronze plate, or plate mail; field plate and full plate armor:** These types of armor must be made with metal components, making them both expensive and potentially deadly in the day's heat.

## Piecemeal Armor

Characters in a DARK SUN campaign seldom (if ever) wear complete suits of metal armor. There are many reasons for this, but primarily the oppressive heat of the Athasian sun and the scarcity of metal make full suits of armor impractical. It's not uncommon, at least among heroic sorts, for a character to wear scavenged portions of various suits of armor, however—hence, "piecemeal armor."

Determining the correct Armor Class for someone wearing piecemeal armor can be difficult. Each type of armor piece has a specific AC modifier associated with it. When a piece of armor is worn, that modifier is subtracted from the character's base Armor Class (usually 10) to determine his actual AC. Thus, a character who is exploring some ancient ruins and finds an old, battered breastplate from a suit of full plate armor would be able to don it, reducing his AC by four places, as indicated on TABLE XXXI, below. The table lists the AC bonus associated with any given piece of armor.

**TABLE XXXI: BONUS TO ARMOR CLASS PER PIECE OF ARMOR WORN**

Armor Type	Full Suit	Breast Plate	Two Arms	One Arm	Two Legs	One Leg
Banded mail	6	3	2	1	1	0
Brigandine	4	2	1	0	1	0
Bronze plate	6	3	2	1	1	0
Chain mail	5	2	2	1	1	0
Field plate	8	4	2	1	2	1
Full plate	9	4	3	1	2	1
Hide armor	4	2	1	0	1	0
Leather armor	2	1	1	0	0	0
Padded armor	2	1	1	0	0	0
Plate mail	7	3	2	1	2	1
Ring mail	3	1	1	0	1	0
Scale mail	4	2	1	0	1	0
Splint mail	6	3	2	1	1	0
Studded leather	3	1	1	0	1	0

Although piecemeal armor is lighter than full suits of armor, it can still be quite heavy and cumbersome. Breastplates weigh one-half the weight of a complete suit of that armor type, and each arm or leg piece weighs one-eighth the weight of the original suit. No more than one piece of armor may be worn to protect a specific region of the body. Thus, it would be impossible for a character to wear two breastplates and claim a double bonus to his Armor Class.

Characters wearing piecemeal metal armor are also subject to the exhausting effects of Athas's hot climate. A character who has armor covering more than two limbs or is wearing a breastplate is subject to the full effects of the savage heat.



# Equipment

TABLE XXXII: EQUIPMENT

Item	Cost
<i>Household provisions:</i>	
Wineskin (1 gal)	2 bits
Small barrel (30 gal)	2 sp
Tun of water (250 gal)	1 sp
Fire kit	2 bits
<i>Tack and harness:</i>	
<b>Barding</b>	
Inix, leather	35 sp
Inix, chitin	50 sp
Kank, leather	15 sp
Kank, chitin	35 sp
Mekillot, leather	500 sp
Mekillot, chitin	750 sp
<i>Transport:</i>	
<b>Chariot</b>	
One kank, one warrior	10 sp
Two kank, two warrior	25 sp
Four kank, three warrior	50 sp
<b>Howdah</b>	
Inix	1 sp
Inix, war	10 sp
Mekillot	2 sp
Mekillot, war	50 sp
<b>Wagon, open</b>	
1,000 pound capacity	10 cp
2,500 pound capacity	20 cp
5,000 pound capacity	30 cp
10,000 pound capacity	50 cp
<b>Wagon, enclosed</b>	
1,000 pound capacity	15 cp
2,500 pound capacity	25 cp
5,000 pound capacity	40 cp
10,000 pound capacity	60 cp
Wagon, armored caravan	100 sp
<b>Animal</b>	
Erdlu	10 cp
Inix	10 sp
Kank, trained	12 sp
Kank, untrained	5 sp
Mekillot	20 sp
Crodlu, riding	10 sp
Crodlu, war	20 sp

TABLE XXXII lists equipment generally available in populated sections of Athas for the prices shown. Descriptions of the equipment and animals follow.

**Wineskin/Barrel:** Water must be carried in skins or barrels. The wineskin listed carries 1 gallon of liquid. The small barrel listed carries 30 gallons.

**Tun of Water:** In most Athasian cities, water is drawn from a collective cistern maintained by the sorcerer-king and his templars. It is not at all uncommon for the price of water to increase dramatically during particularly dry periods or when the templars are attempting to extort more money from consumers.

**Fire Kit:** Though flint is readily available, steel is scarce on Athas. The standard fire-starting kit therefore uses a bow and sticks rather than flint and steel.

**Barding:** Leather and chitin are two types of barding for the various beasts of burden on Athas. Leather barding is made with stiffened leather pads, often reinforced with bone or chitin, and joined together with cloth or soft leather straps. Leather barding gives the animal a -1 bonus to its AC. Chitin barding is made from plates of insectoid chitin and bone, fastened together with leather and cloth. Chitin barding gives the animal an AC bonus of -2. The two types of barding can't be combined.

**Chariot:** A chariot is a lightly armored vehicle constructed of wood, chitin, and hardened leather; it's designed for riding and combat. The driver of the chariot must have either the teamster/freighter secondary skill or the charioteering proficiency. The chariot driver can attack with single-handed weapons while the vehicle is moving, but suffers a -4 penalty to all attack rolls. Others in the vehicle suffer no penalty to melee attack rolls, but have a -1 penalty to missile attack rolls while the chariot is moving. Those in a chariot have 50% cover from the front or sides and 25% cover from the flank or rear (consult the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide* for the exact effects of cover and concealment on combat).

If one of the animals hitched to a multikank chariot dies or is maimed, the chariot's speed is reduced to that of normal. The slain beast may also cause the chariot to crash, but the fallen animal can then be cut loose by survivors. Multiple deaths in the animal team bring the chariot to a halt.

**Howdah:** A howdah is a frame with seats designed to be mounted on the back of an inix or a mekillot. A normal howdah is made of a light wooden frame and has one seat for the animal's driver. Normal howdahs don't count against the carrying capacity of the animal, but the driver's weight does. Anyone riding in a howdah is considered to be at rest and shaded.

A war howdah is constructed of much sturdier materials, offering cover to those within. An inix war howdah weighs 150 pounds and can hold four fighters. A mekillot war howdah is a more elaborate affair, weighing 1,000 pounds, and contains two levels. Sixteen warriors may ride inside these levels, four of which can fight to any one side at a given time. Soldiers in a war howdah can choose to have 25%, 50%, 75%, or 90% cover and concealment (consult the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide* for the exact effects of cover and concealment on combat).

**Wagon, Open:** An open wagon is little more than a wooden box on four wooden wheels. A 1,000-pound-capacity wagon requires a single kank to pull it. The 2,500-pound- and 5,000-pound-capacity wagons need teams of two and four kanks, respectively. The 10,000-pound-capacity wagon requires a single mekillot to move. Inix aren't used to pull wagons for the simple reason that their tails get in the way.

**Wagon, Enclosed:** Enclosed wagons require the same animal power as open wagons of similar capacity. Items within enclosed wagons are generally unaffected by weather. Some merchants and nomads convert enclosed wagons into living quarters. Individuals riding within enclosed wagons are considered at rest and shaded.

**Wagon, Armored Caravan:** An armored caravan wagon weighs 5,000 pounds and can carry up to 35,000 pounds more. The exact design of any particular armored caravan wagon can change from trip to trip. Artisans customize the interior for each journey, adding or taking away slave pens, expanding or removing enclosures, and so forth. In general, an armored war caravan can carry a cargo of 15,000 pounds of goods, plus have room for 50 fully armed warriors, 25 slaves in transit, and a handful of merchants, nobles, or other stately travelers. Soldiers in an armored caravan wagon can choose to have 25%, 50%, 75%, or 90% cover

and concealment (consult the *DUNGEON MASTER* Guide for the exact effects of cover and concealment on combat).

While one mekillot can pull an armored caravan wagon, they are usually drawn by teams of two to prevent the death of a single mount from stranding the wagon.

**Erdlu:** Erdlus are herd beasts raised by many different cultures on Athas. These large, flightless birds stand up to 7 feet tall and weigh around 200 pounds. Their omnivorous diet allows them to graze nearly anywhere, and their hardy nature keeps them alive in harsh terrain. The price of a single erdlu can be as much as double that listed or as little as half, depending upon availability. Erdlu's eggs are also edible; one egg can fetch 3 bits.

**Inix:** An inix is a large lizard animal that grows to as much as 16 feet long. Each can carry up to 2,000 pounds. Though herbivorous by nature, inix are vicious combatants, attacking with both tail and bite. Inix trained for riding are also trained not to fight while mounted, for no rider could manage to keep his seat while an inix thrashed its mighty tail. These creatures can be fitted with a howdah. Half-giants use them as individual mounts. Inix can't generally pull wagons because of their lengthy tails.

**Kank:** Kanks serve as both herd animals and beasts of burden. They are large insectoids, 4 feet high and 8 feet long, weighing around 400 pounds. As herd animals, kanks are durable and easily tended. Kanks are not raised for their meat, which becomes foul-smelling as soon as they die. Instead, they are raised for honey globules produced on their bellies. A single honey globule can bring 4 bits.

As riding beasts, kanks provide effective transportation for a single character (except for half-giants, who are too large and must use inix for the same purpose). A kank can carry up to 400 pounds. Kanks used as riding animals also require harnesses and saddles. The tack and harness prices given in the *Player's Handbook* for horses work well for kanks also.

Kanks can be hitched to wagons individually or in teams. A character needs the teamster/freighter secondary skill or the animal handling proficiency to effectively operate a team of kanks.

**Mekillot:** A mekillot is an enormous 6-ton lizard and is used as a beast of burden. Each one can carry 8,000 pounds or pull up to 40,000 pounds behind it. A mekillot can be fitted with a pack howdah or a war howdah, carrying several men into combat. Mekillots are hard to control and sometimes turn on their handlers.

**Crodlu:** A crodlu is a large reptilian animal used for transportation or as a beast of burden. It resembles an enormous scaled ostrich whose limbs are tipped with wicked claws. It can move at its maximum movement rate of 24 if carrying 90 pounds or less. Movement falls to 18 for 91 to 180 pounds, and to 12 for 181 to 270 pounds. It will reluctantly move at a rate of 6 if burdened with as much as 360 pounds, and outright refuse to move at all if overloaded with even more weight.





## Holy Elements

Elemental clerics have the ability to imbue the element they are connected to with holy power. In this way, holy water, fire, air, and earth can be created.

Holy elements are rare, powerfully blessed versions of the raw elements of the planes. They affect most forms of undead and creatures from the Lower Planes.

Damage caused by a holy element can't be regenerated; it must be healed normally. Holy water and earth have no effect against creatures in gaseous form or incorporeal undead.

However, holy air and fire does affect these types of creatures.

Holy water and earth can be splashed at a target (causing 2 points of damage) or thrown in quantities (causing 1d6+1 points of damage). The flames of holy fire cause 1d6+2 points of damage, while the heat of a holy fire causes 1d2+1 points of damage to incorporeal creatures.

Holy air is a more fleeting substance, but it can be created faster than the other types of holy elements. Its touch causes 1d4 points of damage.

The creation of a holy element requires the use of the new cleric spell, *create holy element* (as described later in this chapter).

## CHAPTER 4:

# Magic and Spells

The sources of magical energy on Athas are very different from those on other AD&D campaign worlds. For example, Athas is a world without deities, where clerics worship the elemental powers themselves. Priests receive their magic directly from the elementals and thus are closely tied to the elemental planes. Wizards, however, draw the power to cast their spells from the land itself. Despite the tenacious brutality that seems infused in its soil, Athas is a fragile world. The use of wizardly magic can disrupt and destroy the land's ability, to support life, for if a wizard takes too much energy from the land, plants and soil die. Both priestly and wizardly magic can imbue items with energy. These magical items release their energy through the use of command words or actions.

Priestly, magic, wizardly magic, and magical items are discussed in this chapter, along with new and altered spells and magical items.

## Priestly Magic

The priests of Athas worship the beings that inhabit the elemental planes of earth, air, fire, and water as there are no gods in the DARK SUN world. (Spells that indicate some contact with a deity instead reflect contact with a powerful being of the elemental planes.)

In a DARK SUN campaign, priest spells fall into four spheres associated with the four elemental planes, as well as a separate Sphere of the Cosmos. This last sphere is by far the largest, though the other four hold more specialized and generally more powerful spells. All priests on Athas draw magical energy (the energy with which they cast spells) from one of the elemental planes and the Sphere of the Cosmos. In other words, they have major access to the sphere of the element they worship, plus minor access to the Sphere of the Cosmos.

**TABLE XXXIII: SPELLS AVAILABLE TO ATHASIAN PRIESTS**

— *Sphere of Earth* —

Magical stone (1st)  
 Dust devil (2nd)  
 Calltrops\* (3rd)  
 Meld into stone (3rd)  
 Stone shape (3rd)  
 Clear path\* (5th)  
 Conjure elemental (earth) † (5th)  
 Spike stones (5th)  
 Transmute rock to mud (5th)  
 Stone tell (6th)  
 Transmute water to dust (6th)  
 Animate rock (7th)  
 Earthquake (7th)  
 Transmute metal to wood (7th)

— *Sphere of Air* —

Aura of comfort\* (2nd)  
 Dust devil (2nd)  
 Air lens † (3rd)  
 Call lightning (3rd)  
 Zone of sweet air\* (3rd)  
 Control temperature, 10-foot radius (4th)  
 Protection from lightning (4th)  
 Weather stasis\* (4th)  
 Air walk (5th)  
 Cloud of purification\* (5th)  
 Conjure elemental (air) † (5th)  
 Control winds (5th)  
 Insect plague (5th)  
 Plane shift (5th)  
 Sandstorm † (5th)  
 Aerial servant (6th)  
 Weather summoning (6th)  
 Astral spell (7th)  
 Breath of life\* (7th)  
 Control weather (7th)  
 Uncontrolled weather\* (7th)  
 Wind walk (7th)

— *Sphere of Fire* —

Endure heat/endure cold (1st)  
 Faerie fire (1st)  
 Log of everburning\* (1st)  
 Aura of comfort\* (2nd)  
 Fire trap (2nd)  
 Flame blade (2nd)  
 Heat metal (2nd)  
 Produce flame (2nd)  
 Resist fire/resist cold (2nd)  
 Flame walk (3rd)  
 Protection from fire (3rd)  
 Pyrotechnics (3rd)  
 Blessed warmth\* (4th)  
 Fire purge\* (4th)  
 Produce fire (4th)  
 Conjure elemental (fire) † (5th)  
 Flame strike (5th)  
 Wall of fire (5th)  
 Fire seeds (6th)  
 Chariot of Sustarre (7th)  
 Fire storm (7th)

— *Sphere of Water* —

Create water (1st)  
 Purify food & drink (1st)  
 Create food & water (3rd)  
 Water breathing (3rd)  
 Water walk (3rd)  
 Lower water (4th)  
 Reflecting pool (4th)  
 Weather stasis\* (4th)  
 Cloud of purification\* (5th)  
 Conjure elemental (water) † (5th)  
 Magic font (5th)  
 Part water (6th)  
 Transmute water to dust (6th)  
 Uncontrolled weather\* (7th)

— *Sphere of the Cosmos* —

**First-Level Spells**

Analyze balance\*  
 Animal friendship  
 Antivermin barrier\*  
 Bless  
 Call upon faith\*  
 Combine  
 Command  
 Courage\*  
 Cure light wounds  
 Detect evil  
 Detect magic  
 Detect poison  
 Detect snares & pits  
 Emotion read\*  
 Entangle  
 Invisibility to animals  
 Invisibility to undead  
 Know age\*  
 Know direction\*  
 Know time\*  
 Light  
 Locate animals or plants  
 Merciful shadows †  
 Mistaken missives\*  
 Morale\*  
 Pass without trace  
 Personal reading\*  
 Protection from evil  
 Remove fear  
 Ring of hands\*

**Second-Level Spells**

Aid  
 Augury  
 Barkskin  
 Calm chaos\*  
 Chant  
 Charm person or mammal  
 Create holy symbol\*  
 Detect charm  
 Dissension's feast\*  
 Draw upon holy might\*  
 Emotion perception\*  
 Enthrall  
 Find traps  
 Frisky chest\*  
 Goodberry  
 Hesitation\*  
 Hold person  
 Idea\*  
 Know alignment  
 Lighten load\*  
 Messenger  
 Mind read\*  
 Moment\*  
 Music of the spheres\*  
 Mystic transfer\*  
 Nap\*  
 Obscurement  
 Rally\*  
 Sanctify\*  
 Silence, 15-foot radius

**Third-Level Spells**

Accelerate healing\*  
 Adaptation\*  
 Animate dead  
 Astral window\*  
 Choose future\*  
 Continual light  
 Create campsite\*  
 Create holy element †  
 Cure blindness or deafness  
 Cure disease  
 Dispel magic  
 Efflucaulous monster ward\*  
 Emotion control\*  
 Extradimensional detection\*  
 Feign death  
 Glyph of warding  
 Helping hand\*  
 Hold animal  
 Invisibility purge\*  
 Know customs\*  
 Line of protection\*  
 Locate object  
 Magical vestment  
 Memory read\*  
 Miscast magic\*  
 Moment reading\*  
 Negative plane protection  
 Plant growth  
 Prayer  
 Random casualty\*

**Fourth-Level Spells**

Abjure  
 Addition\*  
 Age plant\*  
 Animal summoning I  
 Body clock\*  
 Call woodland beings  
 Chaotic combat\*  
 Chaotic sleep\*  
 Circle of privacy\*  
 Cloak of bravery  
 Compulsive order\*  
 Cure serious wounds  
 Defensive harmony\*  
 Detect lie  
 Dimensional folding\*  
 Divination  
 Focus\*  
 Fortify\*  
 Free action  
 Genius\*  
 Giant insect  
 Hallucinatory forest  
 Hold plant  
 Imbue with spell ability  
 Inverted ethics\*  
 Join with astral traveler\*  
 Leadership\*  
 Mental domination\*  
 Modify memory\*  
 Neutralize poison

### First-Level Spells

Sacred guardian\*  
Sanctuary  
Shillelagh  
Speak with astral traveler\*  
Thought capture\*  
Weighty chest\*

### Second-Level Spells

Slow poison  
Snake charm  
Speak with animals  
Spiritual hammer  
Trip  
Warp wood  
Withdraw  
Wyvern watch  
Zone of truth\*

### Third-Level Spells

Remove curse  
Remove paralysis  
Rigid thinking  
Slow rot\*  
Snare  
Speak with dead  
Spike growth  
Squeaking floors\*  
Starshine  
Strength of one\*  
Summon insects  
Telepathy\*  
Telethaumaturgy\*  
Thief's lament\*  
Tree  
Unearthly choir\*

### Fourth-Level Spells

Plant door  
Probability control\*  
Protection from evil, 10-foot radius  
Rapport\*  
Rejuvenate †  
Repel insects  
Solipsism\*  
Speak with plants  
Spell immunity  
Sticks to snakes  
Tanglefoot\*  
Thought broadcast\*  
Tongues  
Tree steed\*  
Uplift\*  
Weather stasis\*

### Fifth-Level Spells

Age object\*  
Animal growth  
Animal summoning II  
Antiplant shell  
Atonement  
Barrier of retention\*  
Blessed abundance\*  
Champion's strength\*  
Chaotic commands\*  
Commune  
Commune with nature  
Consequence\*  
Cure critical wounds  
Disguise\*  
Dispel evil  
Easy march\*  
Elemental forbiddance\*  
Extradimensional manipulation\*  
Extradimensional pocket\*  
Grounding\*  
Illusory artillery\*  
Impending permission\*  
Meld\*  
Memory wrack\*  
Mindshatter\*  
Moonbeam  
Pass plant  
Quest  
Rainbow  
Raise dead  
Repeat action\*  
Shrieking walls\*  
Thoughtwave\*  
Time pool\*  
True seeing  
Unceasing vigilance of the  
  holy sentinel\*  
Undead ward\*

### Sixth-Level Spells

Age creature\*  
Animal summoning III  
Animate object  
Antianimal shell  
Blade barrier  
Conjure animals  
Create tree of life †  
Crushing walls\*  
Disbelief\*  
Find the path  
Gravity variation\*  
Great circle\*  
Group mind\*  
Heal  
Heroes' feast  
Land of stability\*  
Legal thoughts\*  
Liveoak  
Monster mount\*  
Physical mirror\*  
Reverse time\*  
Seclusion\*  
Skip day\*  
Sol's searing orb\*  
Speak with monsters  
Spiritual wrath\*  
Transport via plants  
Turn wood  
Wall of thorns  
Word of recall

### Seventh-Level Spells

Changestaff  
Confusion  
Creeping doom  
Divine inspiration\*  
Exaction  
Gate  
Holy word  
Hovering road\*  
illusory fortifications\*  
Mind tracker\*  
Regenerate  
Reincarnate  
Restoration  
Resurrection  
Shadow engines  
Succor  
Sunray  
Symbol  
Tentacle walls  
Timelessness

### Other Spells


All quest spells from the *Tome of Magic*.



\* From *Tome of Magic*.

† From the revised *Rules Book*, found in this boxed set.

**Note:** All other spells found in the *Player's Handbook*.



The spells listed on TABLE XXXIII, above, can all be found in the *Player's Handbook*, the *Tome of Magic*, or this book. Spells from the *Tome of Magic* are noted with an asterisk (\*), while spells found in this book are marked with a dagger (†); all other spells are from the *Player's Handbook*. Any priest spells from these sources not listed below don't exist in the DARK SUN campaign setting.

New priest spells and variations on existing spells follow TABLE XXXIII.

## First-Level Priest Spells

### Create Water

In the DARK SUN world, *create water* produces only a half gallon of water per level of the caster. In all other ways, the spell is exactly as described in the *Player's Handbook*.

### Merciful Shadows (Abjuration)

*Reversible*

Sphere:	Cosmos
Range:	Touch
Components:	V, S, M
Duration:	1 day/5 levels
Casting Time:	1 round
Area of Effect:	Person touched
Saving Throw:	Neg.

This spell creates a magical shade to protect an individual from the scorching sun. Once cast, the individual gains the benefits of being in the shade (requiring only half the normal water consumption), even when traveling or fighting in the full light of the sun. The individual so protected appears normal, except that he doesn't sweat as much as expected and his coloration is a bit gray.

The reverse of this spell, *blistering rays*, intensifies the light and heat of the sun on the victim. The individual must have twice the water per day for the duration of the spell or suffer the effects of dehydration. Also, in each round of combat in the open sun, the individual must make a Constitution check to keep from passing out. The saving throw, applicable only to the reverse of the spell, negates its effects.

This spell (and its reverse) has no effect on an individual who is in the shade.

The material component of this spell is a piece of a palm leaf (or black fabric for the reverse).

## Second-Level Priest Spells

### Charm Person or Mammal

Athasian creatures that can be *charmed* include all of the player character races except thri-kreen, plus anakore, bat, belgoi, braxat, cats, cyclops, ettin, giant, gith, and rat.

### Hold Person

In DARK SUN campaigns, this spell affects all player character races except thri-kreen, plus anakore, belgoi, and gith.

### Snake Charm

Yuan-ti and silk worms can be affected by this spell.

## Third-Level Priest Spells

### Air Lens (Alteration)

Sphere:	Air
Range:	90 yards
Components:	V, S, M
Duration:	3 rounds +1 round/level
Casting Time:	3
Area of Effect:	Special
Saving Throw:	None



By means of this spell, the priest creates a magical lens high in the air with which he can direct intensified rays of the sun against his enemies (the caster must be in the sunlight for the duration of the spell). Once cast, the priest can attack with the lens twice per round, against one or two different targets within the range of the spell. Attack rolls must be made for each attack, but the priest suffers no nonproficiency penalty. Targets under cover receive benefits for both cover and concealment. Each hit inflicts 2d6 points of damage. Creatures resistant to heat or fire take only half damage.

The spell can also be used to ignite flammable materials. When doing so against immobile targets, no attack roll is necessary and any normally combustible material (cloth, wood, paper, and so forth) will ignite. Personal equipment may also be targeted, but the priest must make a successful attack roll with a 4 penalty. If hit, the article of equipment ignites. Burning clothing inflicts 1d6 points of damage for 1d6 rounds or until discarded. Burning shields become useless. The flames so created are not magical in nature and can be extinguished normally. Magical darkness can negate the effects of this spell. Magical shade reduces damage by half.

The material component for this spell is a small, round piece of glass.

#### **Create Food & Water**

In DARK SUN campaigns, this spell can create a maximum of one-half gallon of water per level of the caster. The remainder of the material created is bland food. In all other ways, the spell is exactly as described in the *Player's Handbook*.

#### **Create Holy Element (Alteration)**

Sphere:	Cosmos
Range:	Touch
Components:	V, S, M
Duration:	Permanent
Casting Time:	1 hour
Area of Effect:	Special
Saving Throw:	None

This spell changes a specific volume of an element associated with the casting priest into a holy element. The holy element is pure and blessed, a physical manifestation of the elemental priest's faith and devotion.

To cast this spell, the priest spends the casting time deep in prayer. He focuses on his holy symbol, praying over a specific quantity of his patron element and contemplating the pure strength of its planar form. At the end of the hour, the priest makes a Wisdom check and plunges his hand and holy symbol into the element (whether earth, air, fire, or water), causing it to become invested with holy power. Note that no harm befalls the priest or the holy item if he rolls a successful Wisdom check; a failed check indicates no damage, with the exception of the fire element, which causes 1d4 points of damage. The prayer must be vocalized throughout the casting, accompanied by distinct hand motions unique to each element. For example, a fire priest's fingers dance like wild flames, an earth priest makes slow, deliberate motions, a water priest's hands move with fluid grace, and an air priest's movements are filled with erratic fluttering.

Holy elements retain their purity and blessed state until they are used. Some priests carry holy elements with them as another sign of their faith, while certain ceremonies require a priest to make use of a holy element. If employed as a weapon against undead or creatures from the Lower Planes, a holy element loses its sacred nature immediately after it is used. See the sidebar on "Holy Elements" for details on using these elements as weapons and for the damage inflicted by them.

The specific quantities of material altered by this spell are as follows: a palm-sized rock or loose earth that fills a small sack; an amount of fire equal to a torch; six ounces of water. Air, of course, is a special case. Elemental air is the hardest holy element to retain, but it is also the fastest to imbue with sacred power. The elemental air priest must pray as described above, but his casting time is reduced to one full round. At the end of that round, the priest makes a Wisdom check. If successful, the air around the hand holding the holy symbol becomes pure and blessed. It retains this holiness for 1d4 rounds, then returns to its normal state. Any time during this duration, the priest can use the holy air as described above. He holds his hand toward the intended target and softly blows in that direction. The holy air



moves like the wind, releasing its sacred power when it strikes a solid object or comes in contact with an incorporeal entity.

## Fourth-Level Priest Spells

### Call Woodland Beings

This spell is available in DARK SUN campaigns, but only in rare situations. The priest must be native to a forest terrain type, and he must be in a forested terrain in order to cast the spell.

### Rejuvenate (Alteration)

Sphere: Elemental, Plant  
Range: Touch  
Components: V, S, M  
Duration: Special  
Casting Time: 1 round  
Area of Effect: 10-foot radius/level  
Saving Throw: None

This spell functions just as the 5th-level wizard spell of the same name.

## Fifth-Level Priest Spells

### Commune

In DARK SUN campaigns, a priest is able to contact powerful beings from the elemental planes to answer his questions.

### Conjure Elemental (Conjuration/Summoning)

#### Reversible

Sphere: Elemental (various)  
Range: 80 yards  
Components: V, S  
Duration: 1 turn/level  
Casting Time: 5 rounds  
Area of Effect: Special  
Saving Throw: None

In DARK SUN campaigns, there is no 6th-level *conjure fire elemental* spell or 7th-level *conjure earth elemental* spell for priests. Instead, this spell allows the caster to open a special gate to any elemental plane to which he has major access and summon an elemental to step through. The hit dice of the elemental are determined randomly, as follows.

1d100 Roll	Hit Dice
1-65	8
66-90	12
91-100	16

The elemental will not turn on the caster, so concentration need not be maintained. The elemental summoned remains for a maximum of one turn per level of the caster, or until it is slain or magically banished.

### Sandstorm (Conjuration/Summoning)

Sphere: Air  
Range: 60 yards  
Components: V, S, M  
Duration: 3 rounds/level  
Casting Time: 4 rounds  
Area of Effect: Special  
Saving Throw: Half



This spell allows a priest to conjure a very large version of a *dust devil*; one that can engage and attack a number of targets at once. The sandstorm is a large whirlwind of dust and sand 12 feet tall that covers a 10-yard by 10-yard square per level of the caster. The storm has AC 0, MV 12, and Hit Dice equal to the level of the caster.

The storm's shape can be determined by the caster and changed on any round after casting, provided no portion of the storm moves farther than its movement rate. Any creature within the storm is subject to an attack that inflicts 2d6 points of damage (save versus spell for half damage). The storm is only subject to attacks from magical weapons. The winds of the storm will put out all normal fires within it. Also, any items within the storm must make item saving throws each round or be destroyed—all sandstorm saves are as if versus acid with a +5 bonus. The storm can hold a gas cloud or a creature in gaseous form at bay or push it away from the caster. The cloud obscures vision through it, and creatures are blinded for 1d4 rounds after emerging from it (save versus spell to avoid blindness). A spellcaster caught within the sandstorm loses concentration and any spells he is about to cast are ruined.

The material component for this spell is a small bottle of air collected on a windy day.

## Sixth-Level Priest Spell

**Create Tree of life** (Alteration, Enchantment)

Sphere:	Cosmos
Range:	0
Components:	V, S, M
Duration:	Permanent
Casting Time:	1 turn
Area of Effect:	One tree
Saving Throw:	None

This spell is identical to the 8th-level wizard's spell of the same name.

## Wizardly Magic

Wizards draw their magical energies from the living and life-giving nature around them, whether they use preserving or defiling magic. Except for the trappings associated with the DARK SUN world, preserving magic is essentially the same as magic used in other AD&D campaign settings; defiling magic, however, is something quite different. While preservers cast spells in harmony with nature, subtly using their magic to return to the land what they have taken from it, defilers care nothing for such harmony and brutally scar the land with every spell they cast.

The bitter dichotomy of these two extremes is often the stuff of Athasian legend, for defilers wield magic with no concern for their dying world. Indeed, defilers are much to blame for Athas's current state. With each spell they cast, defilers draw magical energy from the life force of plants in the vicinity and channel it to their own selfish ends, often draining the land of life and energy. All magic cast by defilers of up to 20th level, including all 1st-through 9th-level spells, destroys plant life only, though any creatures in the area suffer great pain. Even worse, the defiling magic of sorcerer-kings is so powerful that it destroys living animals as well as plants.

**Casting Defiler Spells:** Spells cast by defilers use all the necessary verbal, somatic, and material components. The absence of any of these precludes the successful casting of the spell. The range, duration, casting time, area of effect, and saving throws remain unchanged.

When a defiler absorbs the energy necessary to memorize his spells, all vegetation in a sphere around him turns to ash. The radius of that sphere depends upon the abundance of vegetation in the area and the level of the spells memorized, as noted in TABLE XXXIV below. The number shown is the radius, in yards, around the defiler where all vegetation is turned to ash; the effect occurs throughout the memorization process. Note that these numbers adjust for specific situations. For example, in a city, the mud pits might have no more vegetation than the stony barrens, while the gardens of the sorcerer-king are equal to a teeming forest.

TABLE XXXIV: DEFILER MAGICAL DESTRUCTION

Terrain Type	Spell Level								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Silt Sea	12	16	20	22	24	26	28	30	32
Boulder fields	10	14	17	20	22	24	26	28	30
Salt flats	10	14	17	20	22	24	26	28	30
Sandy wastes	10	14	17	20	22	24	26	28	30
Mountains	5	7	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Rocky badlands	5	7	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Stony barrens	5	7	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Scrub plains	3	4	4	5	5	5	5	6	6
Verdant belts	2	2	2	3	3	3	4	4	4
Forests	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	3	3

**Memorizing Multiple Spells in the Same Location:** If a defiler memorizes more than one spell with energy drawn from the same location, the radius of destroyed vegetation expands around him. Consult TABLE XXXIV for the highest level spell memorized from that location, then add one yard for every other spell memorized. (Spells equal to the highest level spell are treated as additional spells.)

For example, if the defiler Grifyan memorizes eight spells while in the scrub plains, he finds the base radius by checking the highest spell level. In this case, the highest level is 3, so the area of ash has a base of 4 yards. Add the number of remaining spells memorized (7) for a total of burnt earth of 11 yards (4 + 7 = 11).

**Effect on Living Creatures:** Though only plants are destroyed within the radius, living creatures also suffer. Any being in the radius of a defiler's magical summoning makes an immediate save vs. spell. If the save succeeds, there is no effect. If the save fails, the being receives an initiative modifier penalty equal to the level of the highest spell memorized. This modifier comes into play at the first opportune moment. The pain can never keep a character from performing an action during a round. The initiative penalty only postpones when the action occurs.

**Ash:** The ash created by defiler magic is black and gray, completely devoid of life or life-giving elements. Nothing will grow in an area of ash for one year. The ash itself is very light and usually blows away, leaving behind a lifeless, circular scar on the ground. Even with the ash gone, though, the defiler's magic has leached all life-giving nutrients from the soil, so a defiled area may take many years to recover life, if ever.

With the wild, destructive might of defiling magic and the more forgiving but no less powerful preserving magic, the wizards of Athas shape and mold the harsh realities of their world. The influences of foul defilers, the valiant efforts of preservers, and the corrupt researches of sorcerer-kings have left their mark upon the wizard's trade, as highlighted in the following new spells and the differences between DARK SUN magic and magic in other AD&D game worlds.

## First-Level Wizard Spells

### Charm Person

Athasian creatures that can be charmed include all PC races except thri-kreen.

### Find Familiar

In DARK SUN campaigns, substitute the following table for that found in the *Player's Handbook*.

1d20 Roll	Familiar	Sensory Powers
1-3	Bat	Night, sonar-enhanced vision
4-5	Beetle	Senses minute vibrations
6-8	Cat, black	Excellent night vision and superior hearing
9	Pseudodragon	Normal sensory powers, but very intelligent
10-11	Rat	Excellent sense of taste and smell
12-15	Scorpion	Senses fear
16-20	Snake	Sensitivity to subtle temperature changes



### Mount

In DARK SUN campaigns, substitute the following table for that found in the *Player's Handbook*.

Caster level	Mount
1st–3rd level	Wild kank
4th–7th level	Trained kank
8th–12th level	Inix
13th–14th level	Mekillot (and howdah at 18th level)
15th level+	Rot (and saddle at 18th level)

## Second-Level Wizard Spells

### Detect Psionics (Divination)

Range:	0
Components:	V, S, M
Duration:	2 rounds/level
Casting Time:	2
Area of Effect:	30-feet/level-diameter sphere
Saving Throw:	None

This spell is similar to the psionic devotion psionic sense, except that it uses magical instead of psionic means to gain information. The caster detects all psionic activity within the area of effect (in other words, whether PSPs were spent in the round by any characters or items within the area of effect); how much other information he gains depends on his level, as described below. The spell allows the caster to detect psionic activity in a sphere around his location. The diameter of the sphere is 30 feet per level of the caster. Psionic activity is defined as the expenditure of psionic strength points (PSPs).

If the caster is 5th level or lower, he only determines whether someone or something within the area of effect is psionically active. A caster of 6th to 8th level also learns how powerful the activity is. Power levels of psionic activity are as follows: low, 1 to 5 PSPs; moderate, 6 to 12 PSPs; high, 13 or more PSPs. (Note that at these levels, the power detected includes all psionic activity within the area of effect and doesn't differentiate between individual psionic use.) A caster of 9th to 12th level also learns where the activity is taking place (direction and distance), thus allowing him to identify characters or objects expending PSPs in a given round. Finally, a caster of 13th level or higher can differentiate the power-level expenditure of each individual in the area of effect.

### Fool's Gold

Copper coins are seldom minted on Athas. However, copper is still the medium of this spell and can be turned into solid gold. In DARK SUN campaigns, the area of effect is reduced to 1 cubic inch, or about 15 gold coins, per level.

## Third-Level Wizard Spells

### Fleet Feet (Alteration)

Range:	Touch
Components:	V, S, M
Duration:	1 day/5 levels
Casting Time:	3
Area of Effect:	One individual
Saving Throw:	Neg.

This spell allows an individual to move more quickly. The person affected can take very large strides, as if his feet and legs weighed far less than they actually do. For purposes of cross-country movement, an affected character can travel double his normal movement rate (and may still force march beyond that, though he is still subject to those effects). The character's movement rate is doubled in combat situations, as well, but his balance and inertia make it



difficult to maneuver. If he moves greater than his normal movement rate and attempts to turn in any way, such as to round a corner or to avoid an obstacle, he must make a successful Dexterity check to avoid falling (failure ends his movement for the round and makes him prone).

The reverse of this spell, *stone feet*, makes the affected character's legs feel as heavy as rock, slowing his movement to half, though a saving throw negates this effect. The character's balance is unaffected.

The material component for this spell is a feather from a flightless bird, such as an erdlu (or for the reverse, a piece of mekillot hide).

#### **Phantom Steed**

In DARK SUN campaigns, this spell creates a kanklike creature with the same abilities listed in the *Player's Handbook*.

## Fourth-Level Wizard Spells

#### **Ice Storm**

In DARK SUN campaigns, the water, hail, and ice created by this spell is only temporary. It disappears three turns after the completion of the spell. Even water consumed in that time disappears, giving its imbiber no benefit.

#### **Massmorph**

Since trees might be somewhat conspicuous in DARK SUN campaigns, the caster of this spell has the option of making the affected creatures appear to be boulders and stones instead. The material component is a handful of available pebbles.

#### **Plant Growth**

This spell has no effect on a *tree of life*. Since a defiled area has no vegetation left, this spell has no effect if cast there.

#### **Psionic Dampener** (Alteration)

Range: 5 yards/level  
Components: V, S, M  
Duration: Special  
Casting Time: 4  
Area of Effect: One individual  
Saving Throw: Neg.

Use of this spell allows the caster to disrupt the psionic activities of one individual. The target is allowed a saving throw to negate the spell. Regardless of success, the target immediately knows that the spell was cast and who cast it.

If the spell is successful, the target is unable to expend PSPs for its duration. The spell lasts until the wizard stops concentrating, either voluntarily or involuntarily. The affected psionicist can otherwise function normally. If the affected psionicist moves beyond the range, the spell is broken and he can again use PSPs normally, even if he reenters the spell's area of effect.

The material component for this spell is any small object within a blown glass sphere.

#### **Raze** (Alteration)

Range: Touch  
Components: V, S, M  
Duration: Permanent  
Casting Time: 5 rounds  
Area of Effect: Special  
Saving Throw: None

This spell duplicates the life-draining effects peculiar to defiling magic. The spell may be cast by a defiler or a preserver, though a defiler causes more damage with it.



The casting of the spell causes a large area of vegetation to instantly give up its magical potential and turn to ash. Unlike the natural destruction of defiling magic, *raze* affects all vegetation within the radius of the spell, regardless of the terrain. The area of effect for a preserver is one yard per level of the caster. For a defiler, it is five yards plus one yard per level of the caster (in lieu of normal defiling damage). The ash created is a mixture of black and gray, completely devoid of life or life-giving elements. Nothing will grow there for half a year, leaving a barren circular scar on the ground.

The material components for this spell are a handful of ash (either from a previous *raze* spell or from normal defiler magic) and a pinch of salt.

#### **Transmute Sand to Stone** (Alteration)

*Reversible*

Range: 10 yards/level  
Components: V, S, M  
Duration: 2d6 days  
Casting Time: 4  
Area of Effect: One 10-foot cube/level  
Saving Throw: None

This spell turns a volume of sand into an equal volume of sandstone. The caster can choose any simple shape he desires, provided no single portion is smaller than one cubic foot and none of the shape exceeds the range of the spell. The spell does not confer the ability to move the sand or stone created; the stone occupies the space where the sand was at the time of casting. Persons standing with their feet in the sand at the time of casting must break themselves free, though a saving throw versus paralyzation is allowed to jump free, if possible. The fact that an area of sand has been turned to sandstone is not readily apparent even after the spell has been cast. Viewers may have to make an Intelligence check to notice that there is stone where there was once sand. Though not an illusion, the magically created sandstone quickly breaks down into sand particles over a period of 2d6 days.

The reverse of this spell, *transmute stone to sand*, allows the caster to change any type of stone (sandstone, granite, gems, clay brick, concrete, and so forth) to sand. Stone items such as weapons become useless. Floors turned to sand may cause those standing on them to lose their balance and fall (a Dexterity check avoids this effect). Supporting stones in buildings so affected can easily cause a structure to collapse.

The material component for the spell is sand ground between two pebbles (or sand from an hour glass for the reverse).

#### **Wall of Ice**

Like the *ice storm* spell, the ice created disappears three turns after the conclusion of the spell.

## **Fifth-Level Wizard Spells**

#### **Rejuvenate** (Alteration)

Range: Touch  
Components: V, S, M  
Duration: Special  
Casting Time: 1 round  
Area of Effect: 5-foot radius/level  
Saving Throw: None

This spell grants the ability to support vegetation to an area of ground. In the case of ground made barren by defiler magic, *rejuvenate* dispels the ground's sterility, making it immediately capable of supporting vegetation. The spell may also be cast on any ground short of solid rock, including sand, rocky sand or soil, and dust.

The spell affects the ground in a circle extending away from the caster, so he must stand in the middle of the area he wishes to revitalize. The radius of the circle is 5 feet per level of the caster. Once cast, the soil is enriched and moistened, and a blanket of fine grass emerges instantly.



The duration of the spell varies. Once cast, the moist soil and grass are not magical, and are subject to all natural forces upon them. They will, however, survive a week in even the worst of conditions. *Rejuvenate* otherwise lasts until a defiler spell destroys the vegetation there.

The material component of the spell is a seed (of any type) and a drop of water. Defilers can't cast *rejuvenate*.

#### Transmute Rock to Mud

The mud created by this spell is of a magical nature—no water can be obtained from it.

#### Wall of Iron

In DARK SUN campaigns, the duration of this spell is one turn per level of the caster.

## Sixth-Level Wizard Spells

#### Reincarnation

In DARK SUN campaigns, substitute the following table for that found in the *Player's Handbook*.

1d100 Roll	Incarnation
1-8	Aarakocra
9-11	Cyclops
12-19	Dwarf
20-27	Elf
28-29	Giant
30-40	Half-elf
41-47	Half-giant
48-58	Halfling
59-70	Human
71-77	Kenku
78-81	Mul
82-89	Pterran
90-96	Thri-kreen
97-100	Yuan-ti

#### Transmute Water to Dust

In DARK SUN campaigns, this spell has no reverse

## Eighth-Level Wizard Spell

#### Create Tree of life (Alteration, Enchantment)

Range:	0
Components:	V, S, M
Duration:	Permanent
Casting Time:	1 turn
Area of Effect:	One tree
Saving Throw:	None

By means of this spell, a wizard can enchant a living sapling to become a *tree of life*, a magical item of tremendous power. Any tree less than one year old will suffice; this spell cannot be cast on an older tree. The sapling must have already sprouted from the ground, though the wizard can transplant such a sapling before casting the spell. It grows to its full size in only one week, but has its full powers and capabilities immediately after the spell is cast. The properties of a *tree of life* are described in the following section.

The material components for this spell are the sapling (which grows into the *tree of life*) and a piece of copper wire formed in the shape of a tree.

# Magical Items

Use of magical items never causes a defiling effect on the surrounding grounds. However, defilers who create magical items do cause destruction at the time of an item's manufacture. For the most part, magical items on Athas follow the guidelines noted in the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide*. However, random generation via magical items tables is more limited on Athas, and so revised tables are presented below. Note that these tables should be used instead of those presented in the *DMG*; as such, they are titled identically with those that they replace. Lastly, four uniquely Athasian magical items are also presented under their appropriate heading.

TABLE 89: FRUIT POTIONS AND OILS (1D6)

Subtable A (1-2)			Subtable B (3-4)			Subtable C (5-6)		
1d12			1d20			1d20		
Roll	Item	XP Value	Roll	Item	XP Value	Roll	Item	XP Value
1	Animal control*	250	1	Half-giant strength †	400	1	Oil of timelessness	500
2	Clairaudience	250	2	Giant strength ††	550	2	Philter of glibness	500
3	Clairvoyance	300	3	Growth	250	3	Philter of love	200
4	Climbing	300	4-6	Healing	200	4	Philter of persuasiveness	400
5	Delusion**	—	7	Heroism (warrior)	300	5	Philter of stammering and stuttering**	—
6	Diminution	300	8	Invisibility	250	6-8	Poison**	—
7	ESP	500	9	Invulnerability (warrior)	350	9	Polymorph self	200
8	Extra healing	400	10	Levitation	250	10	Rainbow hues	200
9	Fire breath	400	11	Longevity	500	11	Speed	200
10	Fire resistance	250	12	Oil of acid resistance	500	12-14	Superheroism (warrior)	450
11	Flying	500	13	Oil of disenchantment	750	15	Sweet water	200
12	DM's choice	—	14	Oil of elemental invulnerability*	500	16	Treasure finding	600
			15	Oil of etherealness	600	17	Undead control*	700
			16	Oil of fiery burning	500	18	Ventriloquism	200
			17	Oil of fumbling**	—	19	Vitality	300
			18	Oil of impact	750	20	DM's choice	—
			19	Oil of slipperiness	400			
			20	DM's choice	—			

\* The type of creature affected can be determined by a die roll (see the specific item description for more information).

\*\* The DM shouldn't reveal the exact nature of the item.

† Athasian giant strength: 23 is 90% = +7, 24 is 100% = +8.

†† +4 Strength bonus for duration.

‡ Mindless undead only.

## Potions and Oils

On Athas, potions come in the form of magical fruits or berries; they're never found as fluids in a flask or vial. The juices of the fruit hold the magical properties of the potion, and the fruit must be eaten to release the magical effect. Any juicy berry or fruit may be enchanted with a potion. Since the juice itself holds the potion, drier fruits such as dates can't be so enchanted. The type of fruit chosen to house the potion has no effect; any fruit can contain any potion.

Whereas normal fruits may only remain ripe for a few days or weeks before they begin to rot, potion fruits have their period of ripeness greatly extended. Once enchanted with a potion, a fruit remains ripe for 99 years. After that time, the enchantment fades and the fruit rots normally.

Once the skin of the fruit is broken, it must be eaten within one turn or the potion's magic is lost. The entire fruit must be eaten to gain the effect of the potion, which takes one full round. Fruits that are enchanted with oil-type potions must be crushed and the juice allowed to run over the user, which takes two full rounds. Although potion fruits can't be identified by taste, a *detect magic* spell will identify a fruit or tree as magical, but only *identify* or similar magic will provide a positive identification.



Potion fruits can be combined; different potion fruits eaten concurrently will all have their effect on the consumer. Regardless of how many potion fruits are consumed, however, the magical effects last only 4 + 1d4 turns unless otherwise stated in the description.

Fruits may be enchanted with potions in one of the following two fashions.

- **Magical Enchantment:** Any wizard, cleric, or druid can enchant normal fruits into cal enchantment occurs as described under “Potions” in Chapter 10 of the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide*.
- **Botanical Enchantment:** Any wizard, ranger, cleric, or druid can use botanical enchantment. Botanical enchantment is the process of using one enchanted fruit to grow more. The original potion fruit must be planted unused. From this seed a magical tree grows very quickly, producing a full-sized fruit tree in 1d6 weeks. Once the magical tree is full-grown, roll 1d6: on a roll of 1 or 2, two new potion fruits of the same type appear on the tree; on a 3, 4, or 5, one new potion fruit of the same type appears; and on a 6 no potion fruits appear. Regardless of how many nonmagical fruits the tree bears, there will be, at most, two potion fruits on it. Once these are picked, no additional potion fruits will grow from that tree. However, if a *permanency* spell is cast on a potion fruit tree, it grows a continuing series of potion fruits. Once the tree's potion fruit is picked, a new one grows in 1d6 days. Such a tree lives at least 99 years unless it is destroyed.

Botanical enchantment is risky. The tree must be tended, watered, and pruned every day while it's growing. Any severe change in the weather, such as a drought or freeze, ruins the tree and no fruit will grow. Any use of defiler magic near the tree kills it and renders any potion fruits on it useless. Even if all goes well, the tree may not bear potion fruits, if the 1d6 rolls are unlucky.

One new potion fruit that is particularly useful in the Tyr Region is the *oil of feather* as described below.

#### Oil of Feather Falling

XP Value: 700

Crushing such a fruit and rubbing the juices on one's feet gives the character all the abilities of the wizard's spell *feather fall*, but for a duration of exactly 10 hours. The character can carry with him up to 250 pounds of equipment beyond his normal clothing and weapons. *Oils of feather falling* are most often used to travel across the Silt Sea—a person of feather weight can float easily on the surface of the silt and walk at his normal rate of movement. Multiple applications can last a character long enough to cross an estuary of the Silt Sea or even to reach one of its many islands from shore.

TABLE 90: SCROLLS (1d6)

Subtable A (1-4)			Subtable B (5-6)		
1d20 Roll	Item	Level Range	1d12 Roll	Item	XP Value
	Same as in the <i>DMG</i> except that all scrolls are printed on hide, bone, wood, or stone and only rarely on paper.		1	Map	—
		2	Protection from acid	2,500	
		3	Protection from cold	2,000	
		4	Protection from electricity	1,500	
		5	Protection from elementals		
		6	Protection from fire	2,000	
		7	Protection from gas	2,000	
		8	Protection from petrification	2,000	
		9	Protection from plants	1,000	
		10	Protection from poison	1,000	
		11	Cursed	—	
		12	DM's choice	—	

## Scrolls

Scrolls found as part of a treasure will always be papyrus and will lack a case of any kind, unless otherwise noted. As such, these delicate scrolls often do not survive the combat in which they are won. The spells on a scroll can be either wizard or priest, as indicated in the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide*, and should be determined using the random spell lists in that book. Note that the process of setting a spell to a scroll inherently strips the spell of defiler or preserver characteristics. Thus, spells cast from scrolls do not cause defiler destruction.

**TABLE 91: RINGS (1D6)**

Subtable A (1-4)			Subtable B (5-6)		
1d20 Roll	Item	XP Value	1d12 Roll	Item	XP Value
1	Animal friendship	1,000	1	Protection	1,000*
2	Blinking	1,000	2	Regeneration	5,000
3	Chameleon power	1,000	3	Shocking grasp	1,000
4	Clumsiness	—	4	Shooting stars	3,000
5	Contrariness	—	5	Spell turning	2,000
6-8	Delusion	—	6	Sustenance	500
9	Elemental command	5,000	7	Telekinesis †	2,000
10	Feather falling	1,000	8	Truth	1,000
11	Fire resistance	1,000	9	Warmth	1,000
12	Free action	1,000	10	Weakness	—
13	Human influence	2,000	11	Wishes (3) †	3,000
14	Invisibility	1,500	12	DM's choice	—
15-17	Jumping	1,000			
18	Mind shielding	500			
19	Protection	1,000*			
20	DM's choice	—			

\* Per +1 of protection.

