

Tales *of the* Reaching Moon

Issue 15



**Prax
Part
Deux**

Cam's Well
Cult of Waha
Spirit Cults Part 2
The Tunnelled Hills

Tales of the Reaching Moon

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Edict #15

Mike 37

Welcome

Gosh! Another issue so soon? Wonders will never cease. And we've even managed to go one better than *Wyrms Footnotes*.

This issue we present part deux of our Praxian special. Now you'll be able ride the range a bit further afield, and even enjoy some of the delightful flora and fauna of the Tunnelled Hills, the denizens of Cam's Well, and the shysters of Moonbroth.

Subscribe Now!

Next issue the UK cover price and subscription price of *Tales* will be increasing. All publications have been hit just recently by a couple of large hikes in paper prices and I need to catch up with my costs.

In addition, it's getting harder and harder to distribute the zine, with the likes of Virgin Games and Orcs Nest failing (refusing?) to stock it. You can do me a big favour by always asking why they don't have it whenever you go in! The current trend is for lower subscriptions and lower distribution which is not at all healthy for the zine.

If you subscribe now you can not only beat the price increase for a couple of issues but also guarantee getting a copy! Bear in mind that my subscription price offers excellent value for money, even without the special covers and offers.

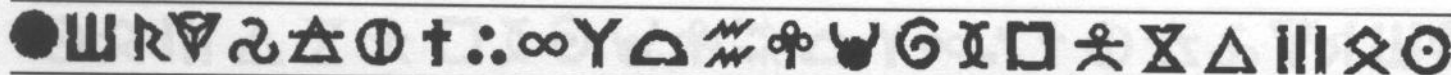
Avalon Hill

Life goes on and the cogs do seem to be moving at Avalon Hill. With a new burst of energy MOB has almost completed *Soldiers of the Red Moon* (or so he tells me), a contract has been signed with Harald Smith for an Imther pack, and the *RQ4* art budget has been increased! Hurrah! Hurrah!

Chaosium

The good news is that *Mythos* is selling well (anyone got an Albert Shiny to swap?), which means that Chaosium should now be solvent. Evidence of this comes from the flood of new products and reprints of hitherto out-of-print rules sets.

On the Gloranthan front Greg Stafford writes: "We are preparing something major and solid, in conjunction with many surprising parties, to bring Gloranthan gaming to the fore once again."



The Good News

The demise of *RQA* has been exaggerated. In fact, the zine hasn't folded (as reported last Edict), instead John Castellucci is striving to produce one issue per year. For the UK the Megacorp has now taken over as distributor – but don't all rush me at once since I've got nothing to sell, yet.

New Lolon Gospel #1 & #2. These should be available from me by the time you read this. No guarantees tho'. The selling price will be £3.50 for #1 and £4.00 for #2.

Codex. No news is good news?

Megacorp News

Unfortunately, both *The Tarsh War* and *The Best of Tales* have been delayed, mainly due to the hassles of organising *Convulsion 3D*. They are now expected out with *Tales* #16 (a Lunar special) later this year.

Instead, we now have available *A Rough Guide to Boldhome*, *Proceedings in Malkionism*, and the *Meints Index of Glorantha* (the MIG).

Proceedings is the convention report from *Convulsion '94* and features the low-down on what happened at the Seventh Malkioni Ecclesiastical Council, as well as transcripts of the Gloranthan Lore auction, Greg Stafford's address, and other Gloranthan seminars.

The *Meints Index of Glorantha* is Rick Meints' compendium of all things Gloranthan, from official *RuneQuest* publications, to small press zines, to freeforms and conventions. It includes product reviews, auction price guidelines, and spell and monster indexes.

Convention Corner

Glorantha-Con IV: January 24th to 26th 1997. Chicago, USA. Guests of Honour are Greg Stafford and Sandy Petersen. The featured LARP's are *The Coming of the White Bull* and *The Broken Council*. Registration is \$35 and rooms are \$72 per night (double occupancy) at the Ramada Hotel O'Hare. Do wrap up warm as it's bloody cold in January! The Megacorp will be in residence ensuite and en-limo. Contact: Andrew Joelson, 1330 D.Gifford Court, Hanover Park, Illinois 60103-5227, USA. Email: joelson@cpdmfg.cig.mot.com

Glorantha-Con V: July 25th to 27th 1997. Victoria, BC, Canada. The expected guests for this are Greg Stafford & Sandy Petersen. The Megacorp will also be in full attendance since the featured LARP is *Reaching Moon Megacorp's Life of Moonson*. Contact: Neil Robinson, 2996 Dysart Rd, BC, V9A 2K2, Canada. Email: nrobinso@direct.ca

Letters?

There's no letters page this issue because, well, there's no letters to speak of. OK, so there's loads saying how good the zine is and the like (ta very much!), but not enough with any meaty criticism or comment. Where are all those gripes about the One True World bias? Or about how perfidiously "English" the zine is getting? Anyone for an argument about the spelling of do'n't, perchance?

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Travelling Man

Lastly, I will admit that I was rather harsh on Travelling Man in the last edict. Suffice to say their enthusiasm and commitment in pushing *RuneQuest* is indisputable, and they have now paid up in full.



Waha

The Butcher

By Greg Stafford & Sandy Petersen, with Scott Schneider

Mythos and History

The time after the retreat of the Storm Bull and the birth of the Dawn is often called Greytime. In the Greytime, the greatest god was named Waha. He was born in the Paps, a child of Eiritha and the Storm Bull. The sacred places in the Paps had been dormant until his birth, and from that time onward there were loyal officers to follow the sacred khan, and priestesses to aid him.

Waha emerged from the earth to look upon a world of darkness and lingering chaos. People wandered through the blasted land, dazed and dying of stupidity. Some had followed lesser spirits or dark gods, but Waha knew a better way to survive.

One of the first things Waha did was to free the Daughters of Eiritha who had been imprisoned in darkness. These herd mothers were eternally grateful for their liberation and rewarded Waha with great promises and powers. Waha, wise leader, taught those secrets to his sons and followers.

Waha taught men the secrets of Death. He taught the Peaceful Cut, whereby they could return animal souls to the bliss within the womb of Eiritha, thereby supplying the tribes with provender from the goddess. He also taught them the warlike blows whereby men can send their foes to dark hells.

He fought Wild Fire and tamed it to be a friend of man. He cleansed the desert of the presence of the Devil. He dug a great pass through the earth, diverting a river to the spot where the Devil lay. Waha ordered the river and its creatures to devour the putrid thing, and they did.

The Food Game began when Waha gathered all the starving creatures together and told them they must make an agreement. The sparse vegetation remaining, Eiritha's bounty, could only support part of the creatures. The rest would have to eat those who fed upon the vegetation. All that needed to be decided is who ate who.

The Food Game was decided by lots.

Humans and beasts cast lots, and in every case but one the humans won and now herd, ride, and eat their appropriate beasts. The one exception is the Morokanth, who herd beasts that are like men. All men say that the Morokanth cheated.

The Food Game established the nomad way of life. Waha organised the survivors into tribes led by his sons. As the population increased, Waha retired into the wonder of his underground palace in the Paps, coming forth only on momentous occasions.

The cult of Waha has survived intact since the Darkness. Occasionally less popular than some other religions among the nomads, it has never been extinct.

Since the Dawn, the cult of Waha has suffered several defeats. The first of these was about 850 S.T., when outsiders came from the civilised lands to the west and founded a teeming city in sacred Prax itself. The city has since been reduced mostly to ruins.





The second great defeat was in the early Third Age, when the dragon peoples of Kralorela sent forth a great army and slew ninety-nine out of a hundred khans in the battle of Lost Hope. In the Third Age, the Lunar Empire, armed with odd magics, has defeated Waha's cult yet again.

The cult promises its worshipers that their souls will return again to the familiar lifestyle of the Wastes after an undefined time spent in the gloomy, silent world of the dead. Initiates are promised that they will live at least one day in the lush Land of the Wondrous Dead (where Waha and Eiritha live and rule) for each day they faithfully serve the cult in life. Members of this cult are burned after death, and their ashes are spread to the plains and the winds. In a prayer, the other warriors pray that the "spark of the soul stay in the tribe, and its might watch over the herds."

Waha the Butcher's runes are Death, Beast and Man.

Cult Ecology

The cult of Waha provides the basic life style and survival needs of the animal nomads of the Wastes. It carefully explains what each man must do to survive, and determines social order within the tribe. Most adult males of the animal nomads are initiates into the Way of Waha.

Waha is the Protector of the Herd, and dislikes enemies of the beasts. Anyone that does not practice the Peaceful Cut is a potential foe, whether he be fierce predator or foreign human.

Waha hates chaos, and his khans must muster to fight it quickly when it is found. He remembers those who aid him against the evil, and is their friend afterwards, so long as they leave his people and herds unharmed. Waha distrusts horses, for horse-riding folk have long warred on his people.

Waha's special day is God Day. The sacred night of his birth is God Day of Death week, Darkseason, and that is the most holy time of the cult. Each God Day of Death week is a season festival.

The Cult in the World

The hierarchy of the Waha cult forms the hierarchy of the tribes of Prax. All khans must be able to claim descent from Waha, and they are also leaders of the cult.

Waha is only worshipped among the animal nomads. The transplanted nomads of Fronela and Peloria still worship him in a much-altered form. There, he is the god of butchers and slaughterhouses, rather than the khan-of-khans.

There are many holy places for the cult. The most important are at Day's Rest, where the Protectresses once halted, and Good Canal, which Waha dug.

Each tribe of the animal nomads has its own High Khan who is the High Priest of Waha for the entire nation. The High Priest of Waha at the Paps has precedence over all other khans, but only when in their presence. He cannot send orders from afar, though he may send magical promises or gifts to influence a tribal khan. Each tribe is ruled by its High Khan. Each clan is ruled by a chieftain, who must also be a khan and who answers only to the High Khan.

Waha Cult Special Skill

Craft/Butchery

(Knowledge 10%):

Butchery allows the user to dismember an animal in the quickest and most effective way. It also allows the user to divide up a prey animal in the tribe's traditional manner (i.e. haunch to the man who killed it, brain to the priest, etc.).

Waha Special Spirit Magic

Peaceful Cut

1 point

ritual ceremony

This is the special ritual which herders perform to ensure that the soul of the slain beast returns to its mother, to be reborn properly. It includes a short prayer and ritual of thanksgiving.

This spell must be performed in conjunction with the craft skill of Butchery. The user makes a single skill roll, attempting to roll under both his ceremony skill and his Butchery skill.

The size of the temples varies with the size of the clan. Large clans have major or great temples, smaller clans have only shrines or minor temples. Shrines teach the spell Command Spirit of Law.

Initiate Membership

Tribe members are initiated into the cult of Waha after they have proved themselves to the tribal elders. This is done when the men are 20-25 years old.

A candidate for initiation must be a tribal member, have 50% skill in Ride and a tribal weapon, and know one spell. He must pass an easy examination. All qualified candidates who have not shamed themselves or their deity are initiated. A point of POW is sacrificed to Waha. Outsiders must join the tribe before they may join Waha's cult.

Initiates must sacrifice all their magic points but one each holy day. This is dedicated to Waha, and is done at dawn by chanting the Song of Rising Waha. Initiates must be willing to risk their lives for the protection of the herd. They must follow every command of their chieftains and khans. An initiate must attempt to kill chaos whenever found. If unable, he must do his best to alert the clan.

An initiate can marry a priestess of Eiritha, if she is agreeable. He can go on war parties and raids. Initiates receive third choice of portions from a slaughtered animal. They have second choice of weapons from the traders. They may eat at the Bachelor's Fire if they wish, and learn skills from their elders and priests.

An initiate of Waha may not learn more than one point of the Heal spell.

Spirit Magic: Countermagic, Detect Spirit, Heal, Peaceful Cut, Protection Slow, Vigour.

Shaman Membership

The shamans of Waha are less of a magical priesthood than they are a social hierarchy maintaining order in the tribes. Strict cult functions are more directed to tribal rule than magical or spiritual salvation. The shamans must make all possible effort to be living examples of the virtues of Waha the Butcher.

Any initiate who is or becomes a shaman qualifies for this status.

A shaman of Waha is not allowed to marry any foreign woman. He may not eat meat on Clayday. He may not hunt birds, gather eggs, or sew. Once in his life, a shaman of Waha must make pilgrimage to the Devil's Marsh and kill something of chaos. He is responsible for the welfare of his followers and must not do anything which will uselessly or foolishly endanger his wards.

A shaman of Waha can learn divine magic reusably as if he were a priest. He must give 90% of his time and income to the cult. He gets second portions of slaughtered beasts, and receives all gifts from foreign travellers to distribute as he sees fit.

Common Divine Magic: Extension, Spellteaching, Summon Spirit of Law, Worship Waha.

Special Divine Magic: Command Gnome, Command Spirit of Law, Fix Intelligence, Release Intelligence, Shield.

Khan Membership

A khan of Waha is the warrior leader of his clan. He is the taker of life for both friends and enemies. A khan is known as Impala-khan, Bison-khan, and so on, depending on his herd.

All potential khans must be of noble blood. This blood may be thin, coming from a long dead ancestor, but it must be present. Tribal orators always know if a candidate is faking his genealogy. All must be men, initiates, and not be proven murderers, robbers, or cowards. A potential khan must also have 90% Ride and 90% tribal Weapon Attack. He must have 90% in Butchery and know Peaceful Cut. He must have 50% in Orate and Track.

A khan must celebrate the high holy day with followers of the cult. He may never ride any steed but his own herd beasts. He may not marry woman that is not a priestess of Eiritha or one of her associated goddesses. If he is already married, however, he need not divorce his present wife, even if she is not a priestess. A



khan may not travel to the sky as a friend, eat gold or golden food, or build a house. Once in his life, a khan must travel to the Devil's Marsh and kill a thing of chaos.

A khan can have as many wives and concubines as he can handle, receives first choice of weapons from the traders, and shares the second portions of the slaughtered animal with the shamans of the cult.

Any khan of one of the five great nations who captures ten each of the herd beasts of the other four great nations receives a special blessing. His favourite riding animal gains four points of magical armour.

Upon becoming a khan, his favourite riding animal is awakened to full 3d6 intelligence and it is placed in permanent Mindlink with him. If the animal dies, he can only gain another through successful Divine Intervention.

Common Divine Magic: Extension, Spellteaching, Summon Spirit of Law, Worship Waha.

Special Divine Magic: Command Gnome, Command Spirit of Law, Fix Intelligence, Release Intelligence, Shield.



Subcults

Barabo Nightmare

Whenever a person dares to leave the cult of Waha after initiation he is visited unexpectedly during their sleep or heroquest by this spirit. The reprobate must engage it in spirit combat. It has a POW of 4d6, attacks by matching points vs. magic points, but it reduces both magic points and POW by 1d3 permanently when it overcomes the defender. It stays for two rounds of combat only, then disappears.

Jaldon Toothmaker

Jaldon was a famous khan of a previous age who managed to unify all the tribes to help in the destruction of the Empire of the Wyrms' Friends. He was apparently cursed by the Wyrms Empire, and can never return to Prax, but is still revered as a perfect and true worshiper of Waha. It is said by some that when he appears all the tribes will unite. Others say that when all the tribes unite he will be called.

Jaldon has no aid to give his worshipers, unless they venture in force into Dragon Pass. Then Jaldon's spirit embodies himself with his steed Home (which looks like no steed, or every Praxian steed, depending on who looks at it) and again guides them to the plunder of the soft city folk.

The Founders

Waha the Butcher is the heir to the secrets of the Founding Spirits who came down from the Spike in Godtime with the Storm Bull and who wed the Protectresses to create the race of people. These are very powerful spirits, each bound to one of the animal nomad tribes. The legitimate khan of an entire tribe may learn the powerful Call Founder spell, for use in overall tribal emergencies only.

Spirits of Law

Spirits of Law have no INT and a POW of 2d6+6. They can engage in spirit combat but only against chaotic targets. Any chaotic being which is reduced to 0 magic points by a spirit of law is immediately and permanently destroyed.

Cremate Dead

1 point

ritual ceremony, nonstackable, reusable

This spell allows an official (usually a priest) to fully destroy the bodily remains of any one cult member after death. It guarantees that the ghost will not return to haunt the family. It also burns all goods sent along with the corpse, allowing the deceased to carry some weapons and other supplies into the land of the dead. It can be used on the still-animated skeleton, zombie, or even vampire form of a former Lodril initiate or priest to burn it, though the target's magic points must be overcome in this case.

Oakfed

The god of Wildfire destroyed all of the once-lush plant life of Prax. In the Darkness, Waha fought with Oakfed and overcame him. Since then, Oakfed has been Waha's loyal servant, and rules over the souls of all those who die by fire.

Associated Cults

Eiritha

Waha's mother provides her divine magic spell Speak with Herd Beasts.

Storm Bull

Waha's father provides the divine magic spell Impede Chaos.





Waha Special Divine Magic

Fix Intelligence

2 points

touch, instant, nonstackable, one use

This spell only affects complete creatures. If the target's magic points are overcome, his INT is transformed into fixed INT. The actual quantity of INT does not change – only its quality alters.

The victim is now ruled by instinct, rather than reason. He remembers his former life, and knows his friends and enemies. Essentially, he becomes a very cunning animal in human form.

He becomes totally incapable of using any knowledge or communication skills, or of using any magic (except that he can use magic items which automatically function). He still has full use of his weapons, agility, manipulation, perception, and stealth skills, and can increase in them through experience or training, though not through research. He cannot speak, but can use gestures to indicate his wants and desires.

If this spell takes effect on a shaman, the shaman's fetch takes over the body, dominantly possessing the shaman and replacing his INT and POW with its own. However, the new person no longer has normal shaman powers, including the ability to disincorporate or see via Second Sight. The fetch can maintain spirits already bound to it. All spells held in the shaman's mind remain accessible to the fetch. An additional casting of Fix Intelligence on such a shaman has no effect.

If this spell is cast on a member of a divine cult, that member retains his ability to call for Divine Intervention, but cannot use any other magic.

All familiars of a sorcerer affected by this spell are freed from his control, exactly as if he had voluntarily released them. They do not lose their special characteristics unless he dies. If he ever regains normal INT, his familiars return to his control.

Release Intelligence

2 points

touch, instant, nonstackable, one-use

This spell only affects creatures which are complete except for the possession of fixed INT. If the target's magic points are overcome, his INT is transformed into normal INT. The actual quantity of INT does not change – only its quality alters.

