

Living Greyhawk™

Enlightenment can penetrate even the helm of iron—Cuthbertine proverb

Campaign Director: Stephan Radney-MacFarland • **Contributing Reporters:** Jason Bulmahn and David Christ

3.5 Edition and Living Greyhawk

Recent months have brought a lot of discussion and speculation regarding the new “3.5” edition of the D&D core rules, set to hit store shelves in July. Many LIVING GREYHAWK players have wondered when and how the campaign will support these new rules. While the campaign administrators have not yet finalized all the details of how to implement the changes, we have been working very hard with the new rules to make any changes as smooth as possible.

We do know that LIVING GREYHAWK will support the new rules. Those rules will not “go live” for the campaign in July, but will be implemented by the end of 2003. We wish to give our players and especially our judges enough time to become familiar with the new rules before we make them official.

Shortly after the new books hit the shelves, we will place a conversion document in the “Files” section of the campaign website (www.living-greyhawk.com). The document will detail what changes must be made to your character, with a deadline for when all changes must go into effect. We realize that not knowing what changes await your characters can be frustrating, but we plan to incorporate the new rules in a manner that causes as little strife to the players as possible. With a positive attitude and a little understanding from all involved we can make this change as quickly as possible and get back to the fun of playing the game we all love.

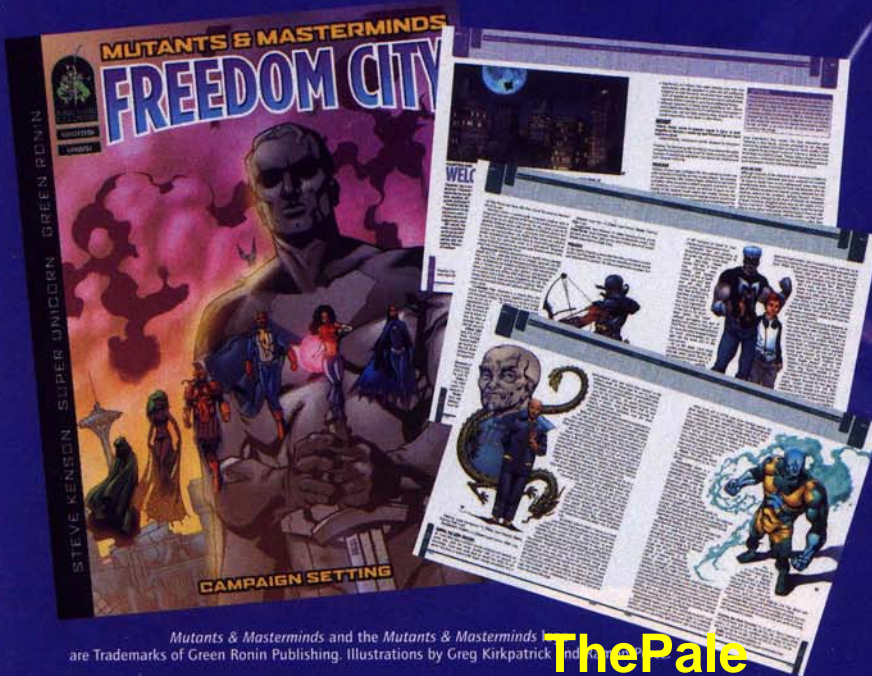
Campaign Policy: Regionals at the “Big” Shows

The RPGA Network designates certain conventions as “spotlight” shows. These shows receive Core Premieres, special events, and other special considerations unavailable to regional shows. As a balancing factor, “spotlight” shows cannot run regional or meta-regional events, which are reserved for smaller local shows. The current “spotlight” shows are: WINTER FANTASY, Origins, Gen Con Midwest, Gen Con West.

New Books, New Spells, New Ways to Die

Got a feat or prestige class from a new Wizards of the Coast product that’s just perfect for your character? The list of allowable rules expansions changes twice annually, and is noted in two important campaign documents. The *LIVING GREYHAWK Campaign Sourcebook* (LGCS) contains everything a player needs to create and play a character in the campaign. The *LIVING GREYHAWK Administrators Handbook* (LGAH) provides guidelines regarding what rules can and cannot be used in the campaign, and is a resource for the Regional Triads who manage the campaign regionally.

Campaign administrators update both documents every six months (in January and July), adding character options that have come out since the last update once they have been reviewed for campaign compatibility. As always, the current version of the LGCS can be found at www.livinggreyhawk.com. ●



MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS FREEDOM CITY

A Hometown Worth Rescuing from Evil

The newly released *Freedom City* sourcebook provides endless adventure for *Mutants & Masterminds* players and Gamemasters! Battle one of dozens of supervillains or earn a spot in the heroic Freedom League with the help of this lavishly illustrated complete superhero city sourcebook!

Praise for *Mutants & Masterminds*
★★★★★—Simon Collins, Staff Reviewer, ENWorld.org

“The best-looking RPG product I’ve ever seen, bar none.”—Mike Mearls, author, *Monster’s Handbook*



Available wherever quality roleplaying games are sold.

ThePale

Mutants & Masterminds and the *Mutants & Masterminds* are Trademarks of Green Ronin Publishing. Illustrations by Greg Kirkpatrick and others.

Living Greyhawk™

Enlightenment can penetrate even the helm of iron—Cuthbertine proverb

Campaign Director: Stephan Radney-MacFarland • **Contributing Reporters:** Jason Bulmahn and David Christ

3.5 Edition and Living Greyhawk

Recent months have brought a lot of discussion and speculation regarding the new “3.5” edition of the D&D core rules, set to hit store shelves in July. Many LIVING GREYHAWK players have wondered when and how the campaign will support these new rules. While the campaign administrators have not yet finalized all the details of how to implement the changes, we have been working very hard with the new rules to make any changes as smooth as possible.

We do know that LIVING GREYHAWK will support the new rules. Those rules will not “go live” for the campaign in July, but will be implemented by the end of 2003. We wish to give our players and especially our judges enough time to become familiar with the new rules before we make them official.

Shortly after the new books hit the shelves, we will place a conversion document in the “Files” section of the campaign website (www.living-greyhawk.com). The document will detail what changes must be made to your character, with a deadline for when all changes must go into effect. We realize that not knowing what changes await your characters can be frustrating, but we plan to incorporate the new rules in a manner that causes as little strife to the players as possible. With a positive attitude and a little understanding from all involved we can make this change as quickly as possible and get back to the fun of playing the game we all love.