† Power limited by the number of charges remaining in the item.

**TABLE 92: RODS**

The *rod of absorption* is unavailable on Athas.

**TABLE 93: STAVES**

The *staff of swarming insects*, *staff of thunder & lightning*, and *staff of the woodlands* are all unavailable on Athas.

**TABLE 94: WANDS**

1d12 Roll	Item	XP Value
1	Earth & stone	1,000
2	Enemy detection	2,000
3	Fear (priest, wizard)	3,000
4	Fire (wizard)	4,500
5	Illumination	2,000
6	Illusion (wizard)	3,000
7	Lighting (wizard)	4,000
8	Magic detection	2,500
9	Magic missiles	4,000
10	Negation	3,500
11	Paralyzation (wizard)	3,500
12	DM's choice	—

**TABLE 95: MISCELLANEOUS MAGIC: BOOKS, LIBRAMS, MANUALS, TOMES**

These items are so rare on Athas that there is no random generation table appropriate for them.

**TABLE 96: MISCELLANEOUS MAGIC: JEWELS, JEWELRY, PHYLACTERIES (1d6)**

Subtable A (1-3)			Subtable B (4-6)		
1d20 Roll	Item	XP Value	1d12 Roll	Item	XP Value
	Same as in the <i>DMG</i>		1	Pearl of power (wizard)	200*
	except that metals are		2	Pearl of wisdom (priest)	500
	seldom used; quality of		3	Periapt of foul rotting	—
	workmanship is obtained		4	Periapt of health	1,000
	instead through use of		5	Periapt of proof against poison	1,500
	bone, wood, stone, or		6	Periapt of wound closure	1,000
	other materials.		7	Phylactery of long years (priest)	3,000
			8	Phylactery of monstrous	
				attention (priest)	—
			9	Scarab of death	—
			10	Scarab of enraging enemies	1,000
			11	Scarab of protection	2,500
			12	DM's choice	

\* Per level.

**TABLE 97: MISCELLANEOUS MAGIC: CLOAKS AND ROBES**

The *cloak of arachnids*, *cloak of elvenkind*, *cloak of the bat*, *cloak of the manta ray*, *robe of the archmagi*, and *robe of useful items* are all unavailable on Athas. Disregard these entries and roll 1d12 to obtain a random result.

**TABLE 98: MISCELLANEOUS MAGIC: BOOTS, BRACERS, GLOVES**

The *boots of elvenkind*, *boots of the north*, *boots of varied tracks*, *bracers of brachiation*, *gauntlets of ogre power*, *gauntlets of swimming & climbing*, and *gloves of missile snaring* are all unavailable on Athas. Disregard these entries and roll 1d12 to obtain a random result.

**TABLE 99: MISCELLANEOUS MAGIC: GIRDLES, HATS, HELMS**

1d12 Roll	Item	XP Value
1	Girdle of femininity/masculinity	—
2-3	Girdle of giant strength* (priest, rogue, warrior)	2,000
4	Girdle of many pouches	1,000
5	Hat of disguise	1,000
6	Hat of stupidity	—
7	Helm of brilliance	2,500
8-9	Helm of comprehending languages & reading magic	1,000
10	Helm of opposite alignment	—
11	Helm of telepathy	3,000
12	DM's choice	—

\* Athasian giant strength: 90% Strength 23 (+7), 10%, Strength 24 (+8)

**TABLE 100: MISCELLANEOUS MAGIC: BAGS, BOTTLES, POUCHES, CONTAINERS**

The *beaker of plentiful potions*, *Bucknard's everfull purse*, *decanter of endless water*, *Heward's handy haversack*, and *iron flask* are all unavailable on Athas. Disregard these entries and assign the remaining entries a 1 in 12 chance and then roll 1d12 to obtain a random result.

**TABLE 101: MISCELLANEOUS MAGIC: CANDLES, DUSTS, OINTMENTS, INCENSE, STONES**

The *candle of invocation*, *Keoghtom's ointment*, *Nelzur's marvelous pigments*, *smoke powder*, *sovereign glue*, *stone of controlling earth elementals*, *stone of weight*, and *universal solvent* are all unavailable on Athas. Disregard these entries and roll 1d12 to obtain a random result.

**TABLE 102: MISCELLANEOUS MAGIC: HOUSEHOLD ITEMS AND TOOLS**

The *broom of animated attack*, *broom of flying*, *carpet of flying*, *mattock of the titans*, *maul of the titans*, *Murlynd's spoon*, and *spade of colossal excavation* are all unavailable on Athas. Disregard these entries and assign the remaining entries a 1 in 12 chance and then roll 1d12 to obtain a random result.



**TABLE 103: MISCELLANEOUS MAGIC: MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS**

The *horn of bubbles*, *horn of collapsing*, *horn of fog*, *horn of goodness*, *horn of the tritons*, *horn of Valhalla*, *lyre of building*, and *pipes of the sewers* are all unavailable on Athas. Disregard these entries and roll 1d12 to obtain a random result.

**TABLE 104: MISCELLANEOUS MAGIC: THE WEIRD STUFF (1D6)**

Subtable A (1-3)			Subtable B (4-6)		
1d12	Item	XP Value	1d12	Item	XP Value
1	Bowl of commanding water elementals (wizard)	4,000	1	Eyes of petrification	
2	Bowl of watery death (wizard)	—	2	Eyes of the eagle	3,500
3	Censer controlling air elementals (wizard)	4,000	3-5	Figurine of wondrous power	100*
4	Censer of summoning hostile air elementals (wizard)	—	6	Lens of detection	250
5-6	Crystal ball (wizard)	1,000	7	Sheet of smallness	1,500
7	Crystal hypnosis ball (wizard)	—	8	Sphere of annihilation	4,000
8	Cube of force	3,000	9-10	Wind fan	500
9-10	Eyes of charming (wizard)	4,000	11	Wings of flying	750
11	Eyes of minute seeing	2,000	12	DM's choice	—
12	DM's choice	—			

\* Per Hit Die of the figurine.

## Rings, Rods, Staves, Wands, and Miscellaneous Magic

These items function just as described in the *DMG*. Such items rarely consist of metal, but rather are fashioned from the finest alternate materials available. Three additional items are available in the *DARK SUN* campaign world, as noted below.

### Amulet of Psionic Interference

XP Value: 5,000

This item scrambles the wearer's psionic abilities, rendering him incapable of using any psionic powers. The device creates a magical field around the wearer's mind that doesn't eliminate his psionic strength points (PSPs), but the field interferes with them in such a way that they can't be called upon. The amulet doesn't interfere with the wearer's ability to recover psionic strength points or defend himself with his MAC. Generally, only the person who places the amulet around someone's neck can remove it, though the wearer could remove it if he uses a *remove curse* or *wish* spell.

### Ring of Life

XP Value: 500

This item protects the wearer from the effects of defiling magic, though not that of a sorcerer-king's. When worn, the character is immune to the initiative point loss incurred when in the destructive diameter of a defiler's spell. The *ring of life* also bestows upon its wearer recuperative powers as if he had enjoyed complete bed rest; the wearer naturally heals 3 hit points per day.

### Rod of Divining

XP Value: 3,500

This item is a small Y-shaped stick that must be held in both hands to use. With each charge expended, the item locates and gently pulls its holder toward any accumulation of water of at



least one gallon within 1,000 yards. The water need not be such that the character can easily obtain it. For instance, the rod might point down to an underground water source up to 1,000 yards beneath the user. It might also locate moisture within a large plant (if it amounts to one gallon or more) or liquid that's hidden by invisibility or other concealing magic, but it will ignore the moisture within living beings. If multiple accumulations of water reside in the rod's range, it draws its bearer to the largest one.

## Armor and Shields

Substitute TABLE XXXV for its counterpart in Appendix 2 of the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide*. Magical adjustment to Armor Class is determined normally.

TABLE XXXV: ARMOR TYPE

1d20 Roll	Armor	Base AC
1-6	Leather	8
7-8	Studded leather	7
9-10	Ring mail	7
11-12	Hide	6
13-14	Scale mail	6
15-16	Brigandine	6
17-18	Shield	+1
19	Special*	—
20	Metal armor (roll 1d100):	
	1-15 Banded mail	4
	16-23 Bronze plate mail	4
	24-45 Chain mail	5
	46-50 Field plate	2
	51-55 Full plate	1
	56-65 Plate mail	3
	66-75 Splint mail	4
	76-99 Metal shield	+1
	100 Special*	—

\* Special armor is determined normally as per the *DMG*, but elven chain mail doesn't exist on Athas; reroll if necessary.

## Weapons

All magical weapons found as part of a treasure are metal or have metal components. Nonmetal weapons can be enchanted as well, but magical adjustments must still take into account the inherently poorer quality of the material used. Weapons are determined as in the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide*. Weapons can have intelligence, and those with intelligence 15 or greater can have a psionic wild talent (25% chance).

## Trees of Life

In Athas, there is an unusual magical item available that deserves its own classification, and that is the *tree of life*. A *tree of life* is a mighty and magical tree, enchanted by a powerful priest or wizard. It is, in essence, a living magical item. It stores and channels energies from all four elemental planes. Thus, though wizards can create a *tree of life*, only clerics and druids can tap its special powers. Those who are in contact with a *tree of life* receive four spells, each of which can be cast once per day. The spells gained are *heal*, *augury*, *divination*, and *magic font*.

A *tree of life* has two distinct parts: its physical form and its life force. The stump, branches, roots, and leaves make up its physical form and aren't inherently magical. The same things that would destroy a normal tree will destroy the physical form of a *tree of life* (for example, chopping it down, burning it) with one exception. Neither climate nor terrain affect a *tree of life*. One will flourish in the middle of the Athasian desert or on a rocky mountain face, regardless of drought, severe weather, natural lightning, earthquakes, and so forth.

If the tree's physical form is damaged or destroyed, it will grow back to full size. The tree will



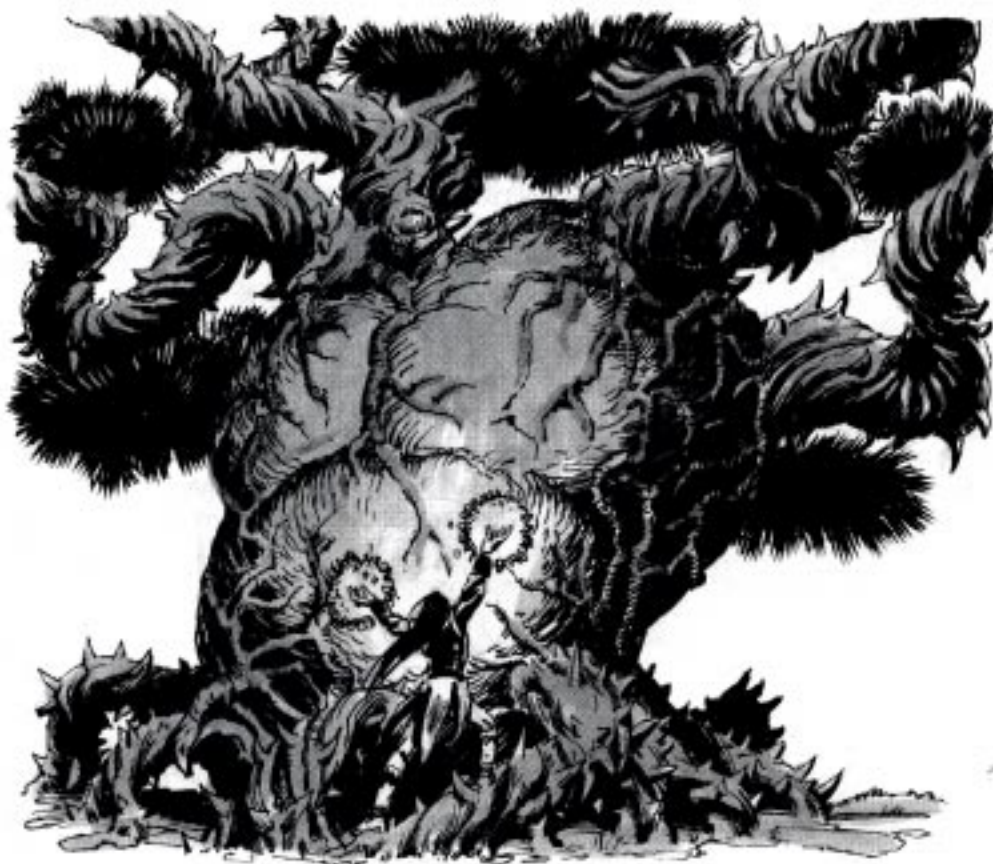
regrow at a rate of one quarter of its full size per week. A sprout will appear in one day and grow to a sapling in a week. It will grow to a young tree in two weeks, then to a full-sized adult tree in three. After four weeks, the *tree of life* will revert to its true form: an ancient and mighty tree. No matter how many times the physical form of the tree is destroyed, it will always grow back in four weeks.

The tree's life force—and destroying that magic—is more complex. A *tree of life*, at any stage of growth (even sprout) has 100 hit points (10 levels of 10 hit points each) that can only be affected by life-draining magic. The wizard spells *vampiric touch*, *enervation*, *trap the soul*, and *energy drain* can each drain hit points; *death spell*, *finger of death*, *limited wish*, and *raze* can each snuff out 3 levels of the target tree; and a *wish* slays the tree. The priest spells that affect a tree's life force are *raise dead* (and its reverse, *slay living*), *restoration* (and its reverse, *energy drain*), and *resurrection* (and its reverse, *destruction*). Undead creatures that have an energy drain attack can affect the life force of a *tree of life*. Likewise, defiler magic also affects a tree's life force. Every level of defiler magic cast within 100 yards of a *tree of life* drains one level of life force from the tree. The only positive aspect of this damage is that it negates the effect the spell would otherwise have on surrounding vegetation.

The life force of a *tree of life* is completely snuffed if it falls below zero levels or hit points. The life force will not regenerate if either of these numbers falls below zero, in which case both the life force and the physical form of the tree die. The life force of a *tree of life* regenerates one level (10 hit points) per hour. It regenerates even if the life force reaches zero points, but not if it goes below zero.

Though originally created by wizards to combat the destruction of nature, *trees of life* are now heavily exploited by defilers, who use the *trees'* powerful life forces to charge their defiling spells. Sorcerer-kings often have large gardens within their cities, even within their palaces, where groves of *trees of life* are tended and maintained. Thus, defilers can exercise evil magic from their citadels without decimating the cities below—a measure to keep their tiny verdant belts as plentiful as possible.

The magical life forces of *trees of life* make them virtually eternal. The greatest *trees of life* are ancient; many solitary trees predate the villages around them and others stand in entire groves, a quiet testament to the great wizards of a bygone age. However, present-day priests and wizards still create new trees to enrich the world. In the case of defilers, the goal is to pervert the *trees'* powerful life forces to further the defilers' destructive, evil ambitions.



## Story Awards

The *DUNGEON MASTER Guide* discusses the concept of “story goals.” The objectives of a particular DARK SUN adventure range from escaping a slave pen to defeating a defiler.

Adventures also have goals that build toward the resolution of a particular campaign goal, such as overthrowing a sorcerer-king, restoring a part of Athas, etc. These objectives are tied to the plotlines.

After a DM decides what the story goal of a particular adventure is, he or she must assign experience points to the successful completion of this goal. These

are bonus points, awarded beyond any other points earned. If the PCs accomplish the goal completely, they should earn all of the bonus points. If they have a partial success, the DM should reduce the bonus accordingly. If they fail, the PCs earn no bonus points.

The story award should never be greater than the total experience points that can be earned for defeating all the monsters and foes encountered in the adventure, and it should never be more than 10%, of what a character needs to advance a level.

## CHAPTER 5:

# Experience and Treasure

Characters in a DARK SUN campaign earn experience points, just like characters in other campaign settings. DMs need to be familiar with the rules covering experience presented in the *Player's Handbook* and the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide*. Awarding experience points for constant goals such as fun, character survival, and improvement is a standard in AD&D games, as it is in a DARK SUN campaign. In addition to awards based on group activities (like slaying monsters), DMs running a DARK SUN campaign should also award experience points based on story goals (see the sidebar “Story Awards” at right). Likewise, they should award players experience points for good role-playing, as described in the following section.

Lastly, rewards in the monetary form of treasure are detailed in this chapter.

## Role-Playing Awards

Good role-playing of the player character races in a DARK SUN campaign should bring with it substantial experience point awards. Conversely, poor role-playing should reduce the experience points awarded to a specific character. Naturally, judgment of good role-playing ultimately lies with the DM, so he or she must be familiar with all the nuances of the Athasian player character races.

Good players never forget the peculiarities of their character's race, and they apply them to all role-playing situations. DMs and players should discuss how the role-playing worked after each gaming session. Of course, if a player has a unique slant on his character that makes sense in the campaign, let him role-play as he sees fit.

Awards for good racial role-playing are as follows.

- **Dwarf:** A dwarf's role-playing revolves around his focus, which should be agreed upon by the player and the DM at the start of a campaign. Examples of dwarf foci range from the

broad (construction of a temple, protection of a village, quest for a lost family member, and so forth) to the narrow (journey from one city-state to another, escort a caravan, explore a half-buried ruin, and so on). The pursuit of a relevant mission is perfectly acceptable, but relevance must be agreed upon in advance by both the player and the DM.

Dwarves rarely shift focus drastically before a project is completed, and only in the face of exceptional circumstances—imminent war, assassination of a brother, or the attack of a great monster, for example. Again, these exceptional circumstances must be agreed upon in advance by both the player and DM.

- **Elf:** An elf's role-playing revolves around his self-reliance and relationships with outsiders. Outsiders include anyone not of the elf's tribe—even other elves. An elf on Athas shouldn't wish to gain friendship and trust with every character he meets; on the contrary, he tests the trustworthiness of outsiders who display some redeeming characteristics (redeeming to an elf, that is). Elves also perform such tests on outsiders who try to befriend them. Elf PCs should put outsiders to tests of trust or loyalty whenever possible rather than trust them from the onset just because they're run by fellow gamers. The trust of an elf isn't easily earned.

An elf also recognizes displays of trust and loyalty that aren't planned in advance. If an outsider fails one or more tests of trust, an elf player character should not consider him a friend and should never retest him. However, if a series of tests are passed, the elf PC can declare the outsider a friend—no further tests will be necessary unless the friend severely breaks that trust.

- **Half Elf:** Seeking acceptance among humans and elves is important to every half-elf, though each will vehemently deny it. Simply observing a local custom of a human or an elf community he is visiting gives a half-elf PC an experience point award. Such opportunities come up rather frequently when a half-elf adventurer is exploring his world. Experience point awards, therefore, should be received only the first time the half-elf performs a particular custom, not every time he observes the same function.
- **Half-Giant:** Adopting the lifestyles of others gives a half-giant purpose. As a player character, a half-giant should seek out the most charismatic member of the party and imitate his racial and class customs. When the half-giant does so, he gains an experience point bonus. Of course, sometimes a particularly charismatic NPC may attract the attention of a half-giant PC. The half-giant character might, for a while, even switch sides in an adventure, during which time he should still get his experience point bonus.
- **Halfling:** Their curiosity and open-mindedness demand that halflings experiment with the customs of other races. When given the opportunity to do so, no matter how trivial the custom, the halfling gains an experience award bonus. The DM should grant the award only once per custom observed, regardless of repetition. Further, halflings are honor bound to aid one another when in need. This award should only be handed out when there is a danger of injury or loss of life to the aiding halfling.
- **Mul:** A mul's ability to exert himself physically over long periods of time can earn him an experience point award. Each 12 hours beyond the first 12 that a mul exerts himself (such as carrying a wounded party member, keeping watch, etc.) merits an award. Note that the exertion must be necessary to the adventure, a judgment subject to the DM's approval.
- **Thri-Kreen:** A thri-kreen's natural combat abilities are formidable and shouldn't be overlooked in favor of human tactics. A player whose thri-kreen uses natural combat abilities or gets in the spirit of an "insect mentality" gains awards. Naturally, instances must be relevant to the adventure to warrant an award.

TABLE XXXVI: ATHASIAN LAIR TREASURES

Type	Bits	Ceramic	Silver	Gold	Gems	Magical Item
A	200-2,000 (130%)	100-2,000 (40%)	10-100 (35%)	10-100 (25%)	10-40 (60%)	Any 2 (30%)
B	400-4,000 (25%)	100-1,000 (25%)	10-100 (25%)	5-50 (30%)	1-8 (30%)	Armor weapon (10%)
C	—	100-600 (15%)	10-60 (20%)	—	1-6 (25%)	Any 2 (10%)
D	1,000-10,000 (15%)	1,000-3,000 (150%)	100-600 (115%)	100-400 (10%)	1-10 (30%)	Any 2 + 1 potion (15%)
E	2,000-12,000 (25%)	1,000-4,000 (25%)	300-1,800 (125%)	200-1,200 (130%)	1-12 (15%)	Any, 3 + 1 scroll (25%)
F	3,000-18,000 (10%)	1,000-4,000 (30%)	300-1,200 (10%)	100-300 (10%)	2-20 (35%)	Any 5 except weapons (30%)
G	—	1,000-8,000 (40%)	300-1,800 (20%)	10-40 (10%)	3-18 (45%)	Any 5 (35%)
H	1,000-10,000 (35%)	1,000-6,000 (30%)	200-1,200 (30%)	20-120 (15%)	3-30 (60%)	Any 6 (15%)
I	—	—	100-600 (30%)	10-100 (10%)	2-12 (65%)	Any 1 (15%)

# Treasure Awards

Since Athas is a metal-poor world, the treasure tables in the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide* are inappropriate for coins found in a lair. The DM should use TABLES XXXVI and XXXVII, below, instead when checking any lair encounter in a DARK SUN campaign for treasure. Note that the percentage chance of finding the quantities listed on TABLE XXXVII is 100% unless otherwise indicated. Descriptions of the types of treasures found on Athas follow.

**TABLE XXXVII: ATHASIAN INDIVIDUAL AND SMALL LAIR TREASURES**

Type	Bits	Ceramic	Silver	Gold	Gems	Magical Item
J	2-12	—	—	—	—	—
K	—	2-12	—	—	—	—
L	—	—	—	2-8	—	—
M	—	—	1-6	—	—	—
N	—	—	—	1-4	—	—
O	10-30	10-20	—	—	—	—
P	—	10-40	—	1-10	—	—
Q	—	—	—	—	1-6	—
R	—	—	2-16	10-40	3-18	—
S	—	—	—	—	—	1-8 potions
T	—	—	—	—	—	1-4 scrolls
U	—	—	—	—	3-24 (90%)	Any 1 (70%)
V	—	—	—	—	—	Any 2
W	—	—	4-24 (50%)	1-6 (25%)	2-20 (70%)	Any 2 (60%)
X	—	—	—	—	—	Any 2 potions
Y	—	—	200-800	—	—	—
Z	100-300 (50%)	100-400 (50%)	100-600 (50%)	100-400 (60%)	1-10 (75%)	Any 3 (50%)

## Coins

Because metal coins are more valuable on Athas, they aren't found in treasures very often. The frequency and quantities of coins in these treasures is less than those in other campaign settings, as indicated in TABLES XXXVI and XXXVII. No platinum or electrum pieces are regularly minted on Athas. These metals are occasionally found in small amounts, but not enough to warrant inclusion on the tables. Finds of platinum or electrum can be special treasures placed by the DM, however.

Bits are triangular chunks of a ceramic piece; 10 bits form a complete ceramic piece. When found, bits may be completely broken into individual units or may be unbroken or partially broken coins. Five hundred bits weigh one pound, and ceramic, silver, and gold pieces weigh in at 50 to the pound.

## Gems

While metals are very rare, gems are a more frequent medium of exchange. On Athas, gems are fairly common and quite valuable. The gem variations and descriptions of the individual stones from the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide* apply to gems found on Athas, though the DM should use TABLE XXXVIII, below, to determine the base value and class of gems found in an Athasian lair.

**TABLE XXXVIII: GEMS**

1d100 Roll	Base Value	Class
1-25	15 cp	Ornamental
26-50	75 cp	Semiprecious
51-70	15 sp	Fancy
71-90	75 sp	Precious
91-99	15 gp	Gems
100	75 gp	Jewels



## Objects of Art

Art isn't usually a part of lair treasures on Athas. Such finds will be specially placed by the DM. The objects of art table in the *DUNGEON MASTER* Guide is appropriate for determining the price of such items, except that the number ranges represent ceramic piece value, not gold piece value. Items made of steel make a valuable treasure as well.

## Magical Items

al items are found as part of a lair treasure, Table 88: MAGICAL ITEMS from the *DUNGEON MASTER* Guide will suffice to determine each item's general category, though the nature of the items found will have an Athasian slant, as discussed in Chapter 4: Magic and Spells. (**Note:** The new magical items described in Chapter 4 can be found as part of lair treasures in DARK SUN adventures. Because they don't appear on the subtables in the *DUNGEON MASTER* Guide, however, DMs may wish to create new tables or use these items when the "DM's Choice" roll comes up.)

Subsequent rolls on the *DMG*'s subtables yield a variety of specific items, though the DM may find some have names that are inappropriate for DARK SUN campaigns. For example, *gauntlets of ogre power* are very useful on Athas, but Athas has no ogres. The various items of *giant strength* have the same problem because DARK SUN campaigns don't use the traditional pantheon of giants.

If a DM rolls up a random magical treasure item with an inappropriate name, he or she should either change the name or, better yet, not give the players a name for the item at all. This latter solution makes PCs cautious with their newfound magical items, testing them carefully for powers that, were they to know the official name, they might recognize from years of play. Other magical items in the *DUNGEON MASTER* Guide are unsuitable not in name only. For example, in magical item descriptions, the mention of humanoids not native to Athas obviously don't apply.

A final group of items so contradicts the environment of Athas that they either don't exist or have been changed so that they fit. Those that don't exist in a DARK SUN campaign include *potion of dragon control*, *scroll of protection from dragon breath*, *bag of tricks*, *Bucknard's everfull purse*, *decanter of endless water*, *horseshoes* (all), *stone horse*, *hammer +3 dwarven thrower*, *elven chain mail*, and any items having to do with aquatic settings or lycanthropes.

Certain items, however, can be altered to fit in DARK SUN campaigns by taking the following into account.

- **Potion of Giant Strength:** Provides either a Strength of 23 with a +7 bonus (90%) or a Strength of 24 with a +8 bonus (10%).
- **Potion of Undead Control:** Roll 1d10 normally; the result is the maximum Hit Dice of mindless undead that the potion can control.
- **Rod of Resurrection:** Charges required are gladiator 2, psionicist 4, half-giant 6, thri-kreen 2, and mul 2.
- **Boots of Varied Tracks:** Substitute Athasian animal tracks for those listed.
- **andle of Invocation:** Rather than invoking pantheons of gods, these draw upon the spirits of the land or the elemental planes.
- **Deck of Illusions:** Though many of the creatures listed are not native to Athas, they can still serve as illusions.
- **Figurines of Wondrous Power:** Use the ebony fly and golden lion. Characters will find no other *figurines* on Athas.
- **Necklace of Prayer Beads:** The bead of summons calls a powerful creature from the elemental planes.

## Hovering at Death's Door

This rule allows a character to remain alive until his hit points reach -10. As soon as the character reaches 0 hit points, though, he falls unconscious.

Thereafter, he automatically loses 1 hit point each round. If his companions find him before his hit points reach -10 and spend at least one round tending his wounds, he won't die immediately.

If they bind his wounds, the injured character no longer loses 1 hit point each round, but he doesn't regain any hit points either. He remains unconscious and vulnerable to further attacks.

If a cure spell is cast upon him, he is restored to 1 hit point. Further *cures* do no good until he has had at least one day of rest. Until such time, he is weak, unable to fight, and barely able to move. He must rest often, can't cast spells (they're wiped from his memory) or use psionics, and is confused.

If a heal spell is cast on the character, his hit points are restored as per the spell, along with his vitality and wits. All spells are still wiped from his memory, however.



## CHAPTER 6: Combat

### Arena Combat

Athas is a savage, violent world. To survive, a character must fight. To survive a long time, a character must fight well. In a DARK SUN campaign, PCs will likely find themselves battling lone monsters in a desolate sea of sand, contesting a polished gladiator in a roaring arena, or facing off against other terrors that roam the alien landscape—including the vicious undead of Athas.

Athas is a particularly dangerous place; character death is frequent and, at times, gruesome. High PC mortality rates find some relief in the character tree, since a fallen player character can be immediately replaced by another of similar level—a character with which the player is already familiar.

Still, as deadly a world as Athas is, player characters (especially those at low levels) may die too frequently. Thus, in DARK SUN campaigns, DMs are urged to use the “Hovering at Death's Door” rule (see sidebar at right).

The vagaries of death and combat are a part of the Athasian landscape, as this chapter discusses.

Every major city on Athas has an arena for holding gladiatorial games. The sorcerer-kings use the games to entertain their slave and noble populations and to hold barbaric executions and trials by combat. Free cities, like Tyr, continue to hold gladiatorial games, but these are never death matches. Throughout most of Athas, life is cheap.

Player characters may find themselves thrust into an arena as prisoners or gladiators. Success can mean great things; failure often means certain death. More powerful player characters may become champions or may themselves own entire stables of gladiators. The champions of the arenas are often elevated to the popular folk-heroes of the age.

The customs of every arena are unique, but some generalities can be drawn about the various matches made and the treatment of those bound for the arena floor. For instance, all arenas feature spectacles that pit gladiators against each other or against ferocious beasts. Wagering on these games is the sport of sorcerer-kings, nobles, merchants, and free citizens alike.





Some of these spectacles are merely simple combats, generally called matinees. They pit inexperienced gladiators or prisoners against each other in struggles to the death. Matinee warriors are never well armed or armored. Combatants who do well in matinee games sometimes rise to higher contests or are traded from house to house. At times, the sorcerer-king or other master of the games uses matinees in lieu of executions, although such public executions aren't performed in the Tyr arena.

Likewise, gladiators generally don't fight to the death in Tyr, regardless of the match being played. Combat lasts until one combatant or one side surrenders or is knocked unconscious. The surrendering party loses all possessions carried into the arena and any share of the purse.

Matinees whet the spectators' appetites for the more skilled games to come later in the evening, such as grudge matches. Gladiators who have met before and survived combat with each other are often called upon to fight again. Wagering on grudge matches is especially heavy, particularly when between colorful antagonists. Most often, grudge matches are fought only to the point of maiming or severe injury—and thus popular combatants may fight again.

Trial by combat, as opposed to grudge matches, is reserved for people accused of crimes by the sorcerer-king, templars, or other officials. Unfortunately for the accused, the officials decide who the accused fights, usually picking from among the best gladiators. Death is tantamount to a confession of guilt—and few accused can match the skill and savagery of a fully trained gladiator. Those who do win gain their freedom, but they are often accused and imprisoned again unless they flee the city.

More exotic styles of combat involve “matched pairs,” gladiators trained to fight side by side. A matched pair is stabled together, undergoing intensive training to complement each other's skills. These pairs, lone gladiators, and hapless prisoners are often sent into an arena against savage beasts, yet another sure method of firing the jaded audience's imagination and interest. The sorcerer-kings sponsor expeditions to capture wild animals for these events or simply buy them from the many caravans that come to their cities. The crowds finds these bloody affairs particularly enjoyable.

The culmination of a day in the arena, however, is often the “test of a champion.” A popular, powerful gladiator is selected to face a series of unusual tests. These tests may be as simple as fighting several demihuman or animal opponents at once or more elaborate





contests against magical or psionic opponents in a maze of walls assembled just for the occasion. Often, the tests increase in cruelty and are the highlight of gladiatorial games.

Some cities strive for even grander events, however. They have team games that are popular with the local audience, but make little sense to visitors. The rules are complicated and deadly, involving dozens of gladiators at a time. Woe betide a traveler who, in the excitement of the moment, wagers his purse's coins in such a foolish wager.

Naturally, bets between spectators run rampant during the games, even in cities that don't boast the team or advanced games. Noble houses and sorcerer-kings cover all wagers against their gladiators, setting odds based on the gladiators involved and the amount of wagering on each side. The rich very often challenge each other with enormous bets, hoping to wipe out another noble house—all on the outcome of a single contest.

When player characters want to wager on gladiatorial games, the DM may handle it in one of two ways. If all players agree, they can roll up the gladiators in question and play the match out themselves. Otherwise, the DM must determine the outcome randomly. The odds on any particular contest vary, but a player character can rarely do more than double or triple his original bet.

## Stables

Most noble and merchant houses have stables of slaves. These slaves battle each other as well as the gladiators, criminals, wild animals, and intelligent animals sponsored by the sorcerer-kings.

Typical stables have between 10 and 100 potential arena combatants. The sponsoring noble house provides the slaves with adequate food, clothing, and housing. Nobles want their investments to pay off, so gladiatorial slaves seldom lack the necessities of life. The slaves train for 12 hours virtually every day in the courtyards of the noble's estate, which is overseen by armed guards and instructors.

Every slave in a stable receives minimal training in armed and unarmed combat before being sent to his first match. Those who show promise (and who survive the dangerous early days of their careers) are further trained in specialized combat techniques. This training emphasizes skilled unarmed combat, raw endurance, and specialization in arena weapons such as the trident, quabone, and net. Slaves who have survived several matches and have undergone this extensive training are considered gladiators (typically levels 1 through 4) and are the mainstay of the stables' arena warriors.

Every stable has its champion or champions. A champion is a gladiator of level 5 through 20, the most experienced warrior in the stable. The champion of a stable has performed well in all the matches described above and has gained the attention of every other noble and merchant house. When a single arena hosts multiple high-level gladiators, rivalries can develop. Usually, rivalries between champions within a single stable aren't allowed; one stable won't arrange a match between two of its own, no matter how fierce the rivalry.

Gladiators are often traded or sold to other houses. Of course, subterfuge and intrigue run wild in the gladiatorial pits. A bard may be sent to one house just to poison and weaken that house's champion in advance of an offer to purchase him. Further, it's unwise to refuse a sorcerer-king's request to purchase a gladiator, no matter how little he or she offers.

## Athasian Undead Combat

On Athas, undead are dead beings that are foully animated to function among the living. Undead come in two varieties: mindless and *free-willed*.

*Mindless undead*—such as skeletons and zombies—are corpses animated by some character or creature for its own purposes. When encountered, such undead are always mindless, controlled as they are by their animators; they are never free-willed. Undead monsters created using an *animate dead* spell are always mindless.

*Free-willed undead* are usually very powerful creatures with great intellect and ambition. Every free-willed undead creature in a DARK SUN campaign is unique—each has its own reason for existing and its own set of strengths and weaknesses. Athas has no ghouls, shadows, wights, ghosts, wraiths, mummies, spectres, vampires, ghosts, or lichens, though PCs may encounter a host of monsters very much like them. Confronting and defeating a free-willed

undead creature is always interesting and challenging, as powerful undead on Athas break all the familiar molds.

Quite often, free-willed undead have minions, either living creatures or mindless undead that they have animated. Often Athas's powerful undead operate undiscovered among the living, while some have even become powerful allies of the sorcerer-kings.

## Timing and Controlling Undead

Athasian clerics draw their spellcasting powers from the elemental planes of earth, air, fire, and water. They also can tap the Positive Energy Plane for *augury*, other information, and the ability to turn undead creatures. Templars draw their magical powers through their sorcerer-kings, who in turn draw upon the Negative Energy Plane. Therefore, templars can't turn undead, but they can control them. Templars, wizards using necromancy, and sorcerer-kings can command undead as per the rules for "Evil Priests and Undead" in the *Player's Handbook*. Druids have no power over undead.

A cleric on Athas wishing to turn undead must challenge the creature with the power of his elemental plane. A cleric of earth, for instance, must throw dirt or dust toward the undead, but he need not strike them, so no attack roll is needed. A cleric of water must splash water at the undead, and a cleric of fire must toss ash or hold forth a burning object. One of the great advantages granted a cleric of air is that he can turn undead with only a breath. Once the character has made the challenge, he rolls for turning the undead normally. Free-willed undead are turned according to their relative power, which is measured by their Hit Dice only.

Turned undead flee as described in the *Player's Handbook*. Dispelled undead are spectacularly overcome by the opposing element-suffocated by earth, charred and burnt by fire, dissolved by water, or battered by hurricane-force winds. These elemental catastrophes only affect the undead being dispelled.



## Where Monsters Come From

The monsters of Athas appear in many forms, though most resemble the monsters of other campaigns. However, each creature has aspects that make it uniquely Athasian—nastier, stronger, and usually psionic in nature. If an encounter table calls for a monster from the *MONSTROUS MANUAL™* tome, the DM ought to tinker with the creature until it has the proper feel . . . the aura of having been born beneath the crimson sun.

What makes a monster good enough to survive in Athas's harsh environs?

Slight alterations to its appearance (a spiky carapace, armored scales, and so forth), surprising abilities (boosted damage, better AC or THAC0, a power not normally associated with the creature, and more), and psionics or spell-like powers change a beast from Toril into an Athasian monster.

All of the monsters discussed in this chapter are found in this boxed set, the *MONSTROUS*

*MANUAL (2140)*, the *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® Annual: Volume One (2145)*, or the *DARK SUN MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Terrors Beyond Tyr (2433)*. DMs might also find useful the creatures and encounter tables provided in the *DARK SUN MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Terrors of the Desert (2405)*, a product which is now out of print.



# CHAPTER 7: Encounters

Encounters in the *DARK SUN* campaign setting occur exactly as described in generic AD&D campaigns. For example, surprise rolls and encounter distances appear in the *Player's Handbook*, and the philosophy and details of handling encounters appear in the *DUNGEON MASTER* Guide. The additional rules given here focus on Athasian encounters, making them easier for the DM to run and more appropriate for the campaign.

## Wizard, Priest, and Psionicist Encounters

Spellcasters and psionicists pose numerous problems for DMs, not the least of which is deciding which spells or psionic powers they can use at the time of an encounter. In situations where DMs have particular spells the NPCs need to have, they should choose those spells and fill out the rest, using the system given in Chapter 8: DM Material.

At times, a scenario with a group of many creatures may best be countered by multiple spellcasters or psionicists. While an encounter with 15 elf psionicists who can all perform different psionic actions may be interesting for the players, it can be a nightmare for a DM to run. He or she may wish to roll the PCs' spells or powers as a group to save time. Rolling as a group simplifies the action and makes for satisfying combat for DMs and players alike.

## City-State Encounters

Athasian city-states are usually crowded and busy: half-elf merchants loudly hawk their wares in bazaars and on street corners; slaves bear nobles on sedan chairs and roughly force their way through the throngs; and templar guards patrol the streets against those who would break the laws of their ruler. Even at night, the decadent lifestyle of the wealthy keeps the city alive with festivals and parties that last until dawn.

When dealing with encounters in a city, it's more appropriate to ask whom the player characters *don't* encounter than whom they do. Any normal denizen of the cities—free citizens, slaves, templar guards, merchants, nobles—can be located without much trouble. If the player characters wish to avoid an encounter, such as with the city guards or with a particular aristocrat, that too is fairly easy to accomplish, what with the bustling crowds.

Specific encounters should be set up by the DM. These will mostly be adventure-specific, presenting the player characters with individuals that will help or hinder their progress.

# Monster Encounters

The DARK SUN MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM *Terrors Beyond Tyr* presents new creatures exclusively for the Athasian campaign. Some are native to the Tyr Region, but many more can be found in the strange wastes beyond that familiar land. Although this product is considered extremely useful for any DARK SUN campaign, many of the monsters presented in the generic *MONSTROUS MANUAL* and the *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Annual: Volume One* are also appropriate for DARK SUN campaigns. Those that best lend themselves to being given an Athasian twist are listed below on TABLE XXXIX.

As always, whenever using generic monsters, such creatures should be given an Athasian feel, with the DM deciding how they have adapted themselves to the more harsh, arid conditions on Athas. In addition to the monsters listed above and those in the DARK SUN MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM, the DM will also want to use the creatures detailed in *The Wanderer's Chronicle*.

TABLE XXXIX: GENERIC MONSTERS ADAPTABLE TO ATHASIAN CAMPAIGNS

## MONSTROUS MANUAL Creatures

Aarakocra*	Insect
Ankheg	Insect swarm
Baatezu	Kenku*
Basilisk	Kirre*
Bat	Lizard
Bear	Mold
Beetle, giant	Plant, dangerous
Behir*	Rat
Bird	Remorhaz
Brain mole	Rot
Bulette	Scorpion
Carrion crawler	Skeleton
Cat, great	Snake (except giant sea)
Cave fisher	Spider, all
Centipede	Tanar'ri
Dog	Wyvern"
Dragonet, pseudodragon*	Yuan-ti*
Dragonne*	Yugoloth
Elemental, all	Zombie (except sea)
Ettercap*	

## MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Annual: Volume One Creatures

Caleb duhr*	Elemental, all
Genie, all*	Elemental vermin
Giant, cyclops*	Genie, tasked, all
Giant, ettin*	Parasite, all
Githyanki*	Snake, giant cobra & stone
Golem (except iron, doll, glass)	Spider, brain*
Hatori	

\* Possible psionic wild talent.

In any DARK SUN campaign using monsters not specifically native to Athas, three clarifications must be made regarding certain types of creatures, as follows.

- **Magic:** Those monsters capable of casting spells should be treated as defilers rather than preservers. When they cast spells, they ruin the ground around them, according to the spell's level, as described in Chapter 4: Magic and Spells. As a result, spell-wielding monsters rarely cast spells directly from their lairs. Those who merely have spell-like abilities don't cause defiling damage when using those abilities.
- **Psionics:** Of all the monsters not native to Athas, only yuan-ti have psionic powers. However, all those marked with an asterisk on TABLE XXXIX could possess wild talents in DARK SUN campaigns, subject to the DM's discretion.
- **Plant-Based Monsters:** Defiling magic destroys all plant life within its area of effect—without exception. Thus, a plant-based monster can be destroyed (or injured if it isn't wholly contained within the area of effect) by defiler magic, with no save allowed.

# Wilderness Encounters

The wilds of Athas are teeming with intelligent and unintelligent monsters. Encounters in the wilderness should be checked on a daily basis or as the DM sees fit. Obviously, if characters are lost the likelihood of more wilderness encounters should increase. Sometimes, however, the DM may opt to limit the encounters (particularly if the characters are unprepared), for even the most routine wilderness encounters can prove fatal for a party.

When encounters occur can be determined using Table 56: FREQUENCY AND CHANCE OF WILDERNESS ENCOUNTERS, found in the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide*, or as determined by

the adventure's needs. TABLE XL: RANDOM WILDERNESS ENCOUNTERS, below, lists possible monsters for encounters by terrain type. These monsters are all found in the *MONSTROUS MANUAL*, the *DARK SUN MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Terrors Beyond Tyr*, and in *The Wanderer's Chronicle* (contained in this boxed set).

Rolling a 1d8 and a 1d12 and adding the results will yield the monster most likely to be encountered in a given terrain type. For those entries where there are two creatures listed, the DM can choose one over the other, or roll randomly to determine between the two (there is a 50% chance of encountering either).

TABLE XI: RANDOM WILDERNESS ENCOUNTERS (1d8+1d12 die roll)

Roll	Creature	Roll	Creature	Roll	Creature	Roll	Creature	Roll	Creature
<b>Forest</b>		<b>Mountains</b>		<b>Rocky Badlands</b>		<b>Sandy Wastes</b>		<b>Sea of Salt</b>	
2	Spider	2	Fire lizard	2	Aarakocra	2	Djinni (genie)	2	Genie
3	Ettercap	3	Ettin	3	Dragonne	3	Dracolisk (basilisk)	3	Basilisk
4	Brain mole	4	Rot	4	Cyclops	4	Spotted lion (great cat)	4	Aarakocra
5	Bat	5	Giant ant	5	Roc	5	Minotaur lizard	5	Ankheg
6	Aarakocra	6	Cyclops	6	Ankheg	6	Giant wasp (insect)	6	Giant beetle
7	Bear	7	Giant lizard	7	Elves	7	Giant constrictor snake	7	Caleb duhr
8	Cat (great)	8	Leopard	8	Giant lizard	8	Constrictor snake	8	Insect swarm
9-10	Halfling	9	Fire beetle	9	Fire beetle	9	Thri-kreen	9	Silt horror or air elemental
11-12	Plant (dangerous)	10	Common bat	10	Large spider	10	Elves	10	Scorpion
13	Insect swarm	11	Dwarves or halflings	11	Dwarves	11	Kank	11	Giant
14	Bird	12	Gith	12	Gith	12	Huge scorpion	12	Beasthead giant
15	Giant beetle	13	Slaves	13	Common Iron	13	Slaves	13	Lizard
16	Behir	14	Kenku	14	Hornet	14	Inix	14	Hatori
17	Centipede	15	Giant spider	15	Huge bat	15	Merchant	15	Centipede
18	Ettin	16	Ettercap	16	Kank	16	Gith	16	Bird
19	Kirre	17	Zombre	17	Giant	17	Phase spider	17	Bulette
20	Brain spider	18	Aarakocra	18	Efreeti (genie)	18	Megalocentipede	18	Rot
		19	Pseudodragon	19	Inix	19	Yuan-ti	19	Wyvern
		20	Bulette	20		20	Dragonne	20	Yuan-ti
<b>Jagged Cliffs</b>		<b>Obsidian Plains</b>		<b>Salt Flats</b>		<b>Scrub Plains</b>		<b>Stony Barrens</b>	
2-3	Giant spider	2	T'liz	2	Dracolisk (basilisk)	2	Jann (genie)	2	Thri-kreen
4	Rot	3	Meorty	3	Ju-ju zombie	3	Remorhaz	3	Bulette
5	Gold scorpron	4	Raaig	4	Spitting snake	4	Behir	4	Rot
6	Mountain spider	5	Fael	5	Giant ant	5	Giant ant lion	5	Dao (genie)
7	Insect swarm	6	Monster zombie	6	Wasp	6	Mekillot	6	Ankheg
8-9	Aarakocra	7	Ju-ju zombie	7	Wyvern	7	Thri-kreen	7	Wyvern
10	Halfling (climber)	8-9	Skeleton	8	Hornet	8	Cheetah	8	Lesser basilisk
11	Environmental hazard (roll 1d10):	10-11	Animal skeleton	9	Skeleton	9	Erdlu	9	Huge spider
1	Waterfall	12-13	Zombie	10	Huge scorpion	10	Gith	10	Gith
2-5	Steam cloud	14	Racked spirit	11	Zombie	11	Elves or slaves	11	Behir
6-8	Barren rock	15	Thinking zombie	12	Giant centipede	12	Kank	12	Giant centipede
9-10	Rock slide	16	Monster skeleton	13	Large spider	13	Giant rat	13	Giant boring beetle
12	Halfling (wrrndnder)	17	Zombie lord	14	Grant lizard	14	Jaguar	14	Baazrag
13	Pterrann	18	Athasian wraith	15	Large bat	15	Large scorpion	15	Ettercap
14	Cave fisher	19	Warrior skeleton	16	Skeleton	16	Giant spider	16	Desert giant
15	Wyvern	20	Kaisharga	17	Phase spider	17	Huge bat	17	Huge bat
16	Bat			18	Monster zombie	18	Mantrap (plant)	18	Ettin
17	Cave bear			19	Remorhaz	19	Pseudodragon	19	Greater basilisk
18	Carnivorous plant			20	Slaves	20	Inix	20	Inix
19	Remorhaz								
20	Halfling (village)								

## Typical Administrative Templar Positions

### *Low-Level Templars*

(Level 1–4)

Removers of Waste

Movers of Grain

Minor Construction

Disease Control

Maintenance of

Gardens

Maintenance of

Roads

Maintenance of

Walls

### *Mid-Level*

*Templars*

(Level 5-8)

Tax Collection

Major

Construction

Slave Control

Grain Distribution

Gate Monitor

Assigner of Permits

Riot Control

### *High-Level*

*Templars*

(Level 9+)

Coin Distribution

Construction

Planning

Mayor of the City

Governor of the Farm Lands

Aid to the King

Because many city-states have lost or done away with their templars, other officials have been given charge of the tasks listed above.

## CHAPTER 8:

# DM Material

## Nonplayer Characters

The subjects included in this chapter are all pertinent to balanced game play, whether for an established DARK SUN campaign or for one newly starting. A Dungeon Master will find information on running nonplayer characters (NPCs); handling time, movement, and vision; and dealing with player character dehydration—a crucial aspect in any Athasian campaign.

Although the denizens of Athas react to the player characters in much the same way nonplayer characters do in any other AD&D campaign setting, there are, of course, exceptions—most

## Templars

Templars are the most feared people in the remaining city-states still controlled by sorcerer-kings. Their power to accuse and imprison nearly anyone for any reason instills constant terror in the city dwellers. Not surprisingly, many templars abuse the powers they have for personal gain—a fact that, as long as the city is administered to and kept in order, doesn't bother the sorcerer-kings.

Templars as a group perform three vital functions within a given city-state. Primarily, they work as city guards and officers in the sorcerer-king's armies. Secondly, they oversee the city's administration, ensuring that businesses keep running and that slaves are fed. Lastly, the templars maintain the illusion that the sorcerer-king is a god by using their absolute power to enforce worship and homage to their ruler. Every individual templar NPC actively pursues one of these functions, unless he is from a city-state where a sorcerer-king has fallen from power.

Templars try to advance through their ranks as rapidly as possible. The means by which a templar might gain power and position are wide open, including bribery: theft, and assassination of other templars. Every templar NPC can be counted on to accept underhanded schemes that will help him rise to power among his fellow—a fact that player characters should note for future exploitation.



Templar soldiers are the enforcement arm of a sorcerer-king's domain. Low-level templars (levels 1–4) are common soldiers or guards within the cities and around the slave areas. Mid-level templars (levels 5–8) are officers in charge of small (10–100) units of guards, slave soldiers, or undead soldiers (in times of war). High-level templars (levels 9 and above) are usually generals or administrators, concerned with keeping the army equipped and fed.

Particularly in the past, sorcerer-kings have been revered as gods within their own cities, with the templars enforcing worship and obedience. In actuality, sorcerer-kings are neither god nor demigods, though they are extremely powerful wizards and psionicists. The templars erect temples and subjugate the populations to worship their ruler. There isn't a noble, merchant, or peasant in a city-state who doesn't at least pay lip service to the sorcerer-king or the templars who enforce his will. Those who do not are often at the mercy of the templars, for those templars still in the service of a ruling sorcerer-king can cast priest spells—and they have access to all spheres.

## Spellcasters

Priests in DARK SUN campaigns have no compunction regarding the sale of their magical services. An Athasian cleric or templar will readily sell himself to cast magical spells for the prices shown on Table 69: NPC SPELL COSTS in the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide*. Note that charges should be in ceramic pieces, not gold pieces.