He is now ruled by reason rather than instinct. He remembers his former life, and knows his friends and enemies. He gains the ability to use and learn knowledge & communication skills, and to use magic.

This spell completely cancels the effects of the Fix Intelligence spell.

Call Founder

6 points

ritual summon, nonstackable, one-use

This spell may only be cast by the legitimate khan of an entire tribe. It takes all day to prepare. The being summoned is of awesome power, far beyond the normal scope of play, appearing as a human with the appropriate herd animal's head, with a STR and SIZ equal to ten times that of the summoning khan. The being's POW varies between 40 and 110, depending on the tribe. It is called only for tribal emergencies.

A Hero Wars Prophecy of Doom

by

**Jeff Okamoto &
Sandy Petersen**

This was related to me by a Humakti in Swenstown who claimed he had travelled to the Great Southern Land. The storyteller claimed this took place on the Plateau of Statues!

- Griflet Asread, Grey Sage, 1623.

Finally they stopped moving and found themselves standing before a person. He spoke: "I hight Urrquong, Barrier of the Door to Chaos. Hearken, ye folk of the Last Age. Your doom besets you. Go home, and experience a few last seasons of fearful rest before the end. An end there will be so great that none shall remain to tell of it."

He spoke to the Morokanth: "Manslayer, stand forth! You serve an impotent god, whose powers weaken with every turn of the years. Strong his worshipers may yet be, but they fight that which cannot be stopped. You hate the Moon, and struggle against it, but the Moon is naught but a harbinger, and your actions are useless, as if with a man that defies the omen, rather than the doom itself."

He spoke to the Sorcerer: "Friend, come near! Never in this Last Age have thy kind hindered mine. You serve us yet. Continue in your ways, with my blessing. You think in your heart that by killing broos and scorpion folk you serve the cause of Law. Does the bird that picks fleas and lice off the lion's back hinder him from destroying his prey?"

He spoke to the Troll: "Dark Man, I have met yours before. In ancient years your mighty kin defied us. Your race has suffered two curses. It cannot survive the third. Go home, and await the extinction of your race."

He spoke to the Dwarf: "Stunted One, thing of clay. The dwarfs have ever proven most adept at slaying their own kind. You have proven no different. You think that repairing the Machine will restore and save you. Yet you are not even repairing the right Machine."

They started moving again. And found themselves in front of an old man. He spoke: "Man, Dark Man, Mostal's brood. Awakened One – come and hear my rede. The end of the universe is at hand, and never was it so difficult to stop."

To the Morokanth: "Storm Bull and Morokanth lack the same quality – Trust. Seek that to save the world. Take this tool to help. Your success shall make your name feared by the foes of Life for ages to come."

And he gave him a metal glove the shape of his hand.¹

To the Sorcerer: "Your kind is legendary for that sin most detested of rulers. Seek charity without self-interest or your type ends with time. This will aid you. Your success shall couple your name with the Mighty One."

And he gave him a sliver of obsidian too big for an arrow and too small for a spear.

To the Troll: "Dark Man, for centuries your kind has perished and shrunk. You need what may be the most difficult virtue of all to obtain. Hope. Take this tool to help. Your success shall make mothers praise you till Time ends."

And he gave him a pitch-black bison calf.²

To the Dwarf: "Tenth Race. You need a virtue most important to all in the world, yet one your type lacks. Love. Take this. Your success shall warm the stone."

And he gave him a key seemingly of iron.

To all: "Past the mountains of Evil, in the land before the sun goes down, lies the End of All, the Bane of Time.

"Beware the Red Beast, beware the lair of vitriol. Seek the Grey Ones, seek your true virtues.

"One of you shall be named a star if your quest succeeds. The Web shall be shattered if your quest fails.

"Beware the Mask of Chaos and know that Life watches your acts. The Barrier of the Door is wounded and cannot lie, only threaten and warn. Heed him as me, save for his despair."

And he too disappeared before they could ask anything further.



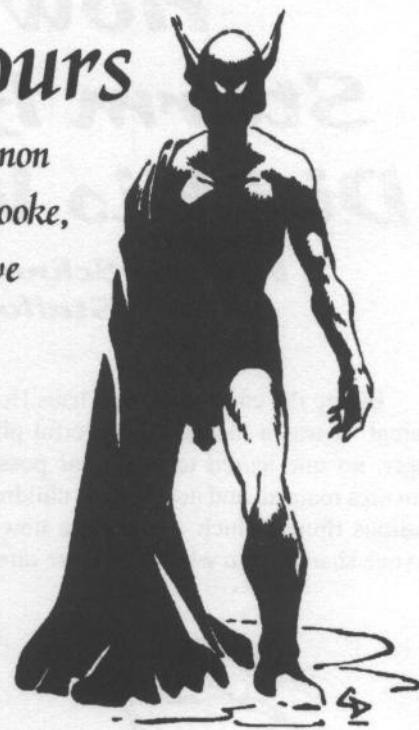
Sandy's Notes:

1 The morokanth had lost his left hind foot in a recent battle – dissolved when he tried to kick Urrquong. He used the metal glove to replace his lost foot, even though the glove had a (usable) thumb.

2 Earlier, the party had encountered the Herd of Fertility upon the plateau top, and had each been requested to mate with the beast of their choice. The humans all selected herd-women, the morokanth actually found a herd-morokanth (to his dismay), the dwarf attempted to mate with an impala, but failed, and the troll selected a bison cow. Later, it became clear that this black bison calf was the troll's own son (!), and had some very special qualities.

Rumours

Contributors: Simon
Bray, Nick Brooke,
Eric Rowe, Dave
Pearton, Sandy
Petersen.



Rumour Indicators:

- T True
- F False
- M So general as to be meaningless.
- R May or may not be true at the referee's option.
- B Generally true, but with a substantial false component.
- A Too awful to even think about.

The Reaching Moon Megacorp will soon be test-marketing Skullbat dung as an aphrodisiac. **A**

The ruler of Than-Ulbar has the skull of the former Volcano God under his control. If this skull could be smashed, and the spirit freed, then the volcano will erupt extremely violently. **T/R**

Chaosium will be releasing HeroQuest in Summer 1997 as a Collectible Card Game called DOOM! **B**

It is believed that the current classification of the Aldryami ("elves") is another mistake and/or rewrite of the original by the God-Learners. The original classification was obviously into green, yellow (oolong) and black/brown based on the type of tea that they produced for the Green Age peoples. **B**

The God Learners are a God Learner construct. **T**

A monument on the Plateau of Statues has come to life, marched down off the Plateau, and sits quietly in the plains, voicing dire prophecies to anyone who speaks with it. **T**

The long-extinct Long Nose tribe has returned, and is travelling to the Paps to declare itself a valid tribe once more. **R**

There is a huge skull in the high temple of Than-Ulbar which is actually Atyar's skull all the way from Kralorela. **B**

The Castle of the Boggles on the Plateau of Statues is actually an inflatable bouncy castle. **A**

How Storm Bull Did His Work

by Scott Schneider
& Greg Stafford

Before the coming of the Chaos Herds, this land was very different. It was a lush and wonderful place where no one was hungry, no one feared to lose their possessions, no slavers or carnivores roamed, and not even the children had nightmares. The wondrous things which we treasure now were many then, and everyone shared them when they were rare.

Genert was the great Earth Giant who ruled everything in peace. He was a handsome and kind Giant who never learned the arts of war, but instead the arts of making children. His way was not that of conflict at all, and whenever someone asked for something, he received it from Genert.

Chaos is the evil of the World. Chaos came in its one manner and its one hundred forms. Chaos changed everything, and what it did not change into evil, it destroyed. So Genert and his twenty-seven wives became the twelve Digestators, their sons became the Eanjak Riders, their daughters became the Bearers of the Greater Miseries, and their grandchildren became the Four Hundred Biting Flies.

Woe to we Little Ones! Woe to the Greater Ones! No one was safe, and only those who fled in shame are our ancestors. The Chaos Herdsmen and their herds brought shame to our Ancestors, and troubles to us. Everything would have died or been destroyed then, or become something worse than death, except for the courage of Storm Bull, Saviour of the Universe! He is the King! He is the Great God! He alone stood to fight, and the Chaos Herdsmen cornered Him and surrounded Him on all sides. Our Ancestors cowered within His cloak, and saw what happened then.

Storm Bull – we all bless His Name! – reached into His Heart, and from it took the Great Rock, and with that Great Rock He crushed the head of the Devil, and smashed its bones, and pulped its flesh, and made its rank squirming organs into things which have no names. Storm Bull – we all revere His Life! – spat upon the ground and from that sprang the waters of transformation which wrapped itself around the dead Evil, and ate it, and turned it into the Forbidden Marshes. Evil foul Chaos! It did not die, but it was made into something more manageable. First out of it crawled the Thirteen Great Monsters, and then the ten thousand broods, and finally the Eight Human Races which fled in fear from this land, and inhabit the regions around the edges of our world.

When Storm Bull saw these new evils, He went into the Dark Place, and He drew from it Little Brother Lost, his six boon companions, and their bright treasure, and He set them down and told them to do their work. Then He leapt into the sky, and He set Bright Treasure – the Sun – there, and told it to do its work. Then He set the stars in their places, and then told them to do their work, and then He made Lady Night do her work. Now Storm Bull sits in His Sky Tent, still doing His work, casting down the monsters, and scouring the world of their work.



Spirits of Prax

Part 2 of 2

by Sandy Petersen,
Stephen Martin, Scott Schneider
and Greg Stafford.

Independent Spirits

The independent spirits lived in Prax, but their origins were unknown, unimportant, or irregular. They belonged to no hierarchy by birth, position, or allegiance, but were able to wander among the other displaced gods as equals, thanks to their own inner strength.

Brother Dog

Sometimes claimed to be the first of man's friends, Brother Dog has always been noted for his loyalty and, especially, for his effectiveness against other beast-kind. Brother Dog is associated only with the Beast rune.

Only a human shaman can contact Brother Dog. His worshipers must never harm a dog, who in turn will not harm them unless attacked first. He provides the spell of Conquer Beast.

Condor

Sometimes called the Fourth Rival or Unsacred Bird of Prax, Condor was once the steed of a Sky God. He claimed the title of King Condor, but lost his pre-eminence when his lord was slain by chaos. He tried to coexist with his brethren, but was long ago driven into the Wastes, though he can sometimes be summoned back. Condor is associated with the runes of Beast and Sky. There is no permanent shrine erected to Condor, although he is sometimes contacted in the Vultures Country when no better help is available, especially in the area around Condor Crags, where some of his children still live.

He insists that his worshipers not harm any vulture or condor, or their eggs, but makes no other demands. He provides Command Condor.

Father of Independents

This pathetic wretch, slave to man and god, claims to be the Founder of the many small tribes of Prax. He gladly tells his amusing lies to all who listen. According to the Father, he was a victim of the Gods War and crippled to become ferryman to the gods. Yet he escaped. Returning to Prax, he was captured and put to a similar task in the Dead Place. And he can be thus captured by any shamans who contact his spirit for worship.

He is associated with the runes of Spirit and Communication. He provides Dead Place Ferry.





Great Rhino

The Great Rhino is either the Founder of the Rhino Riders or the Father of the rhinos themselves. He was slain in the Godtime, but was resurrected after the fall of Old Pavis to help break down the walls of the city. He has been a favourite of the Rhinoceros Riders since his summoning by Jorbal Rhino Khan. He gives his aid freely to other shamans, but will never work against his children. His runes are Beast and Disorder.

Worshippers of the Great Rhino must always use the Peaceful Cut when slaying a rhinoceros, but there are no other requirements. He does not himself teach this spell. He provides the spell of Rhino Hide. The Khan of the entire Rhino Riders tribe is able to use the Call Founder ritual of the Waha cult to summon him physically in times of great danger.

Hyena

Hyena is an odd creature. Supposedly, when Genert learned of his upcoming death, he created Hyena to devour the immortal body so it would not fall into the maws of Chaos. This strange and somewhat disgusting fate is held responsible for the creature's odd behaviour. The Hyena is famous for sitting about and telling lewd jokes all day. And the wild hyena's humourless laughs make the desert night hideous. Hyena is associated with the runes of Beast and Disorder. He provides Hyena's Laugh.

Monkey King

Almost unknown today, this obscure spirit is kept alive by the worship of the Baboons of the Wastes. They claim the Monkey King once ruled a large empire, centred on the Monkey Ruins, but that he and his power were destroyed in the Darkness. They wait for the day when he will lead them to re-establish his empire, and reclaim their former power and glory. He is jealous of the supremacy of humans over his kin, and gladly emerges from his exile to strangle them with his immense strength. He is associated with the runes of Beast and Man. Monkey King requires that his human worshipers never harm a monkey unless they are attacked first, but his baboon worshipers have no restrictions. He provides the spell of Might of the Monkey King.

Ostrich Mother

In the Gods Age the Father of Birds nested with an earth goddess. She laid an egg in Genert's Garden, which hatched into Ostrich Mother. She in turn laid her own eggs, which hatched into ten thousand ostriches and ten thousand ostrich riders, the ancestors of the modern Ostrich Clan. Ostrich Mother was a powerful goddess in the Golden Age, but she suffered in the War of the Gods, as did many spirits. Her pinions were torn out by Air Demons, and only the love of her mother kept her from dying when she fell. She favours her children, and provides greater powers to their human kin, but in her weakness is forced to aid any who call upon her. Her primary runes are Beast and Sky, common to all birds, and Earth, gained from her mother.

Ostrich Mother requires that her worshipers always use Peaceful Cut on a slain Ostrich, and never eat an ostrich egg. She provides the spell of Magnify Bird.

Conquer Beast

Variable

temporal, ranged, non-stackable, reusable

Each point of this spell causes the caster's effective magic points to be increased by 2 for purposes of offensive and defensive spirit combat and spell resistance. This bonus is only received against four-footed mammals and beast-spirits, including riding animals, wolves, etc. Non-humans such as trolls, centaurs, or elves are not considered beasts, though baboons and morocanth are.

Dead Place Ferry

1 point

Duration one day, touch, non-stackable, one-use

Allows the target to travel through a Dead Place, suffering none of the usual ill effects.

Hyena's Laugh

1 point

10m radius around caster, temporal, stackable, reusable

This spell is identical to the Group Laughter spell described in *Gods of Glorantha* (Cults Book, page 71).

Rhino Hide

2 points

touch, temporal, nonstackable, reusable

This spell may only be cast on a rhino or a worshiper of the Great Rhino. When cast on a rhinoceros, it doubles skin armour. When cast on a human, the spell causes the recipient's skin to toughen to the strength of rhinoceros hide. It becomes grey and stiff, and provides 6 points of armour against all attacks, including critical hits. This armour protection also applies to fire and acid attacks, and will protect the recipient each round. However, the stiffness reduces the recipient's Move by 1, and adds 1 to the strike ranks of all attacks.

Magnify Bird

3 points

ranged, temporal, nonstackable, reusable

This spell is cast on a bird of any type. Ostrich Riders usually cast it on their mounts. One of the bird's physical characteristics of STR, CON or DEX is raised to the maximum possible die roll for that species, at the players choice. For example, an Ostrich's DEX is rolled on 3d6+3. If the player chooses to increase DEX, it would be raised to 21 for the duration of the spell. SIZ is not affected by this spell.

Might of the Monkey King

3 points

self, temporal, nonstackable, reusable

This spell instils the caster with the strength of the Monkey King, doubling his or her STR characteristic for the spell's duration. The caster also gains +25% to his Attack skill with Fist.

Pure Horse Founder

The Pure Horse Founder is the father of the original Pure Horse Tribe, which was driven from Prax ages ago. He was defeated in the War of the Gods and again in the First Age, and so retains little power in Prax. However, he was sometimes encountered by the peoples in their travels across the plains, and he consents to aid them as long as it is not against his own descendants. He is associated with the runes of Beast and Man.

When the Pol-Joni tribe entered Prax they adopted the Pure Horse Founder as a kinsmen, and he has regained some of his lost power.

The Pure Horse Founder can only be contacted by the ruling khan of one of the Five Great Tribes acting in concert with a shaman of the Pol-Joni people. He provides the spell of Call Founder (see the Waha cult write-up) to the khan. This spell can only be sacrificed for once in a khan's life, as his own Founder would abandon him if he summoned a rival (however powerless) more than once, replacing him as the khan of his tribe. The Pol-Joni Tribe have no khan, and so no direct access to the worship of this spirit, since their founder Derik Pol-Joni left them (see *King of Sartar* p131).

Other Spirits

Foundchild

Foundchild was discovered during the Great Night when a dying woman stumbled over his infant form and, taking him to her breast, found the urge to live greater than that to die. Her strength and determination formed the Heart of a people that fought to survive. The child grew quickly, and soon proved an able leader. He took up weapons once used to kill only men and showed the survivors how to use them for peace and life, teaching them an extraordinary new art which he called hunting. He had an amazing ability, too, to call any animal towards him, or to send it away.

Foundchild is the premier Feeding Deity of the Praxian plains, the only one to truly survive the transition from Godtime to Time. A major part of most animal nomads' diets is game. The Foundchild cult supplies the hunters to obtain this treasure. The best hunters belong to this cult, and it provides occasion for

these hunters to meet together. The weeks of the Great Hunt (both weeks of the Sacred Time) are sacred, but no special rites are performed until after it, when the master hunter is chosen. Before any important trip or hunt, hunters meet and hold a short ceremony of worship. The chief runes associated with Foundchild are those of Death and Harmony. He teaches the use of death as a tool to save life. He provides the spell of Sureshot to those who worship him.

The Hungry Ghosts

These are spirits of the dead tied to the world of the living because of unfinished business. They haunt old places, trying to devour the souls of the living to appease their never-ending anguish. Fortunately, the shamans of Waha know the secret to appease these ghosts and send them back to the spirit world. The Hungry Ghosts are associated with the runes of Spirit and Death.

The ritual is considered evil, though sometimes necessary, and only volunteers or captured prisoner are ever used as sacrifices. Worshipers of Eiritha may never perform this ritual.





