

THE D'NI PRIMER



Unwritten

Adventures in the Ages of MYST™ and Beyond

SUPPLEMENT

Welcome to D'ni

prim·er noun \pri-mər, prī-mər\:

- 1. A book for teaching people to read*
- 2. A small introductory book on a subject*
- 3. A short informative piece of writing*

While the D'ni civilization existed on (or rather, in) Earth, it most certainly was not like any human civilization we know. This can present some unique challenges to an Unwritten GM- how do you take these ordinary, everyday explorers, and introduce them to the fantastic, surreal worlds of the D'ni? One way to do this is by highlighting your campaign with aspects of D'ni culture.

We've pulled together some of the most basic elements of D'ni for you to draw on: language and alphabet, numbering systems, timekeeping, and more—all to help you flesh out your *Unwritten* explorations.

- ▣ *Spoilers, Canon & IC/OOC*
- ▣ *Language & The D'ni Alphabet*
- ▣ *The D'ni Numbering System*
- ▣ *D'ni Timekeeping*
- ▣ *D'ni Color Symbology*
- ▣ *D'ni Measurement & Reckoning*
- ▣ *D'nidings*

Spoilers

The *Unwritten* supplements go deeper into the background of D'ni than the core rule book does—because of this there will be spoilers for the games present in the material. We highly encourage people to play the games, not only because we are fans, but because there is a wealth of information to be had there. They will give you a good sense of the ambiance and mood of the universe.

Canon

“Canon” is the information about a fictional universe that is considered true and factual by the creators of that universe. After 25 years of existence, canon of the D'niverse is occasionally conflicting, sometimes murky, and always subject to change by Cyan. *Unwritten* has adhered to canon where it is vital to game play, and stretched it where it is not. In *Unwritten* supplements there may be rampant speculation, creative extrapolation, hypotheses, and even blatant apocrypha. At no point do we intend to supersede or speak for Cyan in determining what is, and isn't Real D'ni Canon. That role lies completely in Cyan's hands. *Unwritten's* role is to give you tools and ideas for creating your own iterations of the D'niverse.

IC/OOC

In most RPGs, the term IC (In Character) and OOC (Out of Character) have specifically the meaning of “Things the character does/things that happen in game” vs. “Thing the player does/things that happen in the real world”. The games set in the D'ni universe bend these definitions somewhat and blur the lines between the 'real' world and the 'game' world.

A similar term “In Cavern” describes the assumption that the entire storyline of the D'ni and their civilization is 'real'. In this viewpoint, someone really did find a Myst book, and interacted with Atrus' family. John Loftin and Elias Zandi really did discover the caverns. The early iteration of the D'ni Restoration Council contracted with Cyan, Inc. to create video games based on the notebooks and diaries left by Catherine. Thus *Myst*, *Riven*, *Exile*, and *Revelation* (the last two done by other studios), and the novels (*Book of Atrus*, *Book of Ti'ana*, *Book of D'ni*) are fictional “Out of Cavern” representations of real-world “In cavern” events.

IC/OOC, Continued

Uru, however, takes a different angle. Things happening in Uru are considered to be happening in real time (An early name for Uru was DIRT- D'ni In Real Time), in the real world. When you're running around in the cavern, you're assumed to be really there—and many players will act accordingly. It's a variant of the role-play found in many MMOs, except people are playing themselves (for the most part.)

The events of Uru Live: Prologue (under Ubisoft) and Myst Online: Uru Live (under GameTap) are considered In Cavern, real events. The non-story years between those two publishers, and the ongoing events now, are considered to be also "In Cavern" (but not necessarily canon), but unauthorized by the DRC.

Myst V: End of Ages goes back to being a fictional account of actual events- in this case Dr. Watson's quest to free the Bahro from enslavement.



So, in quick summary- the Myst games (Myst, Riven, Exile, Revelation & End of Ages) and the novels (Book of Atrus, Book of Ti'ana, Book of D'ni) are fictional "*Out of Cavern*" accounts of real events, and Uru (in its various iterations, including the DRC website and DRC forums) are "*In Cavern*" real time/real world happenings.



Language



Shorah, rehkoan trehklehft prehniv lehgloehn b'rehm...

What we know of the D'ni language comes from documents translated by the DRC, the explorer community, and journals left behind by Atrus and his family. Spelling, grammar, and the lexicon of D'ni words have all been cobbled together from these sources. Occasionally, Richard Watson, the D'ni Historian at Cyan, is able to translate new words, and release these to the community.