Unlike priests and templars, wizard NPCs don't readily offer their services for coin. Most preservers and defilers are outlaws within the city-states and won't even let it be known that they have spellcasting capabilities. Even outside the city-states, where folklore and common conceptions about the destructive nature of magic prevail, wizards are reluctant to let their identities be known. Since virtually anyone they meet could be a templar attempting to discover their secrets or a crowd intent on burning a mage, renegade wizards shun those who seek to buy their services.

Rare instances may come up where a wizard might allow his services to be bought. If the use of his magic can be concealed and it benefits him or furthers his alignment's calling, a wizard might agree to such an exchange. Such occurrences are few and far between, and the DM should allow these purchases sparingly.

One notable exception to the reluctance of wizards to sell spells are the affluent, treacherous defilers who are at the beck and call of the sorcerer-kings. These defilers are uncaring and are, for the most part, above the law. If such an ambitious defiler is sought out to cast magical spells for coin, he may readily accept. However, the chance that he will later betray the buyer or even blackmail him are high.

## Druids

Druid NPCs, unlike other spellcasters, have no desire for monetary gain. They sometimes cast their spells for free if the player characters are performing a task that benefits the druid's guarded lands or the natural environment in general. It will have to be quite clear to the druid NPC that the player characters are promoting what he believes to be the ultimate good; moreover, if he even suspects there is a defiler among the party, he won't offer any of his services, regardless of their intentions.

An NPC druid will defend his guarded lands. Regardless of where the player characters are in Athas's wilderness, there is almost certainly a druid watching their every move. Those player characters who responsibly use the druid's guarded lands will never be bothered. For example, hunting on their lands or using its timber for equipment is, to the druid, part of the natural order of things and he won't interfere.

Irresponsible use of a druid's guarded lands, however, will bring him out into the open in full force. Examples include hunting his lands until there is no game left or stripping the land bare of vegetation. An NPC druid who finds a defiler on his land will take steps to eliminate that threat, regardless of whether the defiler makes any actions.





# Athasian Time

Every city-state and merchant house has its own calendar, but the most commonly used are the Calendar of Free Tyr and the Calendar of Kings. The former merely lists the years as “Free Year 1,” “Free Year 2,” and so forth, counting off the years that began with the death of King Kalak and the start of Tyrian independence. All campaigns using this boxed set begin four months after the Great Earthquake and the end of the events depicted in *The Cerulean Storm* (the fifth novel in the Prism Pentad series). In the Calendar of Tyr, it’s Free Year 11.

In the Calendar of Kings, however, it’s the Year of Desert’s Fury in the 190th King’s Age. This calendar is, obviously, a bit more complicated, but it adds distinction and flair to an Athasian campaign. The Calendar of Kings is divided as follows.

## Endlean Cycle

Ral  
Friend  
Desert  
Priest  
Wind  
Dragon  
Mountain  
King  
Silt  
Enemy  
Guthay

## Seofean Cycle

Fury  
Contemplation  
Vengeance  
Slumber  
Defiance  
Reverence  
Agitation

In the Calendar of Kings, years are counted off using a pair of concurrently running cycles: one of eleven parts, the other of seven. The eleven-part, or *endlean* cycle, is counted and spoken first, in the order presented above. The seven-part, or *seofean* cycle, is counted and spoken second. The endlean cycle is complete when Athas’s two moons, Ral and Guthay, meet in the heavens, resulting in a major eclipse that occurs every 11 years. The seofean cycle is more abstract, occurring after Agitation has led back to Fury in the cosmos.

Every 77 years the cycle repeats itself, ending with a year of Cuthay’s Agitation and starting again with a new year of Ral’s Fury. Each 77-year cycle is called a *King’s Age*. There have been 189 complete King’s Ages since this calendar was adopted more than 14,500 years ago.

So, the first year of each King’s Age is a year of Ral’s Fury. The next year is a year of Friend’s Contemplation, etc. The 76th year of each King’s Age is a year of Enemy’s Reverence, followed by the 77th year, a year of Cuthay’s Agitation.

Each year is made up of exactly 375 days: the exact time between highest suns. Athasians have no seasons that govern their thinking of time, for there is no marked difference in temperature or weather patterns. However, the year is divided into three equal phases: high sun, sun descending, and sun ascending. Highest sun is the first day of the year, and lowest sun indicates the midpoint of the year (which, incidentally, occurs at midnight and is generally observed in nighttime ceremonies).

Days are kept track of in a variety of ways. One scheme divides the year into 25 weeks of 15 days each, the names of those days associated with important personages of a particular royal house. In DARK SUN campaigns, DMs may stick to seven-day weeks with the standard Gregorian calendar names for simplicity.

In the parched and burning world of Athas, superstition and folklore have naturally sprung up around each of the years of a King’s Age. Storms during a year of Wind’s Vengeance are believed to be more powerful and dangerous, so many overland trips are avoided. Sacrifices and prayers are held to ward off the great beast during a year of Dragon’s Agitation. When forming treaties and alliances, the year of Enemy’s Contemplation is supposed to foster good will and honor.

An even stronger invoker of superstition and fear occurs every 45 years, when a brilliant comet called “the Messenger” visits Athas. By night one can read by the comet’s light, and it can be seen clearly in the full light of day. Folklore holds that the Messenger visits the Dragon every 45 years to deliver important information. The comet was supposed to appear four years before the start of this campaign set; however, it never arrived. Priests and scholars have been anxiously watching the sky, awaiting the comet’s return, yet dreading what its tardiness might portend.

# Overland Movement

The rules presented for overland travel in the *Player's Handbook* and the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide* also govern movement on Athas. The only exception is that those suffering from dehydration can't undertake a *forced march*. TABLE XLI, below, lists the base movement rates, movements points, and forced march points for each player character race.

**TABLE XLI: OVERLAND MOVEMENT**

Race	Movement Rate	Movement Points	Forced March
Aarakocra	36 (fly)/6 (walk)	12	15
Dwarf	6	12	15
Elf*	12	24	30
Half-elf	12	24	30
Half-giant	15	30	37
Halfling	6	12	15
Human	12	24	30
Mul †	12	24	30
Pterrann	12	24	30
Thri-kreen ‡	18	36	45

\* For overland movement, an elf may add his Constitution score to 24 (his normal movement rate) or 30 (his forced march rate) to determine his actual movement in miles (or points) per day.

† This is for a normal 10-hour marching day. A mul can move for 20 hours per day on each of three consecutive days. The fourth day, however, must be one of rest in which the character only travels for 10 hours. A "resting" mul can still undertake a forced march.

‡ This is for a normal 10-hour marching day. A thri-kreen can always move for 20 hours per day.

Note that of these races, only elves can undertake what's called the "mass elf run." Groups of three or more elves on up to an entire tribe can induce a mass elf run using the Constitution score of the lead runner as the basis for the check. (This is different from the rule for other racial types, and the leader must be either the tribal chief, a clan head, or the elf with the highest Charisma score—not necessarily the elf with the highest Constitution.) The lead runner also grants all members of the group an additional number of movement points equal to his or her Constitution score. In a mass elf run, every individual must use the lead runner's movement bonus, even if his or her own bonus would normally be higher. This reflects the fact that the elves have become as one for the duration of the elf run.

A mass elf run requires group concentration for one hour before beginning a trek, but the runners share each other's strength, thus allowing for longer runs. Bonuses are determined using TABLE XLII, below.

**TABLE XLII: MASS ELF RUN LEADER BONUS**

Leader Type	Constitution Bonus
Tribal chief	+3
Clan head	+2
Highest Charisma	+1

In addition to fighting climatic elements and Athasian monsters, the world of the crimson sun also challenges its characters with a variety of new terrain types, each of which affects movement in different ways. TABLE XLIII lists the cost (in movement points) to pass through one mile of the given terrain. Terrain obstacles and hindrances apply as listed on Table 75: TERRAIN MODIFIERS in the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide*.

**TABLE XLIII: TERRAIN COSTS FOR OVERLAND MOVEMENT**

Terrain Type	Movement Cost
Boulder fields	4
Forest	3
Mountains	8
Obsidian plains	1
Rocky badlands	3
Salt flats	1
Sandy wastes	3
Scrub plains	2
Silt	Special
Stony barrens	2
Swamp	5

## Mounted Overland Movement

As in other campaigns, Athasian mounts can move a number of miles per day equal to their movement rate under normal conditions. The following details the movement rates of Athas's most common mounts. Note that these overland movement rates can be doubled or tripled, but the animal may become lame or exhausted, as per the AD&D rules. Dehydrated animals can't move at greater than their base movement rate.

Mount	Movement Points
Inix	15
Kank	15
Mekillot	9

## Limits of Vision

All of the conditions presented on Table 62: VISIBILITY RANGES in the *Player's Handbook* exist on Athas. However, there are a number of conditions unique to Athas that should be added, as noted in the following table.

**TABLE XLIV: ATHASIAN VISIBILITY RANGES**

Condition	Movement	Spotted	Type	ID	Detail
Sand, blowing	100	50	25	15	10
Sandstorm, mild	50	25	15	10	5
Sandstorm, driving	10	10	5	5	3
Night, both moons	200	100	50	25	15
Silt Sea, calm	500	200	100	50	25
Silt Sea, rolling	100	50	25	10	5

## Dehydration

As PCs adventure, one overriding consideration will almost certainly be the supply, of water. Of course, how much water a character needs depends upon his level of activity and his race. An active character (walking, riding, or performing some other hard exertion) needs 1 gallon of water per day. An inactive character (sitting, resting, or sleeping), needs ½ gallon of water per day. Further, if the character is in the shade during the entire day, he only, needs half the amount of water dictated by his activity. By the same token, a character wearing a full suit of metal armor requires twice as much water each day to avoid dehydration, regardless of his lack of exertion.

Certain races have different requirements for fluids. For example, thri-kreen and half-giants suffer from dehydration differently than humans and other demihumans. Thri-kreen can go for one week on the amount of water it takes to sustain a human for one day. Thus, thri-kreen characters only roll for dehydration once per every week that they go without water.



Half-giants, however, must consume twice the quantities of water (that is, four gallons of water per day when active or two gallons when inactive) of humans to avoid dehydration. Aarakocra need water as per humans, and pterrans need only half that amount.

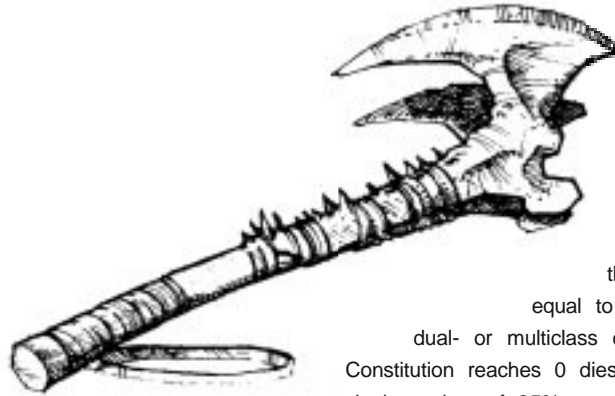
Player characters of any race can supplement their water intake with the many common beverages available, including wine, beer, ale, and fruit juices. The fluid quantities per day remain the same. In times of desperation, players may suggest more outlandish liquids to stave off dehydration: honey, tree sap, even the blood of fallen monsters. Generally, none of these are suitable substitutes.

A character who doesn't drink enough water suffers the effects of dehydration. The following rules are intended for extreme situations and should only be enforced when a lack of water could be life-threatening to a player character or his party.

A lack of water is reflected in the game by a reduction in Constitution. Beginning with the first day a character doesn't receive his required allotment of water, consult TABLE XLV at midnight and immediately apply the result.

**TABLE XLV: DEHYDRATION EFFECTS**

Amount of Water Consumed	Constitution Loss
Full requirement	None
Half or more of requirement	1d4
Less than half of requirement	1d6



Constitution losses are cumulative over consecutive days of dehydration; a character's hit point adjustment, system shock, resurrection survival, poison save, and regeneration rate all drop accordingly. Every point drop in the character's hit point adjustment (from +1 down to 0, or from -1 down to -2, etc.) will reduce the character's hit points by a number

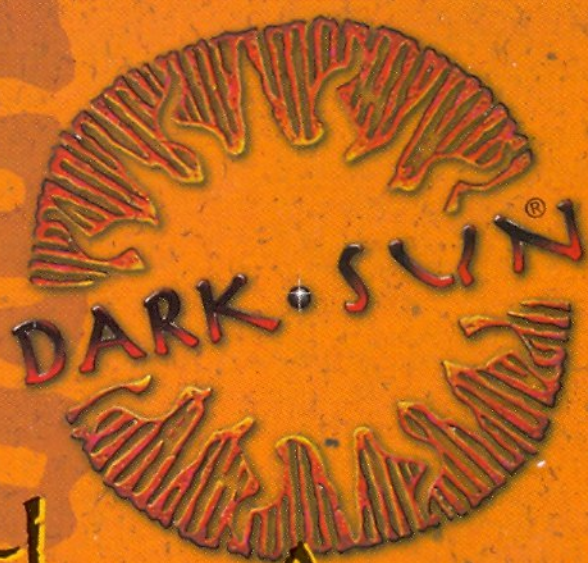
equal to the character's level (highest level for dual- or multiclass characters). A character whose Constitution reaches 0 dies, though he has a resurrection survival number of 25%.

However, a character can rehydrate by drinking his full allotment of water over the course of one day. At the end of that day, his Constitution score goes back up 1d8 points. Each consecutive day that the character's water needs are met restores another 1d8 points until the character is fully recovered. Lost hit points are regained at a character's normal recovery rate.

## Animals and Dehydration

Animals also suffer dehydration. Each day, animals require the following quantities of water: tiny animals need 1/8 gallon; small animals need 1/2 gallon; man-size animals need 1 gallon; larger than man-size animals need 4 gallons; huge animals need 8 gallons; and gargantuan animals need 16 gallons. Animal water intake can be cut in half for shade or inactivity, or quartered if both.

At the end of a day that an animal doesn't get its full allotment of water, there is a 10% chance it will die; the chance increases by 10% for each additional day without water. Animals are fully rehydrated after only one day in which they receive their full allotment of water.



# The Age of Heroes:

Rules for Conquering the Savage Land

By Bill Slavicsek, Timothy B. Brown,  
and Troy Denning

Every challenge has its own set of rules.  
Beneath the crimson sun, the trick is figuring out  
which rules apply in what situations. . . .

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# The Way of the Psionicist:

Psionic Abilities and Powers



# The Way of the Psionicist:

## Psionic Abilities and Powers

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**Psionics:** The practice of extraordinary psychic powers. A character who has psionic abilities harnesses the power of his or her own mind to produce a particular effect. Characters who have psionic powers are either *psionicists* or *wild talents*.

**Psionicist:** A character class whose members use the force of their own minds to affect the environment and inhabitants around them.

**Wild Talent:** A character from any class other than the psionicist class who has a natural psionic ability and at least one psionic power.

## Psionics and Existing Campaigns

If you've been running or playing in a DARK SUN campaign, do you have to change over to this new psionics rules system?

Of course not!

If you prefer the old system, you can continue using *The Complete Psionics Handbook* (2117) and *The Will and the Way* DARK SUN accessory (2431) to handle your game's psionic elements.

Bear in mind, however, that the material contained in this book will be reflected in the way psionics is presented in future DARK SUN products. If you plan to continue using the old psionics rules, you will have to make some adjustments. See Chapter 1 for more details.

## What's Different?

If you're new to AD&D psionics, you can skip this section because the changes discussed below may be confusing. If you're familiar with the previous psionics rules, then a brief discussion on the changes to look for may interest you.

Many of the terms and powers used in *The Complete Psionics Handbook* have been retained for this new system. However, the definitions and descriptions may have changed, so read this book carefully. The most important changes to watch for are the following:

Welcome to *The Way of the Psionicist: Psionic Abilities and Powers*. If this is your first visit to the burning lands of Athas, you may not be familiar with this campaign setting. Living under the crimson sun isn't easy, so player characters (PCs)—or heroes—get an extra edge: **psionics**. With psionics, a character can read the minds of others, move objects without physically touching them, or travel across vast distances in an instant. This book explains the game mechanics used to run psionic characters and provides enough powers to get **wild talent** and **psionicist** heroes started.

The original version of the AD&D® game included psionics, but those mechanics never received a lot of attention. AD&D 2nd Edition left out psionics rules, so a revised and expanded version of psionics was presented in *The Complete Psionics Handbook*. These rules were considered optional, to be used at the discretion of Dungeon Masters (DMs). When the DARK SUN® boxed set was introduced, the psionics rules were incorporated into the campaign setting. In a DARK SUN campaign, psionics aren't optional. All heroes are either psionicists or wild talents, and even many of the plants, animals, and monsters have psionic abilities. To get all the campaign rules, you had to purchase both the original DARK SUN boxed set and *The Complete Psionics Handbook*. That's changed with this updated boxed set.

This new, easier-to-use psionics system fits into 32 pages, requires only this boxed set and the core AD&D rules (*Player's Handbook* and *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide*), and provides descriptions of the core powers and a table for converting the rest of the existing psionic powers to this system. Further, this book re-presents the psionics rules from *PLAYER'S OPTION™ Rule Book: Skills and Powers*, but note that it's self-contained. You don't need any of the *PLAYER'S OPTION* products or *The Complete Psionics Handbook* to use this psionics system.

# INTRODUCTION

- **Attack and defense modes** are no longer powers, but bonus proficiencies. The new terms are *psionic attacks* and *psionic defenses*. Psionicists gain psionic attacks and defenses automatically by level advancement. Existing characters with attack modes must select other telepathic devotions to replace them.
- The **contact power** is now the contact bonus proficiency. The proficiency allows characters to participate in psionic combat. In addition, psionic combat has been simplified to work like other AD&D combat forms (that is, using attack and damage rolls). Characters who had the contact power must select another telepathic devotion to replace it.
- **Tangents** have been eliminated.
- **Maintenance costs** for powers have been eliminated. All powers now have a standard PSP cost per round of use and can be maintained each round by paying that cost.
- **Power scores** and the optional effects of rolls of power scores and 20s have been eliminated. All characters now have *mental armor classes* (MAC) and *mental attack numbers* (MTHAC0). MTHAC0 stands for "mental THAC0" or "mental attack roll." The acronym refers to the number (or higher) a particular character needs to roll on 1d20 to hit an opponent with a mental armor class of 0. This mechanic has two distinct uses that work in basically the same manner.
- The **power check** has been eliminated. To determine the successful use of a psionic power, a character makes an *MTHAC0 roll*. In psionic combat, a character makes MTHAC0 rolls to break through a target's mental defenses and open the mind. To use a psionic power on an open mind, an MTHAC0 roll is made against the power's MAC instead of the target's MAC. (All psionic powers have base MAC scores.) Some minds are considered open automatically (like the psionicist's own mind for the purposes of using a power on himself). In these cases, no psionic combat is needed, for the mind is already open.
- The **metapsionics discipline** has been eliminated; its powers have been redistributed among the remaining five disciplines.



**Psionic Powers:** Psionic energy can be shaped and used by psionists and wild talents to produce desired effects, called psionic powers.

**Disciplines:** All psionic powers are grouped into one of five categories, or disciplines, based on how the energy is used.

**Sciences:** The major powers of a given discipline.

**Devotions:** The minor powers of a given discipline.

### **Psionic Strength Points**

**(PSPs):** Every psionic character has an internal store of psionic energy represented as psionic strength points. These are used to activate sciences and devotions, to focus psionic attacks, and to determine how much psionic damage a hero's psionic defenses can stand.

**Mental Attack Rolls:** The success of psionic attacks against closed minds is determined by the number a character needs to roll on 1d20 to hit a specific mental armor class (MAC). The mental attack number (MTHAC0, or "em-thay-ko") is the number the character needs to hit a MAC of 0.

When used on open minds, the roll is made against a power's MAC. Each power has a base MAC number used to determine the difficulty of activating a psionic power against an open mind.



# CHAPTER 1: Using Psionics

All **psionic powers** belong to one of five **disciplines**: clairsentience, psychokinesis, psychometabolism, psychoportation, and telepathy. Within each discipline, the powers are divided into two categories: Major powers, or sciences; and minor powers, or devotions. The five disciplines are defined as follows:

- *Clairsentient powers* allow characters to perceive things beyond the natural range of human and demihuman senses.
- *Psychokinetic powers* move objects across space using only the energy of the mind.
- *Psychometabolic powers* affect the user's body by altering it in some manner.
- *Psychoportive powers* allow psionic travel, moving characters from one location to another without crossing space.
- *Telepathic powers* involve the direct contact of two or more minds.

Two key concepts need to be presented before the rules for using psionics in the AD&D game are detailed. These are **psionic strength points** (PSPs) and **mental attack rolls** (**MTHAC0s**). These are described in the sidebar on this page.

## Closed and Open Minds

The minds of all characters and creatures exist in one of two states: either *closed* or *open*. A closed mind has either natural or enhanced defenses that protect it from unwanted intrusion. Only those things that enter through the normal senses (such as sight, sound, taste, touch, or smell) can impact on a closed mind. **The minds of all characters and creatures are naturally closed.** A character can voluntarily open his or her mind to psionic contact, or a closed mind can be opened by psionic attack.

An open mind is not a natural state. For a mind to be open, psionic defenses must be voluntarily lowered (in the case of a willing subject) or breached by psionic attack (in an unwilling opponent). A psionist's own mind is considered open when using a psionic power with an area of effect of "personal" (such as the heightened senses devotion).

# Mental Armor Class (MAC)

**Optional Rule:** For those who have copies of *The Complete Psionics Handbook* and who want to continue using the “optional results” rules (page 28), make the following change. A roll of a power’s MAC score gives the good result (what used to be signified by a roll of the power score), while a roll of 1 gives the bad result (what used to happen on a roll of 20).

**Example:** Fenka of Raam has a Wisdom score of 18, which yields a base MAC of 7. She has an Intelligence score of 16, which gives a modifier of -1. Without other enhancements, Fenka has a MAC of 6 (7-1=6).

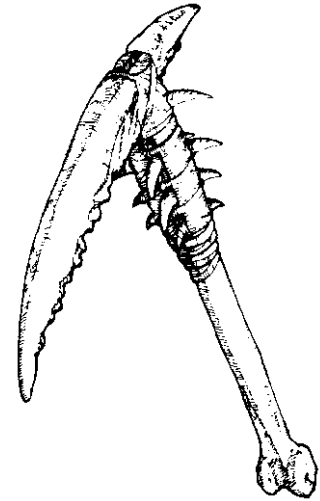
All characters and creatures have mental armor classes (MACs). While physical Armor Classes protect a body from physical attacks, MACs provide protection from psionic attacks. The MAC rating ranges from minimal defense (MAC 10) to maximum defense (MAC -10); there are no MACs worse than 10 or better than -10.

As with standard Armor Class, the higher the MAC number, the more vulnerable the character is to psionic attack. Likewise, with all attacks, a roll of 20 always hits and a roll of 1 always misses, regardless of the target’s MAC number.

To determine a base MAC number, find the character’s Wisdom score on TABLE I below. Then find the character’s Intelligence score and add the indicated MAC modifier. (MACs can be improved through proficiencies and other means, as detailed later.)

TABLE I: BASE MAC AND PSP BONUSES

Ability Score	Base MAC	MAC Modifier	PSP Bonus
15 or less	10	0	0
16	9	-1	+1
17	8	-1	+2
18	7	-2	+3
19	6	-2	+4
20	5	-3	+5
21	4	-3	+6
22	3	-3	+7
23	2	-4	+8
24	1	-4	+9
25	0	-4	+10



# Psionic Strength Points (PSPs)

**Example:** Fenka of Raam has a Wisdom score of 18, an Intelligence score of 16, and a Constitution score of 17. At 1st level, she gets 21 PSPs (15 + 3 + 1 + 2 = 21) plus a 1d6 die roll. Garon, a wild talent with the same ability scores, gets 16 PSPs (10 + 3 + 1 + 2 = 16), a 1d4 die roll, and enough PSPs to use his psionic power once.

Every psionist and wild talent character has psionic strength points, or PSPs. In many ways, PSPs are like mental hit points, though with a different function. Not only do they determine a character’s current psionic strength, they also power psionic abilities. This mental strength is used to create psionic attacks, activate psionic powers, and keep psionic defenses in place. As long as any PSPs remain, psionic defenses keep the mind closed to psionic intrusion of any sort. When a psionic character’s PSP total falls to zero, his defenses crumble and his mind is left open to psionic contact.

Each time a character uses (or attempts to use) a psionic science, devotion, or attack, he must pay the listed cost from his current PSP total. Damage caused by psionic attacks is also subtracted from PSP totals.

The PSP total for a **psionist** depends on four factors: the psionist’s Wisdom, Intelligence, and Constitution scores; and his experience level. Together, these factors determine the psionist’s PSP pool. A 1st-level psionist automatically gets 15 PSPs. This number is modified by bonuses granted by high ability scores. Lastly, the psionist rolls 1d6, which is added to generate a PSP total.

The PSP total for a **wild talent** is determined with some slight modifications. A wild talent automatically receives enough PSPs to use his power (or powers) once. In addition, he gets 10 PSPs (instead of 15) and any bonuses granted for high Wisdom, Intelligence, and Constitution scores. He also rolls 1d4, instead of 1d6. See TABLE I above and Chapter 2 for more details.

**Example:** The psionist Fenka of Raam has a Wisdom score of 18, an Intelligence score of 16, and a Constitution score of 17. When she advances from 1st to 2nd level, she receives 1d6+6 PSPs: the automatic 1d6 die roll and a +6 bonus for her high ability scores.

## Gaining PSPs

The PSP total of psionists and wild talents increases with every level advancement. Psionists receive 1d6 PSPs with each level increase up to 9th level, plus any bonuses for high Wisdom, Intelligence, and Constitution scores. Starting at 9th level, psionists gain just 3 PSPs, and they receive bonuses *only* for high Wisdom scores. Regardless of their Intelligence or Constitution

scores, they no longer receive bonuses for these abilities. Wild talents, on the other hand, receive only 4 PSPs at each level increase, regardless of their level; further, no die rolls or additional modifiers are applied.

## Recovering PSPs

Characters recover expended PSPs by resting for specific lengths of time (minimum of one full hour). The only states of rest that allow for PSP recovery are sleep or meditation. Any other physical activity or the use of psionic powers (which expend PSPs) negates the recovery process for that hour. A character can never recover more PSPs than his maximum total.

During each hour of rest, characters recover one-eighth of their total PSPs (bearing in mind that they never recover more than their maximum total). To do this, divide a character's PSP total by 8 and round up. This is the number of PSPs the character recovers after one full hour of rest. So, if a psionist is reduced to 0 PSPs, it takes eight full hours of rest to recover the expended PSPs—regardless of whether he has 20 or 100 total PSPs.

**Example:** *Ulcen of Tyr has a total of 48 PSPs, and he has lost 24 of them during a recent psionic battle. After an hour of sleep or meditation, Ulcen can recover 6 of the expended PSPs (48 / 8 = 6). He is now at 30 PSPs.*

# Psionic Combat

## PSIONIC COMBAT SEQUENCE

- The DM secretly decides what actions the monsters or NPCs will take—including choosing psionic attacks and defenses (if they have access to any). The DM doesn't announce his or her decision to the players.
- The players indicate what their characters will do, including choosing psionic attacks and defenses (from the ones they have access to).
- Initiative is determined. Note that psionic attacks and powers don't have initiative modifiers.
- Attacks are made in order of initiative.

Psionist characters automatically receive the contact bonus proficiency when they are created. Contact gives them access to psionic attacks (as per TABLE VII: PSIONIC PROGRESSION in Chapter 2) and allows them to participate in psionic combat. The psionic attacks come naturally and don't take up any proficiency slots.

Wild talents, on the other hand, must select the contact proficiency and place it in an open nonweapon proficiency slot. (Note that this should occur at the point when a character becomes a wild talent, whether when he is first created or later in his career when his psionic ability becomes known.) Along with the proficiency, wild talents receive only one psionic attack form. However, as a wild talent rises in level and gains nonweapon proficiency slots (according to his character group), he may select additional attack forms. These fill open slots, and the wild talent may choose more forms (for a total of three) as he gains slots. **Wild talents may never have more than three of the five psionic attacks.**

Psionic combat is used to assault closed minds so that they can be opened to further psionic contact. This is accomplished like other attacks in the AD&D game system: The attacking psionist selects an attack form and makes an MTHACO roll equal to or exceeding the defender's MAC. Regardless of that MAC, a roll of 1 always fails and a roll of 20 always succeeds.

Psionic attacks can be used against psionic and nonpsionic minds. (A nonpsionic mind is defined as any character without a PSP pool.) The procedures are the same, but the results are slightly different.

When attacking a psionic mind, psionic combat continues until one opponent is reduced to 0 PSPs (or until the battle is broken off). That mind is now open and can be subjected to other psionic powers. When attacking a nonpsionic mind, however, only one successful attack is required to open the mind.

Psionic powers can only be used on open minds, whether willingly opened or attacked until that state occurs. A psionic power can be used in the same round that a mind is opened by psionic attack.

Psionic defenses, like armor and shields in physical combat, remain in place until the defender's PSP total is reduced to 0 (in the case of a psionic character) or one successful psionic attack breaches the defenses (of a nonpsionic character).

Psionic attacks require concentration. A psionist who uses one during a combat round can move at only half his walking rate. A character using a psionic attack can also be disrupted the same way as can a wizard casting a spell. In the round when a character using a psionic attack is disrupted, the attack can't be used. **A disrupted psionic attack costs 1 PSP for the attempt.**

Psionists can make a number of psionic attacks in a round according to their level: 1-6, 1/1 round; 7-12, 3/2 rounds; 13+, 2/1 round. Wild talents can never make more than one psionic attack in a round.

Psionists and wild talents receive MTHACO bonuses depending on their Intelligence scores, making it easier to accomplish psionic attacks. See TABLE II: MTHACO MODIFIERS, on the following page, and TABLE IV: THACOs AND MTHACOs, page 15.



TABLE II: MTHACO MODIFIERS

Intelligence Score	MTHACO Modifier
15 or less	0
16-17	+1
18-19	+2
20-22	+3
23+	+4



All psionic attacks require line of sight, as do the use of all psionic powers (with a few exceptions, such as those in the clairvoyance discipline).

## The Five Psionic Attacks

The five psionic attack forms are *ego whip*, *id insinuation*, *mind thrust*, *psionic blast*, and *psychic crush*. Psionicists have access to all five forms (depending on their levels), whereas wild talents can never have more than three of the five. The psionic attacks are described below.

- **Ego Whip (EW):** This attack assaults a target's self-esteem and individuality. It strikes like a glowing whip, its crack slicing open the wells of inferiority and worthlessness buried deep behind the target's defenses. For every 4 PSPs put into the attack (declared after a successful attack roll is made), the attacker rolls 1d6 to determine psionic damage against his foe. If hit, the defender loses that many PSPs or has his mind opened to further psionic contact if no PSPs remain. A failed attack costs 2 PSPs.

Ego whip has three ranges: short (40 yards), medium (80 yards), and long (120 yards). At medium range, the defender receives a +2 bonus to his MAC; at long range, the bonus is +5.

If used against an open mind, ego whip leaves the target dazed for 1d4 rounds, costing the attacker 4 PSPs. Though no psionic defenses remain, the attacker must roll the defender's MAC to successfully hit (this attack receives a +2 bonus). While dazed, all of a character's die rolls (attacks rolls, saving throws, etc.) receive a -5 penalty, and the character can't cast spells above 3rd level.

- **Id Insinuation (II):** This attack assaults a target's subconscious, like a mental battering ram tearing through the walls that separate primitive needs from social constraints. For every 6 PSPs put into the attack (declared after a successful attack roll is made), the attacker rolls 1d8 to determine psionic damage against his foe. If hit, the defender loses that many PSPs or has his mind opened to further psionic contact if no PSPs remain. A failed attack costs 3 PSPs.

Id insinuation has three ranges: short (60 yards), medium (120 yards), and long (180 yards). At medium range, the defender receives a +2 bonus to his MAC; at long range, the bonus is +5.

If used against an open mind, id insinuation leaves its victim confused and powerless to act for 1d4 rounds. While no psionic defenses remain, the attacker must roll the defender's MAC to successfully hit (the attack roll receives a +2 bonus). This use of the attack costs 6 PSPs.

- **Mind Thrust (MT):** This attack stabs the mind of the defender, piercing thoughts and memories. For every 2 PSPs put into the attack (declared after a successful attack roll is made), the attacker rolls 1d4 to determine psionic damage against his foe. If hit, the defender loses that many PSPs or has his mind opened to further psionic contact if no PSPs remain. A failed attack costs 1 PSP.

Mind thrust has three ranges: short (30 yards), medium (60 yards), and long (90 yards). At medium range, the defender receives a +2 bonus to his MAC; at long range, the bonus is +5.

If used against an open mind, mind thrust causes the target to lose the use of one psionic power (chosen randomly) for 1d6 days. While no psionic defenses remain, the attacker must still roll the defender's MAC to successfully hit (with a +2 bonus to the attack roll). This use of the attack costs 2 PSPs. Beyond opening a closed mind, mind thrust has no effect on nonpsionic minds.

- **Psionic Blast (PB):** This attack takes the form of a wave of mental force that jolts a defender's mind. For every 10 PSPs put into the attack (declared after a successful attack

roll is made), the attacker rolls 1d12 to determine psionic damage against his foe. If hit, the defender loses that many PSPs or has his mind opened to further psionic contact if no PSPs remain. A failed attack costs 5 PSPs.

Psionic blast has three ranges: short (20 yards), medium (40 yards), and long (60 yards). At medium range, the defender receives a +2 bonus to his MAC; at long range, the bonus is +5.

If used against an open mind, psionic blast causes 1d8 points of physical damage (hit point loss) for every 10 PSPs put into the attack. While no psionic defenses remain, the attacker must still roll the defender's MAC to successfully hit (with a +2 bonus to the attack roll).

- **Psychic Crush (PsC):** Like a terrible mental weight, this attack seeks to crush a defender's mind. For every 8 PSPs put into the attack (declared after a successful attack roll is made), the attacker rolls 1d10 to determine psionic damage against his foe. If hit, the defender loses that many PSPs or has his mind opened to further psionic contact if no PSPs remain. A failed attack costs 4 PSPs.

Psychic crush has a range of 50 yards.

If used against an open mind, psychic crush causes 1d6 points of physical damage (hit point loss) for every 8 PSPs put into the attack. Although no psionic defenses remain, the attacker must roll the defender's MAC to successfully hit (with a +2 bonus to the attack roll).

## The Five Psionic Defenses

Both psionicists and wild talents develop psionic defenses naturally when they progress in experience, as detailed on TABLE VII: PSIONIC PROGRESSION in Chapter 2. Psionic defenses are gained without using up any proficiency slots. *As with psionic attacks, wild talents may never have more than three of the five psionic defenses.*

A character activates a psionic defense at the beginning of a combat round. This defense protects against all psionic attacks launched at the character in that round. The PSP cost is only paid once per round, no matter how many attacks it defends against in that round.

Some psionic attacks are more effective against certain psionic defenses. The reverse is also true. This is represented by modifiers that apply to the attacker's MTHAC0. See TABLE III: PSIONIC ATTACKS vs. PSIONIC DEFENSES, on page 10, for a cross-referenced list of penalties and bonuses.

When a psionic attack clashes with a psionic defense, cross-index the attack with the defense on the table. The resulting modifier is applied to *the attacker's* MTHAC0. Thus, positive modifiers are bonuses and negative modifiers are penalties.

Combat cards that list psionic attacks and defenses are strongly recommended. Use 3x5 index cards, one card for each attack or defense that a character has. During a round of psionic combat, each player puts an attack and a defense in front of him, face down, to lock in his action. After all declarations of actions have been made, cards are turned over and combat commences.

There are five psionic defenses. They are *intellect fortress*, *mental barrier*, *mind blank*, *thought shield*, and *tower of iron will*. These are described below.

- **Intellect Fortress (IF):** This defense encases the mind in a powerful keep of mental energy to protect it from psionic attack. Intellect fortress provides the best protection against ego whip, but it's extremely vulnerable to psionic blast. The cost is 4 PSPs per round to use this defense.
- **Mental Barrier (MB):** This defense throws up a wall of thought to protect against psionic attack. A mental barrier is extremely effective against a psionic blast, but vulnerable to a psychic crush attack. It costs 5 PSPs to use this defense in a round.
- **Mind Blank (MBk):** This defense hides the mind from psionic attack, forming a vast, featureless area that makes it harder to target the closed mind. Mind blank protects best against id insinuation, while mind thrust easily slices through the defensive fog. It costs 3 PSPs per round to use this defense.
- **Thought Shield (TS):** This defense forms a glowing shield to turn away a psionic attack. Thought shield defends most effectively against psychic crush but is vulnerable to ego whip. The cost is 2 PSPs per round to use this defense.
- **Tower of Iron Will (TW):** This defense builds an unassailable haven for the mind. Mind thrust has a difficult time penetrating this defense, while id insinuation can breach its protection. The defense costs 6 PSPs per round to use.

TABLE III: PSIONIC ATTACKS VS. PSIONIC DEFENSES

	Mind blank	Thought shield	Mental barrier	Intellect fortress	Tower of iron will
Mind thrust	+5	+3	-2	-3	-5
Ego whip	+3	+4	+2	-4	-3
Id insinuation	-5	-3	-1	+2	+5
Psychic crush	+1	-4	+4	-1	-2
Psionic blast	-3	+2	-5	+4	+3

## Adding Substance to Psionic Combat

All psionic combat takes place in the minds of the combatants. This mindscape has its own rules and reality. Each combatant reaches into his or her own nexus of power, the place where the energy of mind, body, and spirit come together. The trained psionicist can readily draw upon this nexus of power, as can the wild talent. Nonpsionicists can't access this energy, but it springs forth to protect them in the form of natural mental armor class (MAC).

Both the attacker and the defender appear as glowing forms, mental pictures of themselves in the mindscape. Psionicists can shape these psionic forms as elaborately as they see fit. Wild talents, however, appear as crude, featureless shapes of humanoid light. Nonpsionicists are simply glowing balls surrounded by mental armor, usually in the shape of a luminescent wall.

While the only thing that determines the success of psionic combat is the MTHAC0 rolls and the choices of psionic attacks and defenses, players and Dungeon Masters are encouraged to add flavor by describing how their characters' psionic forms look and how the powers they use manifest themselves. Being creative and having fun with the mindscape as a psionic battle progresses enhances the role-playing experience for all.

**Example:** Fenka of Raam, a psionicist, decides to use the mind thrust attack against Ulcen of Tyr (also a psionicist). A glowing sword of energy takes shape in her psionic form's hand. The sword slashes out, but Ulcen calls forth a thought shield, and a luminescent shield forms suddenly to block Fenka's attack. Then Ulcen shapes his own attack, unleashing a psionic blast. Energy swells up from his nexus, forming the image of a glowing kirre. The claws of the great beast slash through the maze of ruins Fenka has formed from her mind blank defense, then scrape across Fenka's psionic defenses, reducing her PSP total as the psionic blast finds its target.

## Using Psionic Powers

All psionic powers have a MAC score. To determine if a psionic power works against an open mind, a player must make an MTHAC0 roll against the power's MAC score on 1d20. Any roll equal to or greater than the number means the power has been activated and its effects are applied for that round of play.

All powers have a cost per round of use. The cost listed to the left of the slash is the number of PSPs needed to use the power for a single round. The cost listed to the right of the slash is the number of PSPs expended if the MTHAC0 roll fails (in which case the power's effects aren't applied).

Powers that have been successfully activated can be maintained from round to round without making additional MTHAC0 rolls. The psionicist simply expends PSPs to pay for the power's cost. The first round that the character fails to pay the cost (either voluntarily or because his PSPs have been depleted), the power's effects cease to function. If the psionicist wishes to reactivate the power in a later round, even against the same target, he must make a new MTHAC0 roll. If an MTHAC0 roll to activate a psionic power fails, and the character has enough PSPs remaining, he can try to activate the power again in the next round by making another MTHAC0 roll.

A roll of 1 is always a failure and a roll of 20 is always a success, no matter what the power's MAC or the psionicist's MTHAC0 scores are.

## Closing an Open Mind

A *nonpsionic mind* is one that has never had any PSPs; its natural state is closed unless willingly opened or opened by psionic means. If such a target's mind has been opened, but the subsequent psionic attack or power used against it wasn't successful, the target can attempt to re-close its mind in the next round. This requires a saving throw vs. paralyzation at no penalty. If a psionic power was used successfully against the newly opened nonpsionic mind, the target can still attempt to close its mind, but its saving throw is at a -4 penalty. The target may attempt to close its mind every round thereafter.



For a newly opened **psionic mind** (one whose PSPs have been reduced to 0), the target can't attempt to re-close its mind until 1d4+1 rounds have passed. After the required rounds have passed, the target can make a Wisdom check at a -3 penalty every round thereafter to attempt closing its mind.

When either a nonpsionic or psionic character succeeds at re-closing his mind, the following occurs: Any psionic power currently in use against the character ceases to function, and contact between the two minds is broken. If the power's effect already took place in the round in which the mind re-closed, the psionist expends the full PSP cost. If the power's effect didn't take place yet in the round, then the lower PSP cost is subtracted from the psionist's PSP total (as if the activation attempt failed). If the psionist wants to reestablish contact, he'll have to once again open the target's mind.

## Psionics in a Round

A psionist can do several actions during a single round: 1) He can make as many psionic attacks as his experience level indicates; 2) he can use one psionic defense; 3) he can activate one psionic power against an open mind; and 4) he can maintain as many previously successfully activated powers as he wishes (provided he can afford to continue paying the PSP costs). Further, if a psionic attack succeeds and opens a closed mind, a psionic power can be used against the mind that same round.

## Limitations to Psionic Powers

Psionic powers have definite limitations. Some of these have already been discussed, but are repeated here to emphasize them. Other limitations are new.

- **PSPs:** Psionists and wild talents have a finite amount of psionic strength available to them at any given time. This strength, expressed as PSPs, must be expended to use psionic attacks, defenses, and powers. The total also indicates how much damage a hero's psionic defenses can withstand before his mind opens. As such, the psionic character must always balance the use of powers, attacks, and defenses with how strong he wants his own internal walls to remain.
- **Line of Sight:** All psionic attacks and most powers require line of sight to use. If line of sight is mocked, most psionics won't work.
- **Touch:** Some psionic powers have a range of "touch." These can be used in melee combat, but they require a physical attack roll *and* an MTHAC0 roll to work. Like all psionic powers, they can only be used against open minds.
- **Obstructions:** Anything that hinders a character's normal vision blocks line of sight. Unless the description states otherwise, psionists require a line of sight to use a power. Obvious exceptions to this rule are the clairsentient powers and many of the telepathic powers. However, certain materials can obstruct these psionic powers if they completely block the target. These are lead and iron (at least 1 inch thick), obsidian (at least 2 inches thick), stone (at least 1 foot thick), and the *antimagic shell* spell (see page 12).

## Psychic Contests

Sometimes two or more psionists try to use a psionic power on the same target. For example, two psionists might try to use telekinesis to move a stone in two different directions, or they might attempt to teleport the same character to different locations, or they might use any psionic powers in such a way as to be in direct conflict with each other. Which power use prevails? The struggle results in a **psychic contest**

To resolve a psychic contest, compare the competing characters' MTHAC0 rolls made to activate the powers. The character who has the lowest successful MTHAC0 roll wins the contest. If none of the competing characters roll successfully, none of the power uses succeed. If one character succeeds and the others fail the rolls, then that character wins the contest. If competing characters have the same MTHAC0 score and they roll the same numbers on the dice, then a **psychic lock** occurs.

In a psychic lock, neither competing character wins the psychic contest that round. Both are applying equal psionic pressure, thus creating a stalemate. To resolve the contest, both characters must pay the power's PSP cost and engage in another round of psychic contest. If either character fails to pay the cost (effectively giving up), that character suffers a psychic backlash and loses 4d4 PSPs immediately.

## Psionics and Magic

Psionics and magic use completely different forces. Psionics uses internal energy, while magic taps into extraplanar power. Both arts can produce similar effects, but they do so in very different ways. For this reason, psionics and magic don't ordinarily mix. Magical spells, for example, can't be used to detect or dispel psionic activity, unless otherwise stated. Likewise, psionic powers can't detect magic that simulates psionic abilities. Lastly, if a psionist uses a psychokinetic, psychometabolic, psychoportive, or telepathic power against a magical illusion, he automatically gets a saving throw vs. spell to disbelieve it.

Specific spells, as listed below, intermix with psionics in the following ways.

<i>Antimagick shell</i>	This spell blocks the effects of psionic powers.
<i>Detect charm</i>	This spell detects telepathic control, such as domination.
<i>Detect invisibility</i>	This spell allows the caster to see clearly psionic invisibility, astral travelers, shadowform, and ethereal creatures. It doesn't work against characters in other dimensions.
<i>Detect magic</i>	This spell has no effect on psionics.
<i>Detect scrying</i>	This spell will detect psionic scrying, though psionists get a save vs. spell to avoid detection.
<i>ESP</i>	If this spell is used against psionists, they get a save vs. spell with a +2 bonus to negate the effects.
<i>False vision</i>	This spell works against psionics, though psionists get a save vs. spell to negate effects.
<i>Forbiddance</i>	This spell effectively blocks all teleportation and metabolic powers.
<i>Free action</i>	This spell overcomes all psychokinetic effects against the subject's body, as well as domination.
<i>Globe of invulnerability/ minor globe of invulnerability</i>	These spells have no effect on psionics.
<i>Magic jar</i>	Psionists use their combined Wisdom and Constitution scores when determining the differential modifier.
<i>Mind blank</i>	Psionists get a save vs. spell to overcome this spell.
<i>Misdirection</i>	This spell has no effect on psionics.
<i>Mislead</i>	A psionic attack reveals this spell, but the first attack automatically fails.
<i>Nondetection</i>	This spell works normally against psionics.
<i>Otiluke's resilient sphere</i>	Psionics can't penetrate this spell's protection.
<i>Protection from evil/ protection from evil, 10-foot radius</i>	These spells provide +2 bonuses to MACs.
<i>Spell immunity</i>	This spell has no effect on psionics.
<i>Trap the soul</i>	Psionists trapped by this spell can't use any psionic powers.

**The Will:** This is the Athasian term for innate psionic ability, as well as an individual's reserve of mental strength (designated in PSPs).

Using psionics is strenuous. Even a powerful psionist becomes exhausted and must rest to recover his mental strength. As he expends his PSPs, the Will diminishes until the energy runs out and the powers refuse to form.

A wild talent has the Will, but rarely the desire to push himself to master his internal forces to truly use the Way.

**The Way:** The study of psionics and the refinement of psionic ability is called the Way. While the Will makes the use of psionic powers possible, only the Way allows a hero to become a psionist.

The study of the Way is difficult and demanding. Not every being with the Will can learn the Way; conversely, every student of the Way must possess a strong Will.

The study of the Way is very similar to the study of magic, as both seek to unlock power. Unlike magic, students must develop their own way of harnessing psionic powers.

Wild talents discover the Will within themselves, as do psionists, but psionists need teachers to guide them through the Way. Every city in the Tyr Region has schools devoted to the Way, and teachers can also be found wandering in the wilderness, ready to share their wisdom with worthy students.



## CHAPTER 2:

# Psionists and Wild Talents

## Psionists

Psionic powers can be used by any character class, though one class specializes in the use of psionics: the psionist. These heroes are devoted to strengthening **the Will** and perfecting their use of **the Way**. (See definitions in the sidebar at left.) Wild talents are a subclassification within other character classes. These heroes possess one or two psionic powers but have little understanding of the Will and the Way. Their main vocation is that of their class; for instance, an elemental priest may have a psionic ability or two, but he relies primarily on the skills of his class. A psionist, on the other hand, relies almost entirely on his psionic gifts. The differences between the two types of psionic characters are explained in detail in this chapter.

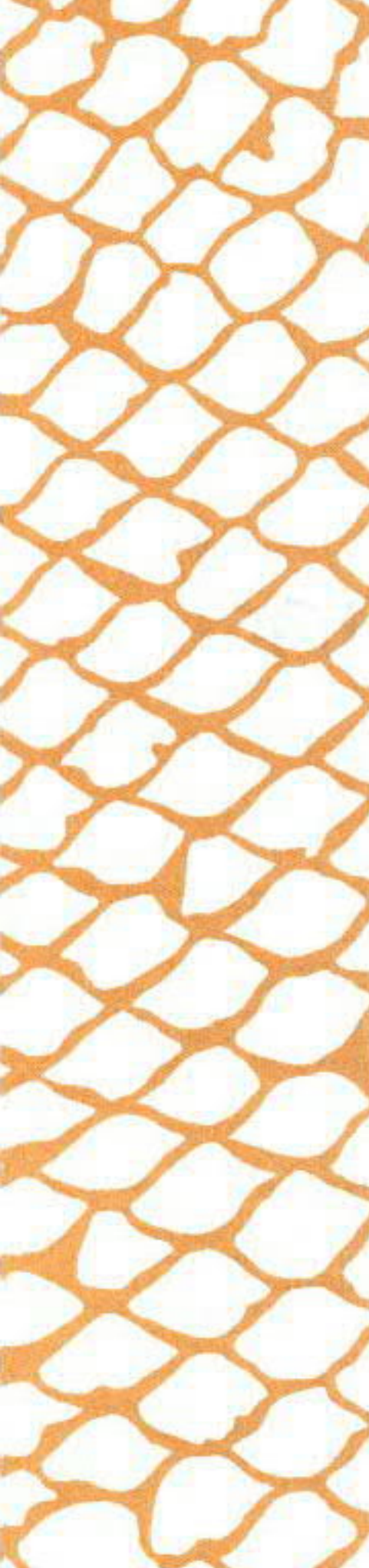
The psionist character works to mold mind, body, and spirit into a unified, powerful whole. The hero's internal energy, or psionic strength, comes from deep within himself (from a place psionists call the nexus). This energy is given form and purpose by the individual's strength of will. Through extraordinary discipline, long contemplation, and deepening awareness of self, the psionist taps the vast potential of his mind. Not all DARK SUN player characters have what it takes to become a psionist. Those that do must first meet or exceed the following prerequisites.

**Ability requirements:** Constitution 11, Intelligence 12, Wisdom 15

**Prime requisites:** Wisdom, Constitution

**Races allowed:** Any

Because the pursuit of psionics and the study of the Way require strict mental and physical discipline, a psionist has two prime requisites: Wisdom and Constitution. His primary mental ability score is Wisdom. As the measure of his willpower and enlightenment, Wisdom promotes the understanding and mastery of the inner self—the essence of psionic ability.

Likewise, the tremendous stress of using psionics requires a healthy body to house a fit mind. This is where Constitution comes into play. Lastly, Intelligence is important to psionics because of the reasoning and memorization necessary to the class.