Silver Deer

This elusive magical animal is known for its swiftness and elusiveness. It had never been caught (though Foundchild tried every year), but when the Lunars came it was trapped by their foreign magic. Even they could not hold it, and though it remains subject to men, it retains its ability to lead its hunters on futile chases. It is associated with the runes of Beast and Motion. The shaman must first locate Silver Deer on the spirit plane, then pursue it. If he can track and catch the spirit, he may learn its spell of Hunter-Prey Link. Its only demand is that its worshipers use the Peaceful Cut on any beast caught while they know this spell.

Thed

Thed is one of the rare Spirits of Chaos. After the cosmic battles during the Great Darkness most of the chaotic survivors in the world were reduced to a mean and worthless existence imprisoned forever on the physical plane. She is an example of the spiritual cesspools which once plagued the world. Thed is associated with the runes of Chaos and Spirit.

Only shamans willing to give themselves over to chaos can worship her. Thed is a jealous goddess, and will only answer a summons made by a male, even among her children. She provides Curse of Thed to her worshipers.

Feed Ghosts

1 point

ritual spell (Summon), stackable, one-use

The shaman must sacrifice a member of his own species. Thus, a broo must sacrifice a broo, a human must sacrifice a human, and so forth. As the individual is sacrificed, all the ghosts and wraiths within 100 meters are drawn to feast upon his soul. Each additional point in the spell increases the radius of effect by 100 more meters. The sacrifice takes one hour per spell point to perform. When finished, all the ghosts drawn to the site are satiated and must return to the spirit plane for one day per point of POW the sacrificed individual possessed. This spell only attracts ghosts and wraiths of the same species as the shaman and his victim. Thus, a human sacrifice appeases only former humans. If an area is haunted by hungry non-human ghosts, the shaman will need to find a shaman of the appropriate non-human species to satisfy them.

Hunter-Prey Link

2 points

ritual Ceremony, duration 6 hours, stackable, reusable

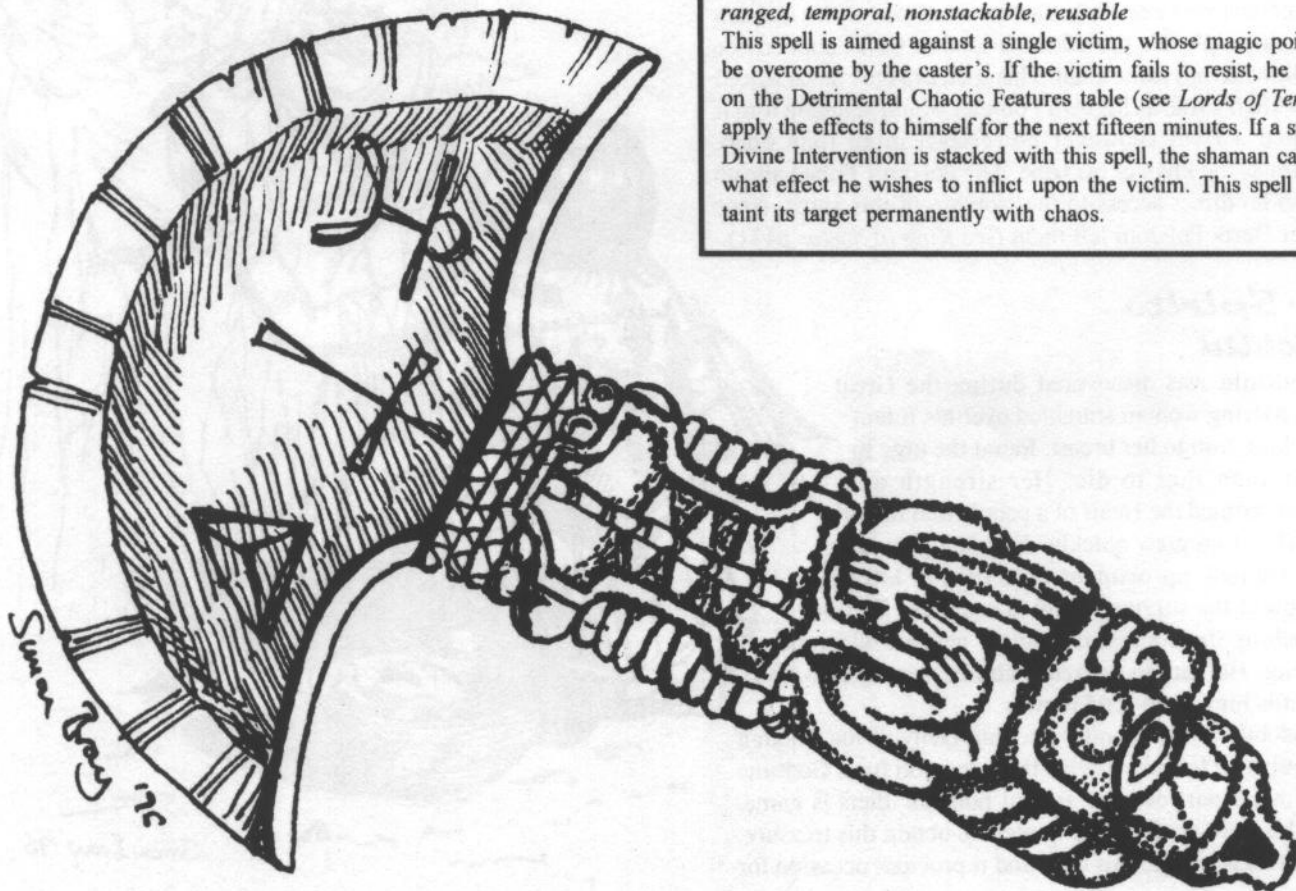
This spell must be cast on an animal which is being actively pursued by a hunter. If more than one hunter pursues the animal, the caster must specify one hunter to be affected; if he does not specify a hunter, the first hunter who sees the animal is the one affected by the spell. Each additional point stacked allows another hunter to be affected. For the duration of the spell, the animal will not be caught by the hunter(s). Regardless of how fast the hunter moves, or how clever he is at tracking or setting traps, the recipient of the spell will always be able to avoid capture. If the animal is skilled enough, it may be able to lose the hunter completely, at which time the spell ends.

Reverse Chaos

2 points

ranged, temporal, nonstackable, reusable

This spell is aimed against a single victim, whose magic points must be overcome by the caster's. If the victim fails to resist, he must roll on the Detrimental Chaotic Features table (see *Lords of Terror*) and apply the effects to himself for the next fifteen minutes. If a successful Divine Intervention is stacked with this spell, the shaman can choose what effect he wishes to inflict upon the victim. This spell does not taint its target permanently with chaos.





If approached, Scirus explains that he wants to trek beyond Northern Vulture Country, searching for ancient sites of scholarly interest. In particular, he hopes to excavate a few. He expects the trip to take about four weeks.

He has already employed a desert tracker, Watyot Keeneye, to organise and guide his expedition. Watyot is arranging transport and scouts. The PCs are to assist with excavations, since the zebra riders are either too proud or too superstitious to dig into ruins themselves. Should the need arise, they are also to provide extra protection.

Scirus is not fussy about whom he hires, provided they can ride and look after themselves. They must be willing to accept orders from both himself and Watyot.

The expedition leaves at dawn four days from now. Anyone wanting the job must sign up before dusk tonight.

Scirus negotiates about 8 silvers/day for each PC. This can be varied at the GM's discretion according to how successfully the PCs bargain, and how useful they can appear to Scirus. Half the fee is paid in advance, and half on their safe return to Pavis.

All items found during excavations belong to Scirus. However, he agrees to pay the finder a bonus dependent on the item's value. He provides transport, provisions, digging tools etc. The PCs must bring their own weapons and armour.

Anyone making suitable enquiries learns that Scirus used to be an apprentice in the city Lhankor Mhy temple. Those who knew him remember best his almost hyperactive restlessness. About 10 years ago he left to go to the great library in Kethaela.

Unexpectedly, he returned to Pavis ten days back, a full initiate and a wealthy man. He contacted his former temple and requested access to its library. The Chief Librarian was delighted to welcome him, especially since he brought gifts of rare documents and other treasures.

Watyot is a zebra rider who used to work for Kost the Tracker. When Kost retired, Watyot set up on his own. He has already hired eight men, all zebra rider kinsmen, and acquired four dozen zebras as riding and pack beasts.

Watyot has been competent and reliable in the past. However, he is certainly not in Kost's league, and this is his first expedition as leader.

Scirus' Detractor

Three days after the PCs have talked with Scirus, one of them (who can read) is furtively approached by another Lhankor Mhy initiate from the local temple. This is Eris Gelosic.

Extract from the Journal of Justus Scriblo, Travelling Scribe

...As we rounded a low hill, we saw a rocky outcrop a javelin's throw from our track. This rose about another 10m from the hillside. Atop could plainly be seen two smooth pillars in fine red stone. As they caught the early sun, they shone like a pair of bloody fingers thrust into the morning air.

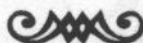
Our guides told us this was a forbidden place of the Watchit clan and warned us not to stray from the track. However, we doubted very much that these primitive people were capable of raising such a monument. More likely, we thought, it was another of those Godtime ruins that are scattered all across the Wastes — mute and dusty testimonies to past glories.

One of our guides, younger and more talkative than the rest, told us a gruesome tale of a band of men from the Urtu clan who came this way. They were in great haste and made the appalling mistake of trying to pass at night.

There was only one survivor. He whispered of a monstrous darkness spirit with a voice like horns and eyes of flame, before he died of his injuries. The scorched corpses of his comrades and their bison were found scattered about the track. All had their throats ripped out.

Our friendly guide swore on his grandmother's cows that the story was true. He said he had the tale from his sister who had married an Urtu man three Sea Seasons back.

I confess the place gave me a sense of unease even before I heard all this. I was not too sorry to leave it behind, scholarly interest not withstanding.



Eris is a small, sallow man with a sour expression. He is about the same age as Scirus. He is neatly dressed and has oiled and combed his hair to try to hide premature balding. His manner is rather pompous.

He says he suspects Scirus has stolen a secret document. He cannot accuse him openly because he is rich and has bribed his way to popularity in the temple. He therefore wants to hire the PC(s) to either obtain the document, or else copy it for him. Whilst accompanying Scirus on his journey seems the best opportunity.

He will pay 50 silvers for this service, payable on delivery. He has no more money, but might be bargained into supplying free library research. He knows Scirus keeps the document rolled up inside his hollow walking cane.

Meanwhile, Eris asks if Scirus explained how dangerous their trip is expected to be. He says he thinks he knows the intended destination, but doubts Scirus would tell someone intended as mere monster fodder. He explains he has a document which he knows Scirus was studying recently. If the character agrees to his offer, he produces the following copy "as a gesture of good will".

GM's Introduction

Scirus and Eris were apprentices together at the Lhankor Mhy temple in Pavis, but never friends. Eris was envious of Scirus' wealthy background and the scholarship to the Kethaelan library it bought him.

Then Scirus came back, even richer than before. Beside himself with jealousy, Eris is desperately trying to find something, anything, to bring Scirus down. In fact, his prying has uncovered the edge of a very dark secret.

In Kethaela, Scirus' interest in forgotten gods became a fascination. After his initiation he explored many ancient temple ruins, selling artefacts and information to finance his trips.

Then he found the following document, a blasphemous remnant from the Godlearners. Believing it could give him immortality, his fascination became obsession. As Eris spotted, he keeps his translation (in Sartarite) hidden inside his cane.

Extract from Transactions of the Learned Society of Theotechnics...

The cult is of little interest save only that it may be used to promote longevity. The lesser powers of the god are easily reproducible from other more accessible sources and, indeed, are better obtained elsewhere.

The power centres of the cult inevitably take one of two hierotypes, *viz.*, a greater and a lesser. The minotype, a shrine, consists of a crude altar, usually of black rock, contained under a domed, red stone canopy.

Beneath the altar is placed the blackened skull of a dog, representing the hound *Galú*. This holds the shrine's power and its defences are often bound here. For fairly minor magics it has some puissance.

Occasionally, the lesser shrine is extended into a full temple and this is the magnotype. A long, straight tunnel is excavated beneath the shrine on an East-West axis. This is closed off at each end, and at the centre, by three sets of doors or gates. It terminates in a fiery pit presided over by an image of the god.

Thus far, only four of these have been successfully recovered. All, however, are remarkably similar in their physical and psychical profiles. Physically, they are crude, black stone images of the god in his role as gatekeeper to the underworld. They range in size between 15 and 30 fingers high.

Psychically, all the figures contain an extremely primitive well of power. This is poorly manipulated but is nevertheless sufficient to supply a somewhat limited array of doorkeeping functions. Overlaid upon this is a later and somewhat erratically structured web of more sophisticated spells.

Both physical and psychical analyses indicate that the figures are considerably older than their surrounding environment. Indeed, it seems likely that the cult originated in some primitive shamanic rite and developed to its current form over generations. The later spells would gradually have accreted from practices evolved after the magnotype temple became established, when the cult entered its post-shamanic period.

The keys to unlock the cult's potential for life extension may be found in the assorted myths that relate to six doorkeepers. Within the magnotype two of these traditionally guarded each set of doors. Since they stood between the open air world of the living and the fiery pit of hell, they were, perforce, immortal for they could be neither alive nor dead.

Consequently, it is possible by the technique of role assumption to adopt to some extent this quality. The cult offers two distinct routes to this achievement but it is the second of the two which is likely to prove the most practical to the average reader. This is because the associated myths are more recent and therefore more clearly defined. However, it should, of course, be remembered that they are therefore less potent.

The first relates to the outermost doorkeepers, *Kamtar* and *Shingu*. These appeared shortly after *Met* converted from his passive role of gatekeeper to the active role of hunter of the damned. Typically they anthropomorphise the boundary between life and death, in much the same way as *Met* and *Galú* must originally have done. They can, indeed, be viewed as avatars of either superbeing.

By association, therefore, as well as from their own intrinsic properties, it is possible to tap into the immortality that is the particular province (albeit in a negative fashion) of the god. However, the very nebulousness which allows this association also makes for rather inexact manipulations. Moreover, the disassociation of avatars from their parent archetypes, necessary to control the manipulations, is notoriously difficult.

The second route offers considerably more promise. This relates to the remaining doorkeepers, respectively *Khumbaba* and *Yu*, and *Adipu* and *Bel-Seri*. All of these appear much later than the essentially demonic *Kamtar* and *Shingu*.

The common theme here is that each of these figures came to his immortal estate as a result of the divine gift of *Met*. However, this "gift", in all four cases, was one of a negative sort. That is *Met* withheld their natural deaths, rather than granting the boon of continual life. This is reflected in these doorkeepers' unwillingness to assume their mythological roles — a distinct contrast to *Kamtar* and *Shingu*.

Of the 4 cult figures, the simplest to manipulate is that of *Yu*. His myth states he was a trickster whom *Met* was told to deliver to hell. Accordingly, the god set out with his faithful hound each evening to hunt him down.

Yu, however, outwitted him for a time by hiding near the tunnel entrance. As *Met* left, he turned himself invisible and slipped inside. When *Met* returned frustrated just before dawn, *Yu* escaped by using his invisibility once more just before the great gates closed shut.

Eventually, however, *Yu* was overcome with exhaustion and fell asleep inside the tunnel. This allowed *Met* to find and capture him on his return.

The user of this simple myth must only bear in mind its negative aspect when putting it to use. *Met*'s gift of eternal life is supposed to be a curse. It is, however, a relatively simple matter to identify the negative runes and, having isolated them from the mythological matrix, to re-imprint them in their positive forms.



Then Scirus' fate took an even more bizarre twist. Whilst excavating the remains of a shrine to Met, he was possessed by the ghost of its priest, Bel-Napishtim. He is the cause of the occasional "dark gleam" in Scirus' eyes.

Bel-Napishtim is as driven as Scirus. He is determined to bring his cult back to its former glory. He intends to found a new temple, with himself as its priest. To do this, he needs to retrieve an image of his god from another ruin. This will form the nucleus of his temple.

Thus, both Scirus and Bel-Napishtim have a common objective: to obtain the holy image of Met, though for different reasons. While their interests coincide, the priest is content to leave Scirus in control of his body. However, as he gets closer to their destination, he cannot help re-asserting his dominance.

Within the temple, he will soon take complete control. Moreover, he will happily sacrifice a few adventurers to placate Met for his theft.

The Journey

The Route

The caravan leaves Pavis by the New Bridge and follows the road East. After crossing the Scrintha River, it continues East to the Vulture Country cliffs. Watyot leads the expedition up through one of the passes onto the plateau and turns North East into Wahalstorana.

After the road, travel is initially through grass land. However, all too quickly this gives way to arid red soil, barren except for scrubby trees and a few sparse plants.

Organisation

The expedition consists of Watyot Keeneye, eight scouts, Scirus Siteseer, the PCs, 50 zebras for riding and pack, and 30 impalas for meat and milk.

On the move, two scouts drive the beasts, whilst the rest are flung out in a picket. Each rides in easy sight and sound of two others. At frequent intervals, a scout or two ride forward to reconnoitre the route ahead.

If any of the PCs are zebra riders themselves, Watyot cheerfully includes them in the picket. Otherwise, they ride with Scirus slightly ahead of the herd.

Each rider is assigned three zebras, with the toughest going to the scouts. Watyot keeps a strict eye on any PCs not of nomad stock, to ensure they look after their animals properly. On the march, he makes everyone change mounts at least five times a day. When they stop at an oasis, the animals are watered first.

"Take care of the zebras in your troop, before they lose condition. For once they have lost it you may spare them all you will, they will never recover it on the journey."

When the caravan stops for the night, the scouts pitch small travel tents. The PCs pitch their own. Anyone failing their Devise roll makes a hash of it and provides huge amusement for the scouts. The scouts take turns to keep watch in four hour shifts. One PC is also required to guard.

Scirus proves to be a restless sleeper. Sometimes he is heard holding muttered arguments with himself in the dead of night.

"...What if it isn't there? What then? Then we look for one elsewhere. We search until we find one. We will find one!"

Even so, he is not expecting his secret document to be stolen. It should be possible for a PC on night duty to sneak up and take it from his cane while the scout on guard is checking the herd.

The cane is opened by twisting the ferrule and pulling the top off. If the cane is left as it was found, Scirus does not even realise the document has gone. The PC then has the option of copying it and returning the original another night.

Every few days, Scirus calls a halt to investigate some site of interest. Here the PCs earn their pay with much strenuous digging in rock-like earth under the sweltering sun, but little is found.