The D'ni alphabet consists of 35 characters, compared to the 26 in the standard Roman script in use by much of the surface world. Most of these additional characters are expressions of specific vowel sounds; 'long' A is  and 'short' A is , for example. There are also several consonants which have two forms - hard and soft. Soft consonant sounds are somewhat more breathy than their harder alternate forms; when transcribing D'ni, this is often indicated by the addition of an H after the consonant.

Avoiding Bad "D'ninglish"

Because there is not a comprehensive lexicon of D'ni words, you may not be able to get a complete translation of a phrase you want to use. In this case, you may find yourself turning to 'D'ninglish'; that is, English words using D'ni characters. There's nothing wrong with this (in fact, Cyan uses it in several of their games: the hanging lamps in Uru neighborhoods read '*this is a lamp*'). It is important to remember the letters won't correspond 1-to-1, and to follow the phonics of English, rather than the spelling.

For example where we'd type "chocolate" in English, in D'ni Font, it would be 'coklat'- . "Don't push the shiny button on the left" becomes 'Dont pUS TE SAnE buton on TE left'- .

A note on Unwritten transcription: In general, we've followed the Old Transcription Standard & Cyan's spelling of D'ni words. While this does lend itself to potential transcription & pronunciation errors, we feel it is a simpler introduction to D'ni for the layperson. We highly encourage anyone wanting deeper instruction in the D'ni language to visit the Unwritten Resources page for links to D'ni language lessons & dictionaries.

Useful Phrases

שׁוֹרָה - "shorah"
Hello/Goodbye [Lit. "Peace."]

שׁוֹרָה בְּשֵׁהֵם - "shorah b'shehm"
Formal Hello/Goodbye [Lit. "Peace to you"]
To address a group of people, it becomes "shorah b'shehmtee"

יָהֵר רַחֵם - "yahr rahm"
Good day

כֵּהֵנְהָם רַחֵם בְּיַהֵם שֵׁהֵם - "kehnehn rahm b'yihm shehm"
It's good to see you
To a group, "b'yihm shehmtee"

גֹּרְוֵהֵם בּוֹיַהֵם שֵׁהֵם - "gorvehn boyihm shehm"
I'll see you soon
To a group "boyihm shehmtee"

כֵּהֵנְהָם - "thoeh kehnehm"
How are you?

כֵּהֵן אֲהֹגוֹ - "kehn ahgo"
I am well

כֵּהֵן זִיחְתְּ - "kehn zihth"
I am bad [Lit. "I am low."]

כֵּהֵן כֵּהֵנְהָם תַּהְגַּחְמִיחַ - "thoeh kehnehm tahgahmihj"
What's your name? [Lit. "How are you known?"]

כֵּהֵן תַּהְגַּחְמִיחַ תֵּה - "kehn tahgahmihj teh"
My name is [Lit. "I am known as"]

תַּהְגַּחְמֵהָ בְּזוֹ אֲהֵ רֵחְקוֹר - "tahgehmah b'zoo ah rehkor"
Give me that book!

רִיל גְּלַחְסֵמַח רֵמֵרְכְּ - "ril glahsemah remerk"
Don't drink the poisoned water!

כֵּחְשְׁתַּחַבְּ - "kehshtahv"
Caution, Warning

We don't know the D'ni word for 'please', but here are the polite responses!

כֵּחְוֵ שֵׁהֵם - "chehv shehm" Thank you || מֵחֹר - "mehoor" You're welcome

The Alphabet

Letter	Sound [IPA]	Transcription	Keystroke*
Ƶ	vibe [v]	v	v
ƶ	bit [b]	b	b
ƴ	ton [t]	t	t
Ʒ	sea [s]	s	s
Ƹ	sheet [ʃ]	sh	S
ƹ	judge [dʒ]	j	j
ƺ	gag [g]	g	g
ƻ	yes [j]	y	y
Ƽ	loch [x]	kh	k
ƽ	kick [k]	k	K
ƿ	father [ɑ:]	ah	a
ƾ	pie [aɪ]	í	I
ƿ	fire [f]	f	f
ƺ	pop [p]	p	p
ƻ	pit [ɪ]	i	i
Ƽ	see [i:]	ee	E
ƽ	pet [ɛ]	eh	e
ƿ	bait [eɪ]	ai	A