In the DARK SUN campaign world, any races eligible for use as player characters can become psionics. Furthermore, DARK SUN psionics have no racial level limits imposed upon them.

## Dual-Class and Multiclass Psionics

A human character who has scores of 15 or more in the prime requisites of his first class and scores of 17 or more in the prime requisites of the class he switches to can be a dual-class psionist. See the *Player's Handbook*, Chapter 3, for more details on dual-class benefits and restrictions.

Demihuman and thri-kreen characters can be multiclass psionics if they meet the requirements in the *Player's Handbook* (also in Chapter 3). See the *Rules Book* in this boxed set for the combinations possible for each race.

## Alignment

Psionics can be of any alignment, save chaotic; the discipline integral to psionics can't be maintained by chaotic characters. If a psionist's alignment shifts to chaotic for any reason, he quickly begins to lose psionic powers. Every day his alignment remains chaotic, the character must make an ability check against one-half his Wisdom score, rounded down. Each time the character fails this check, he loses access to one psionic discipline and all the powers related to it. The discipline is selected randomly by the DM.

Psionics who change to chaotic alignment can't recover PSPs. If a psionist's alignment turns from chaotic back to nonchaotic, he begins to recover lost disciplines at a rate of one per day. This is accomplished by making the same halved Wisdom check described above; success indicates the return of a random discipline from those that were lost.

## Weapon and Armor Restrictions

Psionics disdain using weapons of any sort; further, they don't have the time to properly train in their use. If a psionist character wants to use a weapon, he must select it from the following small-sized items: hand crossbow, dagger, dart, dirk, knife, scourge, sickle, short sword, and wrist razor.

Psionics can only use the following types of armor: padded, leather, studded leather, and hide. They may also carry small shields.

## Psionist Benefits

Psionics have their own THAC0s, which are listed on TABLE IV: THAC0s AND MTHAC0s, below, along with their respective MTHAC0s. MTHAC0s for wild talents are listed on the same table, though these characters must refer to their class's own THAC0 tables for calculated attack rolls.

Psionics gain a +2 bonus on all saving throws vs. enchantment/charm spells. This is in addition to any magical defense adjustments for high Wisdom scores. TABLE V: PSIONICIST SAVING THROWS, on the next page, lists saving throws for this character class.

At 9th level, a psionist becomes a contemplative master. Such a master can build a sanctuary to use as his headquarters and can attract followers. A 1st-level psionist arrives monthly to study with the master, regardless of whether he builds a sanctuary. The maximum number of followers is equal to the master's Charisma score if he builds a sanctuary or half that number rounded down if he doesn't.

A master's followers want to learn. They serve in any capacity the master chooses as long as the master spends at least 10 hours per week instructing them in the Way. If the master doesn't live up to this schedule, the followers leave to find someone else.

TABLE IV: THAC0s AND MTHAC0s

	Psionicist's Level																			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
THAC0	20	20	19	19	18	18	17	17	16	16	15	15	14	14	13	13	12	12	11	11
	Psionicist's Level																			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
MTHAC0	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	Wild Talent's Level																			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
MTHAC0	20	20	19	19	18	18	17	17	16	16	15	15	14	14	13	13	12	12	11	11

TABLE V: PSIONICIST SAVING THROWS

Level	Paralyzation, Poison, or Death Magic	Rod, Staff, or Wand	Petrification or Polymorph*	Breath Weapon †	Spell‡
1-4	13	15	12	16	15
5-8	12	13	10	15	14
9-12	11	11	8	13	12
13-16	10	9	7	12	11
17-20	9	7	6	11	9
21+	8	5	5	9	7

\* Excluding *polymorph wand* attacks.

† Excluding those that cause petrification or polymorph.

‡ Excluding those for which another saving throw type is specified.

TABLE VI: PSIONICIST EXPERIENCE LEVELS

Psionicist Level	Experience Points	Hit Dice (d6)
1	0	1
2	2,200	2
3	4,400	3
4	8,800	4
5	16,500	5
6	30,000	6
7	55,000	7
8	100,000	8
9	200,000	9
10	400,000	9+2
11	600,000	9+4
12	800,000	9+6
13	1,000,000	9+8
14	1,200,000	9+10
15	1,500,000	9+12
16	1,800,000	9+14
17	2,100,000	9+16
18	2,400,000	9+18
19	2,700,000	9+20
20	3,000,000	9+22

## Psionicist Advancement

A psionicist earns experience points and advances in level like members of other classes, as outlined on TABLE VI.

## Initial Funds

DARK SUN psionicists start play with 3d4 x 30 ceramic pieces. Wild talents begin play with whatever their respective class's initial funds allows.

## Psionicists and PSPs

A psionicist determines his initial PSP total by adding bonuses awarded for high Wisdom, Constitution, and Intelligence scores to a base of 15 (see TABLE I: BASE MAC AND PSP BONUSES on page 6), then adding the result of a 1d6 die roll:

$$\text{Wis bonus} + \text{Con bonus} + \text{Int bonus} + 15 + 16 + 1d6 = \text{1st-level PSP total.}$$

With every level increase (up to the 9th level), a psionicist gains additional PSPs by adding the bonuses to a 1d6 die roll:

$$\text{Wis bonus} + \text{Con bonus} + \text{Int bonus} + 1d6 = \text{PSPs gained per level (2 through 8).}$$

Starting at 9th level, a psionicist gains just 3 PSPs per level, plus his Wisdom bonus:

$$\text{Wis bonus} + 3 = \text{PSPs gained per level (9th level and higher)}$$

## Gaining Disciplines and Powers

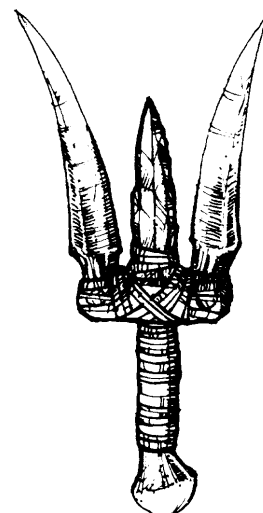
Every psionic power belongs to one of the five psionic disciplines: clairsentience, psychokinesis, psychometabolism, psychoporation, and telepathy (as discussed in Chapter 1). Powers are either major (and are called sciences) or minor (called *devotions*). Before a psionicist can learn a psionic power, he must have access to the appropriate discipline.

At 1st level, a psionicist selects one discipline. This is his primary discipline. As a psionicist advances in level, he gains access to additional disciplines (as shown on TABLE VII: PSIONIC PROGRESSION, on the following page). A psionicist starts out at 1st level with four powers within his primary discipline: one science and three devotions. With each advance in level, the psionicist gains additional disciplines and powers, as outlined on TABLE VII. Some additional points to consider include the following:

- DARK SUN PCs start at 3rd level, so a beginning psionist has access to two disciplines and nine powers (two sciences and seven devotions).
- A player can select new powers for his character as soon as the character reaches a new experience level. These new powers can be selected from any discipline the character has access to, including a discipline that was just gained.
- Within a single discipline, a character must have twice as many devotions as sciences. For example, a player can't select a third telepathic science until his character has at least six telepathic devotions.
- A character can never learn as many sciences and devotions in another discipline as he knows in his primary discipline. This provides a focus for a hero that he can adhere to.

**TABLE VII: PSIONIC PROGRESSION**

Exp. Level	Total Disciplines	Total Sciences	Total Devotions	Psionic Att/Def
1	1	1	3	1/1
2	2	1	5	1/1
3	2	2	7	2/2
4	2	2	9	2/2
5	2	3	10	3/3
6	3	3	11	3/3
7	3	4	12	4/4
8	3	4	13	4/4
9	3	5	14	5/5
10	4	5	15	5/5
11	4	6	16	5/5
12	4	6	17	5/5
13	4	7	18	5/5
14	5	7	19	5/5
15	5	8	20	5/5
16	5	8	21	5/5
17	5	9	22	5/5
18	5	9	23	5/5
19	5	10	24	5/5
20	5	10	25	5/5



## Proficiencies

Like all character classes, psionists have various proficiencies available to them. TABLE VIII lists the initial number of weapon and nonweapon proficiencies available to this class, as well as the rates at which these characters earn new slots. Psionists start with the initial two weapon and three nonweapon proficiencies available to psionists; however, since DARK SUN characters start at 3rd level, they receive an additional nonweapon proficiency (as per TABLE VIII).

Psionists can learn a weapon proficiency for any weapon they can use. They can also learn any nonweapon proficiencies from the “General” group in Chapter Five of the Player’s Handbook, the new “General” proficiencies described in the *Age of Heroes* rules book of this boxed set, and the proficiencies listed below under “Nonweapon Proficiencies.”

**TABLE VIII: PSIONICIST PROFICIENCY SLOTS**

—Weapon Proficiencies—		—Nonweapon Proficiencies—		
Initial	# Levels	Penalty	Initial	# Levels
2	5	-4	3	3

**Initial** Refers to the number of proficiency slots available to 1st-level psionists.

**# Levels** Indicates how many levels a psionist must advance before receiving a new slot. He receives one new weapon slot at levels 5, 10, 15, and 20. He receives one new nonweapon slot at levels 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, and 18.

**Penalty** The modifier to a psionist’s attack roll when he uses a weapon with which he isn’t proficient.

## Nonweapon Proficiencies

Nonweapon proficiencies available to the psionicist class are listed on TABLE IX, including five new proficiencies (described below). Note: "General" listing is an addition to the proficiencies presented in the *Player's Handbook* and the *DARK SUN* rules book. Psionicists wanting non-weapon proficiencies outside their class group or the general group must add one to the slot cost.

The new nonweapon proficiencies available include two that belong in the "General" group and three that belong in the psionicist class group. These proficiencies are described below.

- **Contact:** This proficiency gives characters access to the psionic attack forms necessary to open a closed mind. Contact allows characters to gain psionic attacks as they become available with level advancement (see Chapter 1).

Psionicists automatically receive this proficiency; it doesn't take up any of their available slots. As a psionicist increases in level, he automatically receives psionic attack forms as outlined on TABLE VII. Psionic attack forms don't fill up a psionicist's proficiency slots.

Wild talents, however, must select contact and place it in an available nonweapon proficiency slot to gain its benefits. Once contact is slotted, a wild talent selects one psionic attack. He may select an additional attack by placing it in an available nonweapon slot after he has advanced the appropriate number of levels, according to his group's progression rate. Wild talents may never have more than three of the five psionic attack forms.

- **Harness Subconscious:** Through the use of this proficiency, a psionicist temporarily boosts his PSP total. To procure these extra PSPs, the psionicist's PSP total must be at its maximum. Two full days (48 consecutive hours) must be spent gathering energy from subconscious reserves. At the end of this time, the psionicist makes a proficiency check. Success increases his PSP total by 20%, rounded up.

The extra PSPs remain available for 72 hours or until they are used up, whichever comes first. At the end of 72 hours, the psionicist loses as many PSPs as he gained from his current total (though the total won't drop below 0).

During the 72 hours of boosted energy, the psionicist can't recover PSPs if his current total equals or exceeds his usual maximum. Once all of the bonus PSPs have been used, PSPs can be recovered normally up to the usual maximum.

- **Meditative Focus:** This proficiency allows a psionicist to focus his mental energy into one discipline, causing all powers within that discipline to receive MTHAC0 roll bonuses; powers related to other disciplines receive MTHAC0 roll penalties.

The psionicist must meditate for 12 consecutive hours. He recovers PSPs normally during this time. When the period ends, the character makes a proficiency check. Success means he has focused his energy into the chosen discipline. All MTHAC0 rolls for powers within that discipline receive a +2 bonus for the next 24 hours or until his PSP total is reduced to 0, whichever comes first. Other disciplines get a -1 penalty for the same period.

- **Mental Armor:** This proficiency allows a character to improve his mental armor class (MAC). Each time this proficiency is placed in an available nonweapon slot, the character's MAC improves. Nonpsionicists improve by +1 for each slot; psionicists improve by +2. The proficiency may only be slotted once per level advancement.

- **Rejuvenation:** This proficiency allows a psionicist to recover PSPs more quickly than is usual by entering a rejuvenating trance. This state of deep concentration requires a successful proficiency check. For every hour a hero maintains this trance (and makes the check), he regains PSPs at twice the usual rate (one-quarter of his total instead of one-eighth). He can't expend PSPs while in this trance, and his state is much like deep sleep.

TABLE IX: NONWEAPON PROFICIENCIES

General Group				Psionicist Group			
Proficiency	Slots	Ability	Modifier*	Proficiency	Slots	Ability	Modifier*
Contact † ‡	1	Wisdom	0	Gem cutting	2	Dexterity	-2
Mental armor †	1	Wisdom	-2	Harness subconscious†	2	Wisdom	-1
				Meditative focus†	1	Wisdom	+1
				Musical instrument	1	Dexterity	-1
				Reading/writing	1	Intelligence	+1
				Rejuvenation†	1	Wisdom	-1
				Religion	1	Wisdom	0

\* If a proficiency check is required, apply the modifier indicated to the corresponding ability and roll 1d20; results equal to or less than adjusted ability score indicate success.

† New proficiency described in the following section.

‡ Bonus proficiency received by a psionicist upon creation; does not take up any available slots.

**TABLE X: WILD TALENTS**

Roll	Wild Devotion
<b>Clairsentient Devotions</b>	
1-2	All-round vision
3	Combat mind
4-5	Danger sense
6-7	Feel light
8	Feel sound
9	Hear light
10	Know direction
11-12	Know location
13	Poison sense
14-15	Radial navigation
16-17	See sound
18	Spirit sense
<b>Psychokinetic Devotions</b>	
19-20	Animate shadow
21-22	Control light
23-24	Control sound
25	Molecular agitation
26-27	Soften
<b>Psychometabolic Devotions</b>	
28-29	Absorb disease
30-31	Adrenaline control
32	Aging
33-34	Biofeedback
35	Body control
36	Body equilibrium
37-38	Body weaponry
39-40	Catfall
41	Cause decay
42-43	Cell adjustment
44-45	Chameleon power
46	Chemical simulation
47	Displacement
48-49	Double pain
50	Ectoplasmic form
51-52	Enhanced strength
53	Expansion
54-55	Flesh armor
56	Graft weapon
57-58	Heightened senses
59	Immovability
60-61	Lend health
62-63	Mind over body
64-65	Reduction
66-67	Share strength
68-70	Suspend animation
<b>Psychoportive Devotions</b>	
71-72	Astral projection
73-74	Dimensional door
75-77	Dimension walk
78-79	Dream travel
80-81	Phase
<b>Telepathic Devotions</b>	
82-84	Conceal thoughts
85-87	Empathy
88-89	ESP
90-91	Life detection
92-93	Psychic messenger
94-96	Send thoughts
97-98	Roll two devotions
99	Roll one science
100	Roll one devotion and one science
<b>1d100 Wild Science</b>	
<b>Clairsentient Sciences</b>	
1-6	Aura sight
7-14	Clairaudience
15-22	Clairvoyance
23-27	Object reading
28-32	Precognition
33-36	Sensitivity to psychic impressions
<b>Psychokinetic Science</b>	
37-44	Telekinesis
<b>Psychometabolic Sciences</b>	
45-49	Animal affinity
50-53	Complete healing
54-55	Death field
56-61	Energy containment
62-63	Life draining
64-72	Metamorphosis
72-80	Shadowform
<b>Psychoportive Sciences</b>	
81-83	Probability travel
84-86	Teleport
<b>Telepathic Sciences</b>	
87-92	Mindlink
93-95	No science gained
96-100	Roll two sciences

# Wild Talents

A wild talent is a hero from any character class other than the psionicist class who has natural psionic potential. This potential can be present in any character, regardless of class, alignment, or race. The alignment restrictions of the psionicist class don't apply to wild talents.

Wild talents have one or two psionic powers, up to three psionic defenses, and up to three psionic attacks at their disposal once they've reached full power. The psionic defenses come naturally, one at a time, according to TABLE VII: PSIONIC PROGRESSION on the previous page.

Psionic attacks are only gained after the PC places the contact proficiency in an available nonweapon proficiency slot. A wild talent chooses one of the five attack forms at that time. He may select a second and a third attack form when slots become available according to his group proficiency progression (as outlined in the *Player's Handbook*).

Note that upon initial creation, all wild talents are at 3rd level in a DARK SUN campaign. As stated in the *Player's Handbook*, these characters (excepting rogues) are eligible for an extra nonweapon proficiency, which may be spent on an additional attack form at this time.

All PCs in a DARK SUN campaign are wild talents (if they're not psionicists), so testing for the presence of psionic ability isn't necessary. To find out the power of a newly created DARK SUN wild talent character, roll 1 d100 on TABLE X: WILD TALENTS, under the heading of "wild devotion." If the result is 99 or 100, roll 1d100 again on the "wild science" heading of the table. Note that none of the powers available for wild talents require any prerequisites to use.

## Testing for Wild Talents

Sometimes it's helpful to determine whether a nonplayer character (NPC) or monster is a wild talent, so the following test is provided. (Note that the test can also be used for checking PCs in other campaign settings.) The test can be performed when a character is created, when a character's Wisdom score increases, when psionics are introduced into a campaign, or when a character first receives psychic surgery.

Every character and monster has a base chance of 1% to be a wild talent (10% for DARK SUN NPCs and monsters). This is modified as follows:

Each Wis, Con, or Int score of 18+	+3%
Each Wis, Con, or Int score of 17	+2%
Each Wis, Con, or Int score of 16	+1%
Character is 5th to 8th level	+1%
Character is 9th level or higher	+2%
Character is aided by a psychic surgeon	+2%
Wizard, priest, or nonhuman*	x ½

\* Round fractions up. Apply this penalty only once, even if checking a nonhuman wizard or the like. Ignore this modification for DARK SUN characters.

Once a character's chance to be a wild talent is determined, roll percentile dice. Results are as follows:

- If the result is more than the modified chance and less than 97, the character is not a wild talent.
- If the result is less than or equal to the modified chance, the character is a wild talent. The player rolls percentile dice and consults TABLE X. His character's PSPs are determined as under "Psionic Strength Points (PSPs)," on page 6.
- If the result is 97, the character must save vs. death or his Wisdom is permanently reduced by 1d6 points.
- If the result is 98, the character must save vs. death or his Intelligence is permanently reduced by 1d6 points.
- If the result is 99, the character must save vs. death or his Constitution is permanently reduced by 1d6 points.
- If the result is 100, the character must save vs. death at -5 or his Wisdom, Intelligence, and Constitution scores are all permanently reduced to 3 points.



# Power Parameters

There are five parameters integral to each psionic power, and they are described below.

**MAC:** The number that the user must roll against with an MTHACO roll in order to activate the power against an open mind. Bonuses to a power's MAC score make it lower (thus, harder to hit), while penalties make it higher (and thus easier to roll against). See "Using Psionic Powers" on page 10 for further details.

**PSP Cost:** The number of PSPs that must be spent per round to use a psionic power. The secondary number is the PSP cost if the MTHACO roll fails.

**Range:** The maximum distance from the user at which the power has an effect. "Touch" requires the user to make physical contact with the target (that is, a THACO roll).

**Area of Effect:** The physical area or number of beings a power affects. "Personal" only affects the user.

**Prerequisite:** Other sciences or devotions a character must know before being able to use a particular power. Some prerequisites will list a level; this is the lowest level a psionicist using this psionic power can be.

## CHAPTER 3:

# Psionic Powers

Once a psionicist has mastered the powers of his mind, the results can be as spectacular as the explosive force of the psychokinetic science called detonate or as subtle as the clairsentient devotion called see sound. Originally from *The Complete Book of Psionics* (2117), *Dragon Kings* (2408), and *The Will and the Way* (2431), the psionic powers described in this chapter have been revised to reflect the new psionics system.

Obviously, not every psionic power could be contained within this book. For the most part, however, changes have been kept to a minimum and are listed on the Psionic Powers Summary (found on page 31). The summary provides the statistics needed to convert existing powers to the new system. The revised statistics, the MAC score, and the reconfigured PSP cost replace the power score, initial cost, and maintenance cost from the old psionics system.

The powers are divided alphabetically into the five disciplines (clairsentience, psychokinesis, psychometabolism, psychoportation, and telepathy). The major powers (sciences) are presented first in each section, followed by the minor powers (devotions). Each entry includes certain parameters, as described in the accompanying sidebar.

If you're new to psionics, skip the following paragraph. The explanation of the changes from the old psionics system to the new may be confusing. If you've used psionics often in your past campaigns, however, the following paragraph may help you understand the *why* behind some of the system changes.

Power scores have been replaced by MAC scores, as the base mechanic for psionics has been changed from a proficiency system to a combat system. Initial costs and maintenance costs have been combined into a single PSP cost. Preparation time has been eliminated. Optional results have also been eliminated, though as noted on page 6, they can still be used if DMs and players desire.

# Clairsentient Powers

Clairsentient powers allow characters to perceive things beyond the natural range of human and demihuman senses. Revised sciences and devotions are presented below.

## Aura Sight (clairsentient science)

MAC: 7 (base)  
 PSP cost: 9/3  
 Range: 50 yards  
 Area of Effect: Personal  
 Prerequisite: None

With this power, the user can detect auras (the normally invisible envelope of colored light that surrounds all living things). Each use of the power gives the user one piece of information—either the target's alignment (one portion of it) or relative level of power, but not both simultaneously.

This power can be used twice per round (for two PSP costs and with two MTHAC0 rolls) to examine two different auras or the same aura twice. The user can be discreet, but he does need to gaze at the target. Using the power from a distance is less noticeable than using it up close.

The level (or Hit Dice) of the target character affects the MTHAC0 roll. The higher the level, the tougher it is to interpret the aura. The power's MAC should be improved by 1 for every three levels (or HD) the target has, rounded down. For example, an 8th-level target improves the power's MAC by 2, making it MAC 5 (and therefore harder to roll against).

The DM should relate game-related information in a story sense, rather than in mechanical terms. In the case of alignment, the user sees colored light that represents an element: 1) blue (lawful); 2) gray (neutral); 3) red (chaotic); 4) white (good); or 5) black (evil). Relative level of power can be described as follows: 1) dim aura (a low-level target, 1st to 5th level); 2) bright aura (a midlevel target, 6th to 13th level); 3) dazzling aura (a high-level target, 14th to 20th level); and 4) blinding aura (a target above 20th level).

## Clairaudience (clairsentient science)

MAC: 8 (base)  
 PSP cost: 5/2  
 Range: Unlimited  
 Area of Effect: Special  
 Prerequisite: None

This power allows the user to hear sounds from a distant area. The user picks a location he knows, makes an MTHAC0 roll, then gets to hear everything that he would be able to hear normally if he were standing in that spot. If the user has enhanced hearing, that ability also applies to the use of clairaudience. The power doesn't screen out noise around the user's physical body, which may make it difficult to hear sounds elsewhere. The power doesn't provide any abilities to understand languages or interpret sounds.

The distance of the listening spot modifies the power's MAC, as shown below. For example, a user trying to hear something 10,000 miles away would require a roll against a lower MAC. Instead of 8, the mental armor class would now be -2. If the user's MTHAC0 is 15, he needs to roll a 17 to successfully employ this power.

Range	Power's MAC
100 yards	8
1,000 yards	6
10 miles	4
100 miles	2
1,000 miles	0
10,000 miles	-2
Interplanetary*	-4

\* Clairaudience only works within a given plane or crystal sphere.

## Clairvoyance (clairsentient science)

MAC: 7 (base)  
 PSP cost: 5/2  
 Range: Unlimited  
 Area of Effect: Special  
 Prerequisite: None

This power allows the user to see images from a distant area. The user picks a spot he knows, makes an MTHAC0 roll, then gets to see everything he would be able to see if he were standing in that spot. The user's field of vision is the same as normal, and turning his head allows him to scan the area.

Clairvoyance doesn't replace normal vision. The user still sees what's around his physical location, with the distant scene superimposed. Closing one's eyes blocks the double vision and leaves only the distant scene in sight. This power doesn't enhance vision, so hidden or invisible objects remain so. The distant scene is visual only; there is no sound.

The distance of the viewing spot modifies the power's MAC, as shown below.

Range	Power's MAC
100 yards	7
1,000 yards	5
10 miles	3
100 miles	1
1,000 miles	-1
10,000 miles	-3
Interplanetary*	-5

\* Clairvoyance only works within a given plane or crystal sphere.

## Object Reading (clairsentient science)

MAC: 7  
 PSP cost: 12/6  
 Range: 0  
 Area of Effect: Touch  
 Prerequisite: None

This power allows the user to detect psionic impressions left on an object by a previous owner. These impressions include the owner's race, sex, age, and alignment. The power can also reveal how the owner came to possess the item and how he lost it. An object can be read successfully only once per experience level. Additional readings at the same level reveal no new information.

The amount of information gained depends on the MTHAC0 roll. Success rolls start with the number the user needs to get MAC 7 and then improve from there, as noted below. The user learns the information listed, plus all results above it, as noted below.

Success Roll	Information Gained
0 to +2	Last owner's race
+3 to +4	Last owner's sex
+5 to +6	Last owner's age
+7	Last owner's alignment
+8 and up	How last owner gained and lost object



#### All-Round Vision (clairsentient devotion)

MAC: 8  
 PSP cost: 5/2  
 Range: 0  
 Area of Effect: Personal  
 Prerequisite: None

This power lets the user see in all directions simultaneously. This has obvious benefits, including a +2 surprise roll bonus to the user for encounters where being able to see is an advantage. There is a penalty, however.

While this power is in effect, gaze attacks against the user receive a +4 bonus.

#### Combat Mind (clairsentient devotion)

MAC: 6  
 PSP cost: 4/2  
 Range: 0  
 Area of Effect: Personal  
 Prerequisite: None

This power gives the user an unusually keen understanding of his enemies and their fighting tactics. As a result, the user's side gains a -1 bonus to all initiative rolls during combat for every round the power is in effect. This bonus is in addition to any other modifiers that may apply.

#### Danger Sense (clairsentient devotion)

MAC: 8  
 PSP cost: 3/1  
 Range: 50 yards  
 Area of Effect: Personal  
 Prerequisite: None

This power produces a slight tingling sensation at the back of the user's neck whenever a hazard or threat is near. When a character wants to activate this power, the DM makes the MTHAC0 roll for the character in secret. The DM informs the user that the power has been successfully activated or not, but not how high the roll was. For every round that the user keeps the power in effect, he receives advance warning about the general direction of a threat.

No details about the type of danger are learned, or how or when the danger will strike. How much warning depends on the MTHAC0 roll. If the roll succeeds by +1 to +6, the user receives warning just moments before danger strikes. This gives him the opportunity to act before the danger strikes in the round, but no time to warn others. If the roll succeeds by +7 or better, the user knows whether danger is lurking within the area of effect a full round before it shows itself.

In addition to the above benefits, the power gives the user a +2 bonus to surprise rolls.

#### Feel Sound (clairsentient devotion)

MAC: 8  
 PSP cost: 4/2  
 Range: 0  
 Area of Effect: Personal  
 Prerequisite: None

This power makes the user's body sensitive to sound. It allows the user to continue to hear even if his ears are disabled. He can't detect sound where there is none, and the power doesn't work within areas of magical silence. The user gains a +2 bonus against all sonic attacks or effects, including a siren's song.

#### Know location (clairsentient devotion)

MAC: 8  
 PSP cost: 8/3  
 Range: 0  
 Area of Effect: Personal  
 Prerequisite: None

This power aids characters who travel via teleportation, gates, or other planes of existence. When used successfully, it reveals general information about the user's location. The information is no more detailed than the responses of a simple farmer to the question "Where am I?" Some typical responses are "A few miles southwest of Tyr"; "In the house of Kesik the Templar"; and "On an island in the Silt Sea."

The higher a successful MTHAC0 roll, the more precise the location. A roll of +1 to +4 higher than the MAC specifies a location within 10 miles. A roll of +7 or +8 higher than the MAC targets an area within a mile. A roll of +9 or higher than the MAC gives the location in a planar context ("the Astral Plane").

#### Martial Trance (clairsentient devotion)

MAC: 7  
 PSP cost: 7/3  
 Range: 50 yards  
 Area of Effect: Personal  
 Prerequisite: 3rd level

This power helps the user in psionic combat. By entering a trance before combat begins, the user focuses his complete attention on the psionic activity, tuning out other distractions. While in the trance, the user gains a +1 bonus to all mental attack rolls, in addition to any other modifiers that may apply.

The trance ends when the user chooses to end it, by any moderate physical contact (a blow, shake, or slap), or when his PSPs are reduced to 0. As his attention is completely focused on the psionic battlefield, any melee attacks against him hit automatically and cause maximum damage.

#### Poison Sense (clairsentient devotion)

MAC: 10  
 PSP cost: 1/1  
 Range: 1-yard radius  
 Area of Effect: Personal  
 Prerequisite: None

This power enables a user to detect the presence of poison and identify its location within 1 yard of his body (or presence, if he uses clairvoyance or astral projection). The type of poison and how it can be negated aren't revealed, only its presence.

#### Psionic Sense (clairsentient devotion)

MAC: 8  
 PSP cost: 2/1  
 Range: 200-yard radius  
 Area of Effect: Personal  
 Prerequisite: Mindlink

This power allows the user to detect psionic activity anywhere within 200 yards of his location. Any expenditure of PSPs constitutes psionic activity. The first successful use of this power reveals whether someone or something is psionically active within range. A second successful use of the power in the following round reveals how powerful the activity is and where the psionic activity is taking place (direction and distance). If psionic activity is occurring in more than one location within the range, the user detects all of it.

Power levels are as follows: 1) low psionic activity (1 to 5 PSPs per round); 2) moderate psionic activity (6 to 12 PSPs per round); and 3) high psionic activity (13+ PSPs per round).

### See Sound (clairsentient devotion)

MAC:	8
PSP cost:	4/2
Range:	Special
Area of Effect:	Personal
Prerequisite:	None

This power enables a user to perceive sound waves visually by converting the sound waves into light impulses. Only a character who can see with normal vision can use this power. He can see sound even in darkness, as sound waves don't require light. The user can be "blinded" by silence, however.

## Psychokinetic Powers

Psychokinetic powers move objects across space using only the energy of a character's mind. Revised sciences and devotions are presented below.

### Create Object (psychokinetic science)

MAC:	6
PSP cost:	7/3
Range:	20 yards
Area of Effect:	Special
Prerequisite:	Telekinesis

This power allows a user to assemble matter from air and the surrounding area to create a solid object; only materials within 20 yards of the user can be used in the construction. The object remains in existence for every round that the user continues to pay the PSP cost. During the round that the PSP cost isn't paid, the object breaks apart. An object created with this power can have any shape, color, and texture the user desires, provided it fulfills at least one of these conditions:

- Fits within a sphere no more than 4 feet in diameter.
- Fits within a cylinder no more than 20 feet high and 1 foot in diameter.
- Fits within a cylinder no more than 2 feet high and 6 feet in diameter.
- Weighs no more than 10 pounds.

### Detonate (psychokinetic science)

MAC:	5
PSP cost:	15/5
Range:	60 yards
Area of Effect:	1 item, 8 cubic feet
Prerequisite:	Telekinesis, molecular agitation

With this power, the user harnesses, focuses, and explosively releases the latent psionic energy inside nonsentient (0 Intelligence) plants and inanimate objects. The power also works against animated undead (skeletons and zombies), but doesn't affect incorporeal undead. It can't be used against animals, intelligent creatures, or free-willed undead.

The explosion causes destructive damage to the target, based on the MTHAC0 roll. If the roll is equal to the power's MAC, 10% of the target area is destroyed. For every number rolled above the MAC, an additional 10% is destroyed, up to a total of 8 cubic feet of material (by a single power use).

Monsters such as skeletons and golems targeted by the detonate power take damage based on the percentage of their mass that was destroyed, losing an equal percentage of hit points. Magically animated material, like golems, gets a save vs. spell to resist detonation.

Weapons and armor that have been detonated receive penalties of -1 to attack rolls and AC values for each 10% destroyed. Magical items get a save vs. disintegrate to resist detonation. Vulnerable objects or living things within 10 feet of

the target take 1d10 points of damage from the resulting explosion. A save vs. breath weapon reduces damage to half.

### Project Force (psychokinetic science)

MAC:	6
PSP cost:	10/4
Range:	200 yards
Area of Effect:	Personal
Prerequisite:	Telekinesis

This power allows the user to focus a psychokinetic "punch" against a target up to 200 yards away. If used offensively, this punch causes damage equal to 1d6 points plus the target's Armor Class (negative armor classes are subtracted from the die roll). Only AC provided by actual armor is added to or subtracted from the roll-not Dexterity or magical bonuses. A successful save vs. breath weapon reduces the damage to half.

Project force can also be used to trigger traps, throw levers, open doors (not locked or latched), break windows, etc. No attack roll is needed, just the MTHAC0 roll to activate it.

### Telekinesis (psychokinetic science)

MAC:	8
PSP cost:	3+/1
Range:	30 yards
Area of Effect:	1 item
Prerequisite:	None

This power allows the user to move objects without touching them. Telekinesis tends to be physically taxing, as it takes a lot of internal energy to move objects. Small objects are easy, but larger, more massive objects are significantly more difficult.

The cost listed above assumes the object being moved weighs 3 pounds or less. For heavier objects, use the following:

- PSP cost equals the item's weight in pounds.
- The power's MAC improves by a bonus equal to one-third of the item's weight, rounded down (for example, moving a 10-pound rock requires rolling against a MAC of 5).

Telekinesis moves the targeted item up to 60 feet per round. Items moving at such a slow rate of speed don't make effective weapons, but items weighing more than 3 pounds can be used to disrupt spellcasting or psionic use. (The user rolls his base THAC0 score to hit, with a penalty equal to one-third of the item's weight, rounded down. For example, if a hero whose THAC0 is 15 wants to attack a wizardess whose AC is 0, he needs an 18 or better to hit her with a 10-pound rock.)

Telekinesis can be used to perform very fine work, such as writing or sewing. The user must be capable of performing the work himself, and a second MTHAC0 roll (and second round of power use) is needed to complete fine work. If the hero wants to use the power to pull an item away from an opponent, use the rules for psychic contests, except that the defender uses his Strength score to decide the contest.



### Animate Object (psychokinetic devotion)

MAC:	7 (base)
PSP cost:	5/2
Range:	50 yards
Area of Effect:	1 item, 100 pounds
Prerequisite:	Telekinesis

This power allows the user to control the movement of an otherwise inanimate object, giving it the appearance of life. For example, animate object can make chairs walk or stones dance, though objects being animated must weigh 100 pounds or less. The material the item is made of affects the difficulty of the task, as indicated on the following page.

Material	Power's MAC
Cloth, paper	7
Live wood, dead animal	6
Dead wood, bone	5
Water	4
Thin metal	3
Thick metal	2
Stone	1

Once animated, all materials become flexible to some extent, though fluid motion is uncommon. Animated items move like puppets, with jerky, clumsy motion. If the item was rigid initially, it makes loud creaking, groaning, or grating sounds as it moves. An animated item moves up to 60 feet per round (movement rate 6). It can be used to attack, acting like a club with a THAC0 of 20 and a damage score of 1d6 points.

#### Control Light (psychokinetic devotion)

MAC:	8
PSP cost:	6/2
Range:	25 yards
Area of Effect:	400 square feet
Prerequisite:	None

This power allows the user to manipulate ambient light. He can't create light from darkness, but he can create darkness from light. Use of control light can accomplish the following:

- Deepen existing shadows. A thief hidden in such shadows receives a +20% bonus to his hide-in-shadows rolls.
- Brighten existing shadows. This reduces a thief's hiding ability by 20%.
- Brighten a light source until it becomes blinding. Those exposed to the light receive a -2 penalty to attack rolls.
- Dim a light source. This has no effect on attack rolls.
- Extend shadows into areas that are well lit. Only existing shadows can be lengthened, increasing in size by 200%.
- Extend light into areas that are in shadow. Shadows can be reduced by 50%.

#### Control Sound (psychokinetic devotion)

MAC:	5
PSP cost:	3/1
Range:	100 yards
Area of Effect:	1 specific sound
Prerequisite:	None

This power allows the user to shape and alter existing sounds. A man's words could emerge as a tagster's roar, or the noise of marching soldiers can be made to sound like the wind of a sandstorm. Sounds can also be layered, so that one singer can be made to sound like an entire choir. Control sound can also dampen a noise. The player must specify what sound the character intends to eliminate. For example, the user might quiet the strike of a hammer or eliminate the creak of a door. He couldn't eliminate both at once, however.

#### Control Wind (psychokinetic devotion)

MAC:	5
PSP cost:	12/5
Range:	500 yards
Area of Effect:	1,000 yards
Prerequisite:	Telekinesis

With this power, a user can gain limited control over wind speed and direction. The speed of any existing wind can be increased or decreased by 10 miles per hour or 25%, whichever is greater. The direction of the wind can also be changed by up to 90 degrees. These changes are temporary, lasting only as long as the PSP cost is paid. The changes occur in the round that the power is successfully activated. The wind

returns to its original course and speed the round that the PSP cost isn't paid.

Wind above 19 miles per hour prevents anything smaller than a human from flying and imposes a -4 modifier on missile fire. On the water, such wind makes sailing difficult. Wind gusting at more than 32 miles per hour causes minor damage to ships and buildings. This wind also kicks up clouds of dust and prevents all but the largest creatures from flying. Wind more than 55 miles per hour prevents all flight, knocks down trees and wooden buildings, and may swamp ships. Wind more than 73 miles per hour is a hurricane gale.

#### Inertial Barrier (psychokinetic devotion)

MAC:	6
PSP cost:	6/2
Range:	0
Area of Effect:	3-yard diameter
Prerequisite:	Telekinesis

This power is used as a defense, creating a barrier of psionic energy around the user and anyone within 3 yards of him. This barrier softens missile blows, shielding the user from damage by slowing and absorbing some or all of the potential damage caused by incoming attacks. However, the barrier also slows *outgoing* missile attacks—a drawback the user should consider.

The power protects against damage from these forms of attack: any nonmagical missile weapon; any physical missile created by magic; any missile with magical bonuses; flames; some breath weapon attacks (depending on the nature of the breath); acid; gas; all forms of disintegration; and falling (damage is halved). Inertial barrier can't stop missiles conjured from pure magic or protect against raw heat or cold, pure energy or light, or gaze weapons. An inertial barrier can't keep enemies out, but it does slow them. Anyone trying to cross a barrier must stop moving when contact is made. In the next round, the barrier can be crossed (either entering or exiting).

Missile weapons, whether passing into or out of the barrier, inflict damage in a modified fashion because the power saps energy from the missile. If a missile strikes its target after passing through the barrier (in either direction), the attacker rolls for damage as normal. However, the defender then rolls the same die to see how much damage the barrier absorbed. (Note: The defender doesn't include any magical bonuses the weapon may have.) The defender subtracts his die roll from the attacker's damage total. If anything remains, the defender loses that many hit points. If the defender's roll equals or exceeds the total damage, the weapon falls harmlessly to the ground. If the missile is explosive, the barrier prevents weapon damage but not explosive damage.

#### Levitation (psychokinetic devotion)

MAC:	8 (base)
PSP cost:	5/2
Range:	0
Area of Effect:	Personal
Prerequisite:	Telekinesis

This power allows the user to float by using telekinesis on himself. The user can lift himself at the rate of 1 foot per second, or 60 feet per round. He can descend as quickly as he wants by simply letting himself fall, then slowing down as he nears the ground. The user can always levitate his own weight. Additional weight, such as equipment or passengers, is a hindrance. Every 25 pounds of added weight improves the power's MAC by 1.

Levitation isn't flying. The power provides no horizontal movement. The user can hover motionlessly and drift with the wind if he wants, or he can push off a wall or other fixed object and drift up to 60 feet per round in a straight line. He can't stop, however, until he meets another solid object, lowers

himself to the ground, or stops paying the PSP cost. Two powers—control wind and project force—can help the levitating user propel himself forward and change direction. The use of these additional powers requires the extra expenditure of PSPs and MTHACO rolls.

#### Molecular Agitation (psychokinetic devotion)

MAC: 10  
 PSP cost: 7/3  
 Range: 40 yards  
 Area of Effect: 1 item, 20 pounds  
 Prerequisite: None

This power enables the user to excite the molecules of a substance, causing paper to ignite, wood to smolder, or skin to blister, for example. The degree of destruction is as follows, depending on the number of rounds the item is agitated:

- *One round.* Readily flammable materials, such as paper and dry grass, ignite; skin becomes red and tender (1 point of damage); wood becomes dark.
- *Two rounds.* Wood smolders and smokes; metal becomes hot to the touch; skin blisters (1d4 points of damage); hair melts; paint shrivels.
- *Three rounds.* Wood ignites; metal scorches (1d4 points of damage); skin burns away (1d6 points of damage); water boils, lead melts. Damage doesn't intensify beyond this round, but it does continue.
- *Four rounds.* Steel grows soft.
- *Five rounds.* Steel melts.

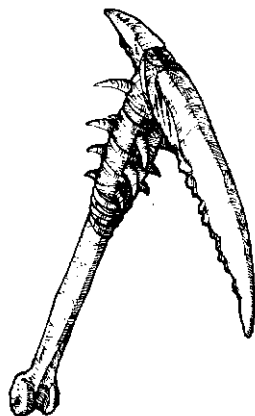
Magical items receive saving throws against magical fire, but a +10 penalty is applied to the number needed. (The heat produced by this power is highly destructive as it comes from inside the item instead of outside.)

#### Molecular Manipulation (psychokinetic devotion)

MAC: 7  
 PSP cost: 6/2  
 Range: 15 yards  
 Area of Effect: 2 square inches  
 Prerequisite: Telekinesis

This power allows the user to weaken the molecular bonds within an object. When stress is applied to the object or a blow is struck, it snaps. The user can create one "weak point" of approximately 2 square inches per round. Deterioration occurs across a plane (in two dimensions, not three). One round's application is enough to fatally weaken most small objects (knives, ropes, saddle straps, bows, etc.). Larger objects require more time and are subject to the DM's discretion.

The DM must decide how vulnerable molecular manipulation makes larger, oddly shaped items (such as doors and shields). An object need not be in two pieces to be useless. A small boat, for example, is unsafe if it has a crack in its hull.



# Psychometabolic Powers

Psychometabolic powers affect the user's body by altering it in some way. Revised sciences and devotions are presented below.

#### Animal Affinity (psychometabolic science)

MAC: 5  
 PSP cost: 7/3  
 Range: 0  
 Area of Effect: Personal  
 Prerequisite: None

With this power, the user develops an affinity for a particular animal type. Roll on the list below to determine the animal type (see the various DARK SUN MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® appendices for descriptions). The user undergoes a physical change when this power is used, depending on the animal and ability. For example, he may gain wings or claws.

When the user activates this power, he temporarily gains one of the animal's attributes. He can gain the animal's Armor Class; movement rate and mode; physical attacks, damage, and THACO; hit points; or any other special ability—though only one of these can be gained at a time. The attribute lasts for every round that the cost is paid. Switching to a different attribute requires a new MTHACO roll.

1d20		1d20	
Roll	Result	Roll	Result
1	Ankheg	11	Lizard, minotaur
2	Carru	12	Mekillot
3	Cilops	13	Pterax
4	Erdland	14	Rasclinn
5	Flailer	15	Razorwing
6	Corak	16	Ruktoi
7	Inix	17	Scorpion, giant
8	Jhakar	18	Spider, giant
9	Kes'trekel	19	Tigone
10	Kirre	20	Wyvern

#### Complete Healing (psychometabolic science)

MAC: 7  
 PSP cost: 25/5  
 Range: 0  
 Area of Effect: Personal  
 Prerequisite: None

This power allows the user to heal himself completely of all ailments, wounds, and normal diseases. He must place himself in a trance for 24 hours to accomplish the healing. (The trance is deep; it can't be broken unless the user loses 5 or more hit points.) During the healing trance, the user's body repairs itself at an incredible rate. At the end of the 24 hours, he awakens, restored to complete health in every regard except for the PSPs expended to use the power. If the user fails his MTHACO roll, the power can't be activated; the trance breaks after 1 hour, costing 5 PSPs.

#### Metamorphosis (psychometabolic science)

MAC: 4  
 PSP cost: 6/3  
 Range: 0  
 Area of Effect: Personal  
 Prerequisite: None

This power resembles magical *polymorphing*, but it has a wider application. The user can change himself into *anything* with approximately the same mass as his body: a wolf, a chair, or

even a tree. While in this form, the user retains his own hit points and THAC0, but he gains the AC of the new form. He also gains all physical attacks the form allows, but no magical or special abilities. (A new attack ability depends on the form chosen; a tree, for example, can't attack, so it has no THAC0.) Nonmagical movement is also gained. If the user metamorphs into another character race, use the *MONSTROUS MANUAL™* or *DARK SUN MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM* descriptions for that race.

Some forms have intrinsic advantages. Changing into a fish or rock renders the user immune to drowning, though he doesn't retain any senses not normally associated with his new form. He may opt to keep some of his own senses when he transforms, but these are likely to give him away.

Like any massive change of shape, metamorphosis causes great physical stress. The user must make a system shock roll. If the roll fails, he expends 6 PSPs, changes form for 1 round, and immediately passes out for 2d6 turns.

#### Shadowform (psychometabolic science)

MAC: 5  
PSP cost: 5/2  
Range: 0  
Area of Effect: Personal  
Prerequisite: None

This power transforms the user into living shadow. The user, his clothing, armor, and up to 20 pounds of equipment all transform. He can blend perfectly into any other shadow. His movement rate, however, is now a 6 (regardless of what it was before), and he can only travel through darkness and shadow. Areas of open light are impassable.

While in shadowform, the user can only be noticed by life detection, other types of psionic detection, or by a *true seeing* spell. He can't harm anyone physically or manipulate any corporeal objects, but he can use psionic powers.



#### Adrenaline Control (psychometabolic devotion)

MAC: 6  
PSP cost: 5/2  
Range: 0  
Area of Effect: Personal  
Prerequisite: None

This power temporarily boosts the amount of adrenaline in the user's system, giving him physical advantages. He gains 1d6 points to divide among his Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution scores as he chooses, thus increasing them while the power is in effect. He receives all of the normal bonuses for high ability scores during this period. (If used to increase Constitution, the user may temporarily gain bonus hit points. Damage suffered is subtracted from the extra hit points first.)

Exceeding racial maximums is dangerous. When an attribute is increased beyond the racial maximum and the user stops paying the PSP cost, he must make a system shock check; he suffers 1d6 points of physical damage if the roll fails.

#### Body Control (psychometabolic devotion)

MAC: 5  
PSP cost: 6/2  
Range: 0  
Area of Effect: Personal  
Prerequisite: None

This power allows the user to adapt his body to a hostile environment. The change must be keyed to a specific surrounding: water, acid, extreme heat, extreme cold, an elemental plane, etc. If the power works, the user not only survives, he behaves like a native organism. He can breathe and move normally,

taking no damage from the environment. However, a character who can survive extreme cold is still vulnerable to a cone of *cold*.

#### Body Equilibrium (psychometabolic devotion)

MAC: 6  
PSP cost: 2/1  
Range: 0  
Area of Effect: Personal  
Prerequisite: None

This power allows the user to adjust his body weight to correspond to the surface he's standing on. Thus, he can walk on water, quicksand, silt, or even a spider's web without sinking or breaking through. If the user is falling when he activates this power, he falls slowly enough to escape injury. Because of how light the user becomes when this power is in effect, he must be wary of wind gusts, which can easily blow him about.

#### Body Weaponry (psychometabolic devotion)

MAC: 6  
PSP cost: 6/3  
Range: 0  
Area of Effect: Personal  
Prerequisite: None

This power allows the user to convert one of his arms into a weapon. Virtually any sort of weapon can be imitated, except ranged weapons (such as bows) or any weapon the user isn't proficient with. The arm actually becomes rock, bone, wood, or metal and assumes the weapon's form. It behaves in every respect like a normal weapon of the chosen type, with the bonus that it can't be dropped or stolen.

#### Cannibalize (psychometabolic devotion)

MAC: 7  
PSP cost: 0  
Range: 0  
Area of Effect: Personal  
Prerequisite: 5th level

This power allows the user to cannibalize his own body for extra PSPs. When activated successfully, the user can take Constitution points and convert them directly to PSPs at a ratio of 1:8 (1 Constitution point equals 8 PSPs). The user can access these PSPs any time, as if they were part of his total.

The Constitution reduction isn't permanent, but it is debilitating and long-lasting. The user immediately loses bonus hit points. His system shock and resurrection survival chances are reduced. All psychometabolic powers receive MAC bonuses (making them harder to use) equal to the number of Constitution points that were cannibalized. The user recovers one cannibalized point of Constitution per week of rest. Rest means staying quietly in a safe place; adventuring is not allowed.

#### Cell Adjustment (psychometabolic devotion)

MAC: 6  
PSP cost: 5+  
Range: Touch  
Area of Effect: Individual  
Prerequisite: None

This power allows the user to heal wounds and cure nonmagical diseases (excluding such unnatural diseases as mummy rot and lycanthropy). He can cure a disease in 1 round by spending 5 PSPs and making a successful MTHAC0 roll. If the roll fails, the disease is too prevalent in the victim's system. The user must continue spending 5 PSPs each round until he succeeds in activating the power. Note that a cure performed

through this power doesn't automatically restore lost hit points. However, the user can heal up to 4 points of damage in each subsequent round by spending 5 PSPs per hit point recovered (4 hit points for 20 PSPs per round maximum). The user can't cure a disease and restore hit points during the same round.

**Chameleon Power** (psichometabolic devotion)

MAC: 7 (base)  
PSP cost: 4/1  
Range: 0  
Area of Effect: Personal  
Prerequisite: None

This power changes the coloration of the user's skin, clothing, and equipment to match the nearest background. The match is automatic; the user doesn't choose the appearance. The change takes several seconds to occur. As the user moves, the coloration changes and shifts to reflect any changes in the surroundings.

This power makes the user extremely difficult to spot. For every round the power is in effect and the user remains still, he can avoid detection simply by successfully rolling against the power's MAC. If the user moves, the MAC score increases (to MAC 5). Chameleon power is most effective in natural surroundings, where the user's coloration can best conceal him. In an urban setting, or in an area without natural cover during broad daylight, the power's MAC score is improved to MAC 3.

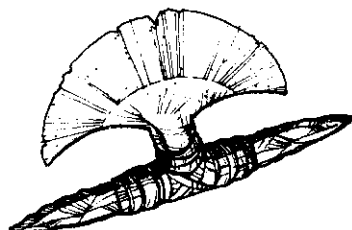
**Heightened Senses** (psichometabolic devotion)

MAC: 7  
PSP cost: 3/1  
Range: 0  
Area of Effect: Personal  
Prerequisite: None

This power allows the user to sharpen all five of his normal senses: sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch. With heightened senses, the user has a good chance to notice thieves hiding in shadows or moving silently. This is represented by a thief's skill chance being cut in half if someone with heightened senses is observing him. Even if the thief is already hidden, he must roll again when the user of this power enters the area.