Encounters

Impala Raiders

One afternoon, the forward scout rides back at speed, constantly checking over his shoulder. Suddenly he veers sharply to the right, ducking almost out of the saddle to avoid an arrow.

He is pursued by two impala riders. Instantly, Watyot rides out to cover his returning scout, waving two more to accompany him. The pigmies nimbly wheel about and ride off.

Cursing, Watyot orders the caravan into a defensive formation. The herd is quickly tethered to prevent stampede. The PCs are warned to stay and guard it, while all the scouts ride out into the picket line.

Nothing happens. Still nothing happens. Half an hour passes.

Abruptly, one of the scouts yells. Five impala folk have materialised out of a hidden gully. The nearest scouts explode into action, dashing to cover their kinsman. Arrows are exchanged at long range, before the enemy ride off again.

From the opposite side, three more riders suddenly probe the line, shoot and veer away before a response can be made.

This forms the pattern of the skirmish. Fortunately, the raiders are only a dozen in number, but the agile impalas have the advantage over the slower zebras. They are content to probe and shoot at long range, wearing their victims down.

Watyot's tactic is to hold them off until dusk. If the light fades, archery will become difficult and the impala riders are likely to give up.

Unless the PCs are skilled in mounted archery, they are mostly onlookers rather than participants in the fight. (Though they can heal injured scouts coming in to change mounts.)

However, two hours after the start of the skirmish, the PCs get a chance to fight back. Three of the enemy find a gap in the picket and ride at the herd. One is obviously the leader. If the PCs have concealed themselves, the pigmies dash forwards and can be attacked at close range before they spot anything amiss and ride off.

Otherwise they exchange volleys for 3 rounds at long range before wheeling away. If their leader is killed, the pygmies are dismayed, break off and ride away for good. Otherwise, the scouts hold the raiders off until dusk, with losses.

Casualties of the encounter are four scouts slain and one zebra lamed. (The raiders wanted to steal not slaughter the animals.) If the PCs shorten the encounter by killing the leader, only two scouts are killed. If they assist with healing magic, casualties are halved in either case.

Whichever outcome, Watyot moves the caravan on when it is clear the raiders have left, even travelling at night if necessary.

The Dust storm

One morning, whilst on the march, the animals begin snorting restlessly and sniffing the wind. Several scouts notice and sniff also. Immediately, Watyot orders everyone to dash to the safety of the nearest shelter, the lee of a large rocky outcrop about 500m away.

The caravan arrives with only a few minutes to spare. The world turns black as winds scream over and about the rocks. Communication is impossible. Choking red dust, torn from the air by the rocks, settles over everyone, sifting into every nook and cranny.

Fortunately, the storm is a little one and blows itself out after only five hours. Almost reluctantly, the caravan comes back to life, emerging from its shroud of dust.

However, danger is far from past. The rocks are home to a nest of eight scorpionmen. When the storm has abated, while the caravan is still in disarray, they scuttle to the attack. They are led by Kikkukukt, an exiled acolyte of Bagog. Only she has a proper weapon and armour, but at close quarters the scouts will be massacred unless the PCs mobilise quickly.

The Oasis

After a week, water is getting low. The last oasis Watyot led the caravan to was dry. However, after a day's diversion, he has located another. The problem is someone else got there first.

This is the Redmane, a morokanth clan whose womenfolk dye their bristly manes scarlet. Their herdmen are branded with a mane-shaped mark.

Their chieftain is Pinchakwe. He leads a clan of about 200 people, with a herd of roughly twice that number. The oasis is well and truly theirs.

Watyot is forced to request access to the water as a favour. This means a diplomatic approach to the chieftain, and the offering of gifts. Fortunately, Scirus brought along suitable items for this very contingency. Watyot tells the PCs to arm up. It is very important to put on a show of strength. Otherwise, the morokanth will try

to extort more out of their visitors. However, Watyot warns that on no account must the PCs draw weapons without his express signal.

Unfortunately, Pinchakwe is not fond of humans and holds city dwellers in contempt. Provided they behave themselves, however, he is not overtly hostile. Instead, he chooses a more subtle way to exercise his resentment. Knowing that city bred humans are uncomfortable around herdmen, he invites the newcomers to a feast. Naturally, the main course is herdman, roasted whole.

Translation of a Fragment of Stone Tablet

...greatly feared for his life, Therefore he commanded his magicians to hide him with a mighty spell from the anger of sacred Met, lest the god find him in the night and pursue him to hell.

And his magicians came to King Khumbaba and said,

"Behold, oh King, each night shall we transform thee into a tiny pebble. For how then shall Met perceive thee with his two eyes that see the living, or his one eye that sees the dead? And each morning thou shalt rise again a whole and living man."

And King Khumbaba said that this seemed good to him. And so was it done. And the fury of holy Met was frustrated for he could find the King neither amongst the living nor amongst the dead.

But King Khumbaba's fourth wife hated him, for ... Makh, daughter of King... and taken against her will. And as the King and his magicians plotted in secret ...

And Makh took the pebble and went to the mouth of the passage to hell. There she cast the pebble ...

Thus when King Khumbaba arose the following morning he was caught between the pit of hell and the wrath of holy Met. Thus remains he forever ...



The zebra riders have no problem with this, but the PCs may. Those not of nomad origin roll against *CON* x 4 to avoid disgracing themselves. Scirus has eaten herdman on his travels before, so is not affected.

If any PC refuses the meat or fails the *CON* roll, Pinchakwe takes offence and more gifts are required to mollify him. Alternatively, if they genuinely upset him he feigns even greater friendship, magnanimously gifting the caravan with ten herdmen. This is a mean trick. Nominally, it is a signal honour and Watyot cannot refuse. However, he is then honour bound to offer a similar number of zebras in return.

Pinchakwe knows that humans cannot ride herdmen and some at least are not keen to eat them. The exchange of ten from his herd will not inconvenience him but the loss of a quarter of the caravan's transport will slow them enormously. The PCs responsible for Pinchakwe's displeasure had better be good walkers!

A Find

The day before the expedition arrives at the temple, a random PC who makes a successful *Scan* notices runes on a flat piece of stone sticking up out of the sand. (If the PCs all fail, have one of the scouts spot it.)

When retrieved, this is seen to be part of a stone tablet covered with intricate scratches, though some of it is clearly damaged. Scirus eagerly asks to examine the find. Hesitantly, he starts to translate,

"Erm, ...very frightened of ... of, ah, of living his ...".

But then that dark gleam comes into his eyes as Bel-Napishtim takes over and reads fluently,

"No, no you stupid dolt, look it says ...".

Both Scirus and Bel-Napishtim are excited by the find for it is a clear sign they are on the right track. Scirus takes the stone, but offers the finder a bonus of 20 silvers for it. He insists on spending time searching the area for anything more, but nothing is found.

Scirus' Last Argument

That night, the PC on guard hears Scirus arguing to himself again, "...Why must they? Because the god must be propitiated! Do you want to take their place? Do you want to be hounded down to hell? Do you? Then accept it. There is no other choice."

Arrival

As the caravan rounds a low hill, about 400m ahead is a jagged promontory of rock, rising above the rocky hillside. Upon the rock can be seen the ruined remains of a very ancient temple to the god Met.

The crueller rites of the temple were kept underground and mysterious as befitted a deity of the nether world. However, frightened by the temple's growing power and intrigue, greedy of its wealth and sickened by the disappearances of his subjects, a local lord decided to quell the cult. He launched a surprise attack with a large band of warriors. He succeeded in killing two of the temple guards and both junior acolytes. The rest fled underground. The lord's men broke the altar and smashed the skull beneath but balked at following the priest into the sacred tunnel. Frustrated, he ordered them to collapse the shrine and use the rubble to block up the stairwell. They completed the incarceration by searching out and clogging the air flues. Even the secret bolt hole was found and sealed.

Within, the survivors soon found there was no way out. However, the priest determined to make amends for his failure to predict the attack. He poisoned his remaining followers, and even the sacred temple hounds. Then he worked enchantments about their corpses, evoking his



deity's power to remain poised between the living and the dead. He condemned their spirits to centuries of watchfulness, waiting to repel any who might dare desecrate their holy fane. The Horn of Terror, whose sound would open the doors to the sacred tunnel, he hid in a secret niche (see 12. Priest's Sleeping Room). Finally he took poison from his own ring, cast the ritual of un-life upon himself and took his place amongst his followers.

Centuries later, the place still has an evil reputation amongst the nomads. Only the hardest shamans actively seek it out. However, their occasional propitiatory sacrifices have gradually brought it back to semi-wakefulness.

Welcome

Scirus/Bel-Napishtim takes the PCs to investigate the shrine, directing them to bring digging tools and climbing gear. Because of the ruggedness of the terrain hereabouts, they have to leave their zebras with the scouts and pick their way cautiously over to the rock. Without the means to fly or climb precipitous surfaces, they can only get to the top via the remains of the original path. At its steepest parts, ancient steps cut from the rock are found. Scirus/Bel-Napishtim follows the PCs up.

When they are almost at the top, an avatar of Galu suddenly peers over the edge of the shrine floor about 2m above their heads. He has a coal-black body and a blood-red head. His eyes glow fiery red, like hot coals. If anyone sees the hound at night, they must roll against *POW* x 3 or flee in fear for 10 rounds.

The hound immediately breathes fire on the PCs. Note that it is probably out of melee reach but also has cover (all but head and forequarters) against missiles from below. However, its breath only reaches 3m, so the lower parts of the PCs will probably remain "raw".

If anyone charges ahead up the steps, the hound instantly withdraws, to re-materialise blocking the entrance to the shrine. Otherwise it continues to breath fire for as long as anyone is in range. If the party flee, it vanishes, re-appearing if they return. If they attack it, it fights to the "death", vanishing completely if "slain". It cannot then manifest until a complete night has passed.

Bel-Napishtim is shocked by the appearance of the sacred hound in broad daylight and stands paralysed on the path during the encounter. Afterwards, however, he becomes delighted, "This is surely a great sign of hope! The image must be within for Galu to manifest so strongly in daylight."

The Shrine

Two pillars of red marble still stand 2m and 1.4m high respectively, either side of the broken remains of a black basalt altar. Another pillar has only the base left and the last has totally gone.

Underneath the altar pieces, the crushed fragments of the black skull, smashed long ago, still remain.

The floor of the shrine was once clearly well paved, though now broken up and uneven. Nevertheless, a strip about 4m long by 1m wide can be made out to the South of the altar which was obviously never paved at all.

Digging in this strip reveals where the rubble from the roof and missing pillars went. It takes about four hours of hot, gruelling, thirsty work for six people to clear it.

Under the rubble are steps leading down to the temple. At the bottom, outside the doorway, the crushed skeleton of a man in archaic bronze armour is found. On his left arm is a broken shield, round and faced in bronze. The device of a hound's head can just about be made out. At his belt are a khopesh and dagger. Near his right hand is a broken, short hewing spear.

The cause of death can be deduced from the arrow head still lodged in his spine through a hole in the back of his armour.

Around the stone lintel of the doorway are carved darkness runes and the same script as on the stone tablet.

Bel-Napishtim translates with almost unholy glee, "Turn and flee before the face of Met. May your limbs tremble uncontrollably. May fear steal your mind. Let all your hopes be dashed. Turn and hide yourself lest sacred Met should come upon you."

A heavy bronze door closes off the doorway. It opens away into the rock, but was sealed shut by a heavy wooden bar on the *outside*, now largely disintegrated. The door is stuck and requires force to open it. (i.e. roll against *STR* x 3). Two people may combine to force the door.

1. Entry Chamber

The doorway leads to a vaulted chamber. To the West is a massive pair of closed doors that lead to the sacred tunnel. They are solid bronze and cannot be opened unless someone sounds the priest's horn (see 12. Priest's Sleeping Room) either here or in the ante-chamber (see 2.). They are intricately wrought with death and darkness runes and symbolic pictures, but are green with age. Examination shows the doors are split into a series of panels. Once again Bel-Napishtim cannot but help express his joy by explaining them out loud.

The dominant centre panel shows Met and Galu driving the naked, terrified souls of the damned down into the fiery pit of hell. As Met sounds his Horn of Terror, his six gatekeepers open their three double gates to admit the gruesome procession.

The panel is bordered by eight more, two above, two on each side and two below.

The first (top left) shows Met and Galu guarding the gate to the underworld. Met drives the vengeful spirits of the dead back into hell by his frightful visage.

The second depicts Met and Galu out hunting the souls of the dead who flee before them. The god is supported by two dog-headed demons, Kamtar and Shingu, who guard the gate to the underworld in his absence.

The third panel celebrates Met's victory over the fire demon, Nusku. Met casts him back into the pit of the underworld from whence he came. Galu laps at the droplets of blood streaming from Nusku's wounds.

The fourth shows Met capturing Yu, a trickster in the form of a birdman. Met seizes him after he has foolishly fallen asleep.

The fifth panel depicts King Khumbaba awakening after having been turned into a pebble. He finds he is trapped between Met on the one side and the fiery hell pit on the other.

The sixth shows the hero Adipu who has just climbed from the pit. He is vigorously clubbing the fingers of his former associates as they too try to climb out.

The seventh shows Met's priest, Bel-Seri, who had the misfortune to fall in love with one of the sacrificial victims. Furious, Met himself casts the girl into the pit. He condemns his recalcitrant priest to stand guard over it to prevent her from ever climbing back out.



The final panel depicts another of Met's priests slaying a sacrificial animal. Blood drenches the altar. Anxious supplicants observe the rite, hoping it will successfully placate the god.

A smaller pair of doors lies open to the East. These are only bronze-faced and are showing signs of decay. Through the opening can be seen an ante-chamber. Within are bones littering the floor.

On either side of the Northern door (but not so close as to be damaged when it is smashed open!) lie the skeletal remains of two men dressed and armed like the one on the steps. These, however, seem relatively intact.

Their armour is serviceable, but the bronze is cruder than that wrought now. Add half again to its encumbrance. The remains of leather pouches at their decayed belts hold 15 and 9 pennies respectively. The coins are of a crude, archaic design not seen for an age. In the richer of them is also a set of knucklebone dice.

Above the doorways are niches holding grotesque earthenware lamps with demonic, canine faces. The tongues form the wicks, and the tops of each niche are smoke blackened. None are within easy reach, and none hold any oil now.

Above each lamp are air flues. Over the lamps, the bottoms of each niche and the floor below is a scattering of dust and rock fragments. This was caused when the flues were blocked from above long ago. Throughout the entire complex, all the lantern niches and flues are in this condition.

2. Ante-Chamber

In the centre of the floor is set a heavy bronze ring. Scattered about it are the skeletons of six large hunting dogs. Their spiked collars are still attached to the ring by hooks on the end of what little remains of their leashes.

Two human skeletons lie behind them. These were the senior acolytes. Their clothes have now virtually disintegrated. However, they still wear hideous, canine leather masks, cracked and brittle with age.

Around their necks are bronze pectorals. In their right hands, they held short leather whips, now fragile with advanced decay. Only the bronze wire wound into the handles and the cruel bronze weights are intact.

What they held in their left hands can just be discerned to have been lit torches. Only the wooden shafts are left. At their waists are sheathed ornate daggers. The hilts are inlaid with lead.

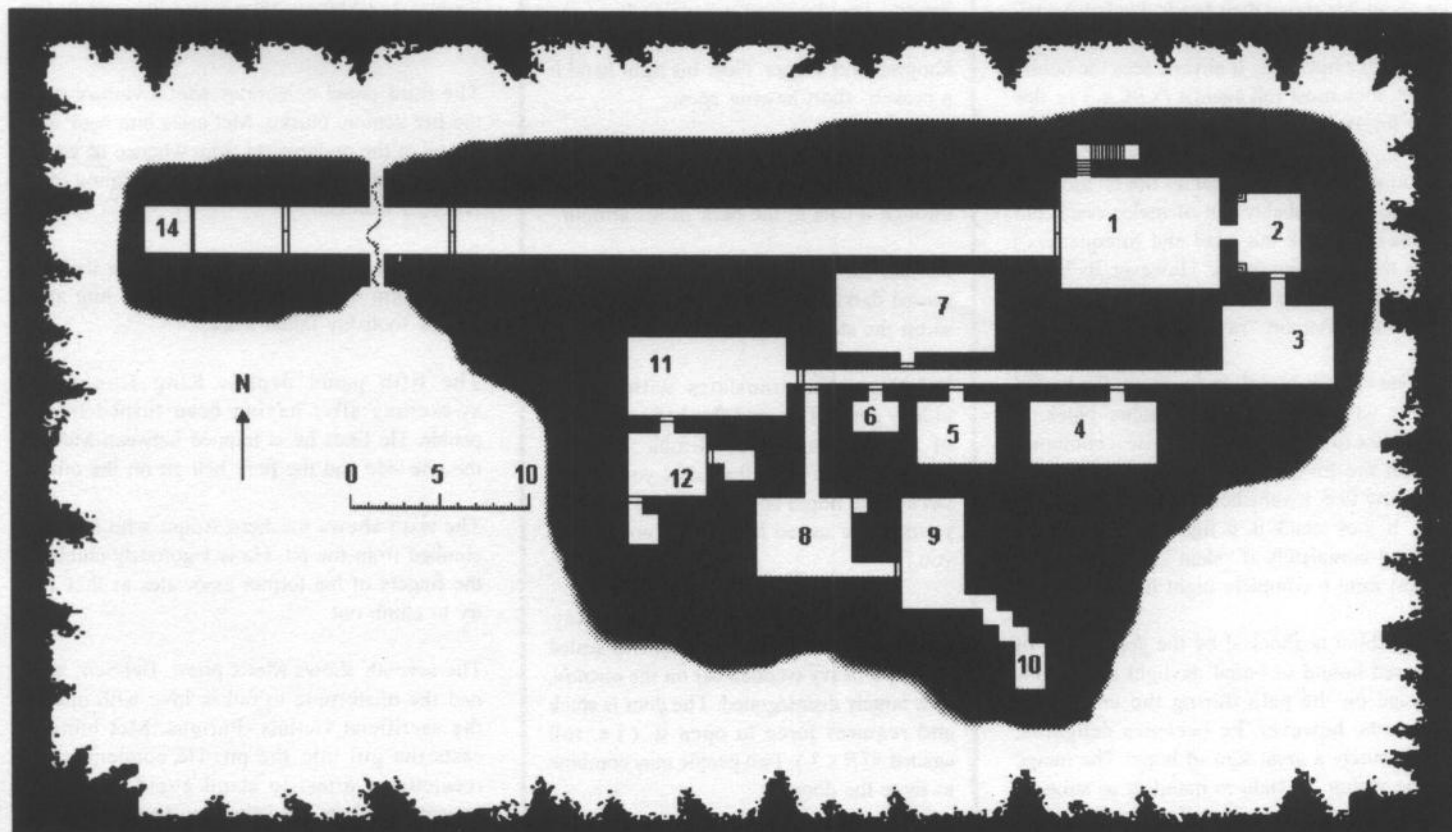
The eyes of the masks are red garnets (worth 30 silvers each). the teeth are ivory (worth only 20 silvers total due to poor condition). The pectorals are inlaid with lead, jet and haemetite (worth 100 silvers each).