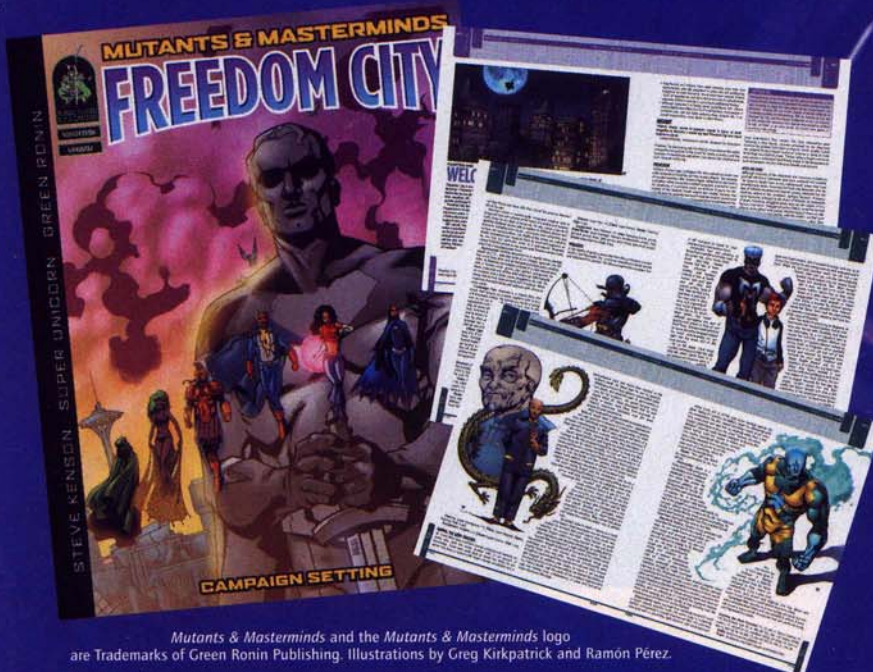
Campaign Policy: Regionals at the “Big” Shows

The RPGA Network designates certain conventions as “spotlight” shows. These shows receive Core Premieres, special events, and other special considerations unavailable to regional shows. As a balancing factor, “spotlight” shows cannot run regional or meta-regional events, which are reserved for smaller local shows. The current “spotlight” shows are: WINTER FANTASY, Origins, Gen Con Midwest, Gen Con West.

New Books, New Spells, New Ways to Die

Got a feat or prestige class from a new Wizards of the Coast product that’s just perfect for your character? The list of allowable rules expansions changes twice annually, and is noted in two important campaign documents. The *LIVING GREYHAWK Campaign Sourcebook* (LGCS) contains everything a player needs to create and play a character in the campaign. The *LIVING GREYHAWK Administrators Handbook* (LGAH) provides guidelines regarding what rules can and cannot be used in the campaign, and is a resource for the Regional Triads who manage the campaign regionally.

Campaign administrators update both documents every six months (in January and July), adding character options that have come out since the last update once they have been reviewed for campaign compatibility. As always, the current version of the LGCS can be found at www.livinggreyhawk.com. ●



MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS FREEDOM CITY

A Hometown Worth Rescuing from Evil

The newly released *Freedom City* sourcebook provides endless adventure for *Mutants & Masterminds* players and Gamemasters! Battle one of dozens of supervillains or earn a spot in the heroic Freedom League with the help of this lavishly illustrated complete superhero city sourcebook!

Praise for *Mutants & Masterminds*
★★★★★—Simon Collins, Staff Reviewer, ENWorld.org

“The best-looking RPG product I’ve ever seen, bar none.”—Mike Mearls, author, *Monster’s Handbook*



Available wherever quality roleplaying games are sold.

Mutants & Masterminds and the *Mutants & Masterminds* logo are Trademarks of Green Ronin Publishing. Illustrations by Greg Kirkpatrick and Ramón Pérez.

INTO THE BRIGHT DESERT

By Creighton Broadhurst

with special thanks to Stuart Kerrigan and Paul Looby

Illustrations by David Hendee and Phil Hilliker

Cartography by Craig Zipse



Two millennia ago, Flan civilization reached its zenith on the arid grasslands of Sulm.

Here, the Flan learned the secrets of agriculture, ironwork, and engineering, founded great cities, and raised majestic temples to their gods. In a series of swift, hard-fought campaigns, Sulm's neighbor states (Ronhas, Durha, Rhugha, and Truun) fell before the might of her iron-shod hosts. Continued aggression brought open warfare with an implacable enemy—Itar.

Situated in a rich coastal region southeast of Sulm, the valorous Sun Kingdom of Itar honored gods of light and progress and posed a serious military, financial, and ideological threat to Sulm. It wasn't enough. After three decades of open warfare, Sulm obliterated Itar's armies, mingling the blood of its soldiers with the ebbing life force of Vathris, an Itarran god of ingenuity who had manifested to aid his people on the field of battle only to be stricken down by dark Sulmish magics.

With Itar's destruction, the entire region fell under Sulmish hegemony. Her people grew proud and her leaders corrupt and arrogant as wealth and tribute poured into the great temple-city capital, Utaa, seat of Sulmish rule. Sulmish society stagnated for centuries as decadence and evil grew into the hearts of her people; simultaneously tendrils of insurrection crept among the subjugated folk of the hinterlands.

For all its might and wisdom, doom came suddenly to Sulm. The nation's rulers, desperate to stem the rising tide of civil unrest and rebellion, delved too deeply into the poisonous wellspring from which their civilization had sprung. The last of Sulm's rulers, an ambitious and undoubtedly mad sorcerer named Shattados, cried out to the Lords of Evil for aid and received a whispered promise in exchange. His divine patron, Tharizdun, granted Shattados a powerful magic artifact, the *Scorpion Crown*, that would allow him total control over his subjects. The greedy overlord thrust the crown upon his head and brought doom to the entire region.

The *Crown's* fell curse initiated an agonizing transformation in Sulm's citizens, who found themselves transformed into hideous "manscorpions," half-breed wretches magically bound to the wearer of the Scorpion Crown.

Within a decade the grasslands were dead, withered into nothingness by an unnatural heat that yet plagues the region or scoured from the face of Oerth by violent and prolonged storms sweeping in from the Gearnat. The

small pockets of vegetation surviving these twin perils were finally buried beneath an insidious, unstoppable tide of sand issuing like a cancer from the cities and holy places of the fallen Sulmites. Soon the curse took hold throughout the area, and what had once been called Sulm became the Bright Desert.

And somewhere, deep within the darkest recesses of the Lower Planes, Tharizdun chuckled softly to himself.

Thus Sulm passed into history, languishing all but forgotten until events transpiring in the city of Greyhawk in the year 584 CY thrust the accursed lands of the Bright Desert into the minds of the great and the good. In Harvest of that year, delegates from several nations gathered in the free city to sign a pact of non-aggression, hoping to bring an end to the so-called "Greyhawk Wars." On the Day of Great Signing, the archmage Rary of the Circle of Eight betrayed the city and his allies by attempting to destroy the entire delegation in a fiery conflagration. Rary's companions Tenser and Otiluke discovered their friend preparing to sabotage the treaty and were killed for their trouble. The archmage Bigby, also present, was wounded to within an inch of his life. But their sacrifice saved the treaty and revealed Rary as a traitor to his friends, to Greyhawk, and to the whole of the Flanaess.

But Rary hadn't acted alone. On the day of his treachery, cohorts and apprentices under the direction of the wily Lord Robilar (late of the Citadel of Eight) ransacked the lairs of Tenser and Otiluke, destroying potential clones and ensuring that the wizards would not return to avenge their deaths. Rary gathered his forces late in the day, teleporting en masse to his tower in Lopolla. Calling upon unrivaled magical powers, he wrenched his tower whole from the very foundation-rock of Ket's capital and transported it, along with Lord Robilar and his fanatical followers, thousands of leagues eastward to the Brass Hills, at the center of the Bright Desert. In short order Robilar's forces pacified the indigenous desertfolk, forcing them to pay homage to a burgeoning "Empire of the Bright Lands." A new power was born.