Someone with heightened senses can also track by sense of smell. He must make an intelligence check every turn to stay on the trail or to recover it if he loses it. While tracking, the user's movement rate is reduced by 50%. The trail can be no more than 24 hours old. Ranges for the user's hearing and seeing are tripled while this power is in effect. Further, he can ingest small quantities of possibly poisoned or impure foods, identifying the substance without causing himself harm. The user can identify almost anything by touch. He can identify any item he has previously handled and can also tell if an item was handled in the last five minutes.

DMs may allow other applications as they see fit.



# Psychoportive Powers

These powers allow psionic travel, moving a character without physical action. Revised sciences and devotions are below.

**Banishment** (psychoportive science)

MAC: 8  
PSP cost: 15/6  
Range: 5 yards  
Area of Effect: Individual  
Prerequisite: Teleport

With this power, the user can teleport a creature against its will to a pocket dimension and hold it there for as long as he chooses to continue spending 15 PSPs per round. The creature being banished must be within 5 yards of the user. The pocket dimension is featureless, with a benign environment—hot or cold, light or dark, but not so much as to cause injury.

The banished creature returns to its original location as soon as the user stops paying the PSP cost. This boomerang feature won't harm the creature. If the creature has access to the Astral or Ethereal Planes, or if it can teleport between planes, it can try to return prior to the expiration of the power by rolling an intelligence check at -3.

**Summon Planar Creature** (psychoportive science)

MAC: 6  
PSP cost: 40/20 or 80/40  
Range: 200 yards  
Area of Effect: 1 creature  
Prerequisite: Teleport

With this power, the user can reach into another plane, grab whatever creature he happens to find there, and teleport it to his own plane. The creature is disoriented for 1 round after arriving, suffering a -2 penalty on all die rolls for initiative, attacks, and saving throws. The user can make the summoned creature appear anywhere within 200 yards of his position. If the user rolls the MAC number exactly, the creature appears within 10 yards. The PSP cost is 40 for a creature from the Astral or Ethereal Planes, 80 for one from the Inner or Outer Planes. Failure costs half the indicated PSPs.

The user chooses the plane from which the creature will come. He doesn't choose the creature, however; that's determined at random. A creature from the Elemental Planes is usually an elemental of the appropriate type. A creature from the Outer Planes could be a native or a visitor. DMs are encouraged to see the PLANESCAPE™ line for ideas.

This power offers no control over the summoned creature and doesn't return it to its home plane after a set amount of time—it merely teleports something from there to here. To be rid of the creature, the user must banish it, teleport it again, kill it, or somehow control it.

**Teleport** (psychoportive science)

MAC: 9 (base)  
PSP cost: 10+/5+  
Range: Unlimited  
Area of Effect: Personal  
Prerequisite: None

This power allows the user to travel to a familiar spot. Teleport is instantaneous and always takes a character to a fixed location. There is a slight audible pop at both ends, signaling use of the power. The destination must be a place the user knows or can picture mentally. Even if the user has never been there, he may still know a location via use of ESP or another power. He



can also teleport to a place even if it has changed from the way he pictures it; rearrangement won't hamper the teleport power.

Restrains don't affect this power. The user can bring his clothes, small items, and equipment (up to one-fifth of his body mass). Doubling the amount of PSPs spent to activate the power lets the user carry up to three times his body mass, or to take along up to two others he has a firm grasp on. The cost to use this power varies with the distance traveled, as indicated below.

Distance	PSP cost	Power's MAC
10 yards	10/5	9
100 yards	20/10	8
1,000 yards	30/15	7
10 miles	40/20	6
100 miles	50/25	5
1,000 miles	60/30	4
10,000 miles	70/35	3
Interplanetary*	100/50	2

\* Teleport only works within a given plane or crystal sphere.

#### Teleport Other (psychoportive science)

MAC:	8 (base)
PSP cost:	10+/5+
Range:	Unlimited
Area of Effect:	1-3 individuals
Prerequisite:	Teleport

This power is identical to teleport, except that it is used to teleport characters other than the user. The user stays where he is while someone else is teleported. The character must be willing to be teleported or otherwise have an open mind. If the user pays twice the usual PSP cost, he can teleport up to three characters—provided they are firmly grasping one another.

Distance	PSP Cost	Power's MAC
10 yards	10/5	8
100 yards	20/10	7
1,000 yards	30/15	6
10 miles	40/20	5
100 miles	50/25	4
1,000 miles	60/30	3
10,000 miles	70/35	2
Interplanetary*	100/50	1

\* Teleport other only works within a given plane or crystal sphere.



#### Astral Projection (psychoportive devotion)

MAC:	8
PSP cost:	3/1
Range:	Not applicable
Area of Effect:	Personal
Prerequisite:	None

This power allows the user to travel without his physical body by creating an astral body that immediately leaps into the Astral Plane. Only creatures or characters who are also on the Astral Plane can see it. A silvery cord connects the astral body to the physical one. This translucent string stretches 10 feet from the astral body before becoming invisible. If the cord is severed, both the astral and physical bodies die—killing the user. The cord is nearly indestructible, however. It can only be severed by a powerful psionic wind or the silver sword of a githyanki.

The Astral Plane is used to get to other destinations—a distant point on the Prime Material or a location on another plane, for example. When the user reaches his destination, a

temporary physical body is formed there. It resembles the user's real body, and the two remain connected by the silvery cord. However, a temporary physical body isn't formed if the user travels to another location on the same plane as his real body. He can view that distant location in astral form, but he can't affect the area in any physical, magical, or psionic way.

#### Blink (psychoportive devotion)

MAC:	9
PSP cost:	4/2
Range:	0
Area of Effect:	Personal
Prerequisite:	Teleport

This power allows the user to make a series of random, short-range teleportations that make him very hard to hit in combat. Each round, the user automatically blinks once at a randomly determined time in the initiative order. Roll 1d10 and note the initiative number of the blink. In order to strike at the user, his opponents must have a better initiative than his blink time. The user may attempt to strike before he blinks, but he must beat the blink initiative with his own roll or hold his action until the end of the round. Each blink carries the user 3d10 feet in a random direction. (Roll 1d8: 1 = straight ahead; 2 = ahead and to the right; 3 = to the right; and so on.) However, the user's blink won't carry him into a solid object or any kind of danger, such as into a fire or over a cliff.

#### Dimensional Door (psychoportive devotion)

MAC:	7 (base)
PSP cost:	3/1
Range:	50+ yards
Area of Effect:	Not applicable
Prerequisite:	None

With this power, the user opens a human-sized portal that leads to the edge of another dimension. The edge acts as a lightning-quick transit system, carrying travelers to a destination chosen by the user. A gleaming portal appears in front of him. At the same time, an identical portal appears wherever the user wants it (within the power's range). The door can have any orientation desired. Stepping into either portal allows a character to immediately step out of the other. Both doors remain in place as long as the PSP cost is met.

A door has only one side and no thickness; it doesn't exist from the "back" and can't be used to screen missile attacks. Up to five characters per round can use a door. If a group lines up, ten can step through per round.

Commuting via this power is disorienting. Indeed, a traveler emerges dazed and can't attack or move for 1 round. Even just poking a head through a door requires a system shock roll. Failure means the hero loses 50% of his current hit points and passes out for 1d6 rounds. Attacks made through a door suffer a -4 penalty. Distances between doors improve the power's MAC, as below.

Distance Between Doors	Power's MAC
50 yards	7
75 yards	5
100 yards	2
150 yards	0
200 yards	-3

### Dimension Walk (psychoportive devotion)

MAC: 8  
PSP cost: 5/2  
Range: Not applicable  
Area of Effect: Personal  
Prerequisite: None

With this power, the user opens a vaguely shimmering portal, which lets him travel from place to place in his own dimension by piercing other dimensions at right angles. This has two advantages over a dimensional door, the first being that a dimension walk isn't physically traumatizing, and the second being that the range of travel is greater. (The user can actually travel through this dimension at the speed of 21 miles per turn.) However, this power allows *only* the user to travel, and the portal closes behind him instantly.

The user finds himself engulfed in a featureless, inky grayness. He can't see where he is or where he's going. He has only his instinct to guide him, and he must make a Wisdom check every turn. If these checks succeed, he'll find himself at his chosen destination when he steps out of the dimensional realm. If any check fails, he strays off course by several miles. The DM can place the character in any location within the maximum distance he traveled from his starting point. It's up to the user to figure out his location, as the power does nothing to help him gain his bearings.

The user can take with him whatever he can carry, though *bags of holding* and other dimensional devices spill their contents if taken into the gray realm. If anything lives in the gray, it never bothers with dimension walkers.

### Phase (psychoportive devotion)

MAC: 10  
PSP cost: 6/2  
Range: 0  
Area of Effect: Personal  
Prerequisite: None

This power allows the user to shift his body into a different frequency of motion, making him transparent to the unphased world around him. While this power is in effect, the user can walk through solid matter. No physical force or energy can harm him, though other phased objects or creatures can do so.

A phased character can move vertically at 10 feet per round; over solid ground at his normal movement rate; over water or silt at half normal; and through solid matter at one-fourth the normal rate. If a character fails to pay the cost while moving through solid matter, he takes 3d10 points of damage, falls into a coma for 1d6 hours, and phases immediately into the Ethereal Plane. Note that a phased character isn't affected by gravity. If a hero is falling off a cliff and activates this power, he retains any momentum he had and phases into the ground 2½ feet for every 10 feet he falls. He must then have enough PSPs to reverse his fall and phase out of the ground or suffer the consequences noted above.

A phased character receives a +2 bonus to his MAC during psionic combat and gets a +2 bonus to all saving throws vs. mind-affecting magic or effects. Conversely, his MTHACO receives a -2 penalty.

### Teleport Trigger (psychoportive devotion)

MAC: 8  
PSP cost: 2 per hour/1  
Range: Unlimited  
Area of Effect: Personal  
Prerequisite: Teleport

This power allows the user to establish a specific event that will instantly activate his teleport power. It is a reflexive event, occurring as soon as the conditions are met without any con-

scious effort on the part of the user. After successfully rolling the power's MAC number, the user must specify where he wants to teleport to and define very specifically what conditions will trigger that teleport. These conditions can be anything he chooses, but they must happen in his immediate vicinity to activate the trigger.

When the teleport is triggered, the user must have enough PSPs remaining to pay the teleport cost. (If he doesn't, the power fails to activate.) He must also make a teleport MTHACO roll. If the roll fails, the power doesn't work. The trigger remains active as long as the user pays the PSP cost.

## Telepathic Powers

Telepathic powers involve the direct contact of two or more minds. Revised sciences and devotions are presented below.

### Domination (telepathic science)

MAC: 8  
PSP cost: 6+/3+  
Range: 30 yards  
Area of Effect: Individual  
Prerequisite: Mindlink

This power can only be used on an open mind. With it, the user projects mental commands into the mind of one other being. The dominated target knows what's happening, but he can't resist the user's will, so he is forced to do nearly anything the user wishes. The target's abilities remain unaffected by this power, and he can be made to use any power he possesses, assuming the user knows about it. Domination doesn't reveal facts or secrets about the target.

When domination is attempted, the target makes a saving throw vs. spell. If successful, the target isn't dominated. If the save fails, the target falls under the user's control for as long as the user pays the PSP cost. (The PSP cost is dependent on the target's level, as shown below.) Later, if the target is forced to do something against his alignment, he can make another save to regain his free will.

Target's Level	PSP Cost
1-5 levels or HD	6/3
6-10 levels or HD	12/6
11-15 levels or HD	22/11
16-20 levels or HD	32/16
21+ levels or HD	50/25

### Mindlink (telepathic science)

MAC: 8  
PSP cost: 7+/3+  
Range: Unlimited  
Area of Effect: Individual  
Prerequisite: None

This power can only be used on an open mind, allowing the user to communicate wordlessly with any intelligent creature. This is a two-way communication. It isn't the same as mind reading, because the user receives only those thoughts the target wants to send. Language isn't a barrier to mindlink. The PSP cost is determined by the target's level, as shown below.

Target's level	PSP Cost
1-5 levels or HD	7/3
6-10 levels or HD	8/4
11-15 levels or HD	9/5
16-20 levels or HD	11/6
21+ levels or HD	12/6

**Probe** (telepathic science)

MAC: 8  
 PSP cost: 8+/4+  
 Range: 2 yards  
 Area of Effect: Individual  
 Prerequisite: ESP

This power can only be used against an open mind. With it, the user can dig deeply into a target's subconscious. If the target fails a saving throw vs. spell, then all of his memories and knowledge are accessible to the user—from memories deep below the surface to those still fresh in the target's mind. The information is true (or at least the target believes it to be true).

A probe can be tried during melee if the user is close enough and the target's mind is opened. The user knows when a probed spellcaster is casting a spell and what the general effects of that spell are. The user can learn the answer to one question per round, though DMs may alter this rate. Complex questions and answers may take longer than 1 round to resolve. The PSP cost is per the target's level, as shown below.

Target's Level	PSP Cost
1-5 levels or HD	8/4
6-10 levels or HD	9/5
11-15 levels or HD	10/5
16-20 levels or HD	11/6
21+ levels or HD	13/7

**Psychic Surgery** (telepathic science)

MAC: 8  
 PSP cost: 9+/5+  
 Range: Touch  
 Area of Effect: Individual  
 Prerequisite: Mindlink, 7th level

This power allows the user to repair psionic damage. He can operate on himself if need be, but the power's MAC improves to 5. Phobias, aversions, idiocy, comas, seizures—all these mental ailments and more can be treated and cured. (Curses or magical conditions such as charms can't be cured by this power. Nor can it cure possession, though it can identify such a condition and force psionic combat.) Most such ailments can be cured in 1 turn. If the MTHACO roll fails, the problem is too great for the user; he can try again when he gains a new experience level.

This power has two special uses. First, it can help characters unleash their wild talents. If the user performs this kind of operation successfully, the patient gains a +2% bonus to his wild talent roll.

Second, the user can make the effect of any telepathic power permanent without any PSP costs. The power isn't bestowed upon the recipient, only the effect. This has the following restrictions: 1) The power must have a range greater than 0; 2) the surgeon must know the power and successfully use it on the patient; 3) the user can't do this type of operation to himself or another psionicist; 4) only one power can be made permanent per turn, and 5) if the MTHACO roll equals the MAC number, the procedure takes 2 turns. Likewise, this power can also remove a permanently implanted power. The PSP cost is determined by the target's level, as below.

Target's Level	PSP cost
1-5 levels or HD	9/5
6-10 levels or HD	10/5
11-15 levels or HD	11/6
16-20 levels or HD	12/6
21+ levels or HD	14/7

**Awe** (telepathic devotion)

MAC: 6  
 PSP cost: 4+/2+  
 Range: 0  
 Area of Effect: 20 yards  
 Prerequisite: Mindlink

This power only works on an open mind. With it, the user can cause another character to hold him in awe. Characters affected by this power are mentally cowed; they sense the user's "awesome might." They have no desire to serve or befriend the user, but they won't attack him unless forced to do so. If possible, they'll avoid the user completely and take the first opportunity to escape his presence. The PSP cost for this power is based on the target's level, as shown below.

Target's Level	PSP Cost
1-5 levels or HD	4/2
6-10 levels or HD	5/2
11-15 levels or HD	6/3
16-20 levels or HD	8/4
21+ levels or HD	9/5

**Conceal Thoughts** (telepathic devotion)

MAC: 10  
 PSP cost: 4/2  
 Range: 0  
 Area of Effect: 3 yards  
 Prerequisite: None

This defensive power protects the user against psionic or magical ESP, probes, mindlinks, and other powers and spells that read or detect thoughts. It gives the user a +2 MAC bonus and a +2 to saving throws when defending against such effects.

**ESP** (telepathic devotion)

MAC: 6  
 PSP cost: 6+/3+  
 Range: Unlimited  
 Area of Effect: Individual  
 Prerequisite: None

This power only works on an open mind. Extrasensory perception (ESP) allows the user to read someone else's mind. The user can only perceive surface or active thoughts. He can't use ESP to explore a target's memories or delve into his subconscious. Most intelligent creatures tend to think in words, so language can be a barrier to understanding. Unintelligent creatures think in pictures. Magical thought, such as when a wizard casts a spell, is unintelligible to this power. However, the user can recognize such thoughts as part of the spellcasting process. The PSP cost is shown below.

Target's Level	PSP Cost
1-5 levels or HD	6/3
6-10 levels or HD	7/4
11-15 levels or HD	8/4
16-20 levels or HD	9/5
21+ levels or HD	11/6

**Inflict Pain** (telepathic devotion)

MAC: 5  
 PSP cost: 3+/2+  
 Range: Touch  
 Area of Effect: Individual  
 Prerequisite: Mindlink

This power can only be used on an open mind. It is a particularly nasty form of torture, although no actual harm is inflicted on the target and the power leaves no physical scars or marks.

Only evil characters can learn this power freely; others find their alignments twisting toward evil if they learn and use inflict pain.

If the target is an NPC who is being questioned, he receives a save vs. paralyzation to withstand the agony. If he fails the save, he begs for mercy and answers questions as the DM sees fit. If the user finds a way to employ this power in combat, the target still gets the saving throw. Success means he grits his teeth and keeps on fighting. Failure means the pain imposes a -4 penalty to his attack rolls that round or disrupts and ruins spellcasting. PSP costs depend on the target's level.

Target's Level	PSP Cost
1-5 levels or HD	3/2
6-10 levels or HD	4/2
11-15 levels or HD	5/3
16-20 levels or HD	6/3
21+ levels or HD	8/4

#### Invisibility (telepathic devotion)

MAC: 6  
 PSP cost: 3+/2+  
 Range: 100 yards  
 Area of Effect: Individual  
 Prerequisite: Mindlink

This power can only be used on open minds. It differs significantly from the spell invisibility. This is a delusion that affects specific minds, not an illusion that affects everyone; the only real change occurs in those whose minds were opened. Thus, the user must open each mind he wants to deceive, for only to these minds will he appear invisible. He can see himself, and so can anyone whose mind wasn't opened. Only beings within 100 yards can be affected by this power.

The user must make a separate MTHAC0 roll for each delusion and pay a separate PSP cost for each. A delusion is defined as one invisible character as perceived by one other being. The user can make anyone who is human size or smaller invisible with this power, not just himself. Note that this power affects vision only; observers may still be able to hear or smell "invisible" characters. PSP costs are as follows.

Target's Level	PSP Cost
1-5 levels or HD	3/2
6-10 levels or HD	4/2
11-15 levels or HD	5/3
16-20 levels or HD	6/3
21+ levels or HD	8/4

#### Life Detection (telepathic devotion)

MAC: 7  
 PSP cost: 3/1  
 Range: 100 yards  
 Area of Effect: Varies  
 Prerequisite: None

This power allows the user to scan for the presence of living, thinking creatures within a limited area. If he is scanning at short range, he can cover a large angle. At long range, the angle is significantly reduced. He can scan 180 degrees to a range of 40 yards, 90 degrees to 60 yards, or 30 degrees to 100 yards. One round of scanning detects humans, demihumans, humanoids, mammals, and monsters with 8 or more Hit Dice. A second round detects all creatures with less than 8 Hit Dice. In either case, the user receives an accurate count.

The DM should make the MTHAC0 roll and keep it secret from the player. If the user doesn't detect anything, he won't know whether nothing's there or the power failed.

#### Send Thoughts (telepathic devotion)

MAC: 8  
 PSP cost: 3+/2+  
 Range: Unlimited  
 Area of Effect: Individual  
 Prerequisite: None

This power only works on an open mind, allowing the user to send his thoughts to another mind via one-way communication. He can send information or simply use the power to distract the target. If the target is a wizard casting a spell, he gets a save vs. spell. If the wizard fails his save, his concentration is broken and the spell fails. If the target is distracted while in melee combat, he receives a -2 penalty to all attack rolls.

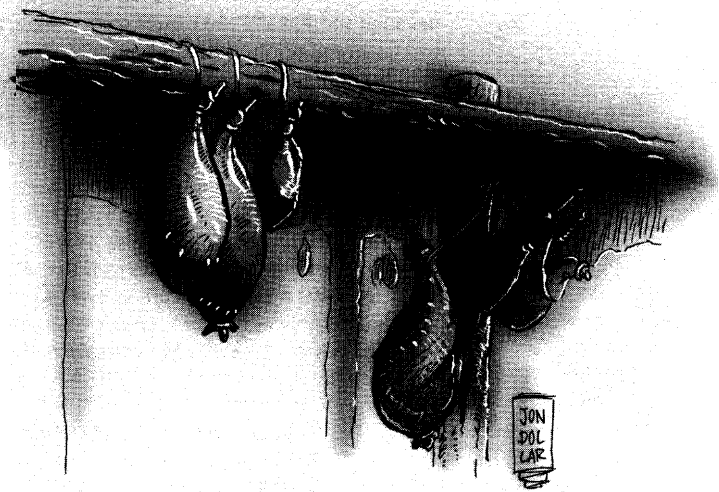
Target's Level	PSP Cost
1-5 levels or HD	3/2
6-10 levels or HD	4/2
11-15 levels or HD	5/3
16-20 levels or HD	6/3
21+ levels or HD	8/4

#### Sight link (telepathic devotion)

MAC: 6  
 PSP cost: 5+ per turn/3+  
 Range: Unlimited  
 Area of Effect: Individual  
 Prerequisite: Mindlink

Only usable against open minds, this power lets the user tap into another's visual senses, allowing him to see whatever that being sees. (The user's own vision is unaffected.) If the linked character is subjected to a gaze attack, the user must make an appropriate saving throw or also be affected by the gaze.

Target's Level	PSP Cost
1-5 levels or HD	5/3
6-10 levels or HD	6/3
11-15 levels or HD	7/4
16-20 levels or HD	8/4
21+ levels or HD	10/5



# Psionic Powers Summary

Below is a listing of all psionic powers currently in the AD&D® game system. Each has two new statistics, a MAC score and a PSP cost, replacing the old power score, initial cost, and maintenance cost from the original source. The number to the right of the slash is the cost if the MTHACO roll fails. All other details of the powers remain the same, unless new descriptions have been provided in this book. Powers are from *The Complete Psionics Handbook* (2117) unless noted otherwise.

— Clairsentient Sciences —			— Psychokinetic Sciences —			— Psychometabolic Sciences —		
Power	MAC	PSP Cost	Power	MAC	PSP Cost	Power	MAC	PSP Cost
Appraise	6	14/6	Create object <sup>1,2</sup>	6	7/3	Animal affinity <sup>1</sup>	5	7/3
Aura sight <sup>1</sup>	7	9/3	Detonate <sup>1,2</sup>	5	15/5	Complete healing <sup>1</sup>	7	25/5
Clairaudience <sup>1</sup>	8	5/2	Disintegrate <sup>2</sup>	7	30/10	Death field	3	35/15
Clairvoyance <sup>1</sup>	7	5/2	Kinetic control <sup>3</sup>	7	8/3	Elemental		
Cosmic awareness <sup>2,3</sup>	7	12/6	Megakinesis <sup>2,3</sup>	8	20+/10+	composition <sup>2,3</sup>	5	8/3
Detection <sup>3</sup>	9	8/3	Molecular			Energy containment	6	9/3
Object reading <sup>1</sup>	7	12/6	rearrangement <sup>2</sup>	6	12/hour/6	Life draining	6	6/3
Precognition	8	18/10	Project force <sup>1,2</sup>	6	10/4	Metamorphosis <sup>1</sup>	4	6/3
Psychic clone <sup>2</sup>	6	16/6	Suppress magic <sup>2,3</sup>	5	8+/4+	Nerve manipulation <sup>2,3</sup>	6	14/5
Sensitivity to psychic			Telekinesis <sup>1</sup>	8	3+/1+	Poison simulation <sup>2,3</sup>	6	16/6
impressions	8	5/3	Telekinetic barrier <sup>2,3</sup>	6	12/5	Regenerate <sup>2,3</sup>	5	8/turn/4
Spirit lore <sup>2,3</sup>	7	13/5	Telekinetic flight <sup>2,3</sup>	8	7/3	Shadowform <sup>1</sup>	5	5/2
Subjective reality <sup>2,3</sup>	8	14/7				Split personality <sup>2</sup>	8	15/6
True sight <sup>2,3</sup>	8	10/4						

— Clairsentient Devotions —			— Psychokinetic Devotions —			— Psychometabolic Devotions —		
Power	MAC	PSP Cost	Power	MAC	PSP Cost	Power	MAC	PSP cost
All-round vision <sup>1</sup>	8	5/2	Animate object <sup>1,2</sup>	7	5/2	Absorb disease	6	10/4
Bone reading <sup>2,3</sup>	10	15/5	Animate shadow	8	4/2	Accelerate <sup>3</sup>	6	10/5
Combat mind <sup>1</sup>	6	4/2	Ballistic attack <sup>2</sup>	6	5/3	Adrenaline control <sup>1</sup>	6	5/2
Danger sense <sup>1</sup>	8	3/1	Compact <sup>4</sup>	9	4/1	Aging	5	9/5
Environment <sup>4</sup>	7	5/3	Concentrate water <sup>2,4</sup>	6	10/3	Alter features <sup>2,3</sup>	7	4/turn/2
Feel light	8	5/3	Control body <sup>2</sup>	6	8/4	Biofeedback	6	4/2
Feel moisture <sup>4</sup>	9	3/1	Control flames <sup>2</sup>	8	4/2	Body control <sup>1</sup>	5	6/2
Feel sound <sup>1</sup>	8	4/2	Control light	8	6/2	Body equilibrium <sup>1</sup>	6	2/1
Hear light	8	4/2	Control sound <sup>1</sup>	5	3/1	Body weaponry <sup>1</sup>	6	6/3
Know course <sup>3</sup>	7	4/hour/2	Control wind <sup>1,2</sup>	5	12/5	Cannibalize <sup>1,2</sup>	7	0
Know direction	8	1/1	Create sound <sup>2</sup>	7	5/2	Carapace <sup>4</sup>	8	2/1
Know location <sup>1</sup>	8	8/3	Cyrokinesis <sup>3</sup>	10	7/3	Catfall	7	4/2
Martial trance <sup>1,2</sup>	7	7/3	Deflect <sup>2,3</sup>	8	4/2	Cause decay	6	4/2
Poison sense <sup>1</sup>	10	1/1	Ghost writing <sup>2,4</sup>	9	5/2	Cause sleep <sup>3</sup>	9	4/2
Predestination <sup>2,4</sup>	9	9/year/4	Inertial barrier <sup>1,2</sup>	6	6/2	Cell adjustment <sup>1</sup>	6	5+/3+
Probability			Levitation <sup>1,2</sup>	8	5/2	Chameleon power <sup>1</sup>	7	4/1
manipulation <sup>2,3</sup>	6	10/5	Magnetize <sup>3</sup>	8	2+/1+	Chemical simulation	5	7/3
Psionic sense <sup>1,2</sup>	8	2/1	Mass manipulation <sup>2,3</sup>	7	9/3	Cognitive trance <sup>3</sup>	8	4/2
Radial navigation	7	6/hour/3	Molecular agitation <sup>1</sup>	10	7/3	Displacement	6	4/2
Retrospection <sup>2</sup>	8	120/40	Molecular bonding <sup>2,3</sup>	8	4/2	Double pain	6	7/2
Safe path <sup>2,3</sup>	8	6/3	Molecular			Ectoplasmic form	5	9/3
See ethereal <sup>3</sup>	7	3/1	manipulation <sup>1,2</sup>	7	6/2	Enhanced strength	8	varies
See magic <sup>3</sup>	9	6/2	Momentum theft <sup>2,3</sup>	7	5+/3+	Enhancement <sup>2</sup>	9	14/6
See sound <sup>1</sup>	8	4/2	Opposite reaction <sup>2,4</sup>	7	5/2	Expansion	6	3/1
Sensitivity to			Return flight <sup>4</sup>	7	3/1	Fighting trance <sup>3</sup>	9	2/1
observation <sup>3</sup>	10	5/2	Soften	8	3/1	Flesh armor	6	5/2
Spirit sense	8	8/4	Stasis field <sup>2</sup>	6	20/10	Forced symmetry <sup>4</sup>	7	12/5
Trail of destruction <sup>2,4</sup>	9	5/2	Static discharge <sup>2,3</sup>	7	5/2	Gird <sup>2</sup>	7	2 x cost
Watcher's ward <sup>3</sup>	7	3/hour/1				Graft weapon	5	5/2
Weather prediction <sup>2,4</sup>	7	10/4				Heightened senses <sup>1</sup>	7	3/1

— Psychometabolic Devotions —

Continued

Power	MAC	PSP	Cost
Immovability	5	7/2	
Intensify <sup>2</sup>	6	6+/3+	
Iron will <sup>3</sup>	10	4/2	
Lend health	7	4/1	
Magnify <sup>2</sup>	8	varies	
Mind over body	8	10/day/4	
Pheromone discharge <sup>4</sup>	8	2/1	
Photosynthesis <sup>3</sup>	7	3/turn/1	
Prolong <sup>2</sup>	5	3/1	
Reduction	6	varies	
Rigidity <sup>2,4</sup>	6	5/3	
Share strength	5	3/1	
Spider touch <sup>3</sup>	8	3/1	
Splice <sup>2</sup>	varies	varies	
Strength of the land <sup>2,4</sup>	6	4/2	
Suspend animation	6	12/5	

— Psychoportive Sciences —

Power	MAC	PSP	Cost
Banishment <sup>1,2</sup>	8	15/6	
Planar transposition <sup>2,3</sup>	6	varies	
Probability travel	8	11/hour/5	
Summon planar creature <sup>1,2</sup>	6	40/20 or 80/40	
Summon planar energy <sup>2,3</sup>	8	30/10	
Teleport <sup>1</sup>	9	10+/5+	
Teleport other <sup>1,2</sup>	8	10+/5+	
Time travel <sup>2,3</sup>	varies	30+/hr/15+	
Wormhole <sup>2,3</sup>	7	12+/6+	

— Psychoportive Devotions —

Power	MAC	PSP	Cost
Astral projection <sup>1</sup>	8	3/1	
Blink <sup>1,2,3</sup>	9	4/2	
Dimensional door <sup>1</sup>	7	3/1	
Dimensional screen <sup>2,3</sup>	6	7/3	
Dimension blade <sup>2,3</sup>	7	5/2	
Dimension walk <sup>1</sup>	8	5/2	
Dream travel	7	1/25 mi/1	
Duodimension <sup>3</sup>	6	6/3	
Ethereal traveler <sup>4</sup>	8	5/2	
Phase <sup>1,3</sup>	10	6/2	
Phase object <sup>2,3</sup>	9	6+/3+	
Pocket dimension <sup>3</sup>	10	6/turn/3	
Shadow walk <sup>3</sup>	7	9+/4+	
Spatial distortion <sup>3</sup>	6	5+/3+	
Summon object <sup>2,3</sup>	6	30+/12+	
Teleport lock <sup>2,3</sup>	8	4/2	
Teleport object <sup>2,4</sup>	7	25+/10+	
Teleport trigger <sup>1,2</sup>	8	2/hour/1	
Time dilation <sup>2,3</sup>	8	varies	
Time duplicate <sup>2,3</sup>	8	22/11	
Time shift <sup>2</sup>	8	16/6	
Time/space anchor	8	3/1	
Wrench	8	10/5	

— Telepathic Sciences —

Power	MAC	PSP	Cost
Aura alteration <sup>2</sup>	8	10/5	
Domination <sup>1,2</sup>	8	6+/3+	
Empower <sup>2</sup>	4	varies	
Fate link <sup>2</sup>	5	6/turn/3	
Hailucination <sup>2,3</sup>	7	varies	
Mass domination <sup>2</sup>	6	varies	
Mindflame <sup>2,3</sup>	7	30/15	
Mindlink <sup>1</sup>	8	7+/3+	
Mindwipe <sup>2</sup>	5	8/3	
Probe <sup>1,2</sup>	8	8+/4+	
Psychic surgery <sup>1,2</sup>	8	9+/5+	
Superior invisibility <sup>2</sup>	6	6/rd/target	
Switch personality <sup>2</sup>	5	40/15	
Ultrablast <sup>2</sup>	5	75/25	

— Telepathic Devotions —

Power	MAC	PSP	Cost
Acceptance <sup>4</sup>	8	4/turn/2	
Alignment stabilization <sup>4</sup>	9	11/day/4	
Amnesia <sup>2,3</sup>	9	varies	
Attraction <sup>2</sup>	7	8/3	
Aversion <sup>2</sup>	7	8/3	
Awe <sup>1,2</sup>	6	4+/2+	
Beast mastery <sup>2,4</sup>	8	6+/day/3+	
Conceal thoughts <sup>1</sup>	10	4/2	
Convergence <sup>2</sup>	10	8/3	
Daydream <sup>2</sup>	10	4/2	
Empathy	10	3/1	
ESP <sup>1</sup>	6	6+/3+	
False sensory input <sup>2</sup>	6	5/2	
Focus forgiveness <sup>4</sup>	8	4/hour/2	
Hivemind <sup>4</sup>	9	2/1	
Identity penetration	8	6/3	
Impossible task <sup>4</sup>	9	6/day/3	
Incarnation awareness	7	12/5	
Inflict pain <sup>1,2</sup>	5	3+/2+	
Insect mind <sup>4</sup>	7	3/1	
Invincible foes <sup>2</sup>	8	6/2	
Invisibility <sup>1,2</sup>	6	3+/2+	
Life detection <sup>1</sup>	7	3/1	
Mind bar	7	5/2	
Mysterious traveler <sup>4</sup>	9	2/1	
Phobia amplification <sup>2</sup>	9	5/2	
Plant mind <sup>3</sup>	6	4/2	
Post-hypnotic suggestion <sup>2</sup>	7	3/HD/3	
Psionic inflation <sup>2</sup>	8	7/3	
Psionic residue <sup>4</sup>	8	15/5	
Psionic vampirism <sup>2,3</sup>	8	varies	
Psychic blade <sup>2,3</sup>	6	5+/2+	
Psychic drain <sup>2</sup>	7	14/6	
Psychic impersonation <sup>2</sup>	10	5/hour/2	

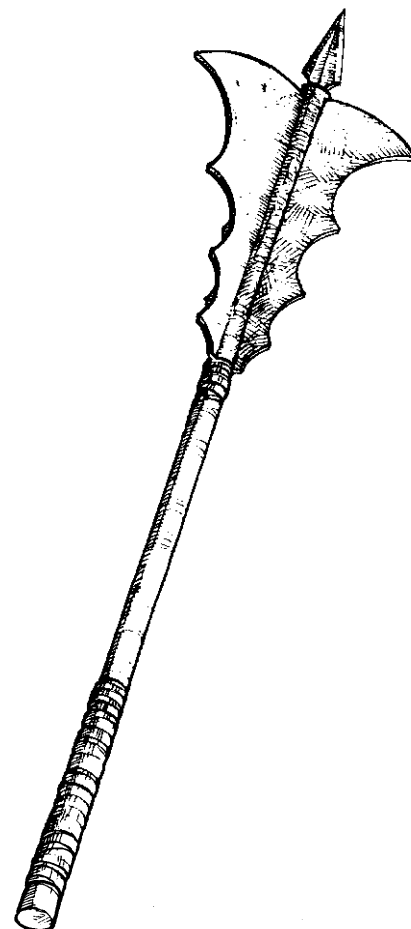
— Telepathic Devotions —

Continued

Power	MAC	PSP	Cost
Psychic messenger	5	4/2	
Receptacle <sup>2</sup>	8	0	
Reptile mind <sup>4</sup>	7	2/1	
Repugnance <sup>2</sup>	8	8/3	
Send thoughts <sup>1</sup>	8	3+/2+	
Sensory suppression <sup>2,3</sup>	7	varies	
Sight link <sup>1,2</sup>	6	5+/turn/3+	
Sound link <sup>2</sup>	6	5+/turn/2+	
Suppress fear <sup>3</sup>	10	5/2	
Synaptic static <sup>2</sup>	6	11/5	
Taste link <sup>2</sup>	6	5+/turn/2+	
Telepathic projection <sup>2</sup>	9	5/2	
True worship <sup>4</sup>	10	5/2	
Truthear <sup>2</sup>	10	3/1	

Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Revised power described in this book.
- <sup>2</sup> Power requires a prerequisite to use.
- <sup>3</sup> Power described in *The Will and the Way* (2431).
- <sup>4</sup> Power described in *Dragon Kings* (2408).





# The Way of the Psionicist:

Psionic Abilities and Powers

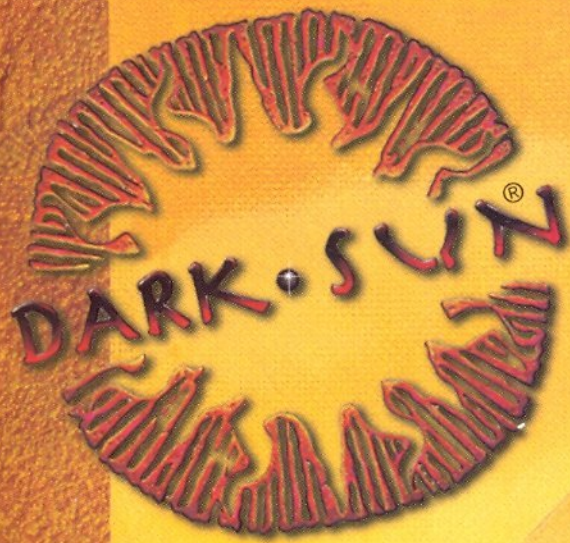
By Bill Slavicsek and Dale Donovan

A wild talent has the will, but rarely the desire, to  
conquer his internal forces and become a true  
master of the way. . . .

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# Mystery of the Ancients





# Ruins from the Blue Age





# Mystery of the Ancients

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## Word on the Streets

*"The Great Earthquake was a nightmare! I never felt the ground shake so hard in all my life. I was near Kalak's ziggurat when the rumbling began. Cracks opened in the stone walls, and pieces of rock fell toward the usual midday crowd. It was terrible, and I was lucky to walk away without a scratch."*

—Selguor the Trader

*"The Dragon is dead, I tell you. I was watching the Council meeting when Rikus and Sadira presented their report. If you want to call either of them a liar, I'd be happy to introduce you to them."*

—Kavette the Potter

*"Wizards living out in the open, just like regular citizens? It's strange, let me tell you. But Sadira is one of them, and look at all the good she's done for Tyr. And they are preservers, after all. I just can't help wondering if Kalak—curse his name—was a preserver once or not."*

—Turog, Arena Champion

*"Did you hear? The Council has called for volunteers to find a path through the Ringing Mountains to the Hinterlands. They say that there are settlements to trade with on the other side, and that Tyr needs new allies now more than ever. Are you going to sign up?"*

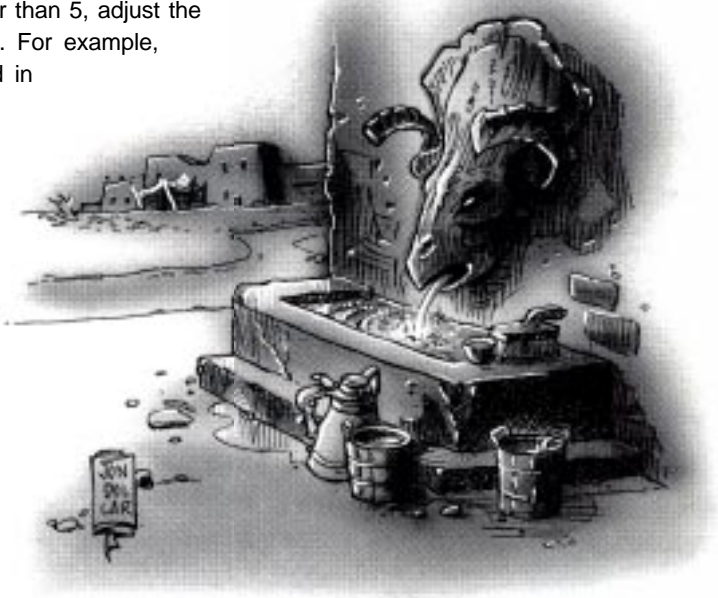
—Deniva the Dancer



*Mystery of the Ancients* is an adventure designed for a party of four to six player characters (PCs) of 3rd to 5th levels. A good mix of classes is recommended, for every mystery on Athas hides a dozen dangers and a horde of foes that must be vanquished. Read *The Age of Heroes: Rules for Conquering the Savage Land*, *The Way of the Psionicist*, and *The Wanderer's Chronicle* before running this adventure. The information in this book is for Dungeon Masters (DMs) only. Players should stop reading now.

In addition to this adventure and the rest of this boxed set, the DM needs copies of the AD&D® *Player's Handbook* and *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide*. Copies of the *DARK SUN® MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® Appendix I* and *II* are also useful.

This adventure is presented as a way for new characters to be introduced into a *DARK SUN* campaign that begins with the events detailed in this boxed set. However, it can also be used to get characters from the previous edition caught up to the current timeline. If a DM's party consists of player characters whose levels are higher than 5, adjust the encounters accordingly. For example, villains can be boosted in level, stronger monsters can be substituted for weaker ones, and the number of foes encountered can be increased—all without changing the basic story.



# The Adventure's Setting

*Mystery of the Ancients* begins four months after the Great Earthquake thundered through the Tyr valley and the events of *The Cerulean Storm* novel unfolded. It's the Year of Desert's Fury in the 190th King's Age, but most people from Tyr call it Free Year 11.


With the advent of the Great Earthquake, a series of problems has plagued Tyr, which the Tyrian Council of Advisers has yet to bring under control. Streets, buildings, and other structures throughout the city-state have been damaged by the quake and the continuing aftershocks, requiring the launch of an extensive repair and maintenance effort. The natural disasters have turned a significant portion of the population into a frightened mob. This has led to looting, violence, and incidents of panic in the streets. It has fallen to the Council to restore order and bolster the confidence of the citizens.

Natural disasters aside, other changes happening in the world have inspired panic of other sorts. For example, news of the Dragon's death was met with skepticism and then elation by Tyr's citizens, resulting in a minor riot in the Merchant's District. The riot started when five dwarf herders and their half-giant companion decided that the return of Durgonis was imminent. Though the dwarf god Durgonis has few followers in modern-day Athas, those who keep his faith are fervently devoted. Unfortunately, his return is prophesied to occur at the same time that a massive sandstorm buries the world. The dwarves (and their half-giant companion) reacted with fear-induced madness, striking wildly at those around them.

Currently, hordes of monsters—frightened out of the mountains by the continuing tremors—flood the valley in search of stable ground. This, in turn, has caused those who live in the client villages surrounding the city to seek shelter within the city gates. Inside the gates, rumors spread like wild fire, and on every street corner a dozen conversations discuss the issues of the moment—including the tales of dead dragon kings, riots in other city-states, and new creatures appearing in the wastes.

Among the calmer citizens, there are those who doubt the tale of the Dragon's death. Even after the popular heroes Rikus and Sadira spoke in the arena and explained what happened to an overflowing crowd, a significant minority refuses to believe a word of it. Even a decade after the event, there remain those who also believe that King Kalak isn't dead and that he's going to return to reclaim Tyr—with a vengeance. Naturally, after only four months there are still those who believe the Dragon lives.





News of the changes in the other city-states has also reached Tyr with each passing caravan, and the citizens are growing more and more concerned by these reports. Will the madness and disease that have gripped Raam somehow cross the desert to Tyr? Will the merchants rise up and take over like they did in Balic? Will Urik's army emerge from the gates King Hamanu sealed to wage a new war against the Free City? These questions and more fill the taverns and are debated in the Council chambers.

With all of these things going on, the last thing the Council needed was another problem arriving out of the wilderness. Unfortunately, that's exactly what the Council got. A strange party of pterrans arrived in Tyr a few days ago. These aren't pterrann savages like the ones Tyrians are familiar with, however. These are civilized, highly intelligent traders seeking to open relations with the Free City. The Council admitted the pterrans and met with them behind closed doors. When the chamber doors finally opened yesterday, word emerged that these pterrans are from the Hinterland village of Lost Scale, far across the Ringing Mountains. The pterrans, led by Ptelacc Goldeye, want to establish trade with Tyr. Because of the continuing aftershocks, however, the path they forged through the mountains collapsed behind them, and they don't know how to get back to their people. What's more, part of their group was separated during the aftershocks. The lost pterrans, if they're still alive, are trapped somewhere in the mountains.

In the meantime, the halflings of the Forest Ridge believe that the Great Earthquake and its aftershocks are the first omens of great and terrible things to come. Some halflings, such as tribal clerics and druids, have begun searching for other portents to determine if other ancient prophecies are coming to fruition. The halfling druid Pooq, for example, has gathered a party of warriors and set out for the Ringing Mountains. He'll soon cross paths with heroes from Tyr as he seeks his own answers from the mysteries of the ancients.

## Summary of the Adventure

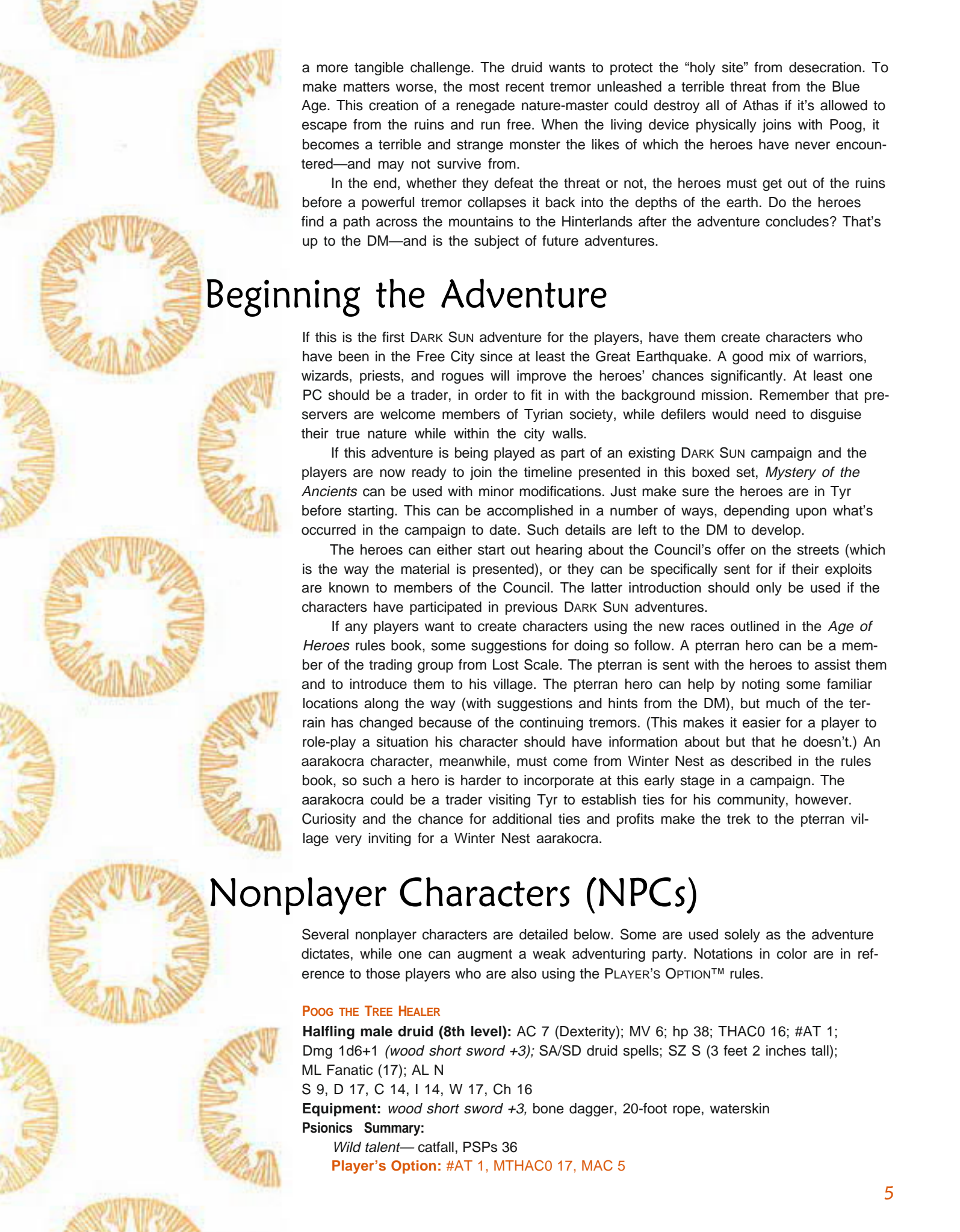
The people of Tyr have always been a cut above the average Athasian. From high nobles to lowly ex-slaves, Tyrians are proud, brave, and stubborn to a fault. One group of Tyrians, the player characters, must now reach even greater levels of bravery. They must become heroes, or all of Athas could be destroyed by a long-forgotten horror from an ancient past.

The mission offered by the Council is simple: The heroes are to escort the pterrann traders back to their Hinterland village, make a detailed map of the route, find and rescue the missing members of the pterrann party (if possible), and open up potential trade channels to the village leaders by making an offer of friendship. The adventure starts in Tyr, then moves west as the heroes try to find a route through the Ringing Mountains. Along the way, a few obstacles will deter the heroes. These include natural disasters, assassins, feral halflings, and the secret, central element of this adventure: a living weapon, a remnant from the Blue Age . . . and still functioning.

In **Part 1**, the heroes learn about the Council's offer on the streets of Tyr (or are specifically summoned if they've had prior dealings with the Council). They appear before the Council, meeting such notables as Rikus and Sadira. A test is presented to determine if the heroes are right for the mission. If they pass the test (or are otherwise recruited), the journey to find a path through the Ringing Mountains begins.

In **Part 2**, the details of the first days of the journey play out. Along the way, the heroes must deal with aftershocks and rock slides, crazed thri-kreen, and disturbed beasts driven to violence by the shifting earth. The lost group of civilized pterrans is located in the Forest Ridge, where they're being attacked by a band of tarek raiders. This part of the adventure ends when a massive aftershock causes the earth to split apart, leaving the heroes hanging in midair—literally!

In **Part 3**, the heroes discover the ruins of an ancient city in the crevasse opened by the massive aftershock. The heroes can explore the ruins, trying to unravel the long-forgotten mysteries the place presents. They might discover a prophecy that has repercussions for the unfolding campaign (as presented in future published products), or they might learn that the ruins are all that's left of a halfling city that existed during the Blue Age—when Athas was covered by water! Pooq and his halfling warriors arrive to present



a more tangible challenge. The druid wants to protect the “holy site” from desecration. To make matters worse, the most recent tremor unleashed a terrible threat from the Blue Age. This creation of a renegade nature-master could destroy all of Athas if it’s allowed to escape from the ruins and run free. When the living device physically joins with Poog, it becomes a terrible and strange monster the likes of which the heroes have never encountered—and may not survive from.

In the end, whether they defeat the threat or not, the heroes must get out of the ruins before a powerful tremor collapses it back into the depths of the earth. Do the heroes find a path across the mountains to the Hinterlands after the adventure concludes? That’s up to the DM—and is the subject of future adventures.