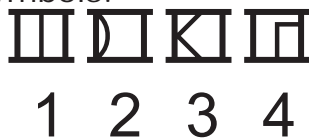
Letter	Sound [IPA]	Transcription	Keystroke*
	roar [r]	r	r
	mom [m]	m	m
	thing [θ]	th	T
	this [ð]	dh	d
	deed [d]	d	D
	hat [h]	h	h
	boat [ɔ:]	o	o
	boy [ɔɪ]	oy	O
	church [tʃ]	ch	c
	wind [w]	w	w
	bun [ʊ]	uh	u
	pool [u:]	oo	U
	resists [ts]	ts	x
	let [l]	l	l
	bag [æ]	a	å
	zoo [z]	z	z
	noon [n]	n	n
 period	 hyphen	 apostrophe	

Numbering System

Here on the surface, we use Base 10 for our standard numbering; we count 1, 2, 3, etc. up to 10. The next numbers are combinations: 10+1, 10+2, 10+3, and so on. The first digit says how many sets of Tens, the second digit how many Ones. As numbers get bigger, more digits are added to the left: hundreds, thousands, and higher

The D'ni used Base 25—that is, they counted 1,2,3...up to 24, then went to 25+0, 25+1, 25+2, etcetera. Like many things by the D'ni, writing numbers looks very complex, but has a very simple underlying structure.

There are 4 core number symbols:





These symbols are used to write all other D'ni numbers, using a logical progression:





The pattern is very clear: 5 is 1 rotated counter-clockwise, 6 is 1+5, 7 is 2+5, 8 is 3+5, 9 is 4+5. When we get to 10, then the pattern moves forward: the 2 is rotated to become the base symbol, and the other symbols added:



You can see what is coming next: 15 is 3 rotated:  And 20 is 4 rotated:  Add the symbols for 1-4 to those, and you get 16-19 and 21-24, respectively.


But things change when you get to 25, because the next number you'd rotate would be 5...which would look just like 1. Here's where the D'ni begin their place system like we use on the surface, and we introduce a new symbol for zero.

25 is written as:  This shows that we have 1 *set of 25* and 0 *sets of 1*.

Because 25 is such an important number for the D'ni, and writing  all the time would have been cumbersome, there is a special symbol for 25, but it is not used as a digit. It is used to show 25 by itself:



So, how do we write numbers bigger then 25? By using division to find out how many *sets of 25* and *sets of 1* we have.

Lets say we want to write the D'ni number for 326. We divide 326 by 25 and get *13 sets of 25* (325) with *1 set of 1* left over. In D'ni this is the 13 symbol, followed by the 1 symbol: 

Here's some other examples, see if you can figure out what number they are:



But wait! What happens when we get to *24 sets of 25* and *24 sets of 1*, and then we add one? We start bumping numbers into a new column on the left, just like surface numbers. We don't have a nice name for these columns like hundreds or thousands, but the principle is the same. For example:




























This is *1 set of 25 squared* (625), *3 sets of 25* (75) and *8 sets of 1*(8), or 708.

10,544 is *16 sets of 25 squared*, *21 sets of 25* and *19 ones*:



With a little practice, you can write any number in D'ni!

+	0	1	2	3	4
0					
5					
10					
15					
20					

Timekeeping

The D'ni's largest amount of time is a *hahr*. The *hahr* is roughly equivalent to one Earth year.

The D'ni *hahr* is divided into 10 equal segments called *vaileetee*. One *vailee* is roughly equivalent to one Earth month.

A *vailee* is further divided into 29 *yahrtee*. One *yahr* is equal to about 30 hours and 14 minutes of surface time. (1.26 Earth days) There are 290 *yahrtee* in one *hahr*.

Yahrtee are further divided into 5 equal segments called *gahrtahvotee*. One *gahrtahvo* is equal to about 6 hours and 3 minutes of surface time.

Gahrtahvotee can be further divided into 5 equal segments called *pahrtahvotee*. One *pahrtahvo* is equal to about 1 hour 13 minutes of surface time.

Pahrtahvotee can be further divided into 5 equal segments called *tahvotee*. One *tahvo* is equal to about 14.5 minutes of surface time.

Tahvotee are further divided into 25 equal segments called *gorahntee*. One *gorahn* is equal to about 35 seconds of surface time.

Gorahntee are further divided into 25 equal segments called *prorahntee*. One *prorahn* is equal to about 1.5 seconds of surface time.