Behind the acolytes lies another skeleton. This one was the priest. He was dressed in black leather clothing, fragments of which still remain over his bones. A terrifying black leather mask covers his face. On his left hand is a gold ring, and on his right a lead ring set with a garnet.

Held in his right hand was an ornate hunting spear. At his belt is a stylised hunting knife used to perform sacrifices at the shrine. A scarlet wand is hooked next to it.

The mask is the Mask of Fear, depicting the visage of Met. When underground, or during the hours of night, all viewing it (roll against *POW* x 5 to avoid looking) must attempt to overcome their fear or stand petrified. (Treat as *Demoralise* spell cast by someone with 15 *POW*, using 2MP).

The heavy gold ring has a secret cavity that once contained poison but is now empty. It is worth 100 silvers.





The lead ring is apparently worth 50 silvers. However, it is magical and allows the wearer to "see" in the dark. (Wearer gains senses equivalent to dwarf *Scan* and *Search* at basic percentiles. These can be improved as normal whilst wearing the ring.)

The spear is also magical (*Bladesharp* 2 matrix linked to bound power spirit, *POW* 6). The knife has an iron blade which is magically sharp (+1 damage and amputates limb/head on a critical if appropriate hit location.) The wand was fashioned from human bone, filed down and stained blood-red. This is a Wand of Ignition (*Ignite* matrix linked to bound power spirit, *POW* 15). There are numerous niches with their hideous lamps here, indicating that the chamber could have been well lit.

Another decaying bronze-faced door to the South leads off to the vestry and priest's quarters. It is closed but has sagged on its hinges with age. Through the gap, torchlight just reveals the glint of yellow metal — bronze or gold!

If anyone steps into the ante-chamber, the skeletons animate and attack:

The guards defend the doorway out to the surface, preventing escape. They move to join the melee in the first round if no-one is already within reach.

The right-hand acolyte unleashes the hounds as they spring to their feet. They attack, pursuing into the entry chamber. The acolytes follow the dogs, plying their whips.

The priest draws and uses his wand in the first round. He then returns it to his belt and on the second, joins the melee with his spear, used two-handed. His mask functions automatically throughout.

If anyone does escape to the open air, the skeletons do not pursue unless it is dark. In fact, direct sunlight destroys them.

Note that before the attack, no amount of damage to the skeletons is effective. Splintered bones simply re-form, and missing pieces are replaced by spectral parts.

Warning: Hacking skeletons apart can take time. This melee could prove quite lengthy, especially if the PCs do not use aimed hits or fail to help each other against the dogs.

The vestry door is stuck and requires force to open. When this is done, it breaks, falling flat with an enormous echoing crash.

3. Vestry

A short passage leads from the ante-chamber to the vestry. Another opening in the West wall leads into a long dark passage, also off to the West.

Against the South wall, opposite the ante-chamber passage, is a large, badly decayed but gilded chest. It is closed but, if opened, falls to pieces. Inside are the folded remains of ceremonial vestments. These crumble to dust at the faintest breath of air.

Hanging on a bronze peg directly above the chest is the priest's symbol of authority — a short, vicious whip. This is made from plaited bronze wire, ending in gold weights with bronze spikes. It is worth 200 silvers. It is this which could be seen glinting in the torchlight from the ante-chamber door.

Against the East wall is a stone bench.

Two niches hold plain earthenware lanterns to either side of the chest. Another is set in the West wall and a fourth is directly opposite in the East.

Passage to Living Quarters

A long passage leads the length of the living area. The crumbling remains of five closed, wooden doors pierce it at intervals. Six lantern niches hold plain lanterns.

4. Senior Acolytes' Quarters

The wooden door is brittle with age. The rude stone chamber beyond held little of comfort and most of that has almost powdered away. A ruined cot bed stands in both of the Southern corners. At the foot of each are fragments of what were wooden chests and their contents. Above each chest is a wall niche with a plain earthenware lantern. Only a few wisps remain of the straw mat that covered the centre of the floor. The rest is dust.

In the East wall are two bronze pegs with powdery fragments of garments dropped to the floor beneath.

Sifting through the bits of chest uncovers 14 and 17 pennies, respectively.

5. Junior Acolytes' Quarters

The wooden door here is in a similar condition to that of the senior acolytes' quarters. The room, however, is even more spartan. Instead of chests, wall niches were used to house the few personal effects. These have completely fallen to dust.

There was no mat on the floor, but the remains of two cot beds occupy the Eastern corners. Lantern niches are above each bed. Bronze clothes pegs are on the West wall.

6. Privy

The door here is almost in pieces. Through the gaps a large closet can be seen. If the door is broken open (easy), it is seen to have been the privy.

7. Barracks

The wooden door to this chamber is slightly sturdier and in better condition. By it, on the South wall is a weapon rack, with slots for six sets of weapons (two were spares). Two hewing spears are still in place with bronze-faced shields next to them. These bear the device of the hound's head painted in red.

Opposite the door is a wooden table with four stools tucked beneath. A few earthenware bowls and jugs are scattered about it. Their contents have long since evaporated/decayed.

Against the North wall are the remains of four bunk beds. Wall niches above each held personal belongings which have virtually decayed away.

Also by each bed is a bronze peg. Hanging on one is a leather belt, brittle with age, still holding a khopesh and dagger. Another belt holding similar weapons has broken and dropped to the floor beneath its peg.

Four more pegs are set in the South wall. Two still hold suits of archaic armour. Armour, shields and weapons are clearly similar to those found with the skeleton at the entry to the temple. There are five lantern niches still holding plain, earthenware lanterns.

8. Kitchen

The wooden door leads into a side passage off to the South, ending in a kitchen area. Another opening in the East wall reveals an Eastern passage ending in a second wooden door. Against the West and North walls is a wooden work bench. A large work table stands against the South wall. Two wooden stools are tucked underneath. Bronze kitchen tools hang on pegs above it.

In an alcove in the North-East corner is a stove, with an oven behind it. The fuel has burned to ashes. A one foot square flue, now clogged from above, opens directly above the stove. There are signs of smoke blackening throughout this room.



Bronze and earthenware vessels stand on wooden shelves lining the walls. Some of the sealed earthenware jars still contain salt and the remains of spices and dried herbs. One shelf has collapsed, littering the floor with potsherds. Six lantern niches hold plain lanterns.

9. Store Room

This is still half-full of sacks of grain, amphorae of wine and oil and tubs of what was salted meat. Most of the sacking has disintegrated and, with the exception of some of the contents of the sealed amphorae, most of the food stuff is only dry dust. A keg of salt is still recognisable.

Bronze meat hooks, heavily corroded, hang from a bar on two supports. Skeletons of meat joints hang or crumble beneath.

A narrow, rough hewn passage curves away from the South-Eastern corner of the room.

10. Well

The passage leads to a tiny chamber in which is a well about 15m deep. It is now completely dry.

11. Priest's Reception Room

The wooden door leads into what were luxurious quarters but which have mostly fallen to dust. Highly ornamental mosaics cover much of the walls with geometric patterns and darkness and death runes in black and scarlet.

An ornately carved and inlaid ebony table, brittle with age, stands West of the centre of the room. A matching chair and five stools are positioned about it.

A smaller, less elaborate table stands against the North wall. It is in poor condition but still supports a platter with six drinking vessels and a ewer, all of black metal. Investigation shows these are heavily tarnished silver, worth a total of 100 silvers.

A wooden writing desk with matching chair has collapsed in the South-East corner. Amongst the ruins are writing materials, mostly decayed away. Rummaging through the shards of wood and dust turns up tarnished silver writing implements worth a total of 10 silvers. Other objects, such as an ink stone, are still intact but pretty valueless.

The two rugs on the floor are reduced to scraps of fibre and dust. There are five cressets attached to the walls, each holding a bronze lantern. The oil in each is now a pitchy sludge.

A wooden door leads to another room.

12. Priest's Sleeping Room

Again, this was once luxurious but is now largely fallen to decay. The walls were painted with friezes, though most have faded somewhat and are difficult to make out.

An ornately carved wooden bed stands in the South-Eastern corner. Its straw mattress and bed linen have virtually disintegrated. A small wooden table, also ornately carved, stands next to it. Upon this is a bronze lamp and a small golden ewer. The priest's personal drinking goblet stands next to it. This also glints of gold. The goblet is fashioned from the top half of a human skull, stained black, and mounted in gold. It is worth 200 silvers, though is a somewhat gruesome drinking cup! The ewer is solid gold and is worth the same. It is still stained inside from the fine wine it once contained.

A closed, bronze-bound, wooden chest stands in the North-Eastern corner. Its lock has welded shut with age. However, the wood is so brittle it can be easily broken open. When this is done, the whole room is flooded with magical darkness and something tries to bite the PC nearest the chest.

The source of darkness is an enchanted jet bead. The attacker is the skeleton of a small serpent. The serpent's fangs are stained black, having originally been dipped in poison, but this has completely denatured. The serpent is now virtually harmless though this may not be obvious to the players! You can have fun splitting them up whilst the darkness lasts and seeing if you can get them to attack each other.

In the chest is the priest's dinner service.

- A matched pair of small golden jugs, for vinegar and oil, worth 100 silvers each.
- A golden salt-cellar worth 80 silvers.
- A golden platter worth 200 silvers.
- A golden bowl worth 150 silvers.
- A golden-handled knife with bronze blade worth 40 silvers.

The rug on the floor is little more than a scattering of dust and fibres. There are four bronze cressets with lanterns positioned about the room.

A small wooden door in the East wall opens into a closet with a privy. Another in the South wall opens into a closet set with bronze clothes pegs and wooden shelves. These once held rich garments, but the only recognisable remains are the occasional gold thread amongst the dust.

In the South wall of the clothes closet is a secret exit. A block of stone can be swung out to reveal a narrow passage that led to the surface. It is totally blocked after about 10m. A small niche by the door holds the priest's sacred horn.

This is the Horn of Terror. If blown whilst underground, or during the hours of night, all hearing it (including the sounder himself, unless protected by the proper ritual) must overcome their fear or flee in panic (roll against *POW* x 3 or flee directly away from the horn for 1r). Note that Bel-Napishtim, as a priest of Met, is already protected.

13. Sacred Tunnel

When the Horn is found, Bel-Napishtim takes it back to the bronze doors that lead into the sacred passage. When everyone is ready, he sounds it. The doors roll open with a great boom, echoed twice more from down the tunnel. Bel-Napishtim knows the likely affect of the Horn on the PCs, but does not warn them, letting them run for a round. Instead, he makes careful note of those unaffected for future reference.

The tunnel is the spiritual heart of the temple. It is 3m wide, by 3m high, by 70m long.

Astute players may realise it should actually project from the side of the promontory they found the temple within. This is a clue that it is not entirely of the physical world.

The tunnel has three pairs of massive, bronze double doors which reach from floor to ceiling. These are at the start, the centre and the end, and are now wide open. The floor and walls are fairly smooth. It slopes downwards with a gradient of about 30 degrees, terminating in the sacred pit.

Each pair of doors opens away from the start of the tunnel. Standing in an alcove behind each one (and therefore completely hidden from view when it is wide open) is the doorkeeper.

These six sacred beings perform the function of opening and closing the doors at the correct times. They also hold the doors shut against anyone inappropriately trying to enter the tunnel from the world of the living, and defend them from anyone trying to leave the world of the dead.

Anyone in the tunnel feels increasingly uneasy, sensing an urge to flee blindly down it. No natural animals willingly enter at all.



Khumbaba and Yu

A single figure waits in front of the left-most of the double doors, half-way along the passage. This is Khumbaba, one of the middle doorkeepers. The other is Yu who is concealed within his alcove.

Khumbaba appears as a middle-aged man regally dressed in an ornately embroidered ankle-length robe and tiered head-dress. His robe is girded at the waist by a broad belt of linked gold plaques. Matching gold arm bands adorn his limbs. His chest-length beard is cut square, elaborately curled and woven with gold wire. His feet are unshod. In his right hand he holds a golden-hilted longsword. As the PCs approach, he steps forward and angrily gestures back down the tunnel with it.

In good light, Khumbaba is seen to be a flickering, insubstantial figure. His step is completely silent.

If the PCs attack him from a distance with spells or missiles, he closes with long, gliding strides and attacks with his sword. If they approach, he waits for them about 3m from the doors ready to attack as they come into reach.

Once in melee, it is found that Khumbaba does not fight in any ordinary fashion. He makes no attempt to dodge or parry, nor to prevent himself from being surrounded. His attacks are blindingly fast. His sword bites deep, seeming to pass through shield, armour and flesh as though they were insubstantial. Similarly, non-magical weapons pass through his form without effect.

Khumbaba is bound into a pebble that lies at the bottom of his alcove. If this is found and crushed, he is banished forever.

When visible, Yu appears as a man naked to the waist but with the iridescent tail feathers and crest of a beautiful bird. He fights with a pair of curved daggers, one in each hand. He has a dart quiver over his left shoulder and a pouch at his waist.

Before the PCs attack Khumbaba, Yu turns himself invisible with his *Conceal* spell, while still inside his alcove. He then casts *Shimmer 4* on himself. If Khumbaba has rushed forward to close with the intruders, Yu hurls darts into the melee, knowing they will pass harmlessly through his ally.

If Khumbaba waited for the PCs to come to him, Yu sneaks behind the least armoured enemy within reach and stabs him in the back with both

daggers. This attack renders him visible for the whole melee round. Unless attacked (or otherwise constrained) before he can do so, Yu leaps away to become invisible again.

Kamtar and Shingu

Two identical demonic figures await intruders at the last pair of double doors. These are Kamtar and Shingu the outermost doorkeepers. They appear as 2 1/2m tall, muscular, coal-black men with blood-red canine heads. Their eyes burn like hot coals. In the backs of their heads is another single eye that glows similarly. Smoke arises from their nostrils and mouths.

They are naked but armed with short hewing spears used two-handed.

As the PCs approach, Kamtar and Shingu snarl and advance to meet them. When within 3m both suddenly exhale a blast of fire at their opponents and spring to the attack. In melee they use their spears and follow up by biting. They also breathe at the start of each round.

Both demons take care not to let anyone get behind them, but even if this should happen, they are not taken unawares because of their third eyes.

Once the gatekeepers are destroyed, it is possible to open the doors behind them and so eventually escape.

Remember that if a complete night has passed since the intruders fought Galu, he is waiting to ambush them as they open the outermost tunnel doors. He tries to drive them back down into the pit, assisted by any manifestations from Met's statuette. (See Welcome for his stats.)

Betrayal

Now at last back in the entry chamber, Bel-Napishtim can safely dispose of the PCs. He casually manoeuvres round until the PCs are between himself and the tunnel. Brandishing the image of Met in triumph, he sounds the Horn of Terror.

The statuette's power increases that of the Horn. The resistance roll is reduced to *POW* x 1.

The murderous priest casts *Fear* on any PC who resists the Horn. Then he gives chase to the PCs fleeing back down the tunnel, crying out,

"Accept this my sacrifice oh holy Met, and forgive my desecration. Through me your power shall rule again!"

However, before he can blow the Horn a second time, causing the PCs to flee the rest of the distance into the pit, he stumbles, dropping it.

Confronted with inevitable murder, Scirus has at last found his conscience and rebelled against Bel-Napishtim. With the priest distracted, he temporarily takes back control of his body. He staggers towards the pit, shaking with strain as Bel-Napishtim fights for control, "No, no I w-w-won't help you murder. I, I won't. No. NO!"

Whimpering with fear, still clutching the image of Met, he casts himself over the edge. (Note: You have a chance to balance things here. If you regard the Horn as too powerful, have Scirus take it to hell rather than drop it.)

Once the statuette is gone, the power of the temple is finished. No more manifestations of Met or Galu occur there again.

Conclusion

Watyot is horrified by his patron's death, especially if the PCs tell him the truth. However, he has no choice but to believe them. Fortunately, he negotiated to be paid three-quarters of his fee in advance, so he does not lose too much. As much to maintain his reputation as anything, he agrees to guide the PCs back home without further pay.

You can have the PCs return to Pavis, or go on to further adventures across the Wastes, perhaps exploring as far as the Tunnelled Hills.

If they return to Pavis and find Eris, he too is shocked by their account. He wanted to bring Scirus down but did not wish him dead. However, if the PCs give him the document from Scirus' cane (dropped by Bel-Napishtim in the Entry Chamber), he keeps his bargain.

The PCs have little chance of getting the missing half of their fee, but the treasures they collected should be ample recompense.

Meanwhile, they desecrated a temple of Met and evaded his holy wrath. If you wish to give them a hard time, they might inadvertently pass by another temple someday. Perhaps Met and Galu might come for them one night ...



Scirus Siteseer

Statistics				Hit locations	Melee / Missile	AP/HP
STR:	13	Move:	3	Right Leg	01-04 / 01-03	0/5
CON:	13	HP:	13	Left Leg	05-08 / 04-06	0/5
SIZ:	13	FP:	26	Abdomen	09-11 / 07-10	0/5
INT:	17	MP:	14+6	Chest	12 / 11-15	0/6
POW:	14	DEXSR:	4	Right Arm	13-15 / 16-17	0/4
DEX:	9			Left Arm	16-18 / 18-19	0/4
				Head	19-20 / 20	0/5

Skills: Ancient Lost Cult Lore 92%, Dodge 30%, Evaluate 56%, Fast Talk 47%, First Aid 40%, Gloranthan Lore 61%, Orate 78%, Read/Write Sartarite 93%, Ride 42%, Scan 33%, Scan for Ancient Ruins 75%, Speak Esrolian 55%, Tradetalk 40%, Pavic 90%, Praxian 65%, Sartarite 90%

Weapon	SR	Att%	Par%	Damage	Pts
Cane	8	50+10*	50	1d6+1d4+2*	5

Spirit Magic: Befuddle(2), Countermagic(3), Detect Enemies(1), Detect Gold(1), Detect Magic(1), Detect Silver(1), Farsee(2), Heal(2), Mindspeech(2)

Divine Magic: (1 use) Heal Wound(1), Knowledge(2), Translate(1)

*Scirus has an obsidian ring (right hand) with a Bludgeon (2) matrix, found on one of his previous expeditions (also has a 6 MP matrix in a bronze ring on left hand).