## Beginning the Adventure

If this is the first DARK SUN adventure for the players, have them create characters who have been in the Free City since at least the Great Earthquake. A good mix of warriors, wizards, priests, and rogues will improve the heroes’ chances significantly. At least one PC should be a trader, in order to fit in with the background mission. Remember that preservers are welcome members of Tyrian society, while defilers would need to disguise their true nature while within the city walls.

If this adventure is being played as part of an existing DARK SUN campaign and the players are now ready to join the timeline presented in this boxed set, *Mystery of the Ancients* can be used with minor modifications. Just make sure the heroes are in Tyr before starting. This can be accomplished in a number of ways, depending upon what’s occurred in the campaign to date. Such details are left to the DM to develop.

The heroes can either start out hearing about the Council’s offer on the streets (which is the way the material is presented), or they can be specifically sent for if their exploits are known to members of the Council. The latter introduction should only be used if the characters have participated in previous DARK SUN adventures.

If any players want to create characters using the new races outlined in the *Age of Heroes* rules book, some suggestions for doing so follow. A pterrann hero can be a member of the trading group from Lost Scale. The pterrann is sent with the heroes to assist them and to introduce them to his village. The pterrann hero can help by noting some familiar locations along the way (with suggestions and hints from the DM), but much of the terrain has changed because of the continuing tremors. (This makes it easier for a player to role-play a situation his character should have information about but that he doesn’t.) An aarakocra character, meanwhile, must come from Winter Nest as described in the rules book, so such a hero is harder to incorporate at this early stage in a campaign. The aarakocra could be a trader visiting Tyr to establish ties for his community, however. Curiosity and the chance for additional ties and profits make the trek to the pterrann village very inviting for a Winter Nest aarakocra.

## Nonplayer Characters (NPCs)

Several nonplayer characters are detailed below. Some are used solely as the adventure dictates, while one can augment a weak adventuring party. Notations in color are in reference to those players who are also using the PLAYER’S OPTION™ rules.

### POOG THE TREE HEALER

**Halfling male druid (8th level):** AC 7 (Dexterity); MV 6; hp 38; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1 (*wood short sword +3*); SA/SD druid spells; SZ S (3 feet 2 inches tall); ML Fanatic (17); AL N


S 9, D 17, C 14, I 14, W 17, Ch 16

**Equipment:** *wood short sword +3*, bone dagger, 20-foot rope, waterskin

**Psionics Summary:**

*Wild talent*— catfall, PSPs 36

**Player’s Option:** #AT 1, MTHAC0 17, MAC 5



**Description:** Poog the Tree Healer is an average-sized halfling druid who collects oral stories concerning the ancient nature-masters of the Blue Age. Braided into his wild hair are a variety of leaves and twigs that signify his calling and his patron spirit. He paints his body with tones of green and brown, using patterns common to the feral halflings of the Forest Ridge. He carries a sword fashioned of enchanted wood, and he doesn't hesitate to use it in defense of the forest or the sacred sites of the ancient nature-masters.

Poog claims a large area of the Forest Ridge as his guarded land. His patron spirit resides in the great trees of the forest, lending them vitality and power. The druid and spirit joined after Poog cured a creeping fungus that had infected a stand of trees in the region.

#### **PTELLACC GOLDEYE**

**Pterrann male trader (7th level):** AC 6 (lizak-hide armor); MV 12; hp 24; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8-1 (bone long sword); SZ M (6 feet tall); ML Steady (11); AL NG S 14, D 12, C 10, I 13, W 13, Ch 15

**Equipment:** bone long sword, lizak-hide armor, waterskin

**Psionics Summary:** Nil

**Player's Option:** MAC 7

**Description:** The leader of the band of pterrann traders from the Hinterlands wears a tunic of lizak hide and carries a bone long sword at his side. Besides his obviously civilized attire and bearing, Ptellacc Goldeye speaks nearly perfect common with only the slightest hint of an accent. The bag slung across his shoulder overflows with a variety of items—goods brought from his village as well as things he's picked up in his travels.

The consummate trader, Ptellacc has a passion for making deals. If he sees something he likes or if he encounters potential customers of any sort, he launches into his regular sales pitch and haggling persona. He can be quite charming and persuasive, but he won't agree to a bad deal that might hurt his village in the long run. Ptellacc's right eye is the color of gold.

If the heroes agree to take Ptellacc with them on the mission across the Ringing Mountains, the pterrann trader will do his best to help them face the dangers before them. He'll even fight at their side, but for every round after the first the DM should make a morale check to see if the trader keeps his nerve. If Ptellacc fails a morale check, he turns and runs for safety. Otherwise, he fights as bravely as any other member of the team.

#### **FOREG THE ANGRY**

**Tarek male fighter (3rd level):** AC 7; MV 12; hp 22; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8-1 (bone heartpick); SA psionics, +3 damage due to Strength; SD can fight to -10 hp without penalty; SZ M (6½ feet tall); ML Steady (12); AL LN; XP 650

**Psionics Summary:**

Dis 2/Sci 2/Dev 7; PSPs 30

Att: MT, PsC; Def: MBk, TS

**Player's Option:** #AT 1, MTHAC0 18, MAC 7

**Clairensience:** *Sciences*—true sight; *Devotions*—combat mind, martial trance, psionic sense

**Telepathy:** *Sciences*—mindlink; *Devotions*—contact (ESP), invisibility, mind thrust (inflict pain), psychic crush (psychic blade)

**Description:** Foreg the Angry is a huge tarek with a terrible disposition. He leads a tribe of tarek raiders that has recently left the plains it usually called home to seek plunder in the Ringing Mountains. Unfortunately, instead of finding a hiding place among the canyons, Foreg's marauders found only death and destruction when the Great Earthquake hit. Cut off from the Tablelands and severely reduced in number, Foreg's band was forced to move higher into the mountains—and into the Forest Ridge.

Foreg's tribe follows him out of fear, but the other tareks also recognize his combat prowess and sense of purpose. In fact, life for this tribe was exceedingly good until it moved to the mountains and the earthquake struck. Now Foreg must reestablish his authority in the wake of the disaster that befell the tribe. His followers have lost some of their confidence in him, and this has only made Foreg even more angry than he is normally.

# News from the Council

*"Let the word go forth! The Council of Advisers needs able-bodied adventurers for a special mission. This trial is not without danger, but a healthy purse is included for those willing to provide this service to the Free City.*

*"We have recently received visitors from the west. It seems that villages we never knew existed lie on the other side of the Ringing Mountains, past the Forest Ridge and well into the Hinterlands beyond. These*

*villages are populated by civilized pterrans who sincerely desire to establish trade routes between our communities.*

*"Unfortunately the path the pterrans took was sealed by another of the tremors that have followed in the wake of the Great Earthquake. A new path must be forged, and for that we need brave people willing to make the trip and then return with a detailed map of the route.*

*"For this great service, the Council offers two pieces of silver to each member of the party upon acceptance of the mission. Upon the party's successful return, an additional silver piece will be paid to each member of the party for every month or portion thereof that the trip there and back lasted.*

*"The Council needs you. The Free City needs you. Come to the Council Hall and offer your services immediately."*



PART 1:

## A Day in Tyr

*Mystery of the Ancients* begins in one of two ways. If the heroes are new to Tyr or have never adventured before, then the tale begins on the streets of the city-state. Here, amid the crowds and normal dangers of city life, the heroes discover that the Council of Advisers is offering a small fortune to those willing to take a trip to the west. On the other hand, if the heroes have been in Tyr for a while and the Council knows of their exploits, they can be summoned directly to the Council chamber to receive the offer of employment. From the moment the mission is presented and accepted, the action takes off, what with a three-part contest and a rival merchant house's ambush of the heroes. This comprises "Part 1: A Day in Tyr."

"Part 2: Journey into the Unknown" continues the danger, including a trek through the Ringing Mountains. The heroes encounter natural perils such as tremors and rock slides as well as dangerous creatures such as sand howlers, tigonas, and other deadly foes—including crazed thri-kreen, terek raiders, and assassins loyal to a rival merchant house.

That part of the adventure ends with a massive aftershock that cracks the ground wide open beneath the heroes and threatens to drop them to their doom . . . a doom that awaits them in "Part 3: Terrors from the Past."

## The Streets of Tyr

Welcome to the Free City of Tyr, where everyone who works earns pay, slavery is a thing of the past, and all citizens participate in the process of government. On these crowded, dusty streets, the heroes encounter a number of locals and visitors, eventually learning about the job offered by the Council of Advisers. Read or paraphrase the following to the players.



*The recent earthquake hasn't changed Tyr very much. The crowds are still as thick as ock'n on a mekillot, and the chaos of freedom still reverberates off every wall. There are signs that the disaster touched the Free City, however. Cracks decorate buildings and walls, and a few structures have collapsed entirely.*

*There are also more refugees than before—people from the client villages who have sought safety behind the city walls. These fugitives have the look of poverty about them, for they haven't been able to find work within the city, nor have they mustered the courage to return to their lives in the villages.*

As the PCs wander the streets, use the encounters described below to weave them into the story. These encounters can be played in any order, and the DM is encouraged to add NPCs and colorful details beyond those provided here.

## Street Hawker

Vendors of all kinds are a common sight on the streets of Tyr. They try to get passersby to sample their wares, selling or trading everything from fruits and vegetables to clothing and exotic trinkets from faraway lands. One particular street hawker is Korin Delb, a burly man who stands beside a cart that overflows with bizarre items that defy identification. He claims these items come from the halfling tribes of the Forest Ridge, but most are really imitations made by the elves of the Sand Foot tribe. Read or paraphrase the following to the players.

*"You aren't thinking of passing my cart by without even giving it a look, are you, my friend?" calls a huge human with a flowing beard and a bald, sun-burned head. "Where else can you find genuine tools and lucky charms from the forests of the Ringing Mountains? This lucky dart, for example, was crafted by a halfling maiden with feathers from a kes'trekel. I have lots of things you need. Take a look. My prices are exceedingly reasonable. Have you hard coin or something to trade?"*

Korin Delb is boisterous and jovial. He makes jokes as he tries to swing his deals. He hawks his items as though they're made of precious metal, convincingly giving them a value they don't even come close to matching. He has charms to ward off earthquakes, fetishes that keep Tyr-storms at bay, polished stones that repel undead, and a host of minor tools and weapons made from stone, wood, and bone. Of course, none of his items really do the things he claims, and most will fall apart after a few uses.

There is one item, however, that is the genuine article. It's a halfling dagger made of bone and covered with runes that date back to an earlier time in their culture. In fact, the blade is an artifact from the Blue Age that has been passed down from generation to generation. Much of the superior tooling of the day has been worn over time, after thousands upon thousands of sharpenings. If a PC has the weaponsmithing proficiency, he can check the dagger to establish its authenticity. A successful check doesn't necessarily hint at its age, but it does give the hero a clear perception that the item is worth having (and clearly worth Delb's asking price).

Korin wants 8 sp for the dagger, but he'll settle for 5 sp if he is outbargained. The dagger is a *blessed* weapon that causes an additional +2 damage to undead. It also has ancient properties that can help the PCs later in the adventure.

### Korin Delb

**Human male trader (5th level):** AC 6 (mekillot hide armor); MV 12; hp 18; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8-1 (bone long sword); SA +1 damage due to Strength, bargain (14); SZ M (6½ feet tall); ML Steady (12); AL NG  
S 16, D 15, C 14, I 13, W 16, Ch 14

#### Psionics Summary:

*Wild talent*— psychic messenger, PSPs 26

**Player's Option:** #AT 1, MTHAC0 18, MAC 8

## Beggars and Street People

As the heroes wander the streets, they take a turn and find themselves in a crowded alley. Here, refugees from the client villages huddle together for safety, hoping to beg a bit or two out of a passing noble or free citizen. In the midst of these poor, destitute people, a gang of street toughs beats and batters those who look to have something worth stealing—even if it's as little as a ceramic bit and a glob of moldy kank honey.

The PCs learn firsthand the plight of those left homeless by the Great Earthquake and the refugees pouring out of the highlands. In addition, they witness the brutality of the street toughs, whom Rikus and the Council have been trying to control. Read or paraphrase the following to the players.

*The ragged crowd that fills this alley consists of destitute men, women, and children who appear as hungry and thirsty as they are dusty and weary. Normally, such a crowd would press toward you, begging for a bit or two with sad eyes and outstretched palms. That doesn't happen today, however. Instead, a gang of street toughs rampages through the refugees. One brings a bone club down on the head of a man trying to protect his family. Another slaps a young girl as he scoops the lone bit out of her begging bowl. The toughs taunt an elderly fellow, laughing as they push him to the ground. Apparently they gain as much amusement from their acts as they do items of worth.*

The heroes can continue on their way, or they can go to the aid of the families being assaulted by the street toughs. There are two toughs for each PC (including the leader). If the PCs decide to walk away and the DM still wants to use this encounter, the toughs can spot them and go after them. After all, the heroes probably look like kings and queens in the midst of the poor street people—people ripe for plucking riches from.

The toughs flee if more than half their number is knocked unconscious or killed. The leader, if he survives the fight, promises the heroes that he'll get his revenge on them someday. Such an event won't occur within this adventure, but it can be used to spur other encounters later in a campaign.

### Street Tough Leader

**Human male fighter (5th level):** AC 8 (carru leather armor); MV 12; hp 22; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (datchi club); SA +1 damage bonus due to Strength; SZ M (6 feet tall); ML Steady (11); AL NE

S 16, D 12, C 12, I 10, W 8, Ch 11

#### Psionics Summary:

*Wild talent*—conceal thoughts, PSPs 15

**Player's Option:** #AT 1, MTHAC0 18, MAC 9

### Street Tough

**Assorted male and female fighters (2nd level):** AC 8 (carru leather armor); MV 12; hp 14; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6-1 (bone club); SZ M (6 feet tall); ML Average (9); AL NE

#### Psionics Summary: Nil

**Player's Option:** MAC 10

## Thief in the Crowd

A crowd has gathered on a particularly affluent street. As the PCs wander into its midst, they hear a number of conversations taking place around them. The sample dialogue from "Word on the Streets" in the Introduction can be used here, as well as the "News from the Council" presented at the start of this section. The word on the street should be presented in the form of conversations, while the news from the Council appears on a mekillot-hide scroll hanging on the side of a wall. The heroes have to push through the crowd gathered in front of the scroll to get close enough to read it. (Remember that reading and writing is no longer restricted in Tyr.)



The PCs hear some people in the crowd say they're going to take up the Council's offer. A few others voice concerns that it could all be a pterrann trick. "The pterrans that I've known were bloodthirsty killers," one mul claims. "How do we know these traders are any different?"

At one point, a young male elf calls to the PCs, "I bet you toughs could handle the job. You look mean enough to wrestle a tribe of braxats to me. So, what do you say? Are you going to accept the Council's offer? I think you'd be fools not to. But that's only an honest elf's opinion."

While the elf is busy shouting at the heroes, his partner, an elf thief, is making her move. She tries to pick the pocket of either a PC warrior or wizard—she knows better than to match skills against other rogues and usually perceptive clerics. If the thief makes her pick pockets roll, have the two PCs nearest the victim (but not the victim) make Wisdom checks at -4 to see if they spot her pilferage. If they fail the checks, they don't see a thing. On the other hand, if the elf thief fails her check, the victim feels a bump and notices a hand in his or her pocket.

The thief tries to grab a money pouch or some visible item of interest (excluding weapons). If she succeeds and nobody notices, she and her partner escape into the depths of the city. If she fails or someone spots her crime, the pair still try to get away. They'd rather flee than fight, only resorting to combat if no other course is available.

#### **ELF THIEF**

**Elf female thief (6th level):** AC 6 (Dexterity); MV 18; hp 21; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8-1 (bone long sword); SA thief skills (pick pockets 60%, hide in shadows 45%); SZ M (7 feet tall); ML Steady (12); AL LN  
S 10, D 19, C 8, I 15, W 13, Ch 15

#### **Psionics Summary:**

*Wild talent*—body weaponry, PSPs 26

**Player's Option:** #AT 1, MTHAC0 18, MAC 7

### ELF FIGHTER

**Elf male thief (4th level):** AC 3 (carru leather armor, Dexterity); MV 19; hp 17; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8-1 (bone long sword); SZ M (7 feet tall); ML Steady (12); AL LN  
S 15, D 20, C 10, I 13, W 11, Ch 12

**Psionics Summary:** Nil

**Player's Option:** MAC 9

## The Council of Advisers

Thanks to the word on the street and the notices tacked to the walls, the heroes should eventually make their way to the Council of Advisers. If they refuse to take the hint, word of their battle with the street toughs or elf thieves reaches Rikus. The ex-gliadiator offers a personal invitation to the party, requesting that they present themselves to the Council.

The Council chambers are located in the Golden Tower. When the heroes arrive at the tower, they'll be directed to the meeting hall of the OverCouncil. Here they'll meet with three members of the OverCouncil: Rikus (male mul/15th-level gliadiator/NG), Sadira (female half-elf/10th-level preserver, 18th-level sun wizard/N), and Gar Bonehammer (male dwarf/3rd-level fighter/NG). Whether they've been summoned or have come in response to the word on the street, the heroes must compete for the mission contract against other hopefuls.

The mission is fairly simple to outline but potentially impossible to complete. The Council wants to set up a trade route between the pterrann village of Lost Scale and the city-state of Tyr. To do this, someone has to find a route that can be used over and over again. This route needs to be direct and easy to negotiate so that cargo can be transported as expeditiously as possible. The OverCouncil isn't trying to trick the heroes, so the information that Rikus and the others know will be passed along to whoever gets the mission.

The group that the Council selects must take the pterrann trader Ptellacc along on the mission (as well as one of Ptellacc's subordinates, should a player decide to create a pterrann PC). A secondary mission to find the lost members of Ptellacc's original expedition is also put forth, but the OverCouncil stresses that the selected group shouldn't go out of its way to accomplish this goal.

As part of this mission, the selected group must make a map of the route from Tyr to Lost Scale, noting all relative landmarks and dangers so that future travelers can prepare themselves for the trip. Additionally, the map will be used by whichever merchant house (presumably House Vordon) gets the contract to maintain the trade route so that it can set up outposts and forts at various locations.

The OverCouncil narrows the competition for the mission down to two groups—one of which is player characters. To obtain the mission contract, the heroes must win a simple three-part contest against the competing group. This band features a burly collection of warriors, one psionist, a cleric, and a rogue. The contest consists of a test of strength, a test of psionics, and a test of skill. Two victories are needed to win the contract. The tests are described in the following text.

### The Three Tests

Rikus, Sadira, and the dwarf Gar Bonehammer oversee the competition between the competing groups. Each group is asked to divide into three teams; a team must consist of at least one character but no more than three characters. Each team must declare which test it will represent its group in, whether it be strength, psionics, or skill. Once this is settled, the first test begins.

- **The Test of Strength.** This test is a simple tug-of-war. A line is drawn across the middle of the hall, and each team receives one end of a giant-hair rope. The object is to pull the other team over the line. The competition puts three warriors forward as its team to handle this test: a male mul with a Strength score of 18, a human female with a score of 15, and a human male with a score of 13. The PCs may match that number or attempt to win with less members on their strength team.

To compete in this test, each member of a team makes a Strength check. Those members who succeed at the check receive one point for each point by which they beat their ability score. For example, a hero whose Strength score is 16 may roll a 14 (a successful check); he receives 2 points (16 - 14 = 2).

*After three rounds of pulling and tugging, the team with the most points wins this test.*

- **The Test of Psionics.** Gar Bonehammer produces an obsidian egg carved from the smoothest, blackest glass. The egg has been prepared to react to psionic energy. Gar places it on the line drawn on the floor and motions for the two teams to stand 10 feet away on opposite sides of the line. Using nothing but PSPs, the teams must push the egg toward their opponents. This is handled by a simple, abstract system. No special psionic powers are needed to compete in this test; the test simply measures raw talent and potential.

Psionist characters roll 1d6 per round, and wild talents roll 1d4. The number rolled is subtracted from the characters' current PSP totals. Once a character runs out of PSPs, he or she must drop out of this contest. Each team adds up its rolls; highest total wins the round. The difference between the two totals is the number of feet the egg moves toward the losing team's side. For example, if the competing team rolls a 5 and a 2 for a total of 7, and the heroes' team rolls a 2 and a 1 for a total of 3, the egg moves 4 feet toward the PCs (7 - 3 = 4). On the second round, the competing team might roll a total of 8 and the heroes a total of 2 (8 - 2 = 6). If so, the egg moves another 6 feet toward the PCs, thus completing the 10-foot journey. The PCs lose the test in this instance.

The opposing team consists of one psionist (36 PSPs) and a warrior who possesses a wild talent (12 PSPs).

- **The Test of Skill.** The last test requires Dexterity and Intelligence to succeed. The two teams must compete at solving a puzzle in the shortest time possible. Like the other tests, this one is also presented in an abstract form. Each team is given a set of carefully balanced blocks. The teams must discern the shape hidden in the blocks and the order in which to lay them (using Intelligence), and then pile them in the proper fashion without letting them tumble (using Dexterity).

It takes 3 rounds of successful ability checks in succession to solve and build the puzzle. One member of each team must be designated "the builder," using that character's Dexterity score. All other team members (including the builder) make Intelligence checks to solve each stage of the puzzle. If a Dexterity check fails, the blocks tumble and the entire process must begin again (though the check is made with a +1 bonus for each round that was successfully completed prior to the failure, up to a maximum of +2). If at least one member of the team makes a successful Intelligence check in a round, the process can continue (provided the Dexterity check succeeds). If all of a team's Intelligence checks for a round fail but the Dexterity check succeeds, the blocks don't tumble-but the round also doesn't count as a success either.

The competing team puts forth its rogue (Dexterity 16, Intelligence 10) and its cleric (Intelligence 14) to handle this test.

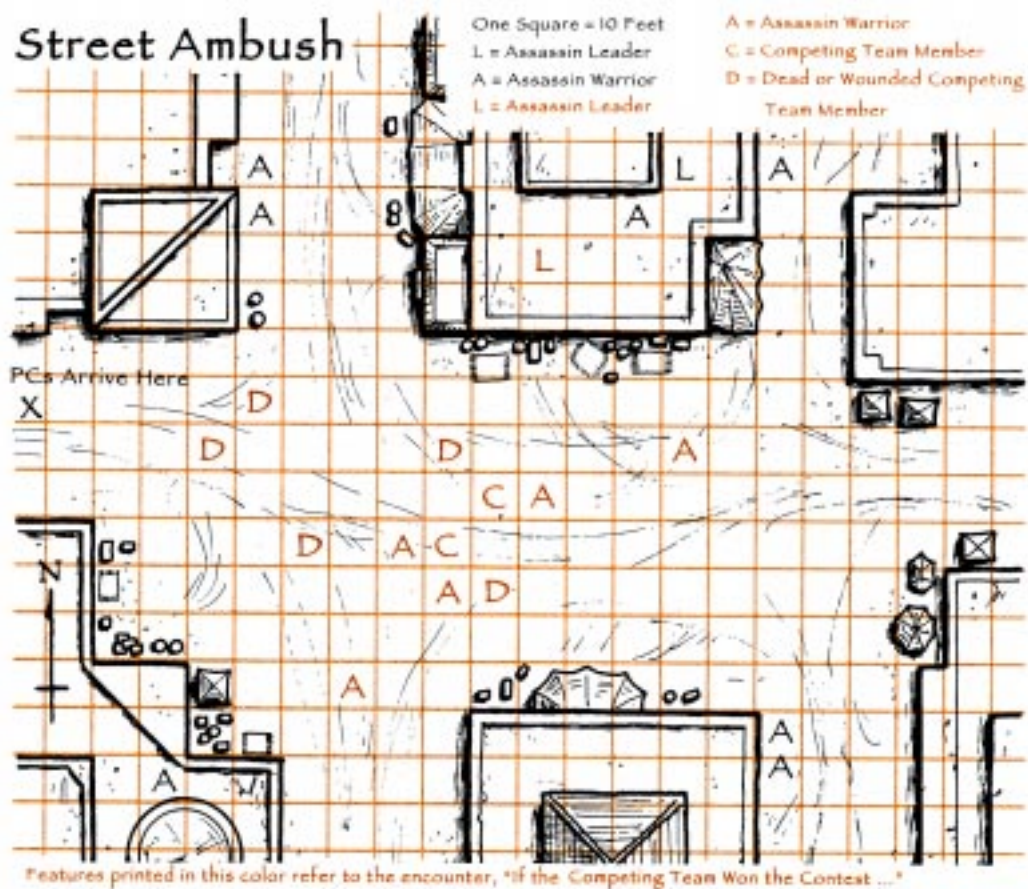
## After the Tests

If the heroes win two of the three contests, they receive the contract to take pterrann ambassador and seek a route to Lost Scale. The terms of employment are presented, and if the PCs agree to the terms they are introduced to Ptelacc Goldeye. The heroes must outfit themselves for the trip from their advance money, though they can convince the OverCouncil to throw in enough food and water to last the group about two weeks. Go on to "Street Ambush" below once the PCs leave the Golden Tower.

If the heroes lose two of the three contests, then the competing team is awarded the mission contract. In this case, the events of "Street Ambush" take a slightly different course, as described in the following section.

# Street Ambush

This encounter has two premises, depending on the outcome of the three tests presented by the OverCouncil. In short, a rival of House Vordon has hired groups of assassins to eliminate the team contracted by Tyr's OverCouncil. The rival doesn't want Vordon to prosper, so it has decided to destroy Tyr's chances to open a trade route to the newly discovered Hinterland villages. Though the PCs shouldn't learn who has hired the assassins as part of this adventure, future adventures can be built around this subplot. The rival can be any logical suspect the DM wants to use, but House Stel of Urik is recommended. With Urik's current isolationist policy, Stel has the most to lose if Vordon gains in size, influence, and reputation.



## If the PCs Won the Contests

... or were otherwise selected to go on the mission, then the assassins come after them. The ambush happens after the heroes leave the Council hall but before they strike out for the Ringing Mountains. Someone close to the Council tipped off the assassins, allowing them time to set up an ambush on the streets of Tyr.

As the heroes exit the Golden Tower into the Templar's Quarter of the city, the assassins draw near. After passing a few blocks filled with the typical administrative crowds and city guards common to this area, the heroes find themselves in a quiet and deserted street. Most likely they will notice this change almost immediately, but there isn't anything they can do to avoid the battle to come.

Refer to the "Street Ambush" map when running this encounter. It shows the starting locations of the assassins, the entry point for the PCs, and the layout of the street where the ambush occurs. Printed in color are details pertinent to the alternate version of this

encounter, as described below. If the PCs won the contest, ignore these markings.

The assassins start out by firing arrows and trying to surround the PCs. Once they cut off any escape routes and run out of arrows, the assassins move toward melee range. They've been hired to stop the PCs at all costs, but will break and flee if six or more of their group are defeated. If any of the assassins are captured, they claim that they work for the Night Runners elf tribe, which is a lie. They won't reveal their actual employer no matter what means the PCs use—they'll die or kill themselves first.

#### ASSASSIN LEADER

**Human male bard (6th level):** AC 4 (carru leather armor, Dexterity); MV 12; hp 23; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8-1 (bone long sword) or 1d6 (arrows); SA bard skills (climb walls 85%, move silently 65%, hide in shadows 70%), short bow and 6 arrows; SZ M (6 feet tall); ML Champion (16); AL NE  
S 14, D 20, C 11, I 17, W 11, Ch 10

#### Psionics Summary:

*Wild talent*—ESP, PSPs 25

**Player's Option:** #AT 1, MTHAC0 18, MAC 6

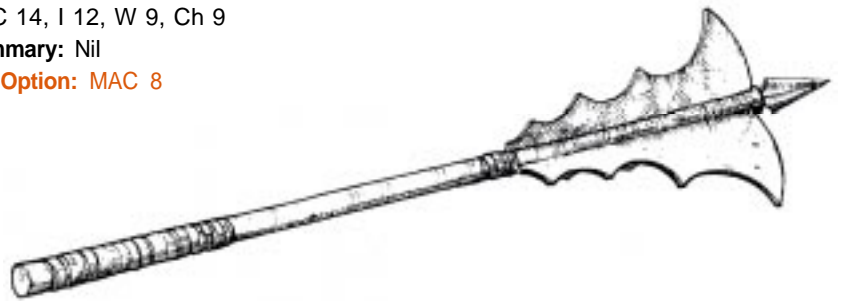
#### ASSASSIN WARRIORS (7)

**Human male fighters (4th level):** AC 6 (mekillot hide armor); MV 12; hp 31, 24, 22, 18, 18, 13, 13; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8-1 (bone long sword) or 1d6 (arrows); SA short bow and 3 arrows; SZ M (6 feet tall); ML Steady (12); AL NE

S 15, D 14, C 14, I 12, W 9, Ch 9

#### Psionics Summary: Nil

**Player's Option:** MAC 8



## If the Competing Team Won the Contests

... this scene plays out a bit differently. The PCs still wind up on the deserted street as described above, but the DM now refers to the details printed in color on the map. These details show the competing team surrounded by the assassins. Before the heroes arrived, the competing team stumbled into the ambush. Five of its members are already down, severely wounded or dead, while the assassins work to finish off the remaining two. Three assassins have also fallen, leaving only five (four warriors and the leader) for the heroes to deal with. Use the statistics presented above.

In this encounter, the assassin leader has remained atop one of the nearby buildings, firing arrows when the opportunity presents itself. He has three arrows left when the PCs arrive. He'll use the remaining arrows if the heroes interfere, but the moment it appears that they pose a real threat to him and his assassins, the leader attempts to escape.

This scene serves one purpose: to get the PCs back into the plot if they failed the contest. If the heroes ignore the situation and walk by, the assassins ignore them. If the heroes decide to get involved, they can save a few innocent lives. Either way, the Council will seek them out a few hours later. With the team the Council selected decimated and unable to complete the mission, it falls to their second choice to handle the job—the PCs.

However the events above resolve themselves, the heroes should have the mission, their starting funds, and a clear idea of how they want to proceed by the end of this part of the adventure. The DM can give the player characters some time to outfit themselves in the markets of Tyr, then it's on into the wilderness and west to the Ringing Mountains.

## Forging a Path (Optional)

To increase the suspense and difficulty of finding a path through the Ringing Mountains, this optional game mechanic can be used. With it, rolls are required once per day of travel or each time the PCs reach a spot where they must make a choice (for example, picking a direction at a fork in the road).

Use the "Getting Lost" rules presented in Chapter 14 of the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide*. For this particular trip, if the PCs are traveling just during daylight hours, the base chance for getting lost is

as follows: Ringing Mountains, 50%; Forest Ridge, 70%. If the PCs roll less than the percentage, they take a strong turn and must backtrack, thus adding 1d6 hours to their trip. Only one roll is required each time, and only one PC should toll.

A character who has the direction sense proficiency reduces the chance of getting lost by 5%. A character who has survival proficiency (either mountains or forest) reduces the chance by 15%. A character who has both direction sense and the appropriate survival skill reduces the chance by 20%.

## PART 2:

# Journey into the Unknown

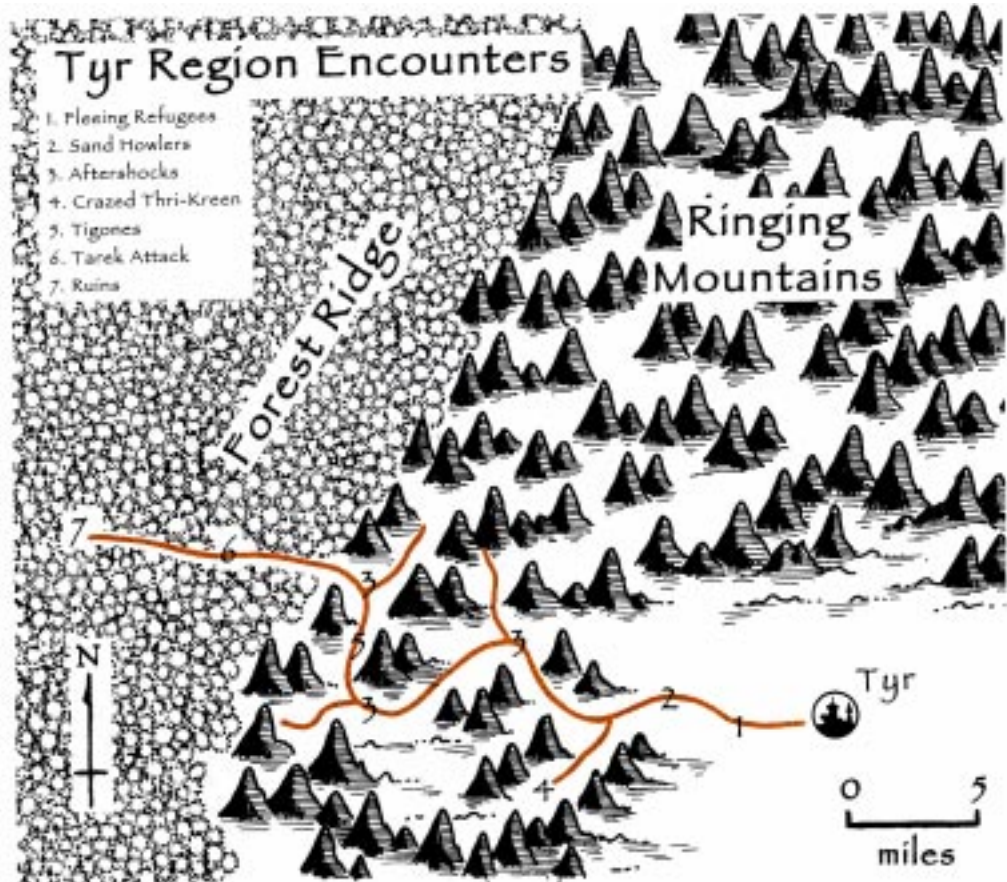
The trip into the Ringing Mountains begins in the valley outside the city-state of Tyr. From there, the heroes must navigate the canyons that wind through the foothills and cut into the heart of the mountains. Many of the details of such a trip are left to the DM, depending on how much emphasis he or she wishes to place on travel. The Tyr Region Encounters map on the following page provides a rough path to the forest and shows approximately where along the trip the planned encounters take place. The DM is encouraged to expand this map and the number of encounters to match the style of play and the level of interest his or her players have in such things. At a minimum, the planned encounters should be used.

The paths that lead nowhere on the map represent trails into box canyons or other dead ends. The heroes ought to encounter a number of these deterrents to give them the feeling of exploring and forging a path through the mountains. The accompanying sidebar provides game mechanics if a DM wants to complicate this portion of the adventure. Otherwise, intersperse scenes where the PCs must backtrack with the planned encounters to take them from the Tyr valley to the Forest Ridge.

## Encounters Along the Way

The encounters presented on the following pages are numbered as to coincide with the Tyr Region Encounters map. Other encounters can be added, but don't provide so many that the heroes are distracted from their original mission or that they arrive at the ruins too weak to handle the threat from the past. Balance the number and ferocity of the encounters with the ease or difficulty the PCs are having.





## 1. Fleeing Refugees


Before the PCs reach the foothills, they encounter refugees fleeing from the canyons. There haven't been any tremors recently, so at first the heroes might be puzzled as to what's causing the mass exodus. In some ways it seems like an earthquake, for herds of animals and hordes of people are also rushing out of the canyon toward them, causing the ground to shake with the weight of their approach.

Read or paraphrase the following to the players.

*The first rays of the blazing sun set the horizon on fire as you travel through the outlying farms toward the foothills of the Ringing Mountains. In the distance, a sound like the building roar of an angry mekillot rumbles, growing in intensity as it echoes across the nearby washes of sand that mark the start of the foothills. A cloud of dust rolls out of the foothills, carried along on the wave of sound.*

Give the heroes a few moments to discuss or ponder the source of the sound. As they stand there (or contemplate other actions), the vibrations in the ground beneath their feet become more noticeable, and the sound becomes louder, exploding toward them like a steady boom of thunder. After each character has had a chance to express an idea, state an action, or give an opinion, read or paraphrase the following to the players.

*Louder now, the wave of sound washes over you, reaching you before the cloud of dust clears the horizon. When it does rise above the edge of the land, you see the source of the sound: Rushing toward you at breakneck speed is a horde of people and a mixed herd of animals. You see kanks and crodlus, erdlus and inixes, carru and sygra, and even wild creatures stampeding across the verdant belt. Only you and your companions stand in the way of this unlikely horde and its destination.*



Before the heroes can react, everyone needs to make initiative rolls. While each PC makes an individual roll, the DM should make two initiative rolls for the stampeding creatures (the creatures are faster than the people and will reach the area where the PCs are standing first). The larger creatures receive an initiative modifier of -1; the smaller creatures get a -2 modifier. The PCs receive no special modifiers unless they announced actions early that might give them a bonus or a penalty now, as determined by the DM.

Let each PC act in order of initiative. A hero can attempt some special action, or he can simply attempt to get out of the path of the stampede. To do so, a successful Dexterity check must be rolled. After the part of the round in which the lowest initiative acts, each ascending initiative earns a character a -1 penalty to the Dexterity check. Any characters who fail the Dexterity check aren't able to leap clear in this round and suffer trample or bashing damage from the crazed herd.

For example, if Hero A rolled a 3 (the lowest initiative), he acts first. He declares he's going to leap out of the path of the stampede (at least for this round). To do this, he makes a Dexterity check with no modifiers. Hero B rolled a 5, the next ascending initiative roll. She makes the Dexterity check with a -1 penalty. It gets harder as the stampede rushes closer. Hero C rolled a 6 and goes next, receiving a -2 penalty.

When the number that the creatures rolled comes up, all heroes who haven't acted yet or who failed their Dexterity checks receive damage as the stampeding creatures bash into them or trample over them. The smaller creatures cause 2d6 points of damage to every character in their path; the larger creatures inflict 2d10 points. In addition, all Dexterity checks made after either group of creatures have acted (and thus reached the spot where the PCs are) are made with a penalty of -7.

The stampede lasts for three rounds after the creatures reach the PCs. In each of these rounds, the heroes must make successful Dexterity checks with the -7 penalty to avoid being trampled. Those who fail the roll take damage from either or both of the creature types, as determined by how badly they failed the Dexterity check: Size S creature damage is caused by rolls of +1 to +3 more than the number needed; size L creature damage is caused by rolls of +4 to +7 more than the number needed; and size S and L creature damage is caused by rolls of +8 or more than the number needed.

After three rounds, the stampede moves past the PCs. Now the fleeing refugees arrive, but the mix of intelligent races isn't so crazed that they'll trample the heroes. If the PCs ask what's going on, one of the crowd yells, "Sand howlers!" This leads to the next encounter.

## 2. Sand Howlers

What caused the stampede? A pack of sand howlers, misplaced by the violent shifts in the earth, rampaged through the foothills and into the valley below. The heroes have survived the stampede, only to find themselves facing six hungry sand howlers.

A sand howler is a lizardlike creature that looks a little like a reptilian dog with eight eyes, an oversized head, and large tusks. Hungry and frightened by the recent tremors, this pack went wild and began attacking the creatures and residents of one of the few villages still occupied in the valley. As the villagers and their herds fled, other creatures became frightened and joined the stampeding mob. Excited by the panic they caused, the sand howlers chased after the mob. They're still chasing them when the PCs get their first look at the sand howler pack. Read or paraphrase the following to the players.

*The dust raised by the stampede hasn't yet settled when you hear a series of frightening howls. On the horizon, you see a single beast. It stands on four legs, with armored scales covering its back and large yellow tusks rising from its long, tooth-filled jaws. It howls again, and five other howls answer it. Six of the creatures gather together, then start racing toward you.*

The sand howlers aren't behaving normally due to the fear caused by the tremors. They would never attack a group of large creatures or even a party of heroes, as they usually prefer to stalk single creatures as prey. However, attack is all they have on their minds right now. They attempt to circle around the PCs, trying to pick them off one at a time with their paralyzing gazes before turning to another foe. If the PCs kill four of the

beasts, the other two will flee. That might be easier said than done, though.

If the heroes survive the fight with the sand howlers, they can start climbing the foothills toward the Ringing Mountains and the Forest Ridge beyond. Depending on how the stampede and the attack of the sand howlers turned out, however, they may want to rest up and heal before proceeding too far into the shadows of the canyons.

**Sand Howlers (6):** Int Animal (1); AL N; AC 5; MV 12; HD 4+2; hp 25, 20, 20, 16, 14, 14; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1d3/1d3 (claws)/1d6 (bite); SA paralyzing gaze (save versus paralyzation or be paralyzed for 2d4 rounds or until a *remove paralysis* spell is cast); SZ M (4 feet long); ML Average (10); XP 420 each.

### 3. Aftershocks

Inside the canyons and as they climb into the mountains, the PCs must contend with a number of natural dangers. The worst, by far, are the tremors and aftershocks that continue to rock the area ever since the day of the Great Earthquake. These can be more deadly than any living creatures, for a tremor can strike without any warning, dumping a literal ton of rock onto the heroes. The Tyr Region Encounters map shows three spots along the way where the PCs can experience the danger of aftershocks and the rock slides these tremors produce.

When a tremor begins, read the following descriptive text to the players.

*It starts as a barely perceivable shake, a small rumbling in the ground that gets stronger and louder with each passing second. Suddenly the earth bucks like a wild crodlu trying to toss a rider off its back. Rock and stone slide apart and crunch together, and loose debris falls from the peaks around you.*

Each tremor causes a rock slide in the vicinity of the player characters. Before a tremor begins, have any PCs with the survival skill (either mountains or rocky badlands) make a proficiency check with a -2 penalty. Earth clerics can make an Intelligence check with a -4 penalty. If any hero succeeds at these particular checks, he or she can warn the rest of the group that a tremor is about to occur. Those heroes so warned receive a +4 bonus to the Dexterity check to come.

In a rock slide, tons of loose earth and stone tumble from above to rain down on the heroes. To determine how much debris a single PC must dodge, roll 1d4. That's how many Dexterity checks the character must successfully roll to avoid being hit by the falling rocks. Dexterity checks are made with a -2 penalty unless a character was prepared for the tremor. If prepared (by being warned as noted above), the Dexterity check is made with a +2 bonus (-2 + 4 = +2). For each ability check that a character fails, he or she takes 2d8 points of damage. If a character must make four checks and fails them all, that character is buried beneath the falling rubble.

A hero buried beneath rubble continues to take 1d6 points of crushing damage every round he or she remains trapped. To free a trapped character, the rest of the group must make a total of 10 successful Strength checks to dig the trapped character out. Each member of the group that isn't trapped may make one Strength check each round. Successes are cumulative; all 10 don't have to be made in a single round. For example, if one member of a party of six is buried beneath the fallen rocks, it would take a minimum of two rounds to free him (five other characters making one ability check per round).

### 4. Crazy Thri-Kreen

Not far into the mountains, the heroes make the mistake of wandering into a box canyon where a pair of thri-kreen have sought refuge from a tale making its way through the thri-kreen packs. This news is so frightening, so linked to deeply buried racial memories, that it has driven some thri-kreen temporarily insane. The tale relates to reports of kreen from the west—kreen that the thri-kreen of the Tablelands fled from in the far distant past.

The pair in this canyon are suffering from this fear- and memory-induced madness. While thri-kreen aren't good climbers, this pair followed a twisting incline into the foothills until they became lost and entered this canyon. The thri-kreen, K'krit and his packmate T'jok, haven't eaten or drunk in many days. When they reached a point where

they couldn't continue moving forward, they simply sat down, overcome by the swell of ancient racial memories. They're still writhing in inner turmoil when the heroes arrive.

The heroes, meanwhile, notice that the sky above is getting darker and darker, even though it's still early in the day. The darkness is especially deep in the western sky. Read or paraphrase the following to the players.


*The sky to the west turns black as night as roiling clouds gather among the mountain peaks. Sharp cracks of lightning fill these clouds, and the sound of deafening thunder rumbles from the distance. You continue on, fearful of being caught in the open should a Tyr-storm strike. The twisting path through the canyon opens into a wider depression between the razor-sharp pinnacles around you. The path leads on to a high ledge. To continue in this direction, you'll have to climb the ledge and the jumble of rocks beyond. But sitting at the foot of the ledge are two thri-kreen. They appear agitated, shaking and staring blankly as they huddle upon the ground.*

When the PCs reach this spot, any of them who has the mountaineering proficiency will immediately realize that the path ahead is just too difficult to travel. The best bet is for the group to turn around and find another, easier path into the mountains. However, there's still the thri-kreen to deal with.

If the PCs ignore the thri-kreen and simply go back the way they came, this encounter ends without further incident. If the heroes try to climb the ledge, attack the thri-kreen, or attempt to communicate with them in any way, K'krit and his packmate react with crazed violence. Once the thri-kreen notice the heroes, the first idea that springs to their weary, jumbled minds is that food and nourishing liquid has come to them out of the wilderness. K'krit and T'jok attack, seeking to kill the heroes so that they may feast upon them.

Offers of food and water won't break through the haze of madness that hangs over these thri-kreen. However, powerful psionics can be used to clear their minds. If the PCs can manage to subdue them through combat or by magical means, they can then reason with the pair, who are fairly friendly and reasonable as far as thri-kreen go. Until such subdual is accomplished, however, the thri-kreen will battle to the death—or until the impending flash flood strikes.





If the heroes stay in the box canyon, after 4 rounds the rain that was falling at a higher elevation comes rushing down the mountain. Its path is through the box canyon, where the PCs are trying to deal with the thri-kreen. The thri-kreen don't react to the rushing water, but any PCs who make a Wisdom check with a -2 penalty can try to brace themselves before the water washes over them. The flash flood lasts for 3 rounds. The PCs must state that they are trying to hold on to a canyon wall or a large boulder before the flood sweeps into the area. Otherwise, the rushing water carries them down the twisting path. Those holding on to something solid must make Strength checks each round to maintain their grip. Those being carried down the mountain suffer 1d6 points of damage each round. They are carried along by the rushing water until they make a Strength check at a -4 penalty or until 3 rounds have passed. Any characters reduced to 0 hit points drown in the flash flood.

When the flood is over, the PCs can continue on their way. The thri-kreen, if they survive the flood, come out of their haze of madness and flee down the mountain path back toward the Tyr valley.

**Crazed Thri-Kreen (2):** Int Average (10); AL CN; AC 5; MV 18; HD 6+2; hp 38, 32; THAC0 13; #AT 5; Dmg 1d4x4 (claws)/1d4+1 (bite); SA paralyzation (save versus paralyzation or be paralyzed for 2d8 rounds); SD missile dodge (roll 9 or better on 1d20 to dodge normal missiles); SZ L (11 feet long); ML Fanatic (17); XP 1,400 each.

## 5. Stalking Tigones

High in the mountains, the heroes come under the scrutiny of a pair of tigones. These great cats have been driven to desperation and hostility by the natural disasters occurring around them. They're also very hungry. They stalk the heroes for a full day, waiting for the proper moment to strike. During that day, the heroes should become restless and nervous, aware of the furtive shadows stalking them. To accomplish this, the DM should pass a note to a player every so often, informing the player that his character thinks something is watching from the higher ledges, or that the character saw something move out of the corner of his eye or heard a strange sound in the distance. No matter how hard the heroes try to discover what's causing their feelings of dread, they don't spot the tigones.

The round before the tigones attack, have all of the PCs make Wisdom checks at -6 penalties. Any characters who make the check realize that danger is about to strike, but they don't have time to warn the others. Randomly determine which two characters the tigones decide to attack. If either of these characters made the Wisdom check, they can attack first as the great cats close on on them. If either character failed the check, the cats strike first. The tigones leap off an overhang and try to claw and bite their chosen targets.

Though the cats are so desperate that they initially attack with only their physical weapons, they will use their natural psionic abilities in subsequent rounds if the opportunity presents itself. If a cat is reduced to 10 hit points or less, it will attempt to flee the battle.

**Tigones (2):** Int Semi (2); AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 5+2; hp 28, 26; THAC0 15; #AT 5; Dmg 1d3x2 (front claws)/1d4x2 (rear claws)/1d10 (bite); SA/SD psionics; SZ M (6 feet long); ML Average (9); XP 975 each.

### Psionics Summary:

Dis 2/Sci 3/Dev 10; PS 16; PSPs 45

Att: EW, II; Def: IF, MB

**Player's Option:** #AT 1, MTHAC0 18, MAC 7

**Clairsentience:** *Sciences*— clairvoyance; *Devotions*— all-round vision, danger sense, know direction, poison sense, radial navigation

**Telepathy:** *Sciences*— domination, mindlink; *Devotions*— awe, contact (ESP), mind thrust (inflict pain), invincible foes, life detection

## 6. Tarek Attack

Shortly after the heroes make it into the forest beyond the Ringing Mountains, this encounter takes place. Refer to the Tarek Attack map when running this event.

The trip through the mountains was tiring and difficult, but eventually the heroes reach the cool shade of the Forest Ridge. After several hours of traveling through the thick jungle, the heroes come across a clearing—only to discover that the lost pterrans from

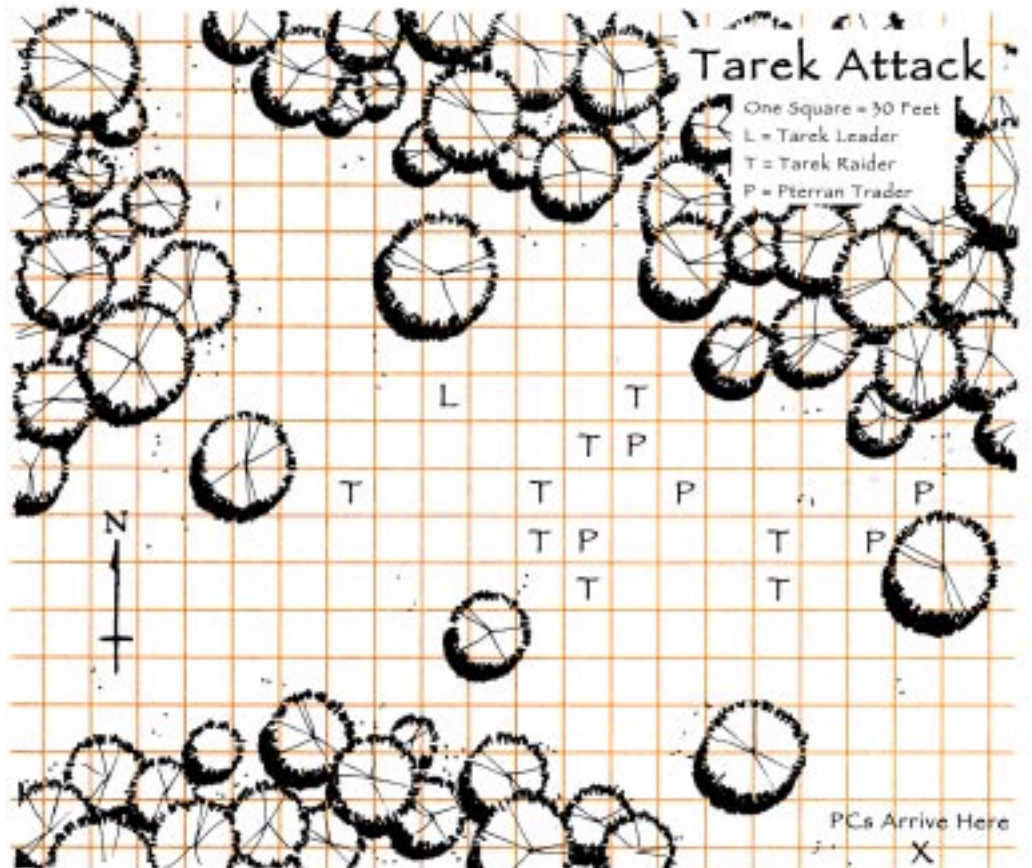
Ptellacc's trading band are being attacked by Foreg and his terek raiders. Read or paraphrase the following to the players.