To this day, rumors abound about what drove the previously calm and peerlessly intelligent Rary to betray his former friends. Mordenkainen and wizards of Greyhawk's Society of Magi believe that Rary knew of the ancient histories that cluster thick about the Bright Lands, and that he likely seeks the catalyst of Sulm's unnatural fall. The Ketite archmage was always obsessed with *ioun stones*,



Bright Desert Empire of the Bright Lands

50 miles

Sea of Gearnat

and scholarly adventurers recently turned up a 574 cy paper he'd logged with the Great Library of Lopolla that suggests the Bright Desert might contain the highest concentration of these magical rocks in the Flanaess. Control over such a resource would make Rary mighty (and rich) beyond belief.

But in the Bright Desert, all is not yet lost. Although warriors of many native tribes have joined Rary's massive army in the years since his arrival, a few tribes still resist. None stand so bitterly opposed to the Traitor's machinations as the hueleneaeer (a race of desert dwelling centaurs). A fierce and proud people, they yet war with the outlanders, for in Rary they recognize the countenance of evil and ambition personified. Their guerilla tactics have stained the shifting sands with the lifeblood of hundreds of Robilar's soldiers and their constant raiding continues to tie down and harass the empire's forces. A steady stream of adventurers also now trickles into the region, beguiled by tales of high adventure and the near-limitless wealth said to lie discarded in ancient Sulm's abandoned cities.

Flora, Fauna, and Climate

Squatting at the near-center of the Flanaess and bounded on all sides by arid, windswept hills or tumultuous, treacherous waters, the Bright Lands are all but isolated from the surrounding civilized nations.

Two passes cut through the torturous ridges of the Abbor-Alz, allowing a trickle of travelers and trade to pass into the desert fastness. Flan tribes existing in a state little better than barbarism have dwelt amongst the ravines for millennia, jealously guarding their high villages and sacred places. Manticores, wyverns, leucrotta, lamia, mountain tigers, ogres, hill giants, and trolls all infest the broken landscape of the inner hills. Bandits, criminals, and deserters have also found sanctuary within the uplands and, like the more monstrous inhabitants, prey upon any who enter their domain.

Travelers approaching by sea must contend with fierce seasonal storms, Pomarji pirates, and sea monsters lurking beneath the warm, turbulent waters of the Gearnat. No known safe, sheltered anchorages exist upon the treacherous Bright Coast and no sane sailor willingly anchors here. The last two years have witnessed an increase in the number of vessels attacked along the coast by an as-yet-unidentified agency that appears not to care under what flag a vessel sails. Merchantmen, warships, and pirates have all fallen to this malign entity. Attempts by several individuals and states to uncover the perpetrator of these attacks have so far met with failure.

The bulk of the Bright Desert is a desolate, waterless wasteland seemingly composed of endless ranks of wide, ever-shifting crescent-shaped dunes. Rainfall here is rare; sandstorms frequently scour the interior, sometimes lasting for days at a time. A handful of oases, most jealously guarded by Rary's forces, are scattered throughout the region. During the summer, temperatures soar far above

100 degrees Fahrenheit during the day and plunge at night to near freezing.

Few creatures have the abilities to survive deep in the desert and those that do are uniformly deadly. Giant ant lions, poisonous snakes, fire toads, giant scorpions, the fearsome dune stalkers, and feral manscorpions all dwell in the deep desert. The more benign brightly colored insect-like pernicons, prized by nomads, hueleneaeer, and travellers alike for their water-divining abilities, also haunt the inner reaches of this land. What little plant life exists here is limited to a few date palms, attendant shrubbery found around oases, and the occasional lone cacti, a few of which are thought to be able to drain moisture from living creatures straying too close.

The desert's coastal reaches are more temperate in nature, cooled by sea breezes and watered by spring and autumnal storms that batter the coast. The dusty, sandy soil acts as a boon to the vegetation that is more predominant here than in the interior. After heavy rainfall the desert explodes with color. Wildflowers, grasses, and shrubs bloom prodigiously for several weeks before returning to dormancy. Nomads have found many uses for these plants. They weave the fibrous deep-questing roots of the yellowthorn into hemp-like rope, whilst the carefully harvested pollen of many other flowers is crushed and mixed to produce their sacred ochre. Amongst the nomads the small shrunken melons found growing near oases and along the few rivulets crossing this harsh landscape are a great delicacy; crushed and boiled they made a thick, bitter and pungent jam.

Stands of withered thorn-laden bushes also grow here along with the occasional desiccated, forlorn pine tree. Undeniably ancient, some struggle to sixty feet in height and boast a high-set spherical crown of pale green needles. Their trunks are often S-shaped as if bowed by savage winds and are wreathed in thick, deeply furrowed greyish-silvery bark reputed to have healing properties. The druids of the Flan tribes ascribe great spiritual power and significance to these trees, believing them to be Oerthly manifestations of the Shalm's powers. Harming such a tree is a mortal sin amongst them.

In similar fashion the desert's northern regions are more temperate in nature than its inner reaches. Sheltered somewhat by the uplands of the Abbor-Alz and watered by periodic cloudbursts falling over the range's dusty peaks, this narrow tract of arid land supports flora and fauna similar to that along the coast. The shadowy canyons and ravines of this rocky land offer respite from the murderous sun but weave a torturous course across the blasted landscape. Caves abound here, although few are occupied. This swath of land quickly gives way to dunes unlike any found elsewhere within the Bright. The complex underlying local topography and convoluted wind patterns combine to form a deep zone of lofty steep-sided star-shaped dunes. Higher than the squat dunes of the interior and in places prone to collapse, these three-legged dunes reach heights of over two hundred feet.



In the north and west of the desert, the sand is white. It is from these sands, composed of pulverized granules of glassy quartz, that the desert derives its name, for the sun's light transforms the dunes into a shimmering sea of dazzling white. Prolonged exposure to the glare of the sands produces a condition known as "bright blindness," which though normally temporary, can in severe cases lead to permanent blindness (see sidebar). Nomads and centaurs that travel these regions generally do so by night, protecting their eyes with veils of fine cloths if they must travel by day.

Trade and Travel

Trade in the Bright is limited. A complete absence of highways through the region coupled with the small number of settlements and the ever-present dangers of desert predators dissuade many merchants from journeying here. The market of Ul Bakak is one of the few commerce centers of note. Trade flows sporadically from two main sources—the Duchy of Umst and Hardby. Weapons are in great demand now as is wood required for the construction of the nomads' bows. In return, the nomads trade stone statuettes carved by skilled craftsmen and polished by the desert winds. Sturdy ponies can be had for trade in the market of Ul Bakak, as can nearly worthless artifacts of long-fallen Sulm or Itar, mere hints at the treasure to be found in the desert's interior. Some less moralistic nomads hire themselves out as guides to explorers intent on locating the countless treasures of the Bright.

Travel through the Bright Desert is fraught with peril. One of the chief dangers is the climate. Desert travellers are exposed to Heat Dangers (described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 86), having to make a Heat Danger check every hour. Travel during the summer months, or through the deep desert, is particularly hazardous, necessitating a Heat Danger check every ten minutes.

Peoples of the Great Sand-Sea

Unaffected by the deviltry that wrought Sulm's end, her subjugated peoples, enemies, and the hueleneae returned to their itinerant ways.