For practical daily timekeeping, the D'ni divided the *yahr* into 25 *pahrtahvotee*, ignoring the *gahrtahvotee*. This *pahrtahvo* is the "bell" time unit described in *MYST: The Book of Ti'ana*. The clocks found in some of the D'ni neighborhoods use this bell system of timekeeping, separating the day into 25 equal segments.

The ten D'ni *vaileetee* are (with their respective surface dates):

Leefo: April 21 - May 27

Leebro: May 28 - July 3

Leesahn: July 3 - August 8

Leetar: August 9 - September 14

Leevot: September 14 - October 20

Leevofo: October 21 - November 26

Leevobro: November 26 - January 1

Leevosahn: January 2 - February 7

Leevotar: February 7 - March 15

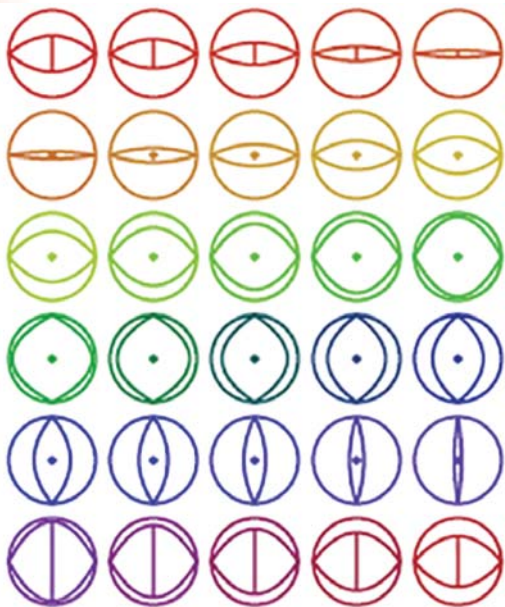
Leenovoo: March 16 - April 21

Color Symbolology

What we know of D'ni color theory and use is very limited. From Gehn's notebooks we believe they had eye-like symbols representing the classic primary and secondary colors: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple.



Gehn also used expanded intermediate eye symbols that cover a small portion of the spectrum between these main eye symbols. Explorers are unsure sure if these are actual D'ni symbols, or something Gehn created as part of his obsession with making things fit his own world view:



GEHN'S DOME EYE SYMBOLS
LEAVE OUT MANY COLORS OF
THE SPECTRUM- HE WAS FRUSTRATED
BY THERE BEING 6 MAIN COLORS,
WHEN HE WAS CONVINCED THE D'NI WERE
OBSESSED WITH THE NUMBER 5

We only know a few D'ni color words:

white - hahzah - *hahzah*: haza

blue - trehl - *trehl*: trel

black - oko - *oko*: oko

red- roodsh - *roodsh*: rUdS

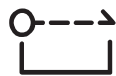
Of those, the symbols for white and black are completely unknown. It is hard to say if they would have eye symbols, or something very different. It is also unknown in what manner light-sensitive D'ni vision actually perceived these colors.

Measurement & Reckoning

When mapping, surface cultures tend to use Cartesian coordinates: Measurements along x- and y-axes (e.g. 5 miles west and then 2 miles south) from a central point, called the origin. Altitude is sometimes added as needed. In contrast, the D'ni used a polar coordinate system. Modern explorers nicknamed this system "KI-PS", as all KI devices would show their current position in these coordinates.



ANGLE FROM THE GREAT ZERO LINE



DISTANCE FROM THE GREAT ZERO



ELEVATION FROM THE GREAT ZERO

D'ni polar coordinates are based off distance from a central reference point (called the Great Zero) and an angle off of a reference line starting at that point and pointing toward magnetic north (called the Great Zero line). Given that differences in height can be very significant in subterranean living, an elevation above or below the central point is usually included. In other Ages, the Guild of Maintainers would designate a point as the Great Zero of that Age and place a Maintainer's Mark there. KI devices received their coordinates from that point. If an Age did not have something like a magnetic north for some reason, an arbitrary Great Zero line was established.










Distances and elevation were measured in *shahftee*, or spans, which were approximately 13.3 feet. Angles off of the Great Zero line were measured in *torantee*. In D'ni mathematics, one *toran* is equivalent to around 0.00576 degrees, and a full circle contained 62,500 *torantee*. The tunnel to the surface was "...cut at a maximum of 3825 *torantee*- 22.032 degrees- from the horizontal." (Book of Ti'ana). 15,625 (or 25 * 25 * 25) *torantee* is a right angle.