*The thick vegetation and tall trees have been pressing in on you since you entered the Forest Ridge. A cacophony of sound has assaulted you the entire time, for this fecund wilderness is as noisy as the marketplace of Tyr. Still, the sounds of animals—even strange animals that you've never encountered—are somewhat comforting to those used to the isolation and silence of the desert. But the noise up ahead is much more familiar to you. It's the sound of battle! Something fierce is happening up ahead. . . .*

The heroes can rush blindly into the clearing or they can slowly approach to see what's happening. Unless the heroes make lots of noise, the raiders won't notice their approach over the sound of their own battle. Have the heroes reach the spot on the map marked "PCs Arrive Here," regardless of which direction they enter the clearing from. Read or paraphrase the following.

*The trees pull back to reveal a clearing. In the tiny glen, a band of tereks have surrounded a handful of pterrans wearing accoutrements similar to Ptellacc Goldeye's. (If Ptellacc is with the party, he excitedly informs the nearest PC that these are his lost companions.) The pterrans are losing this fight: The tereks have begun to play with the pterrans in the cruel, taunting manner that raiders sometimes use. As you watch, one of the pterrans falls to a savage blow, delivered by a large, laughing terek with an old scar across his cheek.*

Fight pterrans were separated from Ptellacc's expedition before it exited the mountains. Three died in the days that followed, but five still live at the start of this encounter. Unfortunately, that might not be true too much longer. The heroes discover the lost pterrans being attacked by a band of violent terek raiders. There are nine terek raiders—their leader Foreg and his eight warriors. Foreg's statistics are in the "Introduction"; his warriors' statistics are presented below.



If the heroes reveal themselves in an effort to help the pterrans, Foreg (as the leader of these raiders) will view the PCs as a rival band of marauders just out to steal what the tareks have rightfully cornered. If the PCs appeal to the leader for a test of strength or some other tribal resolution, Foreg will gleefully face off against the party's champion, convinced of his prowess. However, if the PCs rush in to aid the pterrans, they'll have to battle the entire band of raiders.

These tarek raiders fight in concert, giving them an attack bonus when fighting the same foe. For every tarek fighting together against the same target, their THAC0 number improves by 1. So, two tareks fighting the same opponent have a THAC0 of 18 (instead of the usual 19).

If Foreg falls or he loses five of his raiders, the tareks break off the battle and flee into the forest. While they enjoy plundering and killing weaker opponents, a strong resistance that could defeat the raiders will bring out their cowardly side and cause them to depart. The surviving pterrans may either remain in the clearing to nurse their injuries or join the heroes in their mission, as the DM desires.

**Tarek Raiders (8):** Int High (13); AL LN; AC 7; MV 12; HD 2; hp 15, 14, 12, 12, 10, 9, 8, 7; THAC0 19; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 1d4/1d4 (fists) or 1d6+2 (handfork plus Strength bonus); SA psionics; SD fight past death (can continue to attack until reduced to -10 hit points); SZ M (6 feet tall); ML Steady (12); XP 420 each.

**Psionics Summary:**

Dis 2/Sci 2/Dev 7; PSPs 30

Att: MT, PsC; Def: MBK, TS

**Player's Option:** #AT 1, MTHAC0 18, MAC 7

**Clairsentience:** *Sciences*—true sight; *Devotions*—combat mind, martial trance, psionic sense

**Telepathy:** *Sciences*—mindlink; *Devotions*—contact (ESP), invisibility, mind thrust, (inflict pain), psychic crush (psychic blade)

## 7. The Ruins

The site marked "Ruins" on the Tyr Region Encounters map is simply an area of forest that looks much like the rest of the landscape around the heroes. That will quickly change. After the PCs defeat or flee from the scene of the tarek attack, a massive tremor shakes the forest—the most powerful rumble they've felt since the Great Earthquake itself. Read or paraphrase the following to the players.

*As you continue your trek through the forest, a sudden noise startles you. For no discernible reason, countless birds and other winged creatures rise out of the surrounding brush and take to the sky. For a moment, your ears are filled with the noise of rushing wings and hoarse shrieks. Then, an instant later, the ground begins to vibrate as a mighty rumble builds deep within the earth.*

Give the players a chance to select a course of action for their PCs. Ptellacc and his pterrann traders, if they're with the heroes, huddle together and start calling on the Earth Mother to protect them. Then the tremor erupts in full force. The ground buckles and cracks, tossing around those upon it like paper toys in a strong wind. Any heroes who thought to use spells or psionics to lift themselves into the air are spared the brutal assault. Others must make Dexterity checks at -4 to avoid being battered into the ground or a nearby tree. Those who fail lose their footing and take 1d6 points of damage.

The shaking lasts only a few moments, and then the ground rips wide open. Read or paraphrase the following to the players.

*The earth itself tears apart with the same ease as you might rip the peel of a vel fruit. Dust and dirt fly into the air, trees topple around you, and suddenly the ground beneath your feet is gone—you're dangling in midair! A gaping crevasse waits beneath you, ready to swallow you whole as you fall.*

Let the players think a bout their characters' predicament for a moment, then go on to "Part 3," where the heroes will see the ruins from the Blue Age for the first time.

## First View

The gaping maw of the earth lies open like a wound. Steam and ancient vapors rise from the hole, and through the clouds the heroes can see their first glimpse of a strange city . . . a city from the Blue Age.

The buildings are odd in their architecture, seeming more *grown* than *constructed*. How they were built is unknown, for no building technique known to modern Athasians can account for the curves and other strange, organic shapes of the edifices. There are no sharp corners on these structures, no angles of any kind. Furthermore, every shape is a vibrant, impossible color.

The tremor has caused some damage to the exterior of these structures. A great tear exposes the dark interior of one building, while huge chunks of rock crush a portion of a small sphere.

The single door that's visible might not be recognized as such. It looks like a valve of some sort, small and narrow, and set high above the floor. Though the heroes don't know it yet, the place was built for halflings who lived when water covered the land.



### PART 3:

# Terror from the Past

A great crevasse opens beneath the heroes as the tremor comes to an abrupt end. The heroes can attempt to make Dexterity checks with a -8 penalty to avoid falling into the hole. Successful rolls indicate that the heroes managed to leap to solid ground. Failed rolls indicate that the heroes plunge 20 feet and take 2d6 points of damage. Give the heroes a moment to collect themselves after the ground stops shaking and the dust belched out of the hole settles. Then the PCs notice what the tremor has uncovered.

A series of spherical pods fill the bottom of the crevasse. At first glance, the heroes may think they've uncovered the corpse of some huge creature, but then they should gain the impression that the thing was constructed by some means lost to time. The place has an ancient, alien feel to it that leaves the PCs with an unexplained feeling of nervousness. They've never seen anything like this before.

The place is eerily quiet and lifeless, though somehow the structures give the impression that they *live*. After all of this registers, the heroes must decide how to proceed. There are two possible entrances into the connected spheres. The only visible door is 10 feet above the floor of the crevasse and leads to Area 1, as described below. The rip in the next sphere over can also serve as an entrance. It starts at the floor of the crevasse and leads to Area 8.

But what happens if the heroes decide not to investigate this ancient mystery? Does that mean this adventure is over? It could mean that, but there are ways to steer the characters back into the halfling ruins. If their own curiosity and desire for treasure and adventure don't lure them into the ruins, then have Poog and his halfling warriors arrive early. The adventure calls for them to appear *after* the PCs have entered the ruins, but Poog can be used to push the heroes forward if necessary. If this is the case, Poog steps into the clearing while his warriors remain hidden in the forest. He addresses the heroes. Read or paraphrase the following to the players.



*"You have desecrated this sacred place," calls a voice from behind you. A halfling stands just in front of the stand of trees, looking wild and primal with his painted body and forest-decorated hair. He points a wooden sword at you. "The ancient nature-masters cannot forgive you your trespass, and neither can I! I will raise up the forest itself to destroy you!" A rain of arrows explodes out of the trees, splintering on the ground all around you. The feral cries of halfling warriors echo from the darkness of the trees.*

The heroes can't fight what they can't see, and the halfling warriors have no intention of emerging until they're ready. Poog disappears back into the trees as well, leaving the PCs alone with feral calls and a hail of arrows. Each halfling warrior fires one arrow per round until the PCs are dead, the arrows run out, or the PCs flee into the ruins. The statistics for the halflings are presented later, while Poog's statistics are in the "Introduction."

## Ruins of the Blue Age

Refer to the "Ruins of the Blue Age" map (on the inside cover) when reading the following points. Each area shown on the map is described in the sections below.

- **Doors.** The doors don't operate the way the heroes might expect. Each narrow portal is really a valve that expands when the proper handle is operated. Next to each portal is a small orifice at about the right height for a halfling to comfortably place his hand in. If a PC places his hand into the orifice, it closes tightly around his hand for a moment, then releases it—and the portal opens wide. It remains open long enough for six characters to step through if they move quickly.
- **Rooms and Corridors.** The city was built by and for the use of halflings. Corridors are narrow (5 feet across), ceilings are low (6 feet high in most cases), and everything is made from the same strange porous stone.
- **The Ancient Halfling.** The ruins have a caretaker of sorts. It looks like a halfling from the Blue Age, but it's really only an ancient image of a halfling; the illusion is a projection from a living tool that still operates within the ruins, repeating its message over and over. It appears the first time the heroes enter the ruins (either through Area 1 or Area 8). The ancient halfling also appears several other times as the heroes explore the place, though in most cases these appearances aren't tied to a particular occasion. The DM should decide when the time is right for the ancient halfling to appear again.
- **Poog and the Halfling Warriors.** Unless Poog was needed to get the heroes to enter the ruins, he doesn't make an appearance until the heroes have explored two of the areas inside the ruins. At that point, refer to Event Two, which describes the halfling druid.


## Adventure Events

As the PCs explore the ruins, several events may be played out, regardless of what area the heroes are currently investigating. These events are grouped here for ease of location, with suggestions in the text as to possible times to play them out. The DM should feel free to stage these incidents as the dictates of the players' actions warrant, rather than adhering strictly to the adventure text.

### Event One: Ancient Welcome

As the PCs enter the ruins (through either Area 1 or Area 8), they receive a strange welcome. Read or paraphrase the following.

*A small figure steps out of the shadows. He has the build and general appearance of a halfling, but he seems to have as much in common with the feral creatures as an aarakocra has with a vulture. He has short hair; a beardless face; and a strange, lumpy growth that covers his right arm from wrist to shoulder. He considers you for a moment with large, innocent-looking eyes. Then he bows his head and speaks words that have no meaning for you. "Ulaka teerin," the odd halfling says, sweeping his arm around him.*



The halfling repeats this message over and over. If the heroes picked up the halfling dagger from the street hawker in Tyr, the halfling addresses the character carrying the ancient weapon. He doesn't respond to anything the PCs say, but when they speak he points the organic growth on his arm at them. If the heroes approach the figure or attack it, it disappears as suddenly as it appeared, seeming to vanish out of thin air.

The halfling's words are spoken in the language of the ancient halflings of the Blue Age, and not even a halfling from the Jagged Cliffs could understand them (though such a character would surely recognize the words as the ancient language). The halfling-image isn't welcoming the heroes. He's warning them that the city holds a dangerous occupant. However, nothing the PCs do at this point can help them understand the message. If they don't do anything else, the image fades after repeating its warning six times.

The halfling-image is produced by one of the few living tools that still function within the ruins. It has a number of abilities, including the ability to learn. This is demonstrated as subsequent events play out.

## Event Two: Poog and His Halflings

Unless Poog was used to force the heroes into the ruins, he makes his first appearance after the heroes have explored two of the areas within the ruins. Poog will only show himself to the heroes briefly, for he prefers to deal with dangerous beings cautiously and with extreme prejudice. He makes his proclamation to the interlopers as soon as possible. Poog shows himself briefly, then calls out in heavily accented common speech.

*"You have desecrated this sacred place. The ancient nature-masters cannot forgive your trespass, and neither can I. You will die within this sacred place, and I will spill your blood to appease the ancients whom you have disturbed!"*

If the heroes try to engage or capture Poog, the halfling slips away, undetected. For most of the exploration of the ruins, Poog's warriors then stalk the PCs. They strike when an opportunity presents itself, but they don't want to damage this ancient place or otherwise risk angering the ancient nature-masters.

While the heroes are busy examining some feature of the ruins, they notice a halfling warrior poke his head from behind one of the ruin's many outcroppings. The heroes might think it's the ancient halfling returning with another message, or Poog come to give another proclamation. It takes only a moment to notice that this is a feral halfling, though, a savage warrior wearing war paint and carrying deadly weapons. The halfling ducks out of sight before the heroes can react, however.

If the heroes chase the halfling warrior, they can't find him. Poog continues to direct his band to stalk the heroes until a likely ambush spot presents itself (as chosen by the DM).

Eventually, Poog and his warriors attack the heroes in full force. This shouldn't occur until the heroes are near Area 11 but *before* they've explored that location. The halflings attack from cover, using stealth and guerrilla tactics to best advantage. Poog assists by casting druid spells from time to time, but mostly he watches to gauge the strength of his foes.

**Halfling Warriors (6):** Int Very (12); AL LN; AC 7; MV 6; HD 3+1; hp 21, 20, 14, 13, 12, 10; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6-1 (bone short sword or 1d6 (short bow and arrows); 6 arrows); SD +4 to saving throws versus magical attacks, poisons; SZ S (3 feet tall); ML Steady (12); MAC 7; XP 120 each.

Poog is especially interested in why the nature-master (the ancient halfling image) has spoken to the heroes (see Events One, Three, and Four). Poog wants to find out why. If he sees the halfling dagger that the heroes might be carrying, he'll want to retrieve it for his tribe. Note that if the heroes didn't pick up the dagger from the Tyr street hawker, then Ptellacc the pterranean trader could have it. Maybe he picked it up before the group left Tyr. In that way, the dagger is here to attract the attention of both Poog and the halfling image.

If the heroes begin to defeat the halfling warriors, under no circumstances should they defeat Poog at this time. The druid flees as soon as things look bad, running to hide in Area 12. He appears again with the living weapon grafted to him, as described in the conclusion of this adventure and in Event Five.



## Event Three: The Ancient Halfling Returns

The image of the ancient halfling appears before the heroes once again as they explore the ruins. This time, thanks to the living tool's ability to analyze language, it speaks in a manner that the heroes can understand. The image again directs its attention toward the PC (or NPC) who possesses the bone dagger. Read or paraphrase the following.

*The odd halfling again stands before you, seemingly appearing out of thin air. When he speaks this time, you can understand his words. "This is Ulaka, the city of waves," he says in an accent that is at once alien and familiar. "It was strong and vibrant when the seas covered the land and no other beings but halflings lived from one end of the world to the other." As he speaks, the image of the chamber around you shimmers and changes. It becomes an ancient city much like the ruins you're exploring but vibrant and alive. Water fills the streets and rises to the tops of the buildings, and narrow boats carrying strange halflings float serenely across the gentle waves.*

*"This was in ages past," the ancient halfling continues, "when our sun was the color of sapphire and the sea gave us all we needed to survive. This was the time before magic, before psionics, before the world began to die."*

The heroes can do nothing to stop the halfling's dialogue. They can see that the water and the city are only images projected over the chamber if they make Wisdom checks at -6. Those who fail the checks need to make Constitution checks at -4 to keep from panicking at the sight of so much water. Panicked characters try to flee to escape the vision.

After the halfling goes through his monologue, he disappears again. The living tool is old and weak, so it can't project its message for too long a time without resting. It still has a warning to deliver, but it hasn't yet reached that portion of its message.

## Event Four: The Warning

Use this event when the heroes enter Area 9 or just before they approach Area 11.

The ancient halfling has a warning for the heroes. In the ancient past, an evil nature-bender created living weapons to use against the nature-masters who ruled the world. Though he was defeated, his creations weren't destroyed. They were locked away in the depths of Ulaka, guarded so that they could never be used against the world.

Unfortunately, shortly after the nature-bender was locked away, disaster befell the Blue Age. The sea started to die and the halfling populace began to panic. In the confusion, the living weapons were forgotten, and then the Blue Age itself ceased to be. The halfling cities disappeared from the world, and new ages and civilizations arose to replace them.

The living weapons have since formed into a single entity. It has sentience and desires, as well as a programmed mission placed within it by the nature-bender who created it. It wants to cause massive destruction on a grand scale. Because it's got the combined might of several living weapons and the capacity to learn and improve itself, it could possibly destroy the world. It also seeks to merge with a living host, preferably a halfling.

As long as the living tool from Area 9 hasn't been destroyed, the image of the ancient halfling appears once more to finish giving its warning. It's too late, of course, but the information it provides might come in handy as the heroes decide how to attack the living weapon. As before, the image addresses the character (if any) who carries the halfling dagger provided by the street hawker in Tyr. Read or paraphrase the following.

*The ancient halfling appears again, literally fading into existence before you. He bows his head, then says, "A terrible plague haunts ancient Ulaka. Do not visit this city. Do not explore its depths. The curse of the nature-benders is locked away behind mighty portals. To open these portals is to unleash more death upon the world. And we, the nature-masters, have already caused enough death. Leave now, and never return."*

With that, the image fades away. It has fulfilled its mission and provided its warning. Now it's up to the heroes to save Athas from a terrible fate.

## Event Five: The Living Weapon

When the living weapon approaches the heroes for the first time, read the following.

*An amorphous blob of gray matter rises into a vaguely humanoid shape before you. For a moment, you can see the shape of the halfling druid within its depths, then it begins to shift and change shape before your eyes. Always fluid and moving, the blob forms one massive hammerlike fist and swings at you. At the same time, its other appendage forms into a hollow tube. Lightning crackles within the tube, and a bolt of energy explodes toward you.*

Poog wears the living weapon like a second skin, but it also changes shape and form without warning, swallowing him into its depths before taking on a stable form again. Such horror quickly drives the druid insane. The druid/weapon symbiot tries its best to destroy the heroes as it searches for an exit from the ruins. It wants to get out and undertake its mission, believing that only such duty will give it comfort.

Every once in a while the heroes can see Poog trying to emerge from the symbiot, but he can't escape under his own power. The living weapon fights with all its varied and unusual powers, seeking to destroy the living beings around it. However, it will opt to reach the surface instead of destroying all the heroes immediately. The heroes should recognize this possibility and fight to keep it from successfully exiting the ruins.

**Living Weapon/Poog:** Int High (13); AL CE; AC 4; MV 6; HD 9; hp 47; THAC0 11; #AT 1 (can't use attack form more than twice in successive rounds); Dmg 1d10 (hammer fist) or 1d8 (sword limb) or 1d6 (spike limb) or 3d6 (lightning bolt); SZ S (4 feet tall); ML Champion (18); MAC 7; XP 2,000.

The living weapon targets its strongest attacks against the hero carrying the halfling dagger. If that character attacks with the dagger, he discovers that he not only hurts the creature but that he causes it severe injury as well. The dagger behaves like a +4 weapon against the symbiot.

The heroes must prevent living weapon from escaping, even if they can't destroy it. If they can keep it from killing them, Event Six presents itself that may help them trap the fey living weapon for a few more centuries.

## Event Six: The Earthquake

As the heroes and the living weapon engage in battle, another tremor rumbles through the area. This is a strong one. When it ends (after 8 combat rounds), the ruins will once again be buried beneath the earth. In the time that remains, the heroes must escape from the ruins while struggling to keep the living weapon trapped inside.

If the heroes manage to kill the living weapon, Poog might emerge unharmed (survival check at 60%). If they don't kill it, they need to keep it from escaping. Once the tremor begins, the living weapon ignores the PCs and seeks to exit the chamber. Because of the shaking ground, all attack rolls are made with a -2 penalty. If the PCs can't hit the monster for two rounds in a row, it gets outside—and is free.

## Locations in the Ruins

As the heroes wander through the ruins, refer to the "Ruins of the Blue Age" map found on the inside cover and use the area descriptions below. The areas are described in the order they appear on the map, though the heroes are free to approach the locations in any order they choose. The areas note which events are likely to occur at a given time, though the events themselves are described above.

Note that these areas are ruins only in the sense of age and utility. The structure, with a few notable exceptions, is in perfect condition. Except for the dust and a few breaks in the outer hulls, the city's walls are as solid and as new and vibrant as they were when the place was first constructed.

## 1. Entry Hall

To enter the ruins through this location, the heroes need to get up to the portal, which is located 10 feet above the crevasse floor. The walls are too smooth to climb, so some other means must be employed. This portal operates like all the doors in these ruins, but this outer door is thicker and stronger than the interior versions. Note that the handle-orifice recognizes all human and demihuman beings because of their connections to the ancient halflings (all humans and demihumans are descended from the halflings of the Blue Age). For this reason, any character except thri-kreen can operate the doors. Under no circumstances, however, will the doors operate for a thri-kreen character, though he can enter the portal by closely following a comrade.

The entry hall actually follows the outside curve of this spherical portion of the ruins. Doors and other corridors connect to it, allowing the heroes to move deeper into the ruins. When the heroes enter this location, read or paraphrase the following.

*The portal opens like a desert flower to reveal a low, narrow corridor that curves ahead into darkness. The corridor is more like the inside of a tube than a hall as you know them. Walls, floor, and ceiling curve into one another without the benefit of visible distinctions like corners and right angles. The inner surfaces are smooth and warm to the touch, and beneath your feet you can feel a steady hum.*

If the heroes touch any surface with their exposed flesh, the walls glow with a soft luminescence that provides enough light to see by.

*The walls, ceiling, and floor glow with an incandescence that provides illumination without being harsh. You also notice that it's cool in these ruins. It seems that something is keeping the blistering heat of the day outside, though perhaps that's because the ancient structure is only newly privy to the scorching rays of the sun. The design inside the edifice is as organic as its exterior, and it feels uncomfortably like being inside a living creature. The low thumping echoing from the walls does nothing to diminish the sensation. If anything, it enhances it.*


At this point, if this is the first area of the ruins that the heroes have entered, the ancient halfling appears for the first time. Use Event One here. After that, the heroes are free to explore as they see fit.

## 2. Hall of the Blue Age

This large chamber has slightly higher ceilings than the rest of the ruins. Here, the ceilings are 8 feet above the floor. As in the corridors, the floor, walls, and ceiling blend into each other with no distinct breaks due to the lack of sharp angles. This chamber was dedicated to the Blue Age, the time when the halfling nature-masters were the rulers of Athas and water covered the land. Read or paraphrase the following to the players.

*Entering this chamber is like stepping outside—but it's an outside unlike anything you've ever seen. The ceiling looks like the sky, if the sky were light blue and the sun were a glowing sapphire instead of a dark crimson ball. The floor and much of the walls appear to be covered by clear, sparkling blue water, though you can't feel any wetness at all. Rock formations form a maze through this room, though each formation glows with beautiful, vibrant color. One formation, shaped like a tower, is made from pure white stone.*

The illusion of water is produced by various waves of light projected from luminescent rocks around the room. The column is a piece of art; its white stone has a special property—it prohibits the use of wizardly magic. No preserving or defiling spells can be used within this chamber, and even magical items lose their enchantment while in the presence of the white stone. This hampering effect only works while the white stone is



intact; destroying it or breaking off pieces will not allow the heroes to take this magic inhibitor with them.

If this is the second area that has been explored by the heroes, Poog is likely to make an appearance here. Use Event Two here.

### 3. Hall of Quiet

This chamber was once a barracks for the halflings who lived and worked here. Pods made from a soft, spongy fiber fill the room. These are sleep wombs. The room itself has a subdued lighting that's even dimmer than the lighting throughout the rest of the complex. The room also absorbs sound, to the point where the place has an almost unnatural silence imposed upon it. Normal conversation, the banging of weapons, even shouting emerges as whispers in this chamber.

The sleep wombs are of a size that would only be comfortable to halflings and halfling-sized beings. If a character touches the top surface of one of these pods, his hand and arm sink comfortably into the soft material.

### 4. Water Room

This chamber features fountains of vibrant stone. The fountains are shaped into great sweeping sculptures that seem elegantly thin and impossibly curved. The water flowing from them is barely a trickle, but once great quantities of cold, clear water danced in these beautiful fountain-sculptures. Here the heroes can still gather enough water to drink and fill their waterskins, for the fountains are fed by clean, underground streams. Some of the fountains are shaped like sea creatures that no longer exist on Athas, though most of the sculptures are simply artistic impressions formed by fantastic, impossible shapes.

### 5. Room of Husks

At one time, this room was one of the many chambers where the living tools of the ancient halflings were grown and carefully tended. Today, all that remains of the complicated process are rocks grown into work tables and chairs, and the dried husks that once contained the growing creature-tools. In fact, there are hundreds of these husks scattered throughout the chamber. Once they were lined up neatly and placed in an orderly fashion. Now, thanks to earthquakes and tremors that have occurred over thousands of years, the husks are jumbled and in great disorder.

Walking among large, dried husks, hearing small husks crunching under their feet, the heroes might become nervous in this place where ancient arts are beyond their limited reckoning, though they might also think this was once merely a greenhouse of sorts, with the remnants of fruit and vegetable husks littering the floor. All the heroes find here are the dried husks (in various sizes) and some of the dried, mummified living tools that died within the husks' embrace.

This location is a perfect place for Poog's warriors to make a surprise attack (see Event Two).

### 6. Growing Stone

This chamber has the appearance of a natural cave, for the vibrant, porous stone that is used in all of the ancient halfling construction grows wild in this location. There is no illuminating walls here, so the heroes must provide their own light source if they want to see. The far end of this chamber is still buried beneath the earth, so only a portion of the chamber can be explored. The wild, growing stone has formed stalactites and stalagmites throughout the chamber, and the floor is covered with a shallow pool of water that bubbles up from an underground source.

This chamber has several living denizens. Spiders occupy this place, and their webs fill the open spaces like silky tapestries. The webs belong to the large spiders that inhabit this chamber. There are also a number of hairy spiders that share the webs and sometimes creep out into the rest of the complex to hunt.

**Spiders, Hairy:** Int Low (7); AL NE; AC 8; MV 12, Wb 9; HD 1-1; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison (saving throw at +2; failure carries a -1 penalty to victim's AC and attack rolls, and a -3 penalty to Dexterity checks for 1d4+1 rounds); SZ T (6-inch diameter); ML Average (10); MAC 9; XP 65 each.

**Spiders, Large:** Int Non (0); AL N; AC 8; MV 6, Wb 15; HD 1+1; hp 9; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA webs (characters with Strength scores less than 19 require 1 round for each point of Strength they have below 19), poison (type A); SZ S (2-foot diameter); ML Unsteady (7); MAC 6; XP 175 each.

## 7. Gardens

This chamber once contained a beautifully tended garden of sea plants that no longer exist on Athas. Unfortunately, all of these have died over the centuries. What remains is a wild jungle of mushrooms, fungi, and molds that cover the chamber's smooth surfaces. There is no light in this area, so the heroes must provide their own illumination.

None of the growths is dangerous, but the chamber's other inhabitant is. A hole opened by the recent tremor in the far corner of the chamber has allowed one of Athas's subterranean creatures an exit to the surface. The creature in question is a jastrak, a monster with two heads and a nasty disposition. Once it catches the scent of the heroes, it does everything in its power to get a taste of surface-dwelling flesh.

The jastrak is a lizard of sorts, with two eyeless heads and massive, teeth-filled maws. Its claws are developed for digging, and its spiked tail can deliver a crushing blow. It is a carnivore, and it has arrived in the ruins hungry and ready to feast.

**Jastrak:** Int Low (6); AL N; AC 5; MV 12; HD 6+1; hp 31; THAC0 15; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 1d10/1d10 (bites) or 1d6/1d6 (claws) or 1d8+2 (spiked tail); SZ L (9 feet long); ML Steady (12); MAC 7; XP 420.

## 8. Chamber of the City

This is one of two locations through which the heroes can enter the ruins. If they enter here, make sure to use Event One after they've had a chance to look around.


The tear in the outer wall leads to a large chamber with walls that sweep and curve into the floor and ceiling without any obvious separation. What the heroes see in this room is an amazing miniature of the city this complex was once a part of. Unlike the second appearance of the halfling-image that shows a full-sized projection of the Blue Age, this miniature is a solid model that the heroes can examine up close. Read or paraphrase the following.

*This chamber is filled with a child's toy of some sort. A miniature city stretches from one end of the chamber to the other, raised up on a platform of stone that seems to grow from the floor itself. Part of the model, near where the tear leads to the outside, has been damaged, but otherwise it appears complete. The structures are all tiny scale representations of buildings much like this one, made of colored stone shaped into sweeping curves. A solid blue substance that looks like water covers the entire model, and some of the organic buildings rise above this substance. Tiny boats ride atop the substance, and a sapphire sun floats suspended above the city.*

If the heroes decide to take the sapphire sun, it's worth 1,000 sp in the markets of Tyr. Unfortunately, halflings from the Forest Ridge will hunt down the heroes to punish them for stealing it and to return it to the ruins. The heroes will have to do some great service to the halflings to appease their wrath and stop the periodic hunting parties from coming after them.

## 9. Living Tool

This chamber houses the living tool that powers the halfling-image and illuminates many of the rooms in this complex. When the heroes reach the portal that leads into this chamber, read or paraphrase the following.



*The humming is louder as you approach this portal. The vibration is so strong that the floor and walls around the opening shake almost as strongly as when one of the aftershocks rumbles through Tyr. Whatever is producing the hum must be on the other side of the portal.*

The portal opens just like the other doors in this complex. If the heroes open it, read or paraphrase the following to the players.

*The portal blossoms to reveal a large chamber. If the rest of this place reminds you of a living body then this must be the place's heart. The thumping that has been nothing more than background noise suddenly becomes loud and insistent as the door opens wide. Tendrils of fleshy matter stretch throughout the chamber, connecting a massive structure to the walls, floor, and ceiling. In fact, these tendrils disappear into the chamber walls, where they divide into hundreds of smaller veins that run deeper into the ruins. These tendrils and veins pulse with life, as does the structure they lead from.*

*In the center of the chamber, filling the space from floor to ceiling and as wide as 10 feet across, a great mass of the same material as the tendrils stands and hums with power. On closer inspection, you see what appear to be eyes and nostrils.*

*The thing is alive!*

This is the living tool. It is very old and very weak, but it still has the power to complete the mission it was given in ages past. It has a warning to deliver to anyone who enters the ruins. At this point, have the heroes experience the next appearance of the halfling-image, Event Four.

If the heroes attack the living tool, it uses the halfling-image to deliver its warning again. If the heroes kill it, all of the lights go out and the doors refuse to operate. The PCs must break through the doors to exit the various chambers. The doors can be forced open by making successful bend bars/lift gates rolls.

## 10. The Chamber of Time

Once this was a living school and museum, a place where the ancient halflings could come to learn of their history. Unfortunately, the living tool that powered this chamber has died. Nothing but the withered husk of the tool and its learning pods remain.

However, the PCs might come across an ancient plaque left here if they make a careful search of the chamber. Though they can't read it right now, they might decide to take it with them. Give the players a copy of the plaque inscribed in ancient halfling letters (found on the inside cover). If the heroes figure out how to translate it at some later date, give them a copy of the translated plaque (also found on the inside cover). The message on the plaque hints at events to come that will eventually shake up the campaign world and take it in startling new directions. Watch future products for details.

## 11. The Ancient Gate

This strong portal protects the spheres that hold the living weapons of the renegade nature-bender imprisoned. The gate, like the sphere beyond, has been damaged by the massive tremor that unearthed these ruins. Inside, the spheres have broken open and the living weapons have merged into one creature. The gate itself can be opened by the heroes, but the probable outcome is that Poog opens it after he flees from the battle described in Event Two.

In this latter case, the portal is open when the heroes arrive. Read or paraphrase the following.

*This portal, made of stronger and thicker material than even the exterior door, stands open. The chamber beyond is dark and quiet. Then something moves in its depths.*

Examine the description of Area 12, then go to Event Five for the conclusion of the adventure.



## 12. Chamber of the Spheres

Large spheres, about 5 feet in diameter, fill this chamber. This is the prison of the living weapons of the ancient nature-bender. The weapons have been dormant all these centuries, but the recent tremor that unearthed the ruins caused that to change. One sphere was damaged by the rocks that smashed through the outer wall. The living weapon within it emerged, then freed the rest of its brethren. The many weapons merged into a single entity, then went about seeking an exit from the prison. The rocks that crashed through the outer wall don't leave enough space to escape in that direction.

When Poog opened the portal looking for a hiding place from the heroes, he encountered the living weapon. The living weapon, like most of the tools created by the nature-masters, is meant to work as a symbiot with a halfling. It merged with the druid.

Once the living weapon merged with Poog, it became extremely dangerous. Its primary mission is to destroy life. Add to this Poog's hatred of the heroes (especially since the spirit of the nature-masters spoke to them and not to him), and the living weapon becomes twice as deadly. It specifically attacks the character who carries the halfling dagger the heroes picked up in Tyr.

Go to Events Five and Six as appropriate.



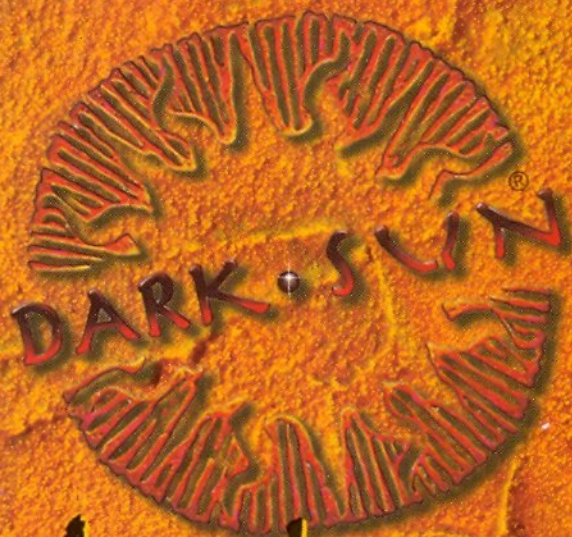
## Conclusion

If the heroes escape the ruins before the allotted eight rounds of the earthquake end, then they can see the living weapon/Poog symbiot get swallowed back into the ground. If the entity is still in the ruins, the heroes receive an additional 300 XP each. If they saved Poog from the living weapon, they get an additional 200 XP each. If they managed to keep Ptelacc and any of the other pterrans alive, they get 100 XP for each.

If the living weapon escapes from the ruins, it dies when it reaches the desert unless it is attached to a halfling host. No other character or being will serve as an acceptable host. If it has such a host, it tries to carry on its campaign against life until some other heroes destroy it.

If the heroes want to complete their original mission, the details of the trip to Lost Scale and any encounters along the way are left to the DM to devise.





# Mystery of the Ancients

By Bill Slavicek

The Council of Advisers needs you. . . . The free city of Tyr needs you. . . . Come to the council hall and offer your services immediately in this adventure for 4 to 6 players!

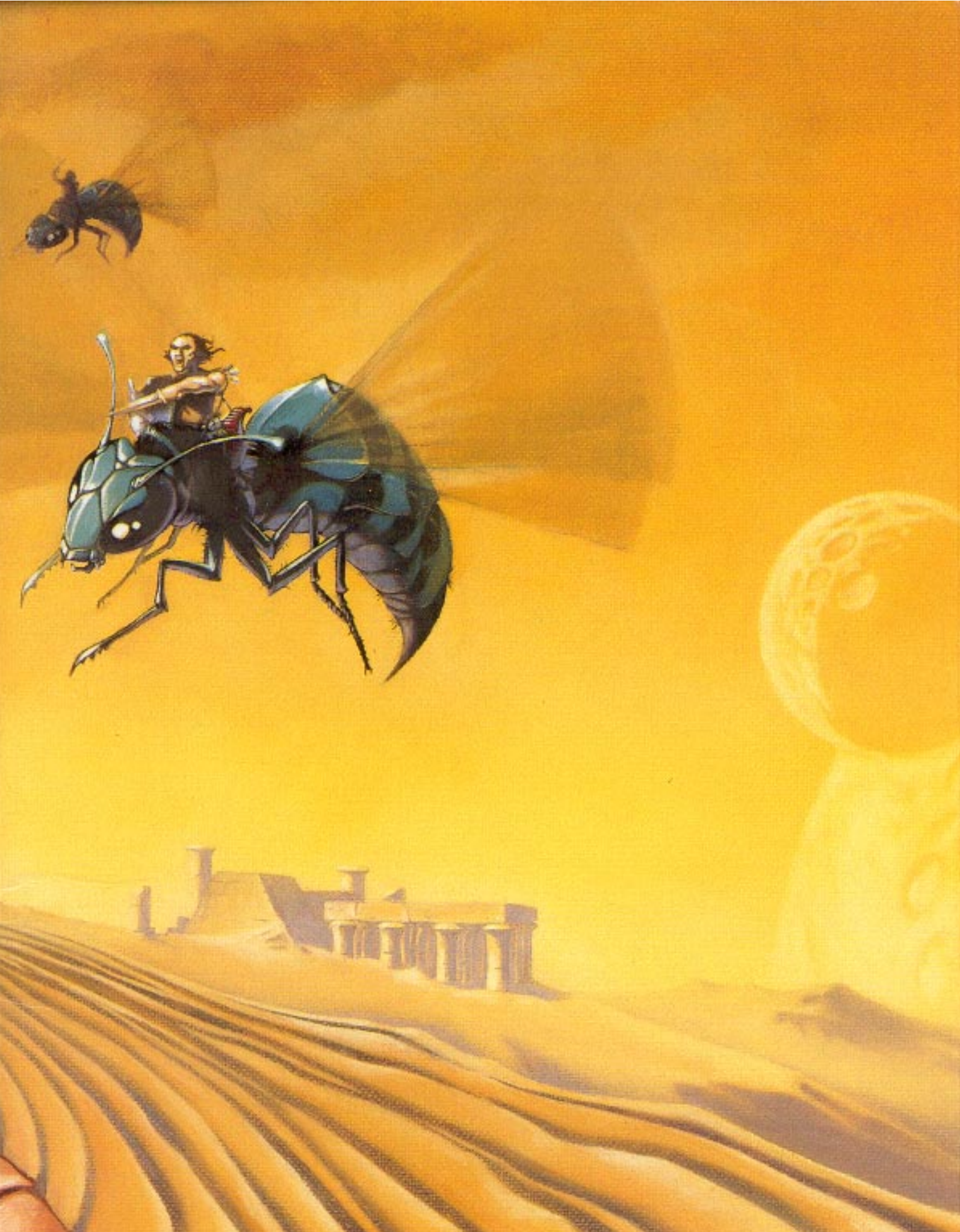
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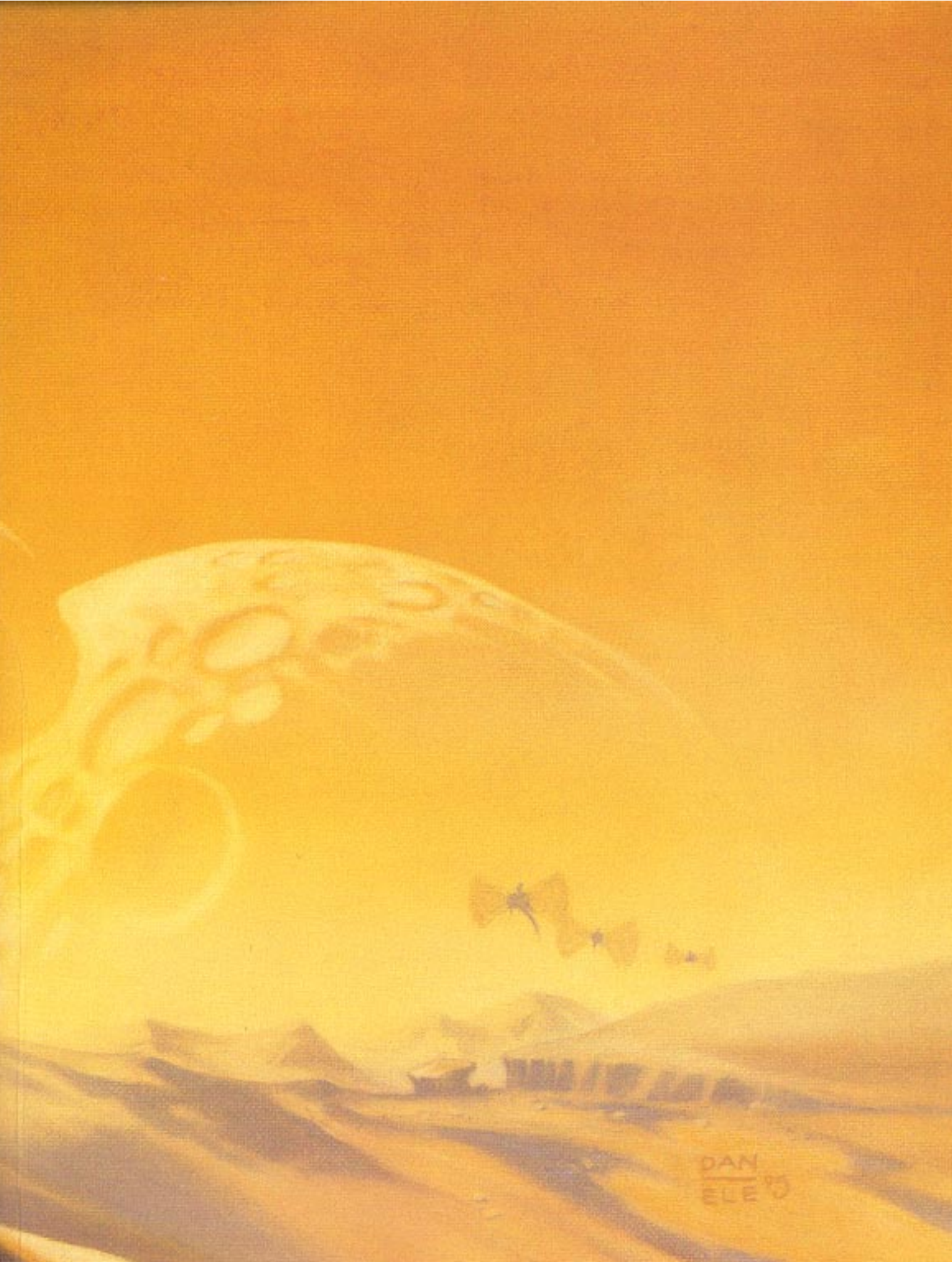


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DAN  
ELE '03

## BASE MAC AND PSP BONUSES

Ability Score	Base MAC	MAC Modifier	PSP Bonus
15 or less	10	0	0
16	9	-1	+1
17	8	-1	+2
18	7	-2	+3
19	6	-2	+4
20	5	-3	+5
21	4	-3	+6
22	3	-3	+7
23	2	-4	+8
24	1	-4	+9
25	0	-4	+10

**Note:** Though nonpsionic creatures can have any MAC score, the following general guidelines (based on Intelligence) can be used: Non, MAC 5-6; Animal, 5-6; Semi, 6-8; Low, 8-9; Average, 8-10; Very, 8-9; High, 7-8; Exceptional, 6-7; Genius, 5-6; Supra, 4-5; Godlike, 2-3.

## MTHACO BONUS FOR PSIONIC ATTACKS VS. PSIONIC DEFENSES

	Mind blank	Thought shield	Mental barrier	Intellect fortress	Tower of iron will
Mind thrust	+5	+3	-2	-3	-5
Ego whip	+3	+4	+2	-4	-3
Id insinuation	-5	-3	-1	+2	+5
Psychic crush	+1	-4	+4	-1	-2
Psionic blast	-3	+2	-5	+4	+3

## MTHACO MODIFIERS

Intelligence Score	MTHACO Modifier
15 or less	0
16-17	+1
18-19	+2
20-22	-3
23+	+4

## PSIONIC ACTIONS PER ROUND

- 1) Character can make as many psionic attacks as his experience level allows, and . . .
- 2) he can use one psionic defense, and . . .
- 3) he can activate one psionic power against an open mind, and . . .
- 4) he can maintain as many previously successfully activated powers as he wishes (provided he can afford to continue paying the PSP costs).

**Note:** All psionic attacks require line of sight, as do the use of all psionic powers (with a few exceptions, such as those in the clairsentience discipline). If a psionic attack succeeds and opens a closed mind, a psionic power can be used against the mind that same round.

## CONSTITUTION

Ability Score	Hit Point Adjustment	System Shock	Resurrection Survival	Poison Save	Regeneration
3	-2	35%	40%	0	Nil
4	-1	40%	45%	0	Nil
5	-1	45%	50%	0	Nil
6	-1	50%	55%	0	Nil
7	0	55%	60%	0	Nil
8	0	60%	65%	0	Nil
9	0	65%	70%	0	Nil
10	0	70%	75%	0	Nil
11	0	75%	80%	0	Nil
12	0	80%	85%	0	Nil
13	0	85%	90%	0	Nil
14	0	88%	92%	0	Nil
15	+1	90%	94%	0	Nil
16	+2	95%	96%	0	Nil
17	+2 (+3) *	97%	97%	0	Nil
18	+2 (+4) *	99%	98%	0	Nil
19	+3 (+5) **	99%	99%	+1	Nil
20	+3 (+6) †	99%	99%	+1	1/4 hours
21	+3 (+6) †	99%	99%	+2	1/3 hours
22	+4 (+7) ††	99%	99%	+2	1/2 hours
23	+4 (+7) ††	99%	99%	+3	1 /hour
24	+4 (+7) ††	100%	100%	+3	1/3 turns
25	+4 (+7) ††	100%	100%	+4	1/2 turns

\* Parenthetical bonuses apply to warriors only.

\*\* All 1s rolled for Hit Dice are automatically considered 2s.

† All 1s and 2s rolled for Hit Dice are automatically considered 3s.

†† All 1s, 2s, and 3s rolled for Hit Dice are automatically considered 4s.



## ITEM SAVING THROWS

Item	Acid	Crushing Blow	Disintegrate	Fall	Magical Fire	Normal Fire	Cold	Lightning	Electricity
Bone or ivory	11	16	19	6	9	3	2	8	2
Cloth	12	—	19	—	16	13	2	18	2
Glass	5	20	19	14	7	4	6	17	2
Leather	10	3	19	2	6	4	3	13	2
Metal	13	7	17	3	6	2	2	12	2
Oils *	16 †	—	19	—	19	17	5	19	16
Paper, etc.	16	7	19	—	19	19	2	19	2
Potions †	15 †	—	19	—	17	14	13	18	15
Pottery	4	18	19	11	3	2	4	2	2
Rock/crystal	3	17	18	8	3	2	2	14	2
Rope	12	2	19	—	10	6	2	9	2
Wood, thick	8	10	19	2	7	5	2	12	2
Wood, thin	9	13	19	2	11	9	2	10	2

\* This save does not include the container, only the liquid contents.

† Even if the save is made, the item is probably hopelessly mixed with the acid.



# THACOs AND MTHACOs

	Level																			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Priest THACO	20	20	20	18	18	18	16	16	16	14	14	14	12	12	12	10	10	10	8	8
Psionicist THACO	20	20	19	19	18	18	17	17	16	16	15	15	14	14	13	13	12	12	11	11
Rogue THACO	20	20	19	19	18	18	17	17	16	16	15	15	14	14	13	13	12	12	11	11
Warrior THACO	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Wizard THACO	20	20	20	18	18	18	16	16	16	14	14	14	12	12	12	10	10	10	8	8
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Psionicist MTHACO	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Wild Talent MTHACO	20	20	19	19	18	18	17	17	16	16	15	15	14	14	13	13	12	12	11	11

## SAVING THROWS

Character Group and Experience Level	Attack to Be Saved Against					
	Paralyzation, Poison, or Death Magic	Rod, Staff, or Wand	Petrification or Polymorph *	Breath Weapon †	Spells ‡	
Priests	1-3	10	14	13	16	15
	4-6	9	13	12	15	14
	7-9	7	11	10	13	12
	10-12	6	10	9	12	11
	13-15	5	9	8	11	10
	16-18	4	8	7	10	9
19+	2	6	5	8	7	
Psionicists	1-4	13	15	12	16	15
	5-8	12	13	10	15	14
	9-12	11	11	8	13	12
	13-16	10	9	7	12	11
	17-20	9	7	6	11	9
21+	8	5	5	9	7	
Rogues	1-4	13	14	12	16	15
	5-8	12	12	11	15	13
	9-12	11	10	10	14	11
	13-16	10	8	9	13	9
	17-20	9	7	8	12	7
21+	8	6	4	11	5	
Warriors	0	16	18	17	20	19
	1-2	14	16	15	17	17
	3-4	13	15	14	16	16
	5-6	11	13	12	13	14
	7-8	10	12	11	12	13
	9-10	8	10	9	9	11
	11-12	7	9	8	8	10
	13-14	5	7	6	5	8
15-16	4	6	5	4	7	
17+	3	5	4	3	6	
Wizards	1-5	14	11	13	15	12
	6-10	13	9	11	13	10
	11-15	11	7	9	11	8
	16-20	10	5	7	9	6
21+	8	3	5	7	4	

\* Excluding *polymorph wand* attacks.

† Excluding those that cause petrification or polymorph.

‡ Excluding those for which another saving throw type is specified.