The most numerous of the desert peoples are the

nomads. Predominately of unblemished Flan lineage, the warrior-nomads who dwell in the Bright Lands are a surly, violent, honor-driven folk famed for their incessant inter-tribal warfare, superstitious beliefs, and disdain of outsiders. A strongly patriarchal society, among them strength—be it spiritual or temporal—is the only source of power. Speakers of Ancient Flan, few know any of the Common tongue, deeming it beneath them.

The stocky, bandy-legged Bright Desert Flan exhibit uniformly tanned skin, lanky straight hair ranging from brown to black, and dark eyes. Their dress typically consists of dark-colored lightweight flowing robes worn over simple

Bright Blindness

Those who travel the white sands of the Bright Desert at day without adequate eye protection risk bright blindness, a condition unique to the region. At first, an afflicted individual's vision becomes indistinct, muddled by colored flashes and indistinct shapes. Later, the eyes begin to ache, becoming inflamed before the victim loses his vision for a number of days. Prolonged exposure can lead to permanent blindness.

Anyone travelling the white sands without protection must make a Constitution check (DC 15) every four hours of travel. The DC of subsequent checks throughout the day increases cumulatively by one with each check. Failure means the character is temporarily blinded for 1d4 days.

Characters suffering from bright blindness should also make these additional checks unless they have been completely blindfolded. If a character suffering from bright blindness fails a subsequent Constitution check, his eyes are damaged beyond repair, rendering him permanently blind.

A successful Heal check (DC 15) and the complete blindfolding of the afflicted character's eyes halves the duration of the temporary blindness. *Remove blindness* removes both temporary and permanent bright blindness instantly.

buckskin garments. When going into battle or mourning, the desert folk daub sacred symbols on their faces with sacred ochre, which they believe imparts strength to the wearer. They prize ornamentation; bone or brass headbands decorated with brightly colored beads attract especial attention from them and are highly valued.

A simple folk who eschew most forms of magic, the desert folk worship the spirits of earth, air, and water. Chief amongst their pantheon are Beory, the Oerth Mother, and her lord, Obad-Hai (the Shalm), known also to them as Lord of Wild Places. Above all they fear Nerull, for to them he is death incarnate; some even denounce Rary as the Reaper's emissary. Some few venerate Pelor, invoking him as a protective power against the pervasive evil of Nerull, or seek to improve their lot through the worship of Vathris in his original guise as patron of ingenuity and progress.

Arcane ability among them is largely unknown and brutally suppressed when discovered. The larger tribes, however, maintain a handful of druids (or *brajal*, as they are known) who derive their powers from the Lord of the Wild. Almost exclusively female, *brajals* act as seers, healers, and advisors. It is a measure of status amongst the chieftains to maintain a large group of such women. They live apart from the rest of the tribe and their lives are sacrosanct. These women are the tribe's spiritual link to the past and are believed to be able to commune with tribal ancestors.

Warriors garbed in sand-scarred leather armor bearing lance, scimitar, and short bow, frequently harass outlanders traveling through the desert. The Bright, unlike other deserts in the Far West, boasts no camels, so natives have domesticated a hardy breed of horse for locomotion (and, occasionally, milk and meat). Some of the greatest horsemen of the central Flanaess come from the Bright, where many children are literally born on the back of a sturdy pony.

A few tribes are of Suel descent and speak only the ancient language of the Imperium. A thousand years ago, several large bands of Suel, fleeing the destruction of their empire, forced a passage through the Abbor-Alz in a fruitless search for a bountiful land spoken of in Flan legends. By the time their folly was revealed they had not the strength to win free and were trapped by vengeful native tribes. Now dangerously inbred, they are reviled and distrusted by their Flan brethren and are slowly being hunted into extinction. Foremost amongst them are the Tareg who, from the ancient Suel fortress of Ghazal, control Hardby Pass, exacting a heavy toll on all who pass through. Led by the sorcerer **Kekravil** [LE Suel male Sor11/Clr5—Llreg] a swarthy, bald-headed, obnoxious man, these folk cling to fragments of their ancient heritage, worshipping Llreg above all others. In this harsh (but starkly beautiful) environment they have forgotten most other deities of note, although some few still revere Phyton.

Bright Desert Suel possess deeply tanned (sometimes burned) skin, which they protect with light cloth robes

and hoods. Most have red or blond hair, which they wear closely cropped beneath leather coifs. Warriors proclaim their tribal allegiance by wearing cleverly crafted brass armbands inlaid with mottled blue or black ornamental stones. A Bright Desert Suel's brooch is his honor, and will never willingly be surrendered.

The Hueleneae

A dwindling people, the centaurs yet lingering in the Bright Lands are the final inheritors of a long and glorious past. The progeny of mercenary warriors who once guarded the sorcerer-kings of Sulm, they are a proud and noble race that still sings the songs of their past, recalling the folly of those who venerate fell powers. Strongly good-aligned in nature, they had all but abandoned their former allies by the time Shattados donned Tharizdun's "gift." The intelligent, cultured hueleneae, rich in the lore of elder days, still remember where many of Sulm's ruins lie hidden.

Despite their culture, hueleneae can be savage and merciless when aroused. Although smaller than their plains-dwelling cousins, the desert centaurs are more muscular and hardy than their kin, making them expert warriors and scouts. They hate manscorpions above all the menaces of the Bright; tribes occasionally unite to speed through the desert, slaying all such creatures they find.

Although in their historical twilight, strength and might still lurks within the hueleneae. Since 589 CY, when a prominent chief was slain by unknown assailants, they have waged a bitter guerrilla war against Rary's forces. Champions amongst them still bear carefully preserved Sulmish blades and armor, gifted to their ancestors when they served as honored mercenaries in the Sulmish hosts. Today, these ancient treasures have been brought forth once more and are wielded to terrible effect against the followers of Rary and Robilar.

After last year's pitched battle at Gai Hur, centaur chiefs beat the sacred drum and passed the blood-red battle lance, summoning the tribes to war. The centaurs now prepare as a unified people for what could be their final crusade against the legacy of the evil that sundered their homeland centuries ago.

Angeanali [NG desert centaur male Bar4/Rgr8], a hot-blooded young chief, is one of the most fervent proponents of war. He seeks to carry the battle to Robilar at every opportunity and dreams of defeating the infamous Lord of Greyhawk in single combat. A small faction primarily composed of older centaurs stands against him, led by the astute and cautious **Kethharon** [NG desert centaur male Clr9—Skerrit], counsels patience in their struggle. Many young warriors accuse Kethharon and his followers of cowardice, not understanding that their stance almost certainly spells the complete destruction of their culture. Only the intercession of **Mailannaeus** [N desert centaur male Brd11], a brave warrior renowned for his mastery of the hueleneae legends, has thus far averted bloodshed.

The Empire of the Bright Lands

As the Greyhawk Wars drew to a close, the arrival of Rary and his army irrevocably altered the Bright Desert's balance of power. None could stand before their might and the factious politics of the region ensured that no alliance would arise to threaten the fledgling empire. Within months, Rary's forces had swelled to include a clan of norkers and several tribes of desert nomads defeated in battle and offered mercy in exchange for service. Initially Rary claimed only the land surrounding the Brass Hills but in subsequent years his domain has swelled to include most of the region. As the first days of 593 unfold, dissent has been all but crushed amongst the desert tribes. Of the nomads, only a few insignificant clans of Suel still defiantly cling to their independence.

One of the most fervent opponents of the empire was the handsome, well-liked **Tolan Kai** [NG human male Rgr12]. His capture in 591 was a great blow to the free nomads and led to the capitulation of several tribes. Tolan's ultimate fate remains a mystery.