Watyot Keeneye (Desert Tracker and Zebra Rider)

Statistics				Hit Locations	Melee / Missile	AP/HP
STR:	15	Move:	3	Right Leg	01-04 / 01-03	2/5
CON:	15	HP:	13	Left Leg	05-08 / 04-06	2/5
SIZ:	11	FP:	30	Abdomen	09-11 / 07-10	2/5
INT:	14	MP:	14	Chest	12 / 11-15	2/6
POW:	14	DEX SR:	2	Right Arm	13-15 / 16-17	2/4
DEX:	10			Left Arm	16-18 / 18-19	2/4
				Head	19-20 / 20	2/5

Skills: Animal Lore 55%, Dodge 60%, Fast Talk 47%, First Aid 35%, Hide 50%, Listen 55%, Nomad Lore 60%, Ride 80%, Scan 60%, Search 45%, Sneak 60%, Speak Pavic 85%, Speak Praxian 60%, Tell Tall Stories 80%, Track 55%

Weapon	SR	Att%	Par%	Damage	Pts
1H S.Spear	7	55	40	1d8+1+1d4	2/10
Round Shield	8	30	50	1d6+1d4	12
Broadsword	7	60	30	1d8+1+1d4	10
Self Bow	2/7	60	-	1d6+1	5

Spirit Magic: Bladesharp(2), Fanaticism(1), Heal(1), Peaceful Cut(1), Speedart(1), Mobility(4), Multimissile(2), Vigour(2),

Zebra Rider

Statistics				Hit Locations	Melee / Missile	AP/HP
STR:	13	Move:	3	Right Leg	01-04 / 01-03	2/5
CON:	14	HP:	13	Left Leg	05-08 / 04-06	2/5
SIZ:	12	FP:	27	Abdomen	09-11 / 07-10	2/5
INT:	10	MP:	11	Chest	12 / 11-15	2/6
POW:	11	DEX SR:	2	Right Arm	13-15 / 16-17	2/4
DEX:	10			Left Arm	16-18 / 18-19	2/4
				Head	19-20 / 20	2/5

Skills: Animal Lore 40%, Dodge 60%, First Aid 35%, Hide 45%, Listen 55%, Ride 80%, Scan 60%, Search 35%, Sneak 55%, Pavic 85%, Praxian 60%, Track 55%

Weapon	SR	Att%	Par%	Damage	Pts
1H S.Spear	7	55	40	1d8+1+1d4	2/10
Round Shield	8	30	50	1d6+1d4	12
Broadsword	7	60	30	1d8+1+1d4	10
Self Bow	2/7	60	-	1d6+1	5

Spirit Magic: Bladesharp(2), Fanaticism(1), Heal(1), Peaceful Cut(1), Speedart(1), Mobility(4), Multimissile(2)

Zebra

Statistics			Hit Locations		Melee / Missile	AP/HP
STR	28	Move:	10	Right Hind Leg	01-02 / 01-02	2/6
CON	11	HP	20	Left Hind Leg	03-04 / 03-04	2/6
SIZ	28	FP	39	Hind Quarters	05-07 / 05-09	2/10
INT	4			Fore Quarters	08-10 / 10-14	2/10
POW	11			Right Front Leg	11-13 / 15-16	2/6
DEX	13			Left Front Leg	14-16 / 17-18	2/6
				Head	17-20 / 19-20	2/8

Skills: Dodge 40%, Smell intruder 29%,

Weapon	SR	Att%	Damage
Bite	6	47	1d8
kick	6	32	1d6+3d6
Rear & Plunge	6	17	2d6+3d6
Trample	6	75	6d6 vs prone target

Pigmy Leader

Statistics				Hit Location	Melee / Missile	AP/HP
STR:	9	Move:	3	Right Leg	01-04 / 01-03	1/4
CON:	13	HP:	11	Left Leg	05-08 / 04-06	1/4
SIZ:	8	FP:	22	Abdomen	09-11 / 07-10	1/4
INT:	13	MP:	13	Chest	12	11-15 / 1/5
POW:	13	DEX SR:	2	Right Arm	13-15 / 16-17	1/3
DEX:	16			Left Arm	16-18 / 18-19	1/3
				Head	19-20 / 20	1/4

Skills: Animal Lore 45% (Llama Lore 65%), Desert Lore 75%, Dodge 60%, Hide 60%, Napoleon Complex (or hate anybody over SIZ 8) 85%, Read Sand Omens 45%, Scan 65%, Sneak 55%, Speak Praxian 75%, Track 60%,

Weapon	SR	Att%	Par%	Damage	Pts
Shortsword	7	60	50	1d6	10
Comp Bow	2/7	75	-	1d8+1	-

Spirit Magic: Bladesharp(2), Heal(1), Speedart(1), Mobility(4), Multimissile(2)

Pigmy

Statistics			Hit Location	Melee / Missile	AP/HP	
STR:	9	Move:	3	Right Leg	01-04 / 01-03	0/4
CON:	12	HP:	10	Left Leg	05-08 / 04-06	0/4
SIZ:	8	FP:	21	Abdomen	09-11 / 07-10	0/4
INT:	11	MP:	12	Chest	12 / 11-15	0/5
POW:	12	DEX SR:	2	Right Arm	13-15 / 16-17	0/3
DEX:	16			Left Arm	16-18 / 18-19	0/3
				Head	19-20 / 20	0/4

Skills: Dodge 50%, Hide 45%, Scan 40%, Sneak 40%, Speak Praxian 55%.

Weapon	SR	Att%	Par%	Damage	Pts
Shortsword	7	50	40	1d6	10
Comp Bow	2/7	65	-	1d8+1	-

Spirit Magic: Heal(1), Speedart(1), Mobility(2)

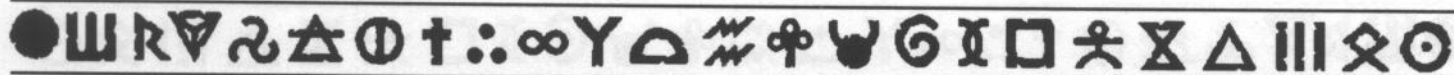
Impala

Statistics			Hit Location		Melee/Missile	AP/HP
STR:	16	Move:	13	Right Hind Leg	01-02 / 01-02	0/4
CON:	11	HP:	14	Right Hind Leg	01-02 / 01-02	0/4
SIZ:	16	FP:	27	Left Hind Leg	03-04 / 03-04	0/4
INT:	4	MP:	11	Hind Quarters	05-07 / 05-09	0/6
POW:	11	DEX SR:	3	Fore Quarters	08-10 / 10-14	0/6
DEX:	13			Right Front Leg	11-13 / 15-16	0/4
				Left Front Leg	14-16 / 17-18	0/4
				Head	17-20 / 19-20	0/5

Skills: Dodge 50%

Weapon	SR	Att%	Par%	Dmg	Pts
Butt	7	40	-	1d8+1d4 -	
Kick*	7	40	-	1d4+1d4 -	

*Can kick while running away.



Kikkukukt

Statistics			Hit Location	Melee / Missile	AP/HP	
STR:	19	Move:	3	Right Hind Leg	01 / 01	3/3
CON:	12	HP:	15	Right Center Leg	02 / 02	3/3
SIZ:	18	FP:	31	Right Front Leg	03-04 / 03	3/3
INT:	13/7	H1 MP:	7	Left Hind Leg	05 / 04	3/3
POW:	11/7	H2 MP:	11	Left Center Leg	06 / 05	3/3
DEX:	16	DEX SR:	2	Left Front Leg	07-08 / 06	3/3
				Head 1	09-10 / 07	7/5
				Thorax	11-12 / 08-10	3/5
				Chest	13-14 / 11-15	7/6
				Right Arm	15-16 / 16-17	7/4
				Left Arm	17-18 / 18-19	7/4
				Head 2	19-20 / 20	7/5

Skills: Chaos Lore 25%, Dodge 15%, Hide 70%, Scan 65%, Scorpion Man Lore 35%, Sneak 70%, Speak Bagogi 55%, Speak Praxian 30%.

Weapon	SR	Att%	Par%	Damage	Pts
Bstrd Sword	5	75	60	1d10+1d6	12
Bite	6	50	-	1d3+1d6	-
Spit Venom	2/7	400	-	-	.*
(Jabber)	4	60	50	1d10+1d6	8)

*Venom is potency 12 & affects after 3r. Resist roll allowed for 1/2 damage.

Spirit Magic (Head 1/2): Dispel Magic(2), Heal(2), Protection(2), Ironhand(2)
Divine Magic (Head 1): Heal Wound(1), Jabbers(1)

Has bezaunted armour covering his torso, arms and both heads (hoods), that fit a size 14 human.

***Chaos Feature:** Extra head (1) replaces sting. Heads function independently with separate INT/POW, casting spells etc. simultaneously. Head 2 stats are before /. Mind affecting spells must overcome both heads (use same resist roll) to take effect. Similarly, destroying one does not incapacitate Kikkukukt. Head 2 bites, injecting venom. Alternatively, it can spit poison up to 5m. This is harmless unless it strikes eyes or an open wound, when treat as injected (eye hit also blinds for 12r). This requires a special hit (80%) to the right location. Kikkukukt normally does aimed shots (SR 10, 40%) unless opponent is injured in many places.

Note: Acolytes are normally accompanied by a giant scorpion as an ally, but Kikkukukt's was killed recently so she ate it. Of course, if the PCs are likely to have an easy time of it then throw in a giant scorpion.

Scorpionman

Statistics			Hit Location	Melee / Missile	AP/HP	
STR:	19	Move:	3	Right Hind Leg	01 / 01	3/3
CON:	11	HP:	15	Right Center Leg	02 / 02	3/3
SIZ:	19	FP:	30	Right Front Leg	03-04 / 03	3/3
INT:	7	MP:	7	Left Hind Leg	05 / 04	3/3
POW:	7	DEX SR:	3	Left Center Leg	06 / 05	3/3
DEX:	14			Left Front Leg	07-08 / 06	3/3
				Tail	09-10 / 7	3/5
				Thorax1	1-12 / 08-10	3/5
				Chest	13-14 / 11-15	3/6
				Right Arm	15-16 / 16-17	3/4
				Left Arm	17-18 / 18-19	3/4
				Head	19-20 / 20	3/5

Skills: Dodge 05%, Hide 65%, Scan 55%, Sneak 55%, Speak Bagogi 35%,

Weapon	SR	Att%	Par%	Damage	Pts
Club	6 5	0	40	1d10+1d6	10
Sting*	9	50	-	1d6+1d6	-
Throw Rock	3/9	40	-	1d3+1d3	-

*Sting normally occurs 3SR after club. Venom is potency 11 & affects after 3r. Resist roll allowed for 1/2 damage.

Chaotic Features:

Scorpionman 1: Very long legs; Move 5, -2 from melee loc roll (scores <1 hit nearest leg)
 Scorpionman 2: venom heals; i.e. instead of damaging, scorpionman only stings self/allies
 Scorpionman 3-7: None

Avatar of Galu

Statistics			Hit Location	Melee / Missile	AP/HP	
STR:	16	Move:	3	Right Hind Leg	01-02 / 01-02	4/4
CON:	18	HP:	15	Left Hind Leg	03-04 / 03-04	4/4
SIZ:	12	FP:	-	Hind Quarters	05-07 / 05-09	4/6
INT:	18	MP:	30	Fore Quarters	08-10 / 10-14	4/6
POW:	30	DEX SR:	1	Left Front Leg	14-16 / 17-18	4/4
DEX:	20			Right Front Leg	11-13 / 15-16	4/4
				Head 1	7-20 / 19-20	4/5

Skills: Dodge 65%

Weapon	SR	Att%	Par%	Damage	Pts
Bite onslaught	6	70	-	1d10+1d4	-
Fire Breath	1	90	-	5d6	-

Fire Breath: This affects everyone within 3m. All locations in range are affected unless behind cover. Damage cannot be dodged or parried. Armour and covering shield protects. For this purpose only, if no armour worn, clothing counts as 1AP. To distribute damage: Divide damage by 20. For each location, multiply fraction by number of 1d20 scores given location on missile table. Round to nearest whole number and apply as damage.

Example: Damage rolled is 18. $18/20 = 0.9$. Human L. Leg is hit on 04-06, i.e. has 3 1d20 scores. $3 \times 0.9 = 2.7 = 3$.

Guard

Statistics				Hit Locations	Melee / Missile	AP/HP
STR:	13	Move:	3	Right Leg	01-04 / 01-03	6/-
CON:	-	HP:	-	Left Leg	05-08 / 04-06	6/-
SIZ:	13	FP:	-	Abdomen	09-11 / 07-10	6/-
INT:	-	MP:	10	Chest	12 / 11-15	6/-
POW:	-	DEX SR:	3	Right Arm	13-15 / 16-17	6/-
DEX:	10			Left Arm	16-18 / 18-19	6/-
				Head	19-20 / 20	6/-

Any damage to a location destroys it. Remnants fight on unless head or chest is hit. Abdomen hit destroys legs.

Skills: Dodge 05%

Weapon	SR	Att%	Par%	Dmg	Pts
Spear	7	50	30	1d8+1+1d4	10
Khopesh	7	50	20	1d8+2+1d4	10
Shield	8	10	50	1d6+1d4	12

Thrusting weapons only damage on an impale or better.

Dog

Statistics			Hit Location	Melee / Missile	AP/HP	
STR:	5	Move:	7	Right Hind Leg	01-02 / 01-02	0/-
CON:	-	HP:	-	Left Hind Leg	03-04 / 03-04	0/-
SIZ:	4	FP:	-	Hind Quarters	05-07 / 05-09	0/-
INT:	-	MP:	10	Fore Quarters	08-10 / 10-14	0/-
POW:	-	DEX SR:	3	Right Front Leg	11-13 / 15-16	0/-
DEX:	13			Left Front Leg	14-16 / 17-18	0/-
				Head	17-20 / 19-20	0/-

Skills: Dodge 65%*

Weapon	SR	Att%	Par%	Damage	Pts
Bite**	9	65	-	1d4	-

* Dog cannot dodge if holding.

**After successful bite, dog holds, doing auto 1d3 on SR 9 to the same location until destroyed. Damage chews through armour, eventually destroying it in that location. Each dog attached reduces move by 1 and increases SR by 1.



Senior Acolyte

Statistics			Hit Location	Melee / Missile	AP/HP
STR: 2	Move: 3		Right Leg	01-04 / 01-03	0/-
CON: -	HP: -		Left Leg	05-08 / 04-06	0/-
SIZ: 3	FP: -		Abdomen	09-11 / 07-10	0/-
INT: -	MP: 5		Chest	12 / 11-15	0/-
POW: -	DEX SR: 3		Right Arm	13-15 / 16-17	0/-
DEX: 10			Left Arm	16-18 / 18-19	0/-
			Head	19-20 / 20	0/-

Skills: Dodge 20%

Weapon	SR	Att%	Par%	Damage	Pts
Short Whip*	3	50	10	1d4+1+1d4	6
Torch	8	10	50	1d6+1d4	5

*Special whip hit immobilises location for 1r.

Priest

Statistics			Hit Location	Melee / Missile	AP/HP
STR: 12	Move: 3		Right Leg	01-04 / 01-03	0/-
CON: -	HP: -		Left Leg	05-08 / 04-06	0/-
SIZ: 13	FP: -		Abdomen	09-11 / 07-10	0/-
INT: -	MP: 20		Chest	12 / 11-15	0/-
POW: -	DEX SR: 3		Right Arm	13-15 / 16-17	0/-
DEX: 10			Left Arm	16-18 / 18-19	0/-
			Head	19-20 / 20	0/-

Skills: Dodge 20%

Weapon	SR	Att%	Par%	Damage	Pts
2-H Spear	7	50	50	1d8+1+1d4	10
Knife*	8	50	10	1d3+2+1d4	6

*Critical knife hit amputates limb/head if appropriate location.

Serpent

Statistics			Hit Location	Melee / Missile	AP/HP
STR: 2	Move: 3		Body	01-20 / 01-20	0/-
CON: -	HP: -				
SIZ: 1	FP: -				
INT: -	MP: 10				
POW: -	DEX SR: 2				
DEX: 18					

Skills: Dodge 90%

Weapon	SR	Att%	Par%	Damage	Pts
Bite	8	90	-	1d2	-

Thrusting weapons only damage on an impale or better. Any damage to serpent destroys it. Note, however, it is very small i.e. -30% to hit.

Adipu

Statistics			Hit Location	Melee / Missile	AP/HP
STR: 21	Move: 3		Right Leg	01-04 / 01-03	8/6
CON: 16	HP: 17		Left Leg	05-08 / 04-06	8/6
SIZ: 17	FP: -		Abdomen	09-11 / 07-10	8/6
INT: 15	MP: 30		Chest	12 / 11-15	8/8
POW: 30	DEX SR: 3		Right Arm	13-15 / 16-17	8/5
DEX: 13			Left Arm	16-18 / 18-19	8/5
			Head	19-20 / 20	8/6

Skills: Dodge 40%

Weapon	SR	Att%	Par%	Damage	Pts
2-H Club	6	75	75	1d10+2+1d6	10

Bel-Seri

Statistics			Hit Location	Melee / Missile	AP/HP
STR: 12	Move: 3		Right Leg	01-04 / 01-03	1/5
CON: 15	HP: 15		Left Leg	05-08 / 04-06	1/5
SIZ: 14	FP: -		Abdomen	09-11 / 07-10	1/5
INT: 17	MP: 30		Chest	12 / 11-15	1/6
POW: 30	DEX SR: 3		Right Arm	13-15 / 16-17	1/4
DEX: 10			Left Arm	16-18 / 18-19	1/4
			Head	19-20 / 20	1/5

Skills: Dodge 20%

Weapon	SR	Att%	Par%	Dmg	Pts
2-H Spear	7	50	50	1d8+1+1d4	10

Spirit Magic: Bladesharp(4), Darkwall(2), Demoralise(2), Dispel Magic(2), Protection(4) Divine Magic: Fear(1), Darkness(2), Soul Sight(1)

Khumbaba

Statistics			Hit Location	Melee / Missile	AP/HP
STR: -	Move: 30		Body	01-20 / 01-20	0/18
CON: 18	HP: 18				
SIZ: -	FP: -				
INT: 15	MP: 30				
POW: -	DEX SR: -				
DEX: -					

Weapon	SR	Att%	Damage	Pts
Sword-touch	1	See below	1d6	-

Attack is by overcoming target's CON with MP. Damage goes to missile location. Armour and magic protection do not help, but spells like Spirit Screen lessen chance of being "hit". Only magic damage affects (c.f. Wraith). Immune to emotional spells like Befuddle.