Unfortunately, D'ni researchers have not confirmed any other units used in D'ni measurement for distance or orienteering. Research is ongoing.

D'nidings

D'ni is full of symbols, both practical and mysterious, informative and confusing. They can tell you where to go, or lead you on goose chases. Some of those symbols have been collected into a font: *D'nidings*

AE'GURA SIGNPOST SYMBOLS

-  - Ferry Terminal (*keystroke = e*)
-  - Museum (*keystroke = i*)
-  - Great Zero (*keystroke = o*)
-  - Guild Hall (*keystroke = p*)
-  - Ferry Docks (*keystroke = r*)
-  - Neighborhood (*keystroke = t*)
-  - Great Library (*keystroke = u*)
-  - Concert Hall (*keystroke = w*)
-  - Great Stair (*keystroke = [*)

AHYOHEEK SYMBOLS



- Ahyoheek Hologram
(*keystroke = z*)



- Pen (*keystroke = v*)











- Beetle (*keystroke = x*)










- Book (*keystroke = c*)

KI SYMBOLS

-  - KI (keystroke = 2)  - Settings(keystroke = d)
-  - KI-2(keystroke = 3)  - Radius (keystroke = 5)
-  - Messages (keystroke = 4)  - Distance(keystroke = 6)
-  - Explorers (keystroke = 9)  - Elevation (keystroke = 7)

CLEFT IMAGER SYMBOLS

(NAMES ARE MOSTLY MADE UP FROM EXPLORER IMPRESSIONS)

-  - "Cavern" (keystroke = a)
-  - "Turtle" (keystroke = d)
-  - "Eye" (keystroke = f)
-  - "Sun" (keystroke = h)
-  - "Seed" (keystroke = k)
-  - "Target" (keystroke = s)
-  - "Snake" (keystroke = j)

KADISH'S SYMBOLS

Defrocked Guild Master Kadish built elaborate Ages meant to awe, mislead and protect secrets—and symbols are often the key to those secrets.

 - (keystroke = A)	 - (keystroke = N)	 - (keystroke = !)
 - (keystroke = B)	 - (keystroke = O)	 - (keystroke = @)
 - (keystroke = C)	 - (keystroke = P)	 - (keystroke = #)
 - (keystroke = D)	 - (keystroke = Q)	 - (keystroke = \$)
 - (keystroke = E)	 - (keystroke = R)	 - (keystroke = %)
 - (keystroke = F)	 - (keystroke = S)	 - (keystroke = ^)
 - (keystroke = G)	 - (keystroke = T)	 - (keystroke = &)
 - (keystroke = H)	 - (keystroke = U)	 - (keystroke = *)
 - (keystroke = I)	 - (keystroke = V)	 - (keystroke = (
 - (keystroke = J)	 - (keystroke = W)	 - (keystroke =)
 - (keystroke = K)	 - (keystroke = X)	 - (keystroke = _)
 - (keystroke = L)	 - (keystroke = Y)	 - (keystroke = ~)
 - (keystroke = M)	 - (keystroke = Z)	 - (keystroke = +)

MISCELLANEOUS SYMBOLS



- The Great Tree (Uru social group)
(keystroke = .)



- Ahnonay (keystroke = l)



- Fancy Pen (keystroke = m)



- Guild of Writers (keystroke = n)



- Cavern Communications (Uru 'news' group)
(keystroke = q)



- Yeesha Name Mandala (keystroke = y)



- Yeesha Name Mandala 2 (keystroke = \)



- Simple Nexus (keystroke = 0 or ,)



- Fancy Nexus (keystroke = -)



- Guild of Maintainers 1 (keystroke = <)



- Guild of Maintainers 2 (keystroke = >)

MISCELLANEOUS SYMBOLS



- Watcher Glyph 1 (*keystroke = :*)



- Watcher Glyph 2 (*keystroke = "*)



- "Share Book" Glyph (*keystroke = 1*)



- DRC Logo (*keystroke =]*)



- Book (*keystroke = ;*)



- Journey Hand (*keystroke = ')*



- Guild of Greeters (*keystroke = /*)



- "Touch Here" (on Relto shelves) (*keystroke = `)*



- Path of the Shell 1 (*keystroke = ?*)



- Path of the Shell 2 (*keystroke = {*)

The D'ni Primer: An Unwritten Supplement
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