Rary's Tower

Rary's onion-domed tower dominates the northern reaches of the Brass Hills. Since the tower's arrival, Rary's agents (both humans and contract-bound yugoloths) have constructed a sprawling fortress around the structure. The fortress houses the archmage's fanatical Paynim riders, loyal nomads, and obsequious norker infantry. A few adventurers and apprentices of doubtful character also attend Rary here, either assisting in his research or ranging throughout the region locating rare or arcane items for their master.

Rary's fortress is surround by an as-yet-unnamed settlement. No doubt destined to become the capital of the Bright Lands, the town is composed of little more than semi-permanent pavilions and mud-bricked buildings. A few canny individuals have staked their claim to some of the high ground falling within the precincts of the new settlement and some permanent structures are being raised here according to visiting merchants. A vast curtain wall, finally completed in early 593 cy, protects the whole settlement from attack.

Merchant trains arrive here almost daily, bringing food, water, and other trade goods. The caravans also bring news of the outside world, making their arrival very popular with both the rank-and-file and with Rary's more powerful lieutenants.

Rary's Paynim riders, led by the well-travelled and fiendishly handsome **Kanir Chafr** [LE Baklunish male



Destroying the Scorpion Crown

Rulers and advisors across the central Flanaess debate the meaning of Rary's turn to evil and the reason for his flight to the Bright Desert. A discovery in 592 cy of a pair of torn and burned bodies in the norther Abbor-Alz may shed some light on the Traitor's plotting. One of the unfortunates carried a collection of writings purporting to be the spellbook and journal of one He Chak, a paynim apprentice who had served Rary for more than 20 years prior to his disappearance during the Greyhawk Wars.

The treatise relates how He Chak, while serving Rary in Lopolla, fell in love with Kaya, an enslaved Wolf Nomad woman. According to the journal, Kaya persuaded her lover to flee after he overheard a conversation between Rary and Robilar, the substance of which dealt with Rary's desire to unmake the *Scorpion Crown*. Rary also revealed that such an act would shatter the curse's grasp on the region, allowing the land to gradually revert to its original state. The veracity of He Chak's writings cannot be ascertained, however, as attempts to return him to life have failed. Perhaps even in death he fears the Traitor's wrath.

Bar6/Rgr3], enforce their lord's will within the settlement. One of Rary's chief apprentices, **Eliazir Razeem Aza'mut of the Muddled Tongue** [N Baklunish male Wiz14], has a small tower here, but is frequently away on diplomatic missions. The half-Paynim bastard son of a Lopollan spice merchant learned at Rary's feet as an apprentice and is believed to have spent time on other planes, where he was somehow changed, his mind addled by the experience. Aza'mut earned his epithet thanks to his richly accented Baklunish voice and his role as emissary of the Bright Lands to the courts of the Flanaess. In recent years, Aza'mut has visited Hardby, Safeton (where he was well received by Turin Deathstalker), Narwell, Onnwal, and Ahlissa.

Military Forces of the Empire

The bulk of Rary's military strength wanders the Brass Hills region or garrisons at Kalki's Leap or Fort Whiterock. Patrols of nomadic horsemen or norkers range far across the sands, seeking out and destroying desert marauders. Rary's forces, under the iron leadership of Robilar, have been forged into a cohesive force capable of meeting and destroying any remaining threats to the archmage's position. The core of these forces, Robilar's personal guardsmen and Rary's fanatically loyal Paynim horsemen, possess excellent training, equipment, and morale. The Tukim tribe, under the command of the canny **Geratyr** [NE Flan male Bar2/Ftr4], number more than 1,500 lances. Pre-eminent amongst the Tukim is **Halan Jeteri** [CN Flan male Bar7/Ftr2], a charismatic hero famed for slaying a dune stalker single-handedly with naught but a broken lance. Other nomad contingents muster another thousand or so troops.

Innumerable norkers and a few contingents of specialist mercenary troops further swell Rary's forces. One of the most infamous of Rary's servants is **Teraeanali** [LE desert centaur male Rgr9], a black-hearted exile from his people. An implacable foe and skilled archer, Teraeanali delights in hunting down those in the archmage's disfavor.

Fort Whiterock

Fort Whiterock wards the eastern portions of the Bright Lands. It was from here that Robilar campaigned against the hueleneae at Gai Hur. Centaurs frequently siege this isolated outpost, which was built over the ruins of an ancient white-walled Sulmish citadel. The seneschal, **Zhora** [NE human female Ftr9], formerly served in Greyhawk City's guard and is a wily tactician. Under her leadership these sporadic attacks have been defeated with little loss. Many pits and ditches litter the surrounding dunes, bearing mute testimony to the near-constant warfare swirling about the fortress.

Whiterock's importance has grown with the expansion of Rary's hegemony into surrounding lands. More than 400 nomads and mercenary crossbowmen garrison the fort, which has been enlarged several times in

the past few years. Deep artesian wells provide fresh water and newly hewn subterranean storage vaults render the fortress nearly invulnerable to the centaurs' lackluster sieges.

Kalki's Leap

Rary's main fortress in the southern desert region, Kalki's Leap has been extensively extended and reinforced by Robilar, who uses it as his personal command center. Surrounded on all sides by narrow, steeply walled winding canyons, the inner donjon is further warded by stout granite walls, making the citadel all but impregnable. Many norkers dwell in caves carved high into the surrounding canyon walls, making a surprise assault virtually impossible.

Skilled in the art of ambush and unwaveringly loyal to Robilar, a truly exceptional unkempt norker named **Grish** [CE norker female Rog4/Bar2] organizes Robilar's outer defenses. Grish's loyalty to Robilar is the subject of much jesting amongst the Paynims, who coarsely suggest (with no proof whatsoever) that the two may be in love. The matter is the source of some considerable friction between the Paynims and Robilar's highly trained personal retinue; blood has been shed twice over the matter.

From here Robilar launched his southern campaigns, which he successfully completed by the close of 589. When the former Lord of Greyhawk is not in residence, the ill-tempered **Chukai** [N Baklunish human male Ftr10] and **Morik** [NE Oeridian/Suel male Ftr5] command the fortress. One of Rary's most trusted Paynims, Chukai was the fort's original commander. He now spends much of his time reporting Robilar's moods and actions to his secret master, Rary. Morik is an exceptional administrator and the garrison quartermaster. Severely injured in the initial campaigns, his left leg is gone below the knee. Robilar trusts Morik implicitly, and the two work continuously to soften Chukai's influence over the rest of the garrison.

Places of Interest

Nomadic villages, a scattered handful of oases, several landmarks, and the few remaining sand-shrouded ruins of once mighty Sulm all lie within the Bright Lands. Primitive villages such as Ul Bakak, Histak, and Kalundi act as focal points for the civilization that maintains a precarious foothold here, while other less permanent settlements can be found huddled around oases and along the few seasonal rivulets. Of the permanent settlements located in the Bright, only Ul Bakak yet maintains a precarious neutrality.

Oases

The Bright Lands boast four well-known oases.

Var is the southernmost and largest of the oases; the waters here have never failed. Hundreds of nomads gather water here each day and a small garrison of Rary's troops linger here, maintaining discipline between the normally factious nomads.