Yu

Statistics			Hit Location	Melee / Missile	AP/HP
STR: 12	Move: 3		Right Leg	01-04 / 01-03	0/4
CON: 13	HP: 12		Left Leg	05-08 / 04-06	0/4
SIZ: 10	FP: -		Abdomen	09-11 / 07-10	0/4
INT: 16	MP: 30		Chest	12 / 11-15	0/5
POW: 30	DEX SR: 2		Right Arm	13-15 / 16-17	0/3
DEX: 18			Left Arm	16-18 / 18-19	0/3
			Head	19-20 / 20	0/4

Skills: Dodge 90%, Sneak 90%

Weapon	SR	Att%	Par%	Dmg	Pts
R-H Dagger	7	50	50	1d4+2	6
L-H Dagger	10	50	50	1d4+2	6
Dart	2/7	50	-	1d6	-

Spirit Magic: Shimmer(4)

Divine Magic: Conceal(3)

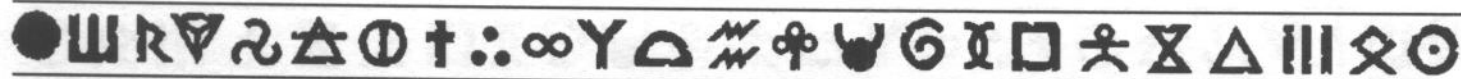
Kamtar/Shingu

Statistics			Hit Location	Melee / Missile	AP/HP
STR: 18	Move: 3		Right Leg	01-04 / 01-03	4/7
CON: 18	HP: 19		Left Leg	05-08 / 04-06	4/7
SIZ: 20	FP: -		Abdomen	09-11 / 07-10	4/7
INT: 16	MP: 30		Chest	12 / 11-15	4/9
POW: 30	DEX SR: 1		Right Arm	13-15 / 16-17	4/6
DEX: 20			Left Arm	16-18 / 18-19	4/6
			Head	19-20 / 20	4/7

Skills: Dodge 65%

Weapon	SR	Att%	Par%	Dmg	Pts
2-H Spear	3	75	75	1d8+1+1d6	10
Bite	6	75	-	1d6+1d6	-
Fire Breath*	1	90	-	4d6	-

*See Avatar of Galu



HOLIDAY GLORANTHA: MOONBROTH

By Nick Brooke and Malcolm Serabian

HISTORY

Moonbroth, also known as Windfeather Oasis or the Devil's Soup-Bowl, is a Praxian oasis on the Pavis Road, situated at the edge of the chaparral of the Long Dry. Famed for its geysers and hot springs, as well as the mysterious Oracle, Moonbroth Oasis is now the religious centre of Lunar Prax.

Everybody knows that the oracle of Moonbroth predicted the coming of the Red Moon, whispering about the "Moon to Come". When the Lunar Army advanced into Prax, it assembled at Moonbroth oasis, driving out the remnants of the Pol Joni tribe, Sartarite allies who were previously dominant in the area. They met an alliance of Praxian animal nomads just outside the oasis and defeated them, before moving on to take the city of Pavis.

Realising that the oasis was both a living shrine of Lunar power and a strategic location, the Lunars adopted the Pol Joni stronghold as their own and began construction of a new, planned settlement: a gateway to Prax, and a Holy Place of the Lunar religion. Under Lunar occupation, the oasis has grown from a stopping point for infrequent peddlers to a bustling centre of caravan trade. A large number of Lunar pilgrims also come to Moonbroth to see the wondrous oracular shrine.

DESCRIPTION

The oasis of Moonbroth lies near the edge of the region of Prax known as the Good Place. The oasis has a relatively large fertile area, within a bowl-shaped depression approximately two kilometres across. Low, crescent-shaped ridges define the north-east and south-west limits of the oasis. The dwellings of Old Town are situated on or below the rough terraces of the north-eastern hillside, the planned streets of New Town on the level ground beneath them, while a fortress stands on the south-western prominence. At the centre of the oasis are the foaming pools and geysers for which it is famous.

The primary vegetation of Moonbroth consists of date palms, pomegranate, olive and apricot trees. In addition to these trees, grains (including the recently-introduced maize), melons and other crops are grown. The large date palms form a canopy under which the smaller, less hardy trees and crops can thrive. Skullbushes and other wiry Praxian vegetation are found away from the more settled areas.

A unique feature of Moonbroth is the presence of hot springs and an accompanying system of geysers. At the centre of the shallow 'bowl' (actually the crater of an ancient volcanic formation) lies a steaming pool of mineral water, thirty metres across. Within the pool are seven stalactite-like rock formations. These geyser pipes drive columns of steam and water high into the air at irregular times: the most impressive eruptions occur each Wildday. Other pools, springs and geysers are dotted around nearby.

INHABITANTS

Oasis Folk Natives

The majority of the inhabitants of Moonbroth are of Oasis Folk stock. These gentl farmers have lived here since the God Time. They tend the crops in the fields, and raise their families as best they can under the heel of one oppressor or another. The animal nomads treat these people as slaves: the Lunar Army has used them in the same way, though some from the priesthood are pleading for their physical and spiritual emancipation.

Sable Tribe

At least one clan of Sable riders is almost always to be found at the Oasis. The women pitch their large tents along the south-eastern margins of the oasis, while herds graze freely among the scrub that grows there.

MoonBroth Town

A contingent of Lunar troops garrison the fortress and patrol Moonbroth Town: fifty Silver Shield peltasts, one hundred hoplites from the Marble Phalanx, and two hundred of the famed Antelope Lancers (half of which are always out patrolling the Pavis Road). The Peltasts are mostly Provincials (though thoroughly Lunarised in nature), the Marble Phalanx are natives of the Heartlands, while the Antelope Lancers are mostly from the Hungry Plateau.

Builders

Master-masons, sculptors, craftsmen, and their chain-gangs of slaves should be labouring without cease to complete the magnificent new Temple of the Seven Mothers. Unfortunately, short supplies and administrative hiccups often prevent their working, to the extent that the Commander is starting to mutter ominously of deadlines and penalty clauses.



Pilgrims, Transients and Others

Of course, there are Whirling Dervishes at Moonbroth, too. And wild-eyed pilgrims who have crawled from Torang to do homage to the Oracle. And sellers of cheap, mass-produced religious statues and expensive incense. And sane men hoping to be moonstruck. And lunatics hoping to be cured. And masked hierophants swirling in procession through the oasis. And Sable Khans come from out the desert to water their nomadic steeds and do homage to the Great Red Queen. And beggars. And social workers giving hallucinogenic red berries to beggars. And sinister agents disguised as all of the above. And sinister agents who look like sinister agents. And rituals. And frenzies. And mass sacrifices. And oracular visions. And player characters, too.

PLACES OF INTEREST

The ambitious but incomplete temple buildings which strike the visitor's eye were only recently begun. This apparent novelty belies the fact that Lunar pilgrims and priests have been in Moonbroth Oasis for nigh on three centuries: the Empire itself only caught up ten years ago. As a result there are two competing Lunar traditions at Moonbroth Oasis: the old-timers, representing a variety of home-grown mystical Lunar traditions, and the newcomers, emissaries of Empire from the Heartlands and Provinces.

OLD TOWN

The streets of Old Town run around the contours of the north-eastern ridge, with only a few alleys ascending the steep inward slope. The architecture is typical for Praxian oases: the buildings are made from wood frames and adobe walls. The one- and two-storey structures are built touching one another, often sharing a common wall. Cloth or leather awnings are suspended outside, spreading their cool shadows over the sun-baked ground. There are no grandiose constructions: the largest compound is the Temple to the Wandering Moon, made up of several smaller buildings connected by awnings and walled off so as to share a single common entranceway.

Pilgrims' Inn

The old Pilgrims' Inn has stood for perhaps two centuries, owned and run by the Smaid family from lowland Saird. It offers Praxian cuisine (which has been somewhat adapted to suit the civilised palate) and varied accommodations, ranging from the almost sumptuous to the downright shabby.

Geyserview

This well-appointed inn and tavern is owned and operated by a Lunar woman of uncommon beauty and wit known only as Zavartia. Her inn caters to Lunar pilgrims and wealthy travellers. All the best rooms have magnificent views of the geysers.

Temple to the Wandering Moon

The Temple to the Wandering Moon is an unorthodox Lunar temple, rumoured to house shrines to Jakaleel the Witch, She Who Waits and the Blue, Black and White Moons within its labyrinthine interior. Any number of odd shrines and peculiar rooms can be found in this rambling complex, screened off behind hangings and veils. Within the inner recesses of the Temple, hallucinogenic incense is burned, which creates disorientating effects. Clouds of smoke and sensory distortion imparted by the incense, the irregular layout, and the use of mirrored surfaces, all create difficulties when outsiders are trying to move through the Temple. The defensive magics of the Temple are covert: Illusions and Reflections, rather than the full-blown array of Mindblasts and Madness spells kept in defence of the Seven Mothers.



The Temple is decidedly old-fashioned: its scriptures, inscriptions and rituals employ outdated forms ("Sultan" for "Satrap", "Yanafal Ta'ar'nils" and "Irrippi On Tor" spelt in the pre-Reconstruction fashion), because the Lunar worship here was not reformed by the New Monks' Revival of the Fifth Wane. There is no single "high priest" of the Temple, so far as outsiders can determine: the most important religious figures appear to be the Weaving Woman, the Spinning Man, and the Balancer, as they are known to the Oasis Folk.

In the Heartlands, such dissent would not be tolerated for long. Matters are different on the frontier, however. A few years before the battle of Moonbroth, Sor-eel the Short led a Lunar force against the Paps. The outcome of this expedition was a treaty in which the Empire swore not to persecute the holy folk of the Praxian oases. The Temple of the Wandering Moon claims immunity under these terms, and the Lunars would certainly be loth to break them and risk the rebirth of Waha the Butcher!

NEW TOWN

The public architecture of this planned 'city' is of the New Pelandan school currently in vogue: white marble colonnades, steps and arches based on the Acropolis of Jillaro. More common buildings are of mud-brick construction, square and with few windows. The local mud has a reddish hue, which makes buildings look something like the red-brick new towns of the Empire's Heartlands. The streets are laid out in a regular grid plan, stretching from below the crescent ridge out towards the distant seething waters and plumes.

Most large structures are still shrouded in scaffolding, with blocks of marble lying about. This wooden scaffolding is expensive to import and often stolen by natives or re-sold by crooked contractors, which has done much to delay the completion of the construction project. Many standard army-issue tents are still permanently occupied by settlers and junior officials, ten years after the Lunar Occupation began.

The Governor is eager to complete construction of his 'model city' by the end of the Seventh Wane so as to offer the most auspicious beginning (a major project completed on schedule!) to the Eighth. Discontented contractors say he is only sucking up to Tatius the Bright, who shares his enthusiasm...

Seven Mothers' Temple Complex

An impressively-designed edifice, though its minaret is still incomplete, and the outer colonnade has yet to be roofed. The temple's priests and acolytes provide teaching and charitable works to the destitute of the oasis, and welcome all who will embrace the Lunar Way. The High Priestess is Yaninya Catia.

Builders' Camp

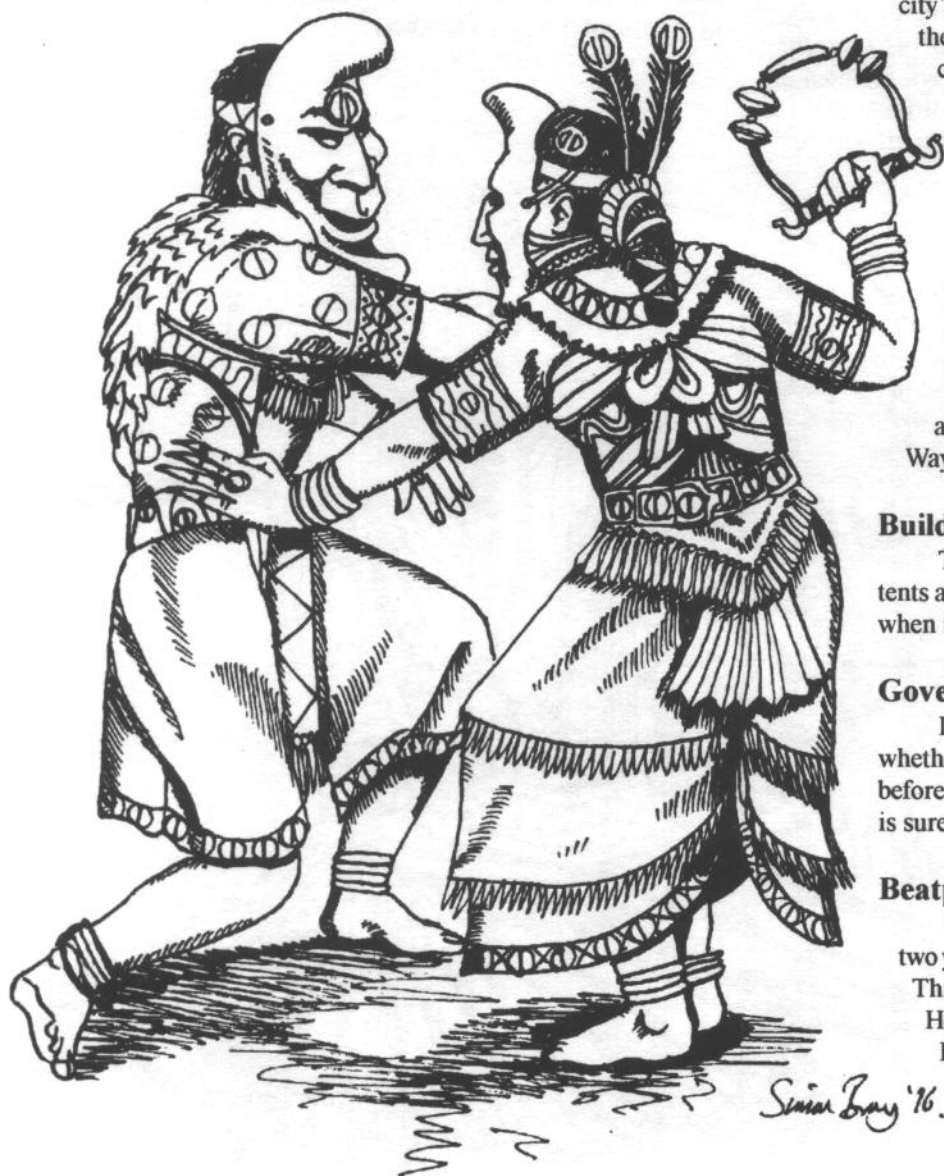
The builders' camp is a temporary settlement of tents and flimsy structures, and everyone will be glad when it is finally swept away.

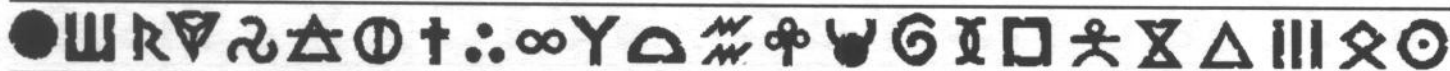
Governor's House

Debate rages among the contractors as to whether they should strive to complete the Temple before re-tiling the roof of Governor's House: nobody is sure which will give him more pleasure.

Beatpot's Moon Rock Cafe

The Moonbroth branch of Beatpot's opened just two years ago to serve the needs of the pilgrim trade. This new-fangled fast-food restaurant from the Heartlands is openly competing with the Pilgrims' Inn, and trying to drive it out of business.





THE CARAVANSERAI

Moonbroth Market

Near the northern end of the oasis town a large open space spanning two terraces forms the Market of Moonbroth. Here traders from across the Empire and beyond can be met, buying and selling items both magical and mundane. A shrine to Etyries, the Lunar god of trade, stands at the eastern edge of the market, and this is where the market's administration is conducted by Vetanis Vania.

The Caravanserai

The traditional campsite for caravans is just north of the oasis proper. Most days, the tents and animals of at least one trader's retinue are arrayed here.

Trader's Rest

This rather ordinary establishment serves transients at the caravanserai. It is large, poorly run, and serves mediocre food. Billum Weysil, the owner, is a native of Pavis who came into a goodly sum of money and decided to open an inn with no prior experience.

Sable Camp

As usual in Lunar Prax, a semi-permanent camp of Sable Riders can be found on the far side of Moonbroth Oasis, often of the Green Sable clan.

The Fortress

The Pol Joni are singular among the Praxian tribes for their use of fortifications, gained from their barbarian cultural heritage. The fortress was a fixed point in their life on the Plaines, located some way outside Moonbroth Town where it could control the approaches to the oasis. Built on the highest spot for many kilometres, it commands an excellent overview of the surrounding plains. The Lunars have adopted this stronghold as their own.

The fortress straddles the barren south-western rise. Its compound is surrounded by an earthen ditch and rampart, topped with a low mud-brick wall. The fortifications run along the crest of the ridge for 25 metres, descending to the base of the hill and enclosing a small portion of the oasis' fertile ground (used for grazing the troopers' mounts) before continuing back to the top of the hill. At the centre of the ridge, a high stone tower serves as a look-out post, army shrine, and military headquarters of the Lunar garrison. Its basement serves as the military lock-up for the garrison. Four newly-constructed adobe barracks-blocks run along the crest of the ridge along the south-western wall, housing the hundred men of the Lunar garrison. A deep well on the oasis floor provides water in case of a siege.