**Note:** A roll of 1, 2, or 3—regardless of modifiers—is an automatic fail.



## INITIATIVE MODIFIERS

Specific Situation	Modifier
Hasted	-2
Slowed	+2
On higher ground	-1
Set to receive a charge	-2
Wading or slippery footing	+2
Wading in deep water	+4
Foreign environment	+6
Hindered (tangled, climbing, held)	+3
Waiting	+1

## COMBAT MODIFIERS

Situation	Attack Roll Modifier
Attacker on higher ground	+1
Defender invisible	-4
Defender off-balance	+2
Defender sleeping or held	Automatic
Defender stunned or prone	+4
Defender surprised	+1
Missile fire, long range	-5
Missile fire, medium range	-2
Rear attack	+2

## COVER AND CONCEALMENT MODIFIERS TO AC

Target	Cover	Concealment
25% hidden	-2	-1
50% hidden	-4	-2
75% hidden	-7	-3
90% hidden	-10	-4



## ELF RUN

Roll Equal to	Days Before Penalties Begin
Failure/No preparation	1
Con score to Con -3	2
Con -4 to Con -7	3
Con -8 to Con -10	4
Con -11 to Con -13	5
Con -14 to Con -16	6
Con -17 or lower	7

## MASS ELF RUN LEADER BONUS

Leader Type	Constitution Bonus
Tribal chief	+3
Clan head	+2
Highest Charisma	+1

## GATHERING SPELL ENERGY THROUGH DEFILING MAGIC

Terrain Type *	Intelligence Check		
	Failure (More than Int)	Int to Int-7	Int-8
Lush	-1 spell/level <i>Failure (More than Int-2)</i>	Usual spells/level <i>Int-2 to Int-7</i>	+3 spells/level <i>Int-8</i>
Abundant	-1 spell/level <i>Failure (More than Int-3)</i>	Usual spells/level <i>Int-3 to Int-7</i>	+2 spells/level <i>Int-8</i>
Fertile	-1 spell/level <i>Failure (More than Int-5)</i>	Usual spells/level <i>Int-5 to Int-8</i>	+2 spells/level <i>Int-9</i>
Infertile	-2 spells/level <i>Failure (More than Int-7)</i>	Usual spells/level <i>Int-7 to Int-9</i>	+1 spell/level <i>Int-10</i>
Barren	-2 spells/level	Usual spells/level	+1 spell/level

\* *Lush terrain* includes forests, large gardens, and parks. *Abundant terrain* includes verdant belts, grasslands, and mud flats. *Fertile terrain* includes oases and scrub plains. *Infertile terrain* includes stony barrens, rocky badlands, and bare mountains. *Barren terrain* includes boulder fields, sandy wastes, and salt flats.

## TURNING UNDEAD

Type or Hit Dice of Undead	Level of Priest												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10-11	12-13	14+	
Skeleton or 1 HD	10	7	4	T	T	D	D	D*	D*	D*	D*	D*	
Zombie	13	10	7	4	T	T	D	D	D*	D*	D*	D*	
Ghoul or 2 HD	16	13	10	7	4	T	T	D	D*	D*	D*	D*	
Shadow or 3-4 HD	19	16	13	10	7	4	T	T	D	D	D*	D*	
Wight or 5 HD	20	19	16	13	10	7	4	T	T	D	D	D*	
Ghast	—	20	19	16	13	10	7	4	T	T	D	D	
Wraith or 6 HD	—	—	20	19	16	13	10	7	4	T	T	D	
Mummy or 7 HD	—	—	—	20	19	16	13	10	7	4	T	T	
Spectre or 8 HD	—	—	—	—	20	19	16	13	10	7	4	T	
Vampire or 9 HD	—	—	—	—	—	20	19	16	13	10	7	4	
Ghost or 10 HD	—	—	—	—	—	—	20	19	16	13	10	7	
Lich or 11+ HD	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	20	19	16	13	10	
Special †	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	20	19	16	13	

\* An additional 2d4 creatures of this type are turned.

† Special undead include the most powerful, free-willed undead of Athas.

## MUL EXERTION

Exertion	Time Before Requiring Rest
Heavy labor (stone construction, quarry work, running)	24+Con (hours)
Medium labor (light construction, mining, jogging)	36+Con (hours)
Light labor (combat training, walking encumbered)	48+Con (hours)
Normal activity (walking, conversation)	Con (days)

## WEAPON MATERIALS

Material	Cost	Weight	Damage *	Hit Probability †
Metal	100%	100%	—	—
Bone	30%	50%	-1	-1
Stone, obsidian	50%	75%	-1	-2
Wood	10%	50%	-2	-3

The damage modifier subtracts from the damage normally done by that weapon, to a minimum of one point.

Not applicable to missile weapons.

## Money

100 cp (ceramic pieces) =  
10 sp = 2 ep = 1 gp = 1/5 pp

- All nonmetal items cost 1% of the price listed in the *Player's Handbook*
- All metal items cost the price listed in the *Player's Handbook*.
- Prices listed in any DARK SUN® product are used as is.



# ATHASIAN WEAPONS

	Cost †	Weight ‡	Size	Type	Speed	Damage *	
						S - M	L
Alhulak	9 cp	9	M	B	5	1d6	1d6
Bard's friend	10 cp	3	S	P/S	3	1d4+1	1d3
Cahulaks	12 cp	12	M	P/B	5	1d6	1d6
Carrikal	8 cp	6	M	S	5	1d6+1	1d8
Chatkcha	1 cp	½	S	S	4	1d6+2	1d4+1
Crusher	24 cp	9	L	B	10	1d4	1d3
Datchi club	12 cp	10	L	B	4	1d6	1d4
Dragon's paw	15 cp	9	L	P	8	1d6	1d6+1
Forearm axe	2 sp	4	S	S/P	3	1d6	1d6
Gouge	6 cp	12	L	P/S	8	1d8	1d10
Gythka	6 cp	12	L	P/B	9	2d4	1d10
Impaler	4 cp	5	M	P	5	1d8	1d8
Lotulis	15 cp	10	L	P/S/B	8	1d10	1d12
Master's whip	6 cp	9	M	P	8	1d3	1d2
Puchik	6 cp	1	S	P/S	2	1d4+1	1d4+1
Quabone	1 cp	4	M	P/S	7	1d4	1d3
Singing sticks	5 sp	1	S	B	2	1d6	1d4
Tortoise blade	9 cp	5	M	P/S	5	1d6	1d6+1
Trikal	4 cp	1	S	P/S/B	2	1d6	1d6-1
Weighted pike	6 cp	15	L	P/B	12	1d6	1d12 or 1d4
Widow's knife	5 cp	4	M	P/S	3	1d4	1d4
Wrist razor	1 sp	1	S	S	2	1d6+1	1d4+1

\* Damage is shown as a base rate. Modifiers must be employed based on the materials used.

† Costs are for items made from stone or obsidian. Change to reflect the use of other materials.

‡ Weights are for items made from stone or obsidian. Change to reflect the use of other materials.

## DEFILER MAGICAL DESTRUCTION

Terrain Type	Spell Level								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Silt Sea	12	16	20	22	24	26	28	30	32
Boulder fields	10	14	17	20	22	24	26	28	30
Salt flats	10	14	17	20	22	24	26	28	30
Sandy wastes	10	14	17	20	22	24	26	28	30
Mountains	5	7	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Rocky badlands	5	7	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Stony barrens	5	7	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Scrub plains	3	4	4	5	5	5	5	6	6
Verdant belts	2	2	2	3	3	3	4	4	4
Forests	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	3	3

**Note:** The number shown is the radius, in yards, around the defiler where all vegetation is turned to ash. If a defiler memorizes more than one spell from the same location, the radius of destroyed vegetation expands. Start with the highest level spell memorized. Add one yard for every other spell memorized. (Spells equal to the highest level spell are treated as additional spells.)

## STRENGTH

Ability Score	Hit Probability	Damage Adjustment	Weight Allowance	Maximum Press	Open Doors	Bend Bars/Lift Gates
3	-3	-1	5	10	2	0%
4-5	-2	-1	10	25	3	0%
6-7	-1	None	20	55	4	0%
8-9	Normal	None	35	90	5	1%
10-11	Normal	None	40	115	6	2%
12-13	Normal	None	45	140	7	4%
14-15	Normal	None	55	170	8	7%
16	Normal	+1	70	195	9	10%
17	+1	+1	85	220	10	13%
18	+1	+2	110	255	11	16%
19	+2	+3	135	280	12	20%
20	+2	+4	170	315	13	25%
21	+2	+5	255	375	14	30%
22	+3	+6	360	475	15 (3)	35%
23	+3	+7	445	600	16 (6)	40%
24	+3	+8	515	700	16 (8)	50%
25	+4	+9	635	810	17 (10)	60%

Dragon Crown  
Mountains

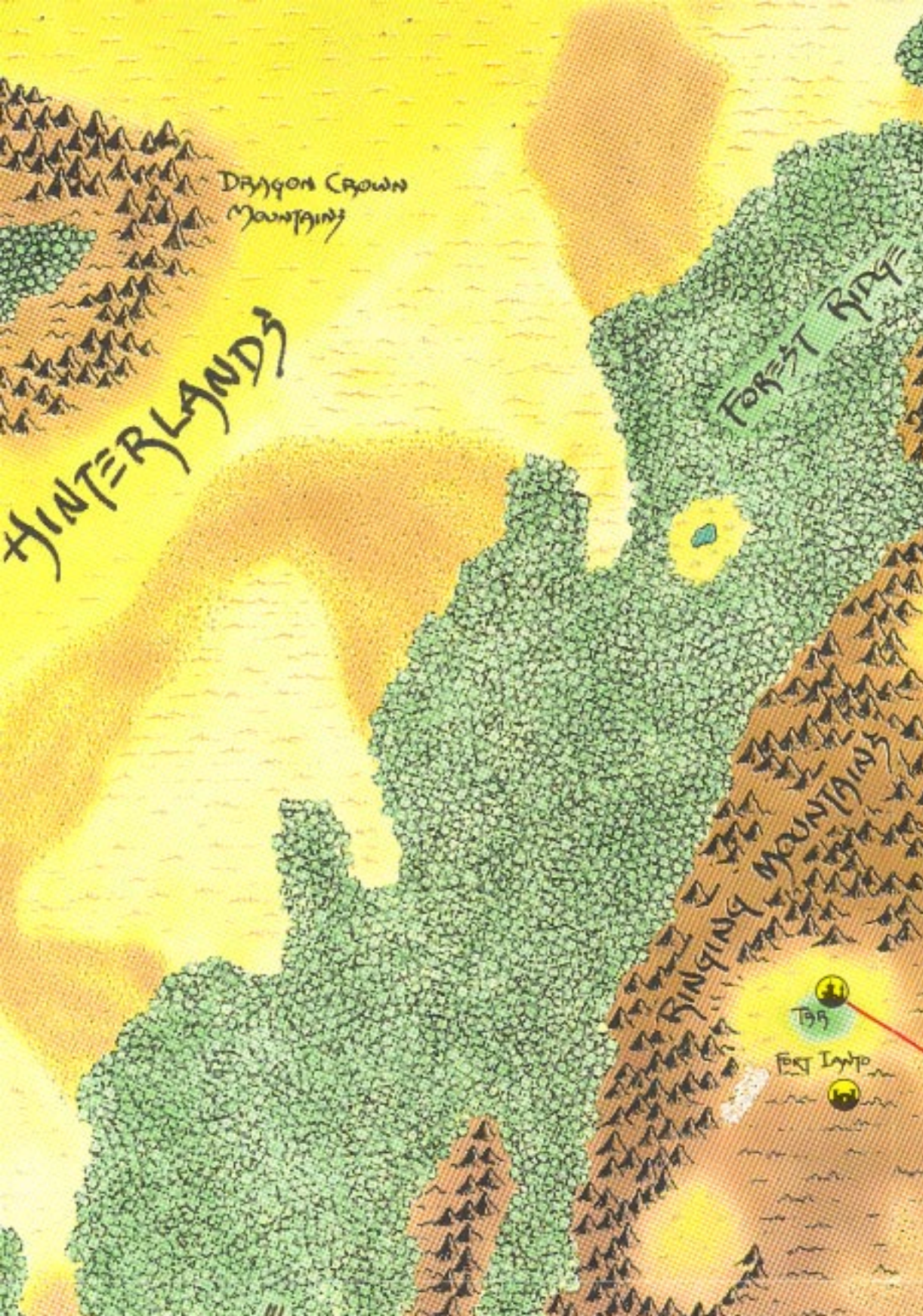
HINTERLANDS

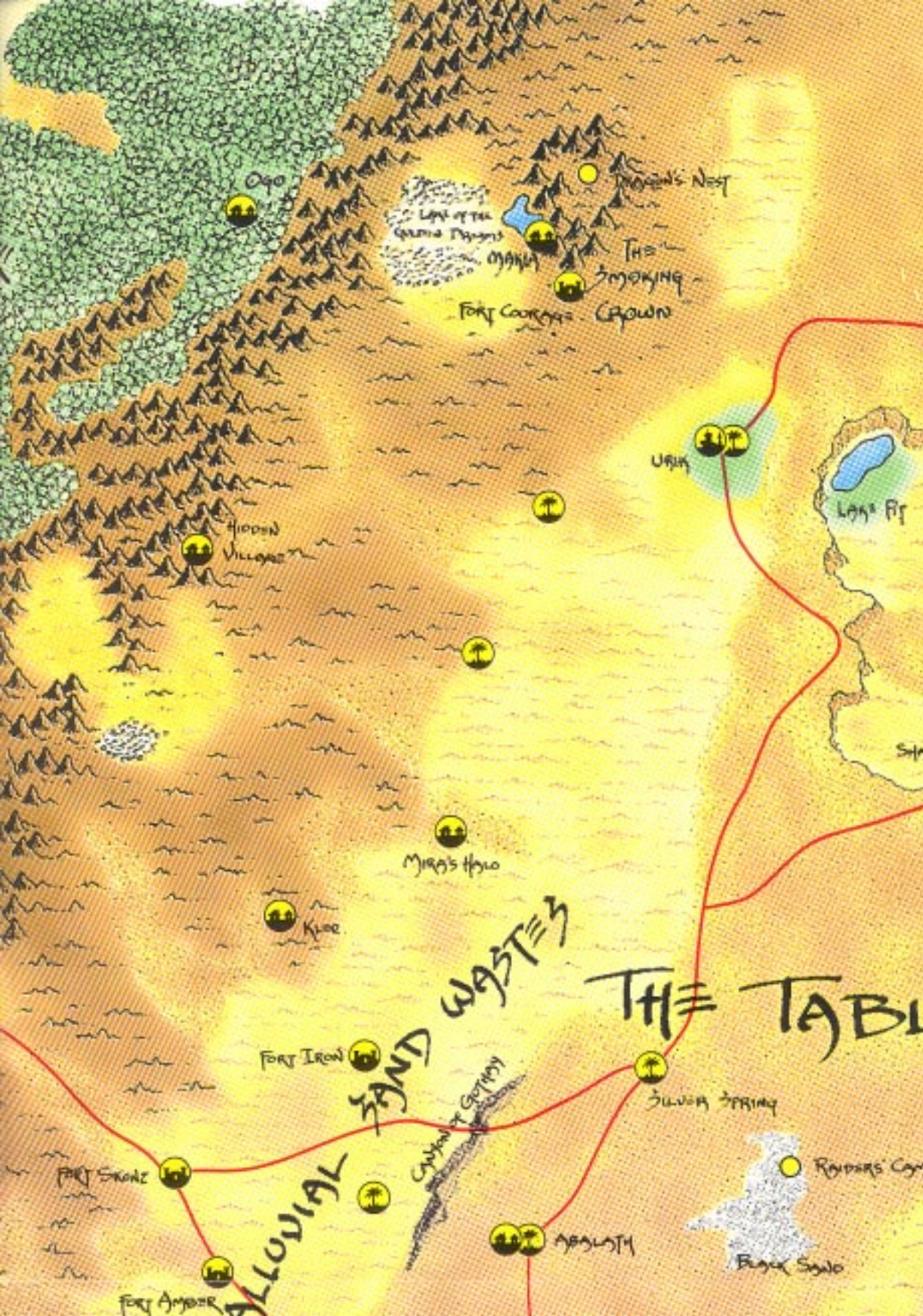
Forest Ridge

Ringing Mountains

T99

First Inno





Ogo

Land of the  
Golden Dragons

Manna

Dragon's Nest

The  
Smoking  
Crown

Fort Courage

Hidden  
Villages

URAK

Lake Pt

Mirra's Hole

Klor

Fort Iron

THE TABLE

Silver Spring

Fort Skole

Canyon of Gormy

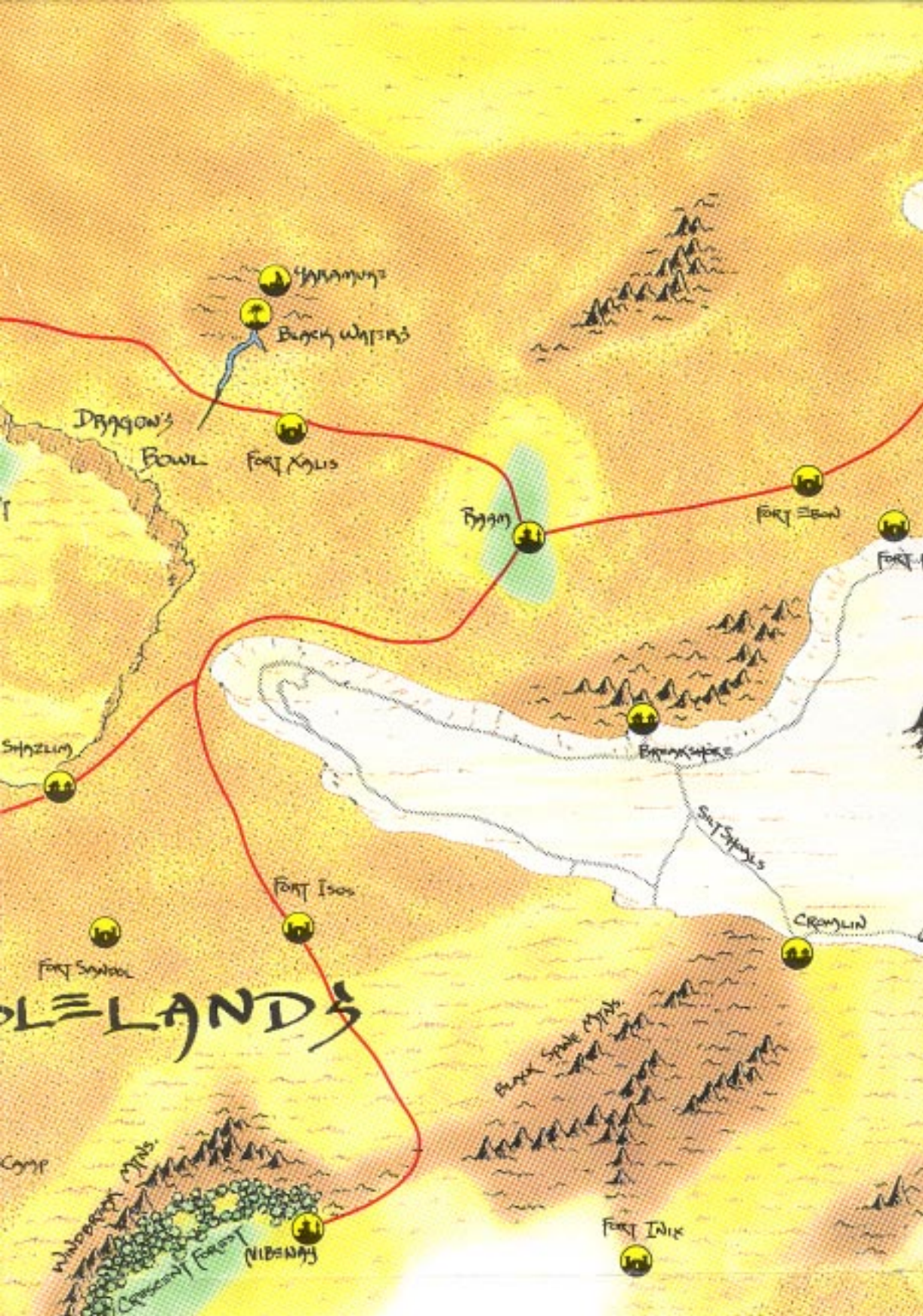
Raiders Camp

Fort Amber

ALUVIAL SAND WASTES

ABSLATH

Black Sand



Pyram

Blanch Whispers

Dragon's Bowl

Fort Kyllis

Pyram

Fort Ebon

Fort

Shtazim

Frankyoke

Shtazim's

Cromlin

Fort Isos

Fort Shtazim

LELANDS

Blanch Spine Mtns

Camp

Whispering Mtns  
Crescent Forest

NIBSNAY

Fort Inix



DAAJ

BUTTA WALL

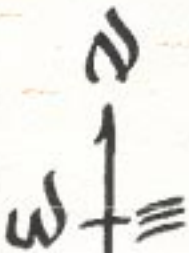
SEA OF SILT

LAKE ISLAND

SILT SHOALS

FIRST WATCH

ISLE OF BONES



Forest Ridge

Binging Mountains

Fort GPR3

Fort M...

Fort GPR...

KALISMAH

Fort T...

WGL2

Wood Road





FORT AMBER

GREAT

ALTAIR

FORT KALIS

GREAT  
IVOR

GRAN'S POOL

FORT  
THAMO

NORTH  
LEOPOLDS

SOUTH  
LEOPOLDS

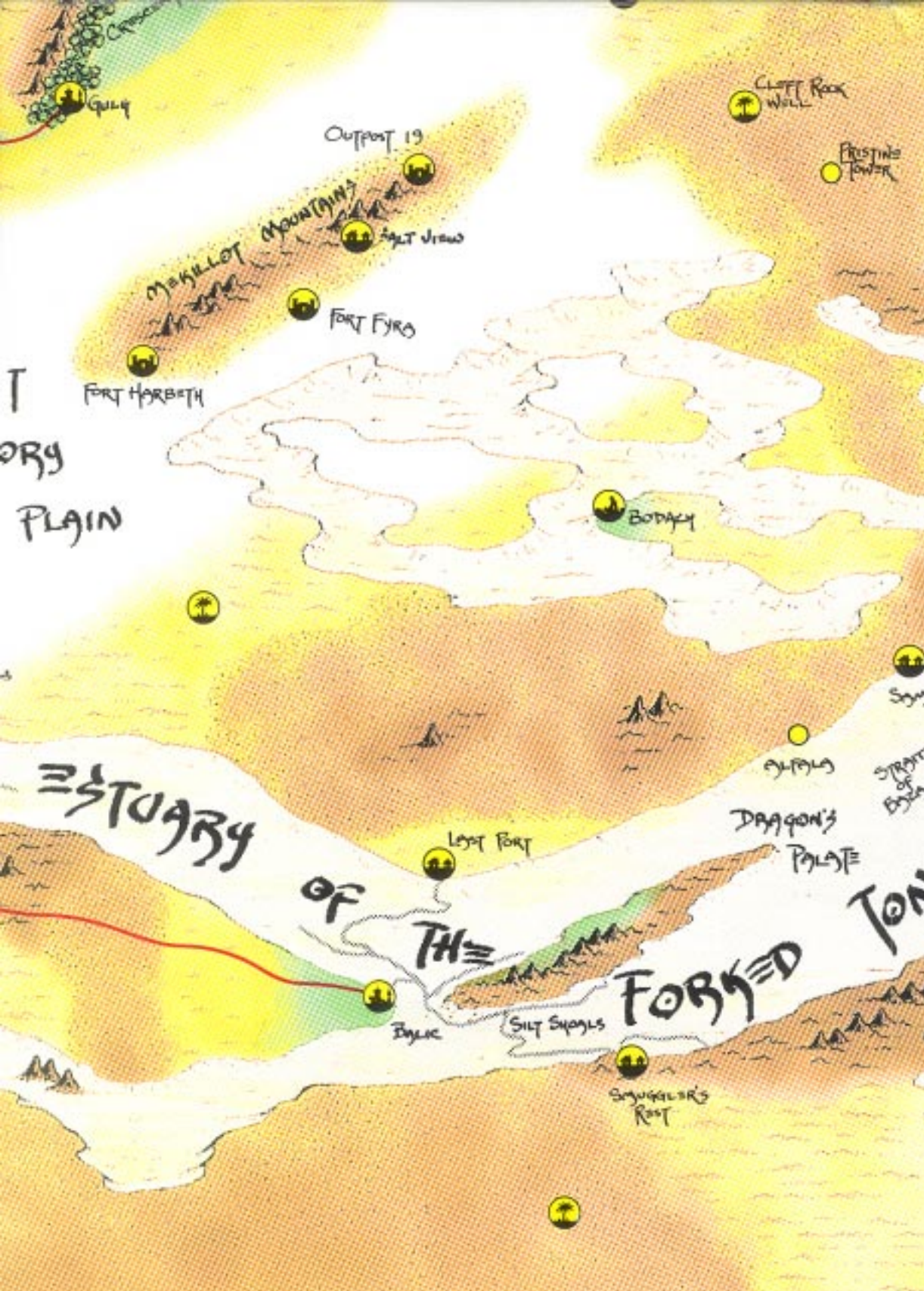
LEDO

FORT  
GLAMIS

GRAN'S POOL

MELISSA

ALTAIR



T  
ORY  
PLAIN

OUTPOST 19

MAGKILLOT MOUNTAINS

SALT VIEWS

FORT FYRO

FORT HARBETH

BODACH

ESTUARY

OF THE

FORGED

TON

LAST FORT

EGRE

SILT SHOALS

Smyggalar's  
ROOST

ALPALS

DRAGON'S  
PALATE


CLIFF ROCK  
WELL


FESTIVE  
TOWER



# The Tyr Region and Beyond

	Mountains		Forest		City
	Rocky Badlands		Grassland		Village
	Stony Barrens		Scrub Plains		Fort
	Sandy Wastes		Boulder Fields		Ruins
	Dust Sink		Lava Caldera		Oasis
	Salt Flats		Lake		Special Interest
	Mud Flat		Obsidian Plain		Road

Lost Scale 

Pterrann Vale 

The Misty Border

Hinterlands

The Wall

The Great Rift

Dragon's  
Crown



ds

n's  
Crown Mountains

Forest Ridge

Malka

Uruk

Dragon's Bowl  
Lake Pit

Hidden Village

Shazlim

Fort Sandel

The Tablelands

kled

Fort Iron

Silver Spring

Tyr

Fort Jante

Fort Skonz

Ablath

Fort Amber

Gulg

Nibena

Fort Kalvis

Great Ivory Plain

Fort Harbeth



Dry Spring

Fort Ral

Ket

Draj

Bitter Well

Lake Island

Shault

Isle of

Fort Eban

Fort Firstwatch

Raam

Break Shore

Fort Jusus

Cromlin

Giustenal

Isle of Bones

Sea of Silt

Nibenay

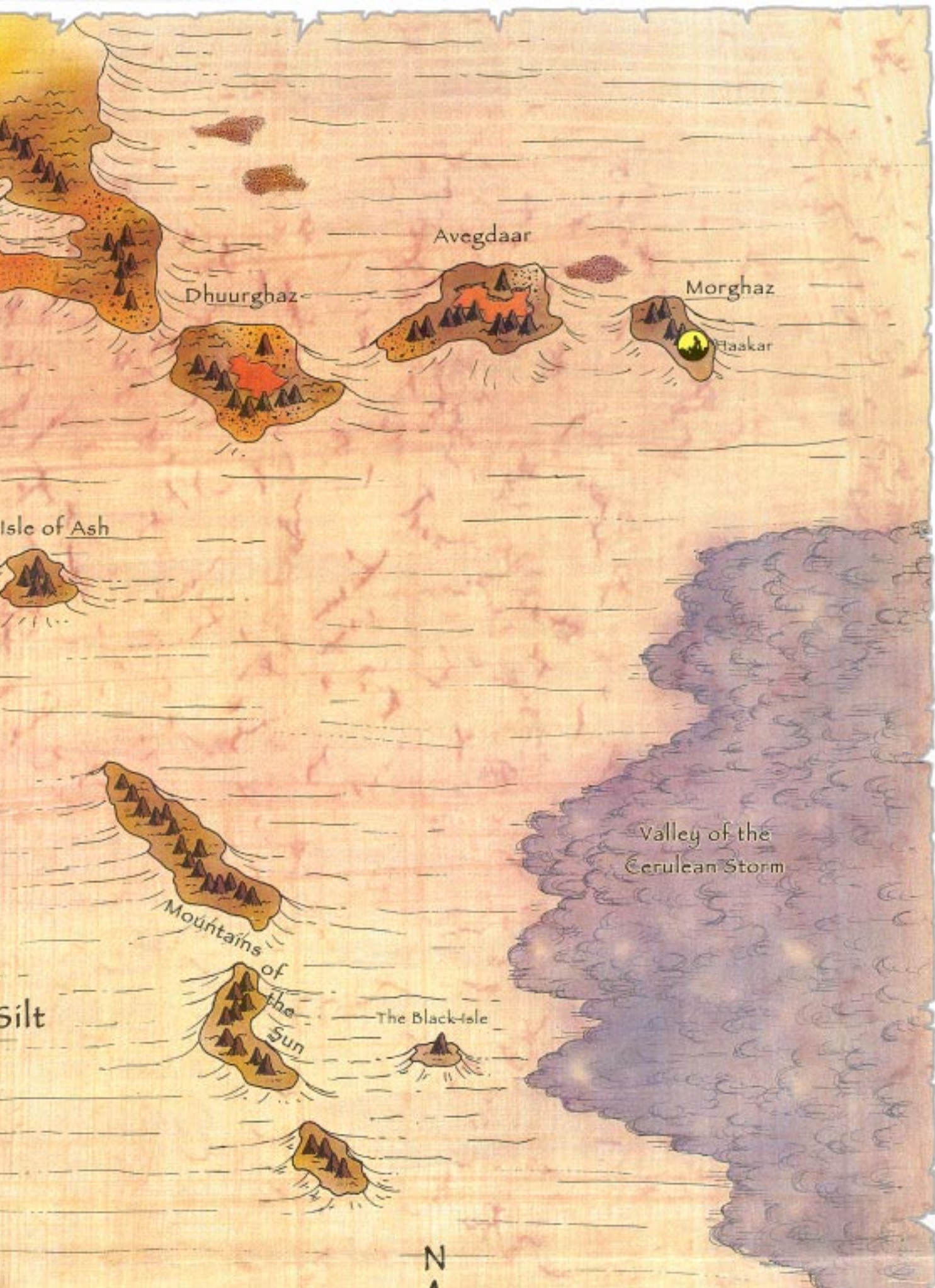
Fort Inix

Outpost 19

Pristine Tower

Fort Pyra

Waverly



Avegdaar

Dhuurghaz

Morghaz

Haakar

Isle of Ash

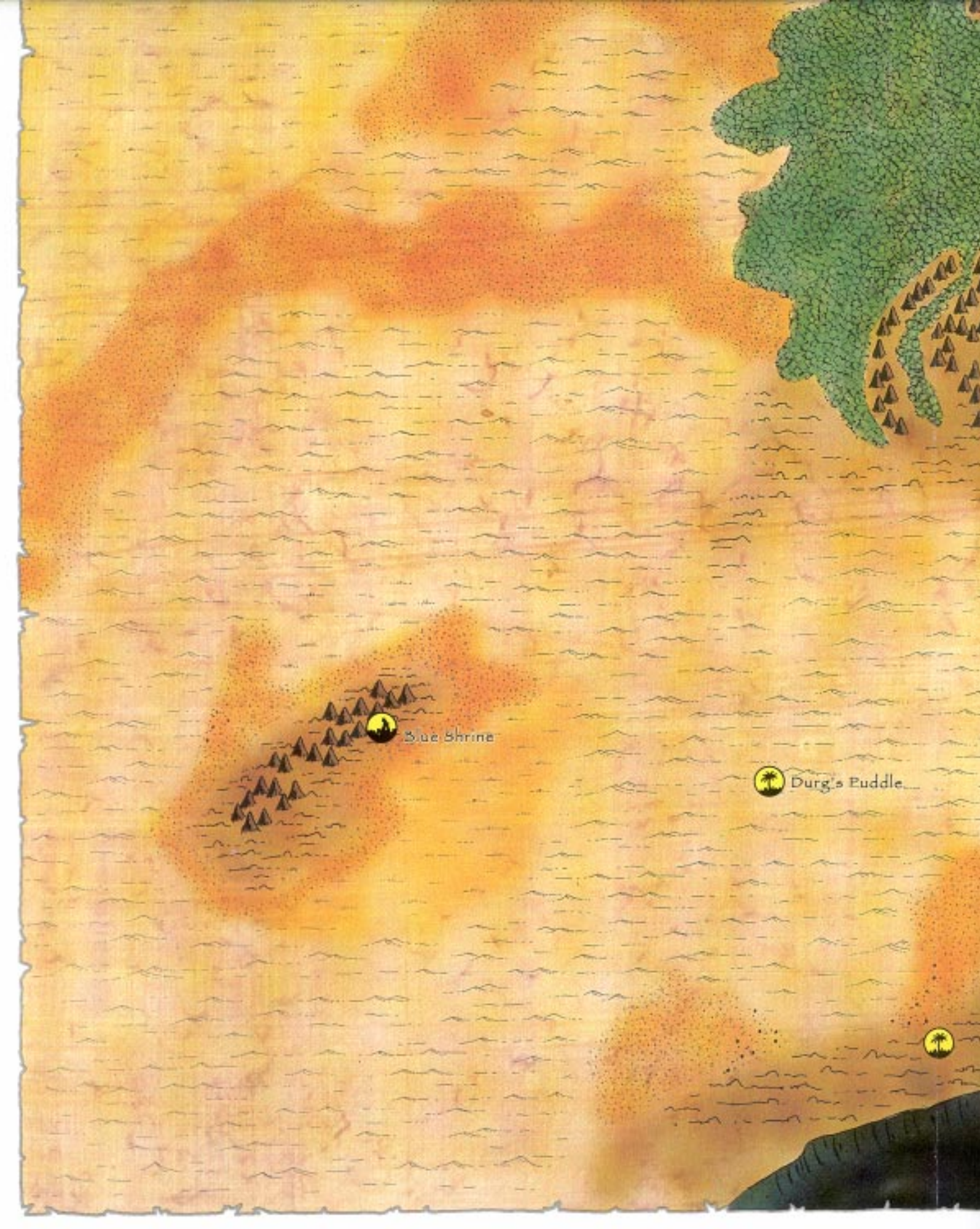
Valley of the  
Cerulean Storm

Mountains  
of  
the  
Sun

Silt

The Black Isle

N



Sue Shrine

Durg's Puddle







North Ledopolus

South Ledopolus

Estuary of

Balic

Lost Oasis

Kalidnay

Celik

Small Home

The Dead Land

Obsidian Fort



Bodach

Samarah

Alfala

Last Port

Arkhold

Tongue

The Mud Palace

Bleak Tower

Crimson Monolith

Last Drink

Endless  
Sand  
Dunes

City of 1,000 Dead

Indian Fortress



Tarcobn



0 50  
Miles

Vanishing Lake

Euripis

Great  
Salt  
Flat

The Silt Archipelago

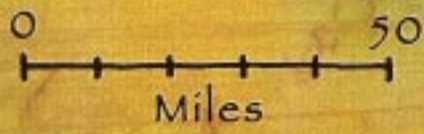
Kakikix



Koschak  
Mtns.

*The Imperial Road*

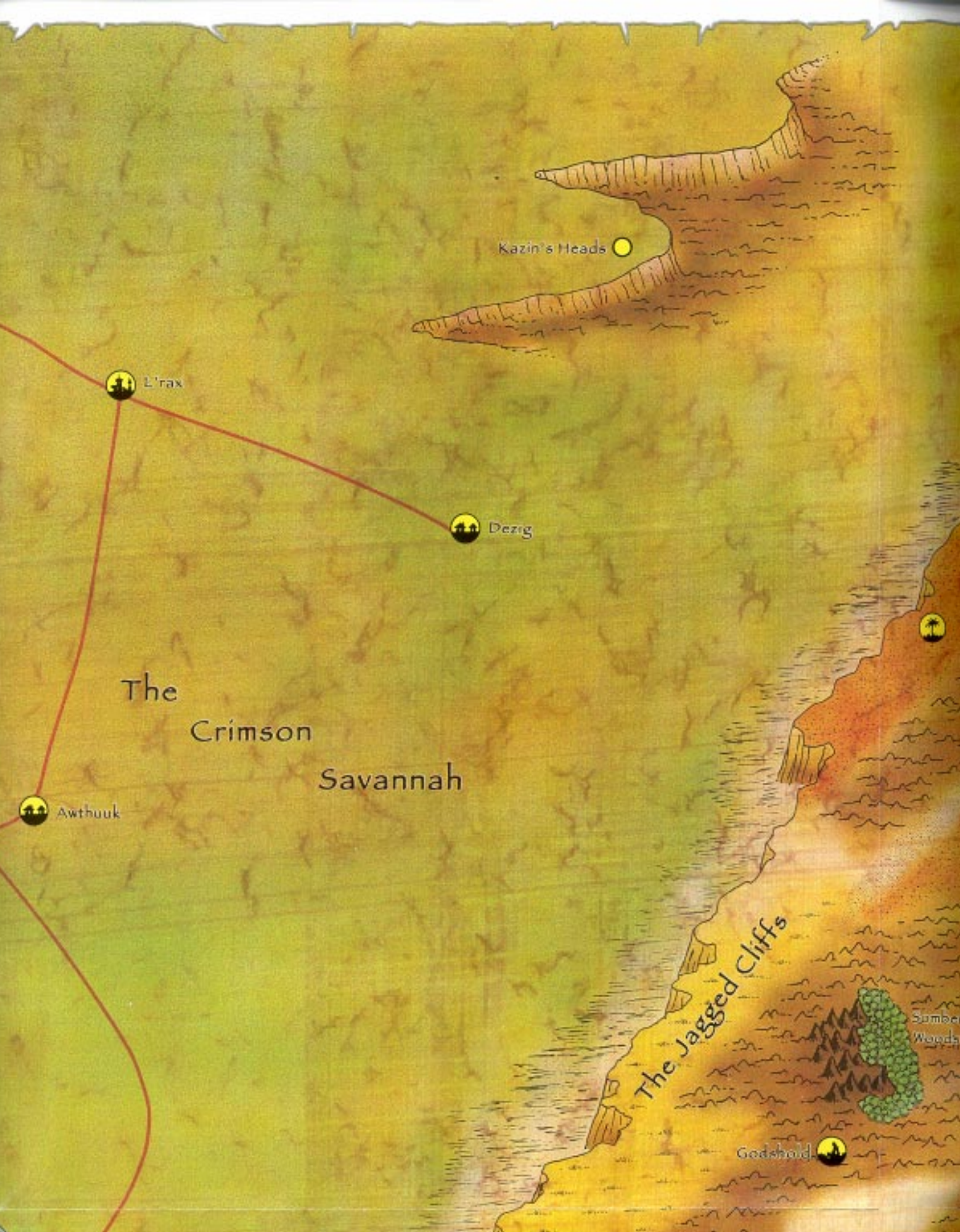
— The Jagged Cliffs Region —



Kano Swamp



Ko'teg



Kazin's Heads

L'rax

Dezig

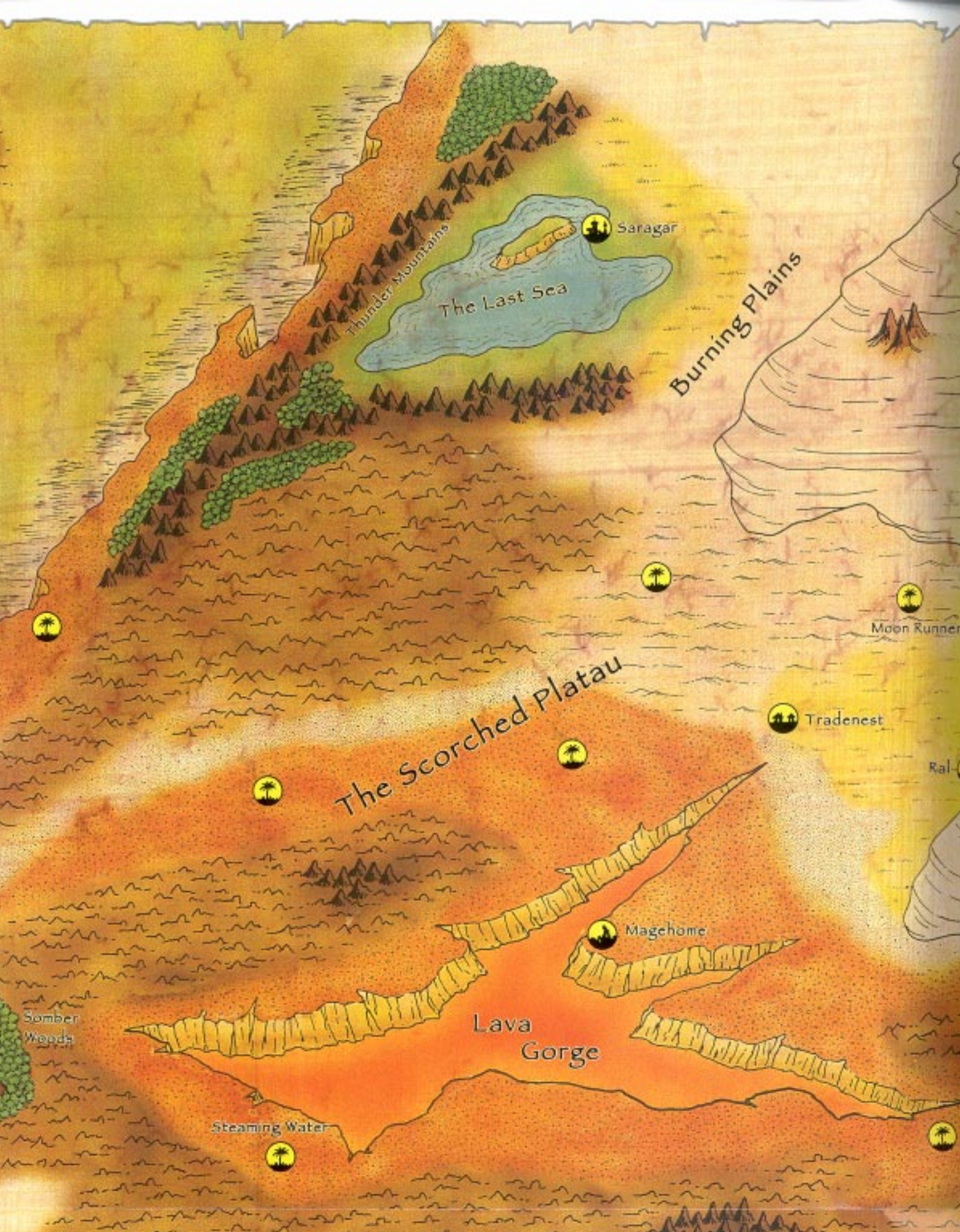
The  
Crimson  
Savannah

Awthuuk

The Jagged Cliffs

Godshold

Sunder  
Woods



Thunder Mountains

The Last Sea

Saragar

Burning Plains

Moon Runner

Tradenest

The Scorched Plateau

Ral

Magehome

Lava Gorge

Somber Woods

Steaming Water



Sea  
of  
Silt

Malthy

Bartigar

on Runner's Rest

Rel

Small Water

S

Ka'teg

J'eztere

Nirik

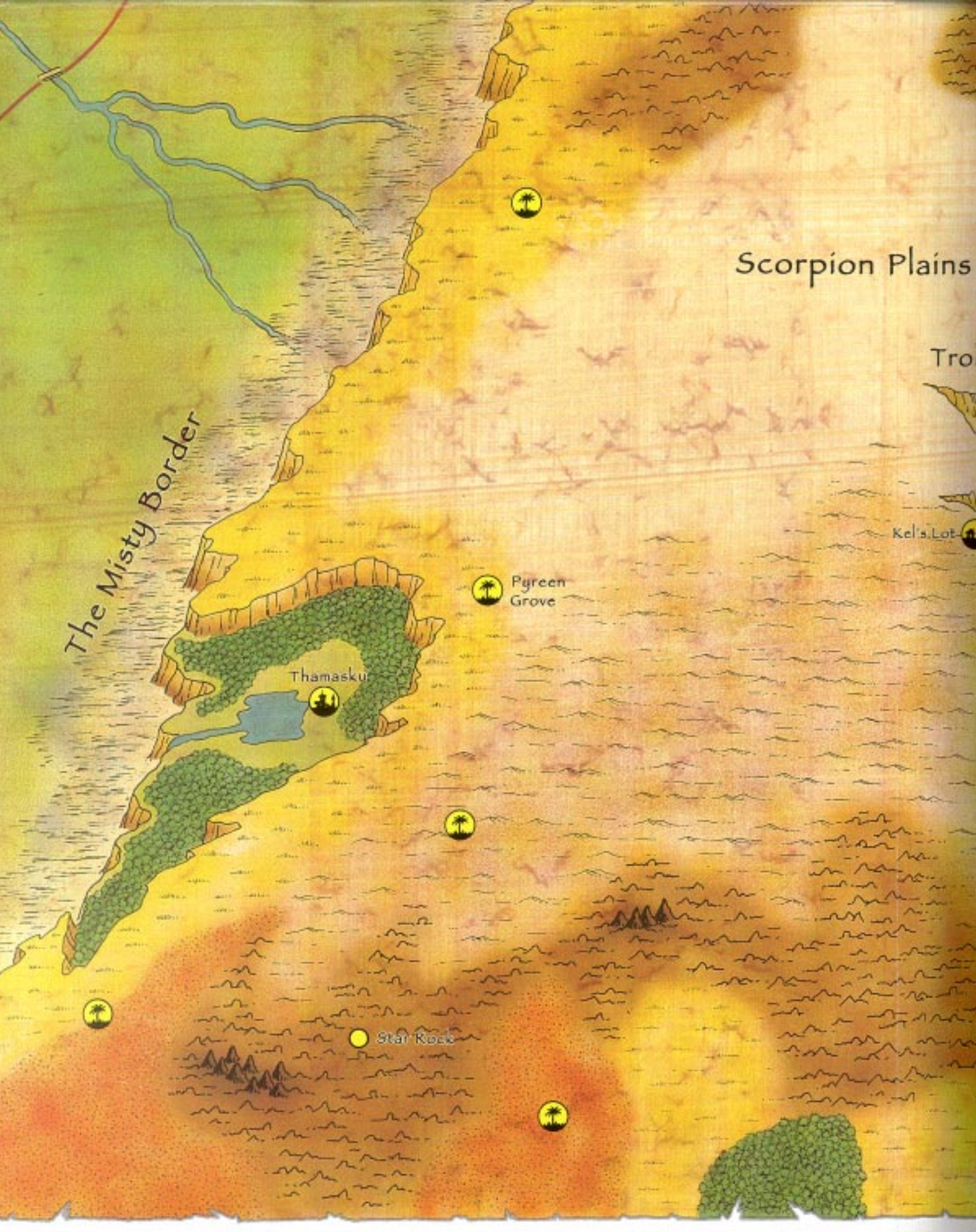
Hak'gyth

Z'aythar

Thaythilor







Scorpion Plains

The Misty Border

Thamasku

Pyreen Grove

Star Rock

Kel's Lot

Tro

ains



Foul Puddle

Buried C...

Pillage

Plunder

Troll Grave Chasm

The Barrier Wastes

l's Lot

Ravish

Winter Nest

Ravage

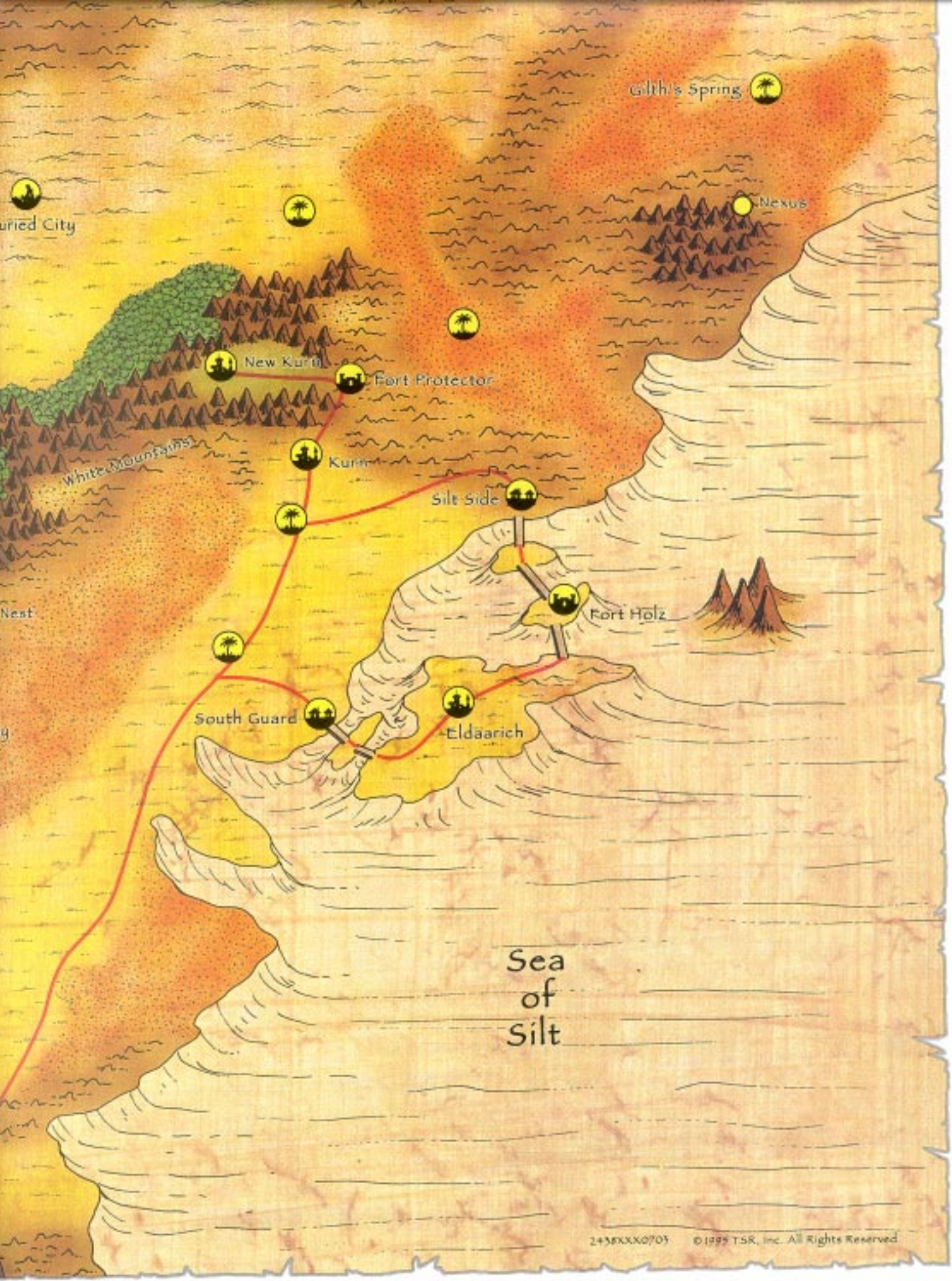
Hogalay

Glowing  
Desert

Wrath

Spail

Azeth's Rest



Buried City

Gith's Spring

Nexus

New Kurn

Fort Protector

Kurn

Silt Side

Fort Holz

South Guard

Eldaarich

Sea  
of  
Silt



A decade has passed since the Age of Heroes began. The city of Tyr has broken free of tyranny, though turmoil still holds the world in its merciless grip. The Dragon King lies dead, earthquakes rock the land, and revolution spreads like wildfire across the Tyr Region. Giant rifts pierce this once impenetrable land: far to the north, the alien thri-kreen empire quickens, sensing its opportunity to invade. And to the south, in the obsidian wasteland, the ground stirs with the emergence of the undead. . . .

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