Kolum was oft beset by manscorpions until Rary's forces annihilated a nest of these creatures lurking in nearby ruins. This skirmish cemented the willing loyalty of several important Flan tribal leaders, who now place their warriors at Rary's disposal. A mixture of nomads and norkers make up the Kolum garrison.

Tulwar oasis is the final link in the trade route between Ul Bakak and the desert interior. After a whirlwind assault by a joint force of nomads and hueleneer decimated the garrison in 588, Rary ordered his yugoloth allies to construct a small fort here. The garrison, members of the fanatically loyal Tukim tribe, send out strong patrols of horsemen to scour the surrounding dunes.

Shembai is the only major waterhole not totally dominated by Rary. Experiments carried out by a puissant Sulmish wizard centuries ago caused a small rift between Oerth and the Abyss to form here. At nightfall the rift opens, expelling several demons that despoil the area, attacking any travelers they find. The lucky are slain; others are carried off to the Abyss. Rary lost several patrols here before deeming control of the oasis unnecessary, placing semi-permanent pickets about Shembai to observe and control access to the waterhole.

Ul Bakak

For the last decade or so, Ul Bakak has repeatedly professed its neutrality in the conflicts wracking the region. Rary's domination of the Bright now all but invalidates this neutrality, but the archmage allows Ul Bakak its fantasy because of the trade it attracts. Nomads from throughout the desert come to Ul Bakak to trade with unscrupulous caravan masters from Hardby. Since the village stands on sacred ground, no nomads will fight here—even Abbor-Alz barbarians and the reviled Suel can walk the market of Ul Bakak without fear.

Little more than a permanent collection of tents and mud-bricked dwellings, Ul Bakak stands between the folds of three hills. A well-guarded stream bubbles to the surface at the base of these hills, allowing the inhabitants to cultivate a small parcel of land and to maintain several herds of goats. Assisted by a ragtag band of desert warriors, the dour-faced and single-minded **Kumhaik** [N Flan male Ftr12] maintains order here. A veteran of over thirty years of skirmishing and survival in the deep-desert, Kumhaik is forthright and honest. The grizzled warrior will not risk the neutrality of Ul Bakak for any cause, no matter how just, and does not suffer fools lightly. He is famed for his equestrian skills and for his patience; desert tales relate how he once tracked a renegade merchant guilty of striking a rival in the marketplace for over two weeks before capturing and punishing him.

The Brass Hills

The jagged peaks of the Brass Hills, situated at the very center of the Bright Desert, afford superlative views of the surrounding landscape. Now wholly pacified by Rary's forces, the hills swarm with his minions. Some of the

region's most interesting locales include:

Tower of the Sands. A small low-lying spur of these hills runs southward toward the Bright Coast, disappearing under the sands within miles of the coastline. At the very tip of this spur, hidden in a sand-choked valley, stands a single tower, the upper portions of which have recently been uncovered. A few travellers, who bestowed upon the tower its rather evocative and romantic name, have glimpsed this place from a distance, but harassment by norkers and other desert denizens precluded their investigations of the place.

The tower's origins remain a mystery, although the hueleneer remember tales, older even than Sulm, imbuing the tower with an aura of preternatural menace. They hold the Brass Hills sacred and will not travel here. Despite this, groups of travelers who recently visited the region report encountering a lone centaur who professed to be on some kind of holy quest. The centaur, **Argaveno** [LN desert centaur male], offered several of these groups succor, leading them without incident past several large bands of patrolling norkers. Rumors report the destruction of several norker patrols by Argaveno and his charges, and Lord Robilar himself is said to be taking an interest in the situation.

The Zochal. In the southern fringes of the hills, in the midst of a dense network of jagged hills and deep crevasses, stand the scorched and blackened remains of a shattered plateau. A yawning crater now stands in the center of the plateau, where once stood a rectangular building of obviously arcane origin known as the Zochal by scholars of the Ur-Flan. What caused the explosion is unknown, although many observers blame Rary and his yugoloth allies. The plateau stands north of Kalki's Leap, which has seen increased activity of late.

The Shrouded Citadel. Adventurers from Ul Bakak to the Wild Coast whisper of a newly discovered fortification deep in the hills constructed by Rary to incarcerate a prisoner of great value. No one knows the prisoner's identity, but the swarms of norkers, Paynims, and hired adventurer-mercenaries keeping away the inquisitive illustrate the prisoner's import. Rary himself visited the citadel several times in the closing days of 592 CY, leading many to assume the place plays some central role in his schemes.

Dagger Rock

Thrusting skyward, the deformed pinnacle of cracked granite known as Dagger Rock dominates the land for miles around. Travelers have used the landmark as a way marker for centuries. The pinnacle itself stands at the center of a shattered landscape. A great expanse of broken and shattered rocks litters the structure's base, making footing treacherous and travel by mount impossible. Thus, while travelers and explorers alike know of and have seen Dagger Rock from a distance, relatively few have actually approached the formation.

The ancient Suel, although they did not linger here long, used this place for a time as a refuge from their Flan

assailants, calling it Kuranot. The few brave individuals who have since approached report the crumbling remains of a cliff-top fortress carved into the outcrop's zenith. Most assume that the Suel cut or discovered passages within the rock that ultimately lead to its summit, but the secret entrances to such thoroughfares are now long forgotten.

A blue dragon named Voltarmarun laired here in recent decades until slain by an incensed Robilar in 590 cy. The fate of Voltarmarun's hoard remains mysterious; since word of the warrior's brave exploits reached civilized lands, several small groups of adventurers have slipped into the desert via the Knife Edge Pass, seeking the treasure. Their ultimate fates likewise remain unknown.

The Uplands of Unath

This small range of hills, located to the north of Utaa, was once home to a small colony of dwur allied to their brethren dwelling in the Abbor-Alz. Natural and dwur-constructed passages burrowed deep under the desert, linking the two groups in a complex web of corridors, galleries, and chambers. No one knows the ultimate fate of the Unath dwur, though they most assuredly warred with the expansionist Sulmites. Either they fell here defending their clanholds, made a final stand with their eastern cousins, or migrated elsewhere. The remains of their ill-fated civilization still dot the sharp, jagged peaks of this range. In many places their way markers are still visible, some still bearing the kingdom's device—two crossed battleaxes surmounted by a blazing sun.

To the south, near the ruins of Utaa, their strongholds stand empty but in the north many teem with clans of norkers or jermaline. The jermaline are fiercely independent creatures that resist the encroachment of the norkers, who for the most part ally themselves to the Empire of the Bright Lands. Preying on both groups, small bands of trolls dwell in and around some of these dwur settlements. Able to change their skin color to surprise foes, the depredations of this subspecies of common troll effectively culls the numbers of other humanoids.

The deep tunnels and passages connect to the Underdark in several places. Powerful adventurers traversing this shadowy world report witnessing the aftermath of several fierce engagements between groups of beholders and duergar. A few explorers also speak of a great underground river flowing swiftly southward toward the Gearnat, perhaps acting as a natural drain to the Gnatmarsh.

Much of the warfare that rages here is subterranean in nature and thus the few hardy nomadic tribes who graze their livestock in the hills are mainly untroubled by the goblinoids of the interior. A small pride of dragonnes led by a huge male, however, dwells in the range's central massif, occasionally issuing forth to prey on the nomad's herds.

Gai Hur

Named "Sky-Peak" in ancient Flan, this roughly hewn monstrous stone pinnacle is a vital landmark for those travelling the Bright's eastern reaches. The hueleneaur

once gathered here in moot twice annually, until one such meeting ended in tragedy in 592. Surprised and encircled by a strong force of nomads and norkers, the gathered centaurs were convinced to parley with their enemies. After the failure of several hours of negotiation with Lord Robilar (who hoped to bring them peaceably into the empire) ended in stalemate, the two sides set to fighting. Several hundred centaurs died attempting to break free of Robilar's army. Those deaths and the reported presence of several unnatural yugoloths on the battlefield strengthened the centaurs' resolve to resist Rary and his machinations.

Shards of Forgotten Kingdoms

The roots of Sulm's civilization are lost in pre-history, of them little is known. Rexidos, however, in his *A Chronicle of the Flan People*, hypothesizes that Sulm's original founders were survivors of an even older Flan kingdom destroyed in a series of conflicts of which the histories are ignorant.

The doom that engulfed Sulm annihilated the population and poisoned the land but failed to completely obliterate the fallen kingdom. In many places ancient ruins still thrust forlornly above the dune sea. Much of Sulm's riches and lore yet lie in the sand-drowned ruins of this once great land, their inaccessibility and many and potent guardians thwarting most attempts to retrieve them. Chief amongst these are the degenerate manscorpions. Far more rarely encountered are the dune stalkers. Tall, naked, hard-skinned humanoids feared for their ability to slay opponents with a single kiss, wild theories abound regarding their origins. Some believe they are native to the Elemental Plane of Earth while others assert they are the twisted personification of Sulm's most evil peoples. A few nomadic sorcerers and wizards have learned to bind dune stalkers to their service, using them to slay rivals or to retrieve lost items of power.

In other places hitherto unknown ruins are exposed and then reburied at the whim of fierce storms sweeping across the desolate landscape. Finally, dust storms can strike with barely a moment's notice, interring would-be explorers beneath the desert's shifting sands.

Utaa

The former capital of Sulm lies in the very shadow of the hills that ward its northern approaches. The city was founded on and about a great plateau thrusting up from the desert floor. Today, only the center of Utaa yet stands above the encroaching sands. Bare, sun-cracked rock surrounds the city for miles, as if the gods themselves have striven to bury Utaa in an attempt to contain the evil that lurks within. The outer precincts of the city are almost completely hidden beneath the encroaching sands; only the remains of occasional watch towers, normally swarming with scorpions and many-tentacled tentamorts, yet breach the surface. The dunes here are star-shaped and very high, some soaring over one hundred



feet in height. Strong, unpredictable winds complicate matters for explorers, although windstorms occasionally uncover a long-submerged portion of the city, allowing further exploration.

No known oases or rivulets exist within fifty miles of these forsaken ruins, making exploration particularly arduous. Nothing grows within the city's boundaries and rain never falls here.

The plateau itself is immense, towering above the surrounding lands. Many watchtowers, noble residences, and minor temples have been carved into its sides. Persistent rumors amongst the nomads speak of a convoluted network of steep, narrow, and lightless tunnels piercing the plateau itself, reaching downward to the communal burial sites of Utaa's common folk. Below even the burial chambers run the city's sewers, which still resist the sand's onslaught. It is through these that pockets of the lower city can be explored.

The center of Utaa can be reached by climbing one of three paved highways warded by a series of strongpoints that snake up the plateau's steep sides. Atop the plateau stands the administrative and spiritual center of Sulm. Here, once-sumptuous palaces, lofty castles, ostentatious temples, and soaring monuments still stand. Weathered by the near-constant winds that plague the plateau, surviving monuments depict a race of heroically posed cruel-faced Flan. The inner city is infested with all manner of incorporeal undead that effectively deal with most interlopers.

Unaagh

Once Sulm's most sacred site, the location of this vast necropolis is well known to the desert's inhabitants. Originally a place of great beauty and tranquility, Unaagh is now a travesty of its former self. Laid out in a great grid, Unaagh was composed of many rows of mausoleums interspaced with gardens, tranquil lakes, and shrines dedicated to the memory of the departed. In the very center of the necropolis arose a black-stoned ziggurat from which the whole necropolis was visible. Now all lies in

ruins, and what beauty once existed here has been eradicated by the harsh elements that constantly work to reduce Unaagh to naught but a memory.

Here, interred in many-tiered mausoleums, lay Sulm's elite. Now the ruins teem with a vast legion of undead commanded by **Drokkas** [LE lich male Wizi8] a one-time rival of Shattados. Mercifully, these undead seem bound here by some unknown agency and are unable to leave this place, crumbling to dust if they attempt to do so.

Rary's forces have made several attempts to explore these ruins, most ending in disaster. In 591 cy, Rary himself came here and bested the dark lord of Unaagh in a magical duel of epic proportions. Much of the black ziggurat was destroyed in the magical conflagration that also consumed many lesser undead. Since Rary's exploration of the ruins, observers have reported a great pall of black smoke hanging motionless over the necropolis, resting the attempts of even the strongest winds to dissipate it.

Darkbridge Temple

Shunned by all, this accursed place is at the center of a growing number of disappearances over the last decade. No sane traveler comes within sight of this squat, festering ruin. Once a Sulmish site dedicated to the reverence of forbidden gods, **Othimvoar** [CE young adult shadow dragon male] now lairs here. Corrupted by dark dreams of ancient glories and glittering treasures Othimvoar, nicknamed "Smoke" by those few who have glimpsed him, was lured here a decade ago from his lair in the Abbor-Alz.

Originally built atop a high hill at the intersection of two valleys and ringed by three great walls that hold the advancing sand somewhat at bay, the central temple still stands. Four great gates, ceremonially set at the cardinal points of the compass, pierce the outer wall, which has in places been overwhelmed by the ever-present wind and sand. The inner walls protect many lesser shrines arrayed around the main edifice and are studded with protective towers. Beneath the temple lie mile-deep catacombs containing some of the most sacred and forbidden places of old Sulm. Undead remnants of Sulm's priesthood guard

these sacred places, incessantly warring with a ferocious tribe of jermaline infesting the sepulchers and vaults of this forsaken netherworld.

Plain of Spears

Itar, Sulm's ancient enemy, was crushed on the Plain of Spears in a battle that some say is still fought to this day by the ghosts of those slain long ago. Nothing grows in this bleak and wretched plain, named after the countless man-tall outcroppings of rock in the area. Incessant winds that seem laden with the sorrows of all who fell here gust across the desolate landscape. Determined explorers often return depleted in numbers but bearing ancient weapons imbued with great power. Often they tell of attacks in the dead of night by spirits clad in the trappings of fallen kingdoms and of their companions driven mad by the ceaseless wind.

The Twisted Canyon

Found to the south of the Plain of Spears, where the eastern Abbor-Alz run down into the desert, the Twisted Canyon is barely more than a score of yards wide at any

point but reaches depths of up to two hundred feet. Legends of the nomads mark this as the spot that Vathris crawled to after being mortally wounded on the Plain of Spears. They relate how he died here in the very deepest depths of the canyon, cursing the wickedness of the kingdom that had laid him low.

After Sulm's fall, worshippers of Vathris carved an elaborate secret temple complex into the canyon walls. Laid out over five main levels and numerous sub-levels that radiate outward from the central chamber, the temple also includes numerous deep cisterns, allowing its inhabitants, the Qolat Sisterhood, to remain within most of their lives.