SACRED PLACES

The Geysers

These are a truly amazing sight. Steam always rises off the central pool, and an acrid odour is in the air. The water shimmers with swirling colours. Individual geysers may erupt, either regularly or unpredictably. The crescendo comes once a week, on Wildday: a loud rumbling noise is heard and then, each in their turn, the seven geysers spew forth great gouts of water. After a short silence the rumbling begins again, much louder this time, and all seven of the geysers erupt at once.

The Spa

The recently-opened Moonbroth Spa offers hot and cold baths, mud-baths and all the conveniences of Heartland medicine to the health-conscious, faddish and decrepit. Built in the centre of the oasis, midway between Moonbroth Town and the Fortress, the Spa is owned by a consortium from Dorkath and staffed by healers of Queen Deezola's cult. Its owners hope to make the Oasis a fashionable vacation spot.

The Tubes

Away from all settlements in the oasis, the Tubes are the opening of a lava-tube cavern formation, perhaps similar in origin to the pillars from which the geysers erupt at the centre of the seething pool of Moonbroth. The Oasis Folk use the expression "down the tubes" to mean that someone is bound straight to Hell: dire stories circulate about this place.

RUMOURS / SCENARIO HOOKS

A renegade Pelorian follower of the Invisible Spear, an outlawed subcult of Lodril, is secretly teaching military skills to the Oasis Folk and preparing them for insurrection.

A religious delegation from the Heartlands arrives to investigate the Oracle. They are rumoured to hold a secret commission from the Red Dancer of Power, the Grand Master of the Cenobites, or the Lunar Presidium itself.

The Waertagi have consecrated Moonbroth Oasis to Annilla, the goddess of Secret Murder and the Blue Moon. More unexplained deaths are sure to follow...

A party of White Moonie pilgrims arrives in town. They claim that the Moonbroth Oracle is still bubbling away about the "Moon to Come," vindicating their heretical claims.

Hazia is being smuggled into the Oasis by Black Fang disguised as pilgrims, and then couriered into Sartar via the Antelope Lancer patrols along the Pavis Road. A junior Lunar officer assigned to the Lancers (the younger son of an important family from the Kostaddi Satrap) is behind the scam.



LAW AND ORDER

The commander of the Lunar garrison stationed at the Moonbroth fort, Morrol Ranem, is responsible for keeping civil and military order in the surrounding area. He reports to Sor-eel the Short, Count of Prax, one of the Field Commanders of the Provincial Army. Day to day mercantile affairs are in the competent hands of the Etyries priest, Vetanis Vania. Commander Ranem has appointed a resident of the oasis, Noshen Apkar, as headman of the Oasis Folk. He rules over their internal disputes, and makes sure that things are going smoothly in the fields. Any disputes between Oasis Folk and others are settled by the Lunar Commander.

RELIGION

Due to the long presence of the Pol Joni as overlords of this oasis, a number of the Oasis Folk worship deities of the Orlanthi pantheon as well as their own ancestral chthonic cults. Popular imported religions include Ernalda and Barntar, although the Seven Mothers claim many devotees. Oasis Folk have for centuries participated in the rituals of the Temple of the Wandering Moon, though few among them have more than a superficial grasp of the Lunar Truths.

The presence of the geysers at this oasis have always marked this place as a mysterious and magically powerful locale. When the Lunars arrived in Prax they realised that this place must be sacred to the Red Goddess and the Seven Mothers. A shrine was established at the site of the geysers, and many devout Lunars make pilgrimages to Prax from as far away as the Heartlands to visit the holy site. The 'official' Lunar priesthood is imported from the Heartlands and Provinces.

Many recognise that the Lunar victory at Moonbroth was a close-run thing. In the end, despite the shock advantage brought by caltrops, the deciding factor was the failure of the Praxian Shamans who had summoned Oakfed, god of Wildfire. The Lunars were able to turn these attacks aside by invoking the Pelorian deity Lodril, whom they knew was father of Oakfed – they were only able to do this because of the proximity of Moonbroth, marked by its geothermal activity as a place holy to Lodril. Since this triumph, far-travelled priests of the Lodril cult have from time to time ventured to the fringes of the Empire to do homage to their deity at this unfamiliar site.

LUNAR AUTHORITIES

Morrol Ranem

Lunar Commander

This grey-bearded Tarshite commands the Moonbroth garrison. He is getting on in years and looking forward to retirement with a small patch of land back home. He misses the hills and mountains of Tarsh a great deal, and tries to keep everything in Moonbroth on an even keel, so nothing intrudes on his plans for the future.

Yaninya Catia

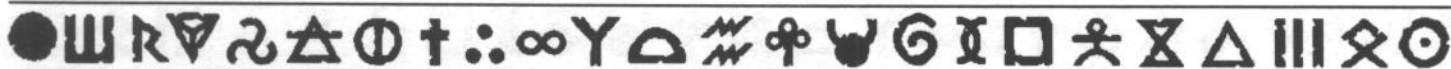
Seven Mothers Priestess

This short, slightly chubby, dark-haired young woman from Glamour presides over the Seven Mothers temple and ministers to the spiritual needs of the garrison. She is also an active missionary and has been making steady progress in her efforts to convert local Oasis Folk to the Lunar Way. Yaninya has begun a secret love affair with Varton Mamigon, an Oasis Folk farmer. She fears disgrace for being intimate with a man of such low standing, but she loves their endless debates on religion and his companionship, and so is willing to take the risk.

Vetanis Vania

Etyries Priest

Vetanis is the chief priest of the market in Moonbroth. This native of the Lunar Heartlands is slim, with blond hair and blue eyes. He seems able to do a hundred things at once, keeping track of all the caravans that pass through Moonbroth, always knowing what's new in the market, what's selling and what's not, and exactly which market location to assign to each trader. During work hours, Vetanis is all business, but when the trading is done for the day he might be found gambling with the troops in the barracks, around the camp fires of the Sable riders, or dining in style with a recent arrival at the oasis.



Fabius of Yolp

Fabius is the lead contractor on the Temple's construction, an apathetic and taciturn man greatly regretting the early enthusiasm which prompted him to take part in the "Taming of Prax". Even he no longer believes his own excuses for the delays in completion.

Dematria the Joyful

Dematria is the alarmingly healthy manager of the Spa that sits at the centre of the oasis. She is a never-ending fount of well-meaning advice for improving the physical and mental health of her charges. Her chief masseur, Hargan the Eunuch, accompanies her everywhere.

Pharazon the Silent

Illuminated Lunar Oracle

When the Lunar Army took possession of Moonbroth, this priest immersed himself in the seething waters of the geyser pool. Since that day, he has not moved from his place, and never speaks except as an oracle of the Red Goddess. A small shrine has been built around him to protect him from the elements. Yaninya brings him food each day, and feeds him. Only questions of the greatest import are asked of him: if the Red Goddess so moves him, he will answer.

LOCAL FIGURES

Noshen Apkar Headman of the Oasis Folk

Within the Oasis Folk community, Noshen is feared as a powerful man with a vicious temper. He rules his people with a firm hand, brooking no question of his authority. When interacting with anyone not born to the oasis, he is meek and fawning. He bends over backwards to please outsiders, and will always take their side against an inhabitant of the oasis. He has become an initiate of the Seven Mothers.

Mama Jaga

Praxian Witch

A sinister and manipulative figure, who seldom stirs from the shadowy recesses of the Temple to the Wandering Moon. Publicly a devotee of Jakaleel the Witch, blackest rumours suggest she may be affiliated with still darker powers: the hidden cults of the Black and Blue Moons, the demon lords of the Dark Side, or others still more unfathomable.

Zanzar Wahanzar

Whirling Dervish

This wild man from the Plains of Prax has forsworn the Way of Waha to devote himself to the excesses of the Red School of Masks, popularly known as the Loonies. His braids and tattoos, fetishes and charms, cannot conceal the strange inner serenity that comes over him when his whirling dances are complete.

Foreman

Deezola Priestess

"The Boiling Man"

Murides Polyphiles

Illuminate

Of Heartland extraction, this softly-spoken man seems almost uncannily reasonable to all who speak with him. He espouses a moderate view on all matters, eschewing extremes in his preference of the middle way. Some suspect this of being a facade, but these fears have not prevented him from winning the Commander's ear on many occasions.

Urratu Bullroarer

The Bullroarer is an initiate of both Waha and the Seven Mothers. His Green Sable clan are often present at the oasis. He is well known for his loud boasts and threats, but seldom backs either with action. He is quite friendly with Vetanis, and often games with him. Urratu has used this friendship to his advantage and has made a fair amount of money trading in the market.

Sable Khan

ENJOY YOUR STAY...

[xxix.445.2] Kosta the Tracker, 1555 ST

"Shortly after leaving the last spring we came in sight of a famous tree, which the nomads revere as the spirit Waleechu. It is situated on a high part of the plain, and hence is a landmark visible a great distance. As soon as the nomads come in sight of it, they offer their adorations by loud shouts. The tree is low, much branched, and thorny just above the root. It is a pace in width and it stands with no neighbour, and I never saw another like it. Although the rains were not long past, it bore no leaves, but in their place numberless silken threads, from some of which offerings such as herbs, carved bone trinkets, scraps of patterned cloth and c. had been suspended.

Most nomads, having nothing better, only pull a thread from whatever silk they have, and fasten it to the tree. Richer nomads pour drink and spices into a certain hole, or may smoke herbs in its shade. All such, I was informed, gratifies the spirit Waleechu.

To complete the scene, the tree was surrounded by the bleached bones of herd beasts which had been slaughtered as sacrifices. All nomads of every age and sex make their offerings; they believe that their beasts shall not tire, and they shall find water easily. When I asked my guide whether some might not steal the offerings, he laughed, but would not say more."

Cam's Well

by Martin Crim

Introduction

Cam's Well is an oasis in Prax, on an alternate trade route from Corflu and the Grantlands to Sartar and Heortland. It is home to about 600 native farmers. A clan of nomads is always in control. There is no permanent Lunar presence, but the Empire claims ownership.

The most striking characteristic of the oasis is the abundance of snakes there. Travellers often remark on the number and variety of snakes climbing trees, slithering through the fields and orchards, swimming in the central pond, or appearing suddenly from the ground like spirits.

The natives do not seem to mind the snakes, but the nomads and their animals (except ostriches) get skittish whenever they spot one. Nomads and ostriches often kill snakes. The natives have a taboo against killing snakes, a taboo they will not break even to save human life. The snakes here include cobras, vipers, rattlesnakes, kraits, death-adders, herpetons (with two tentacles on their noses) and others. Rumour says that all the snakes are poisonous.

Physical Description

Cam's Well is the primary oasis in a vast plateau known as Orani's Mistake. The oasis sits in a bowl-shaped valley about three keymiles across. The edge of the bowl is a ridge rising about ten metres above the surrounding plain. The ridge has some standing stones, ruins of an old wall rumoured to have been 30 metres tall.

Inside the bowl are three bodies of water. Two seasonal ponds of variable size collect the rainfall. A central pond receives water from the well, and teems with life year-round. The central pond is about 40 metres wide at its widest. All the ponds are surrounded by date palm trees.

The natives occupy some 60 buildings clustered around the well. Other buildings stand empty and ruined, all around the bowl. Two large gardens are surrounded by low stone walls. The larger one is several acres in size and lies to the

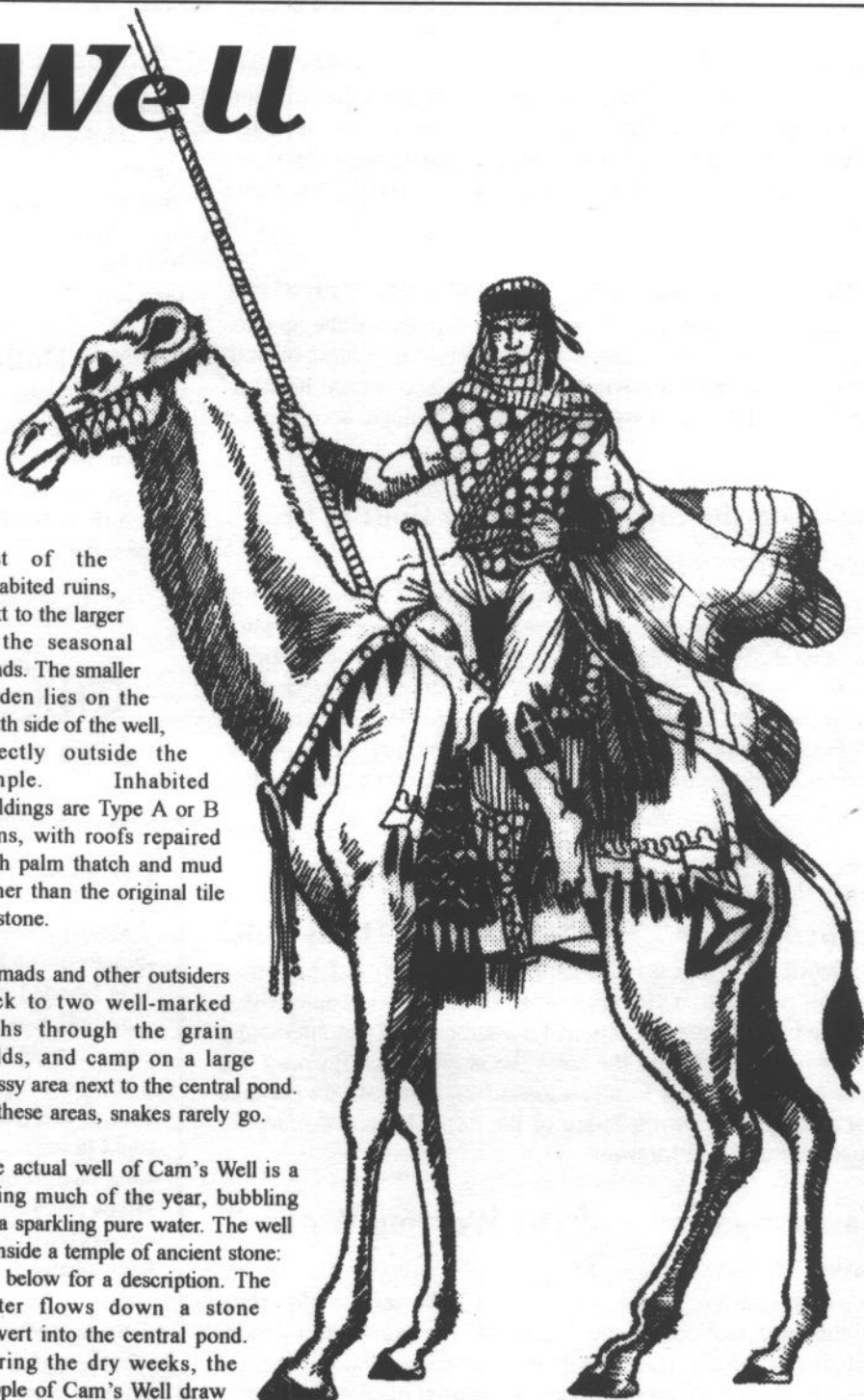
east of the inhabited ruins, next to the larger of the seasonal ponds. The smaller garden lies on the south side of the well, directly outside the temple. Inhabited buildings are Type A or B ruins, with roofs repaired with palm thatch and mud rather than the original tile or stone.

Nomads and other outsiders stick to two well-marked paths through the grain fields, and camp on a large grassy area next to the central pond. In these areas, snakes rarely go.

The actual well of Cam's Well is a spring much of the year, bubbling up a sparkling pure water. The well is inside a temple of ancient stone: see below for a description. The water flows down a stone culvert into the central pond. During the dry weeks, the people of Cam's Well draw water from the well and pour it into the culvert.

The land beyond the bowl of the oasis is sand and flinty clay. Tough plants tear at travellers' clothes, and grow thickest in silt washed out of the many canyons and arroyos. A few tall outcroppings of rock serve as landmarks and as shade from the deadly noon sun. The wind has carved some outcroppings into haunting shapes – nomads call these "spirit rocks."

The peak of Storm Walk Mountain is visible from Cam's Well, and lies west and a little north. Another landmark is the peak of Wintertop, far to the Northwest, visible only occasionally, when the air is not full of dust.



The Inhabitants

The natives are known as Cam's Folk. They have lived there since the Godtime, they say. All of them farm or keep gardens and raise ui, which are much like guinea pigs. They eat ui meat and use ui hair and hide for clothing. Nomads turn up their noses at these animals, leaving them to Cam's Folk.

The nomads believe that Cam's Folk encourage the snakes. One rumour speaks of Cam's women suckling cobras, and many nomads have seen snakes come out of the Folk's houses and barns. Fetishes made of snake skulls, snake skin, and unknown substances keep the nomads out of the Folk's houses and gardens.

Cam's Folk think highly of snakes. Calling someone a snake is, to them, a compliment. Snakes are symbols of cleverness, toughness, and communication with the spirit world. Most people wear snake-skin belts and carry snake skull fetishes on their left shoulders. All the Folk know how to avoid snake bite (by chewing snakeroot and rubbing red onions on their shoes).

The presence of the snakes leads many scholars to believe that the Cam's Folk are originally from Esrolia, where snakes are also popular. This fits with the popular prejudice that humble peasants could not be descended from the architects of grand buildings. An additional clue, sages say, is the Folk's inheritance custom, which is matrilineal. However, the Folk tell another tale.

Cam's Folk are great story-tellers. Nomads often do not know this, because they disdain to listen to the tales. Non-nomad travellers are popular here if they can tell new stories. Among the Folk, personal status depends in part on knowing many stories and telling them well. In game terms, Cam's Folk have a base Storytelling skill (Communication) of 25%, with a 1 to 5 percentile gain per year, depending on the person's profession.

Some stories are for public audiences and others are for private rites. Some are sung, as the people dance, but most are chanted. The tales include legends of great deeds by ancestors, tragic tales of defeat and loss, creepy folk-tales which are metaphors of atrocities against the Folk, and myths of the Golden Age. Golden Age myths often end with the saying, "As it once was, so shall it be again." The legends of events since the Dawn teach the Folk how to survive under Praxian domination.

The people here have blue or green eyes, brown skin, and brown or black hair. Their defining feature has traditionally been a prominent nose. Many men's noses are hooked or Roman. The men wear their hair short, and wear clothes similar to Praxians'. Females wear loose, concealing clothes, even in the hottest weather. They wear shawls over their heads and veils in the presence of outsiders.

Means of Living