The central chamber, known as the Vault of the Faithful, has certain acoustic qualities that allow the barest whisper to be heard at a great distance. The sound of prayer constantly reverberates here, as it has for more than a thousand years. The sisters believe their prayers have the power to revive Vathris, a god whose physical form still bears the seeping wounds of his original destruction. The hero god manifests once or twice a year, wandering the desert in a state of wounded delir-

Adventuring in the Bright

The following LIVING GREYHAWK scenarios take place in the Bright Lands.

URD1-02 TO SAVE THE SCOURING WIND

by Chris Lindsay

Level Range: 1-6

Status: Retired

Whilst in the Abbor-Alz the adventurers encounter a lone centaur seeking aid for his tribe. Traveling to the Bright, the PCs manage to rescue a tribe of desert centaurs from the forces of Rary, but fail to save their shaman, who is slain whilst questing in the spirit world.

URD1-07 FOOLS GOLD

by Jonathan Ingram

Level Range: 1-6

Status: Retired

While resting near the Urnst fortress of Seh, the party discovers a treasure map. The map reveals the location of a Bright Desert dervish raiding camp, allowing the adventurers the opportunity to take matters into their own hands.

COR1-08 THE FUTURE'S BRIGHT

by Creighton Broadhurst

Level Range: 1-8

Status: Retired

Part One of the *Sins of Ages Past* series. Forced to anchor off the Bright Coast to repair their vessel, the adventurers must negotiate with the ghost of Varn Amandis, who allows them to cannibalize the wreck of the *Azure Warden*. But first, they must rescue the *Warden's* only survivor, lost somewhere in the Bright Desert.

URD1-11 INCIDENT AT KIDDEKY CROSSING

by Richard Hubbard

Level Range: 1-6

Status: Retired

Working as agents of the Church of St. Cuthbert, the adventurers find themselves in a race against time when they must beat Lord Robilar and his men to the location of the *Chalice of Relief*, a magical cup reputed to cure those who drink from it.

URD2-04 BRIGHT PROSPECTS

by Jonathan Ingram

Level Range: 1-10

Status: Retired

Adventurers act as bodyguards for Lord Brondar Pontirun when he embarks on a diplomatic mission to woo the Tal'Shaki tribe into an alliance against Rary the Traitor.

COR2-08 ECHO

by Stephen Radney-MacFarland

Level Range: 1-12

Status: Available

Concerned by stories of the resurfacing Isles of Woe, Warnes Starcoat sponsors an expedition into the Brass Hills to explore a site called the Zochal. According to the *Nesser Opuscule*, only surviving fragment of a greater work attributed to Tzunk, the Zochal is an echo point for the planar confluence that infuses the once-lost sunken isles. What does this mean? That is exactly what the Circle of Eight wants you to find out.

COR3-01 THE HIDDEN FORTRESS

by Creighton Broadhurst

Level Range: 4-10

Status: Available

Part Two of the *Sins of Ages Past* series. Fragments of a doom-laden prophesy, a millennia old map, and the sanity of a man long-rescued compel you to return to the Bright Lands.

ium, violently destroying monsters and ignoble men and stoking the desire for revenge among all he meets. Constantly bleeding from the wound that killed him, Vathris always dies again within days of his resurrection, and the cycle continues anew.

Vathris' faithful dwelled here for almost a thousand years until a great schism split their ranks, polarizing them into two factions. The Qolat Sisterhood (a group of militant warrior-priestesses) now holds the temple and from it fights the defilers of the desert. They are few in number now, barely two score strong, but all are skilled in the arts of war and prayer. **Jerianek Firaen** [LN Flan female Clrg-Vathris/Ftr3], a strongly muscled, righteous woman intent on vanquishing all invaders, leads them. She distrusts anyone not desert born, taking a particularly guarded stance toward westerners. The other faction consists largely of male clerics and dervishes who cling to the Vathris of progress and ingenuity and seek to heal the god's wounds, rather than simply use him as a pawn. They declared the Sisterhood anathema hundreds of years ago and still keep a watch for Qolat sisters outside the protection of their fortress home.

Sennerae

The shattered ruins of Sennerae have lain almost undisturbed since Sulm's forces destroyed the city days after annihilating Itar's forces on the Plain of Spears. Once the capital of Itar, the city was wracked by powerful earthquakes conjured by Ur-Flan mystics in the service of Sulm. Almost the entire city was destroyed. A handful of structures came to rest on the treacherous cliffs created by the earthquakes while the crumbling remains of a few battered walls and watchtowers still precariously cling to the clifftop. The easily accessible parts of the city have long ago been plundered, however much of the wealth of Itar was cast into the warm waters of the Gearnat along with the bulk of the city. Travelers sometimes take shelter in the clifftop ruins, although few possess the resources or bravery to investigate the rest of the city.

Over the years, the relentless action of the sea has eroded and smoothed much of what survived Itar's death-throes until nothing now juts above the waves, even at low tide. Below the waves, much of Sennerae still stands. Cracked temples dedicated to Pelor, Vathris, and Rao have resisted the onslaught of the tides well, as have other lesser structures. Some streets and other buildings also remain, including portions of the royal palace.

Despite the large concentration of sahuagin and other undersea predators in the Sea of Gearnat, the region surrounding Sennerae is lightly inhabited. No doubt the presence of a gargantuan dragon turtle, which has laired here for centuries, is somewhat to thank for this. Few who witness this monster's depredations survive the encounter, although some mariner's tales speak of him. Named Lhamzygax in the journals of Kelsannd, an Ahlissian mage given to undersea

exploration, mariners have not encountered the dragon turtle for decades, bringing some to the conclusion that he has finally perished.

The waters off this portion of the coast are uncommonly deep, shrouding Sennerae's ruins in a gloomy half-light. Deep caves pierce the base of the cliff against which the sunken city rests. How far these extend under the desert, and what they contain, is a matter of some conjecture. ●

What the Heck is a Norker?

Norkers are short, gruff goblinoids who possess a thick segmented hide and long canine teeth. Their hairless skin ranges from reddish brown to dark gray. Most wear only loincloths held up by a belt to which other belongings are tied. Norkers speak a dialect of Goblin. Those with Intelligence scores of 12 or above also speak Orc.

Norkers are tribal, although the leader's influence extends only so far as his reach. They raid and steal from other humanoids, being too lazy to do their own hunting. Norkers generally lair in caves, ruins, or villages taken by conquest. Rare occasions in which two norker tribes meet usually end in bloodshed, with victors claiming the fangs of their slain enemies as battle trophies. Most conflicts end once one side takes the advantage; norkers war with each other to establish dominance, not to wipe each other out.

Norkers sometimes work with hobgoblins, who do their best to curb the creatures' natural chaotic tendencies. Most worship Maglubiyet, god of goblins and hobgoblins. A norker's favorite class is rogue, but norker leaders tend to be fighters. The following stat block represents an average norker.

NORKER: CR 1/2; Small humanoid (goblinoid); HD 1d8+2; hp 6; Init: +1 (Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 19 (touch 12, flat-footed 18); Atk +2 melee (1d6, club) or -3 melee (1d4, bite) or +3 ranged (1d6, javelin); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 9, Wis 9, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Listen +3, Move Silently +5, Spot +3; Alertness.

Possessions: Club, 2 javelins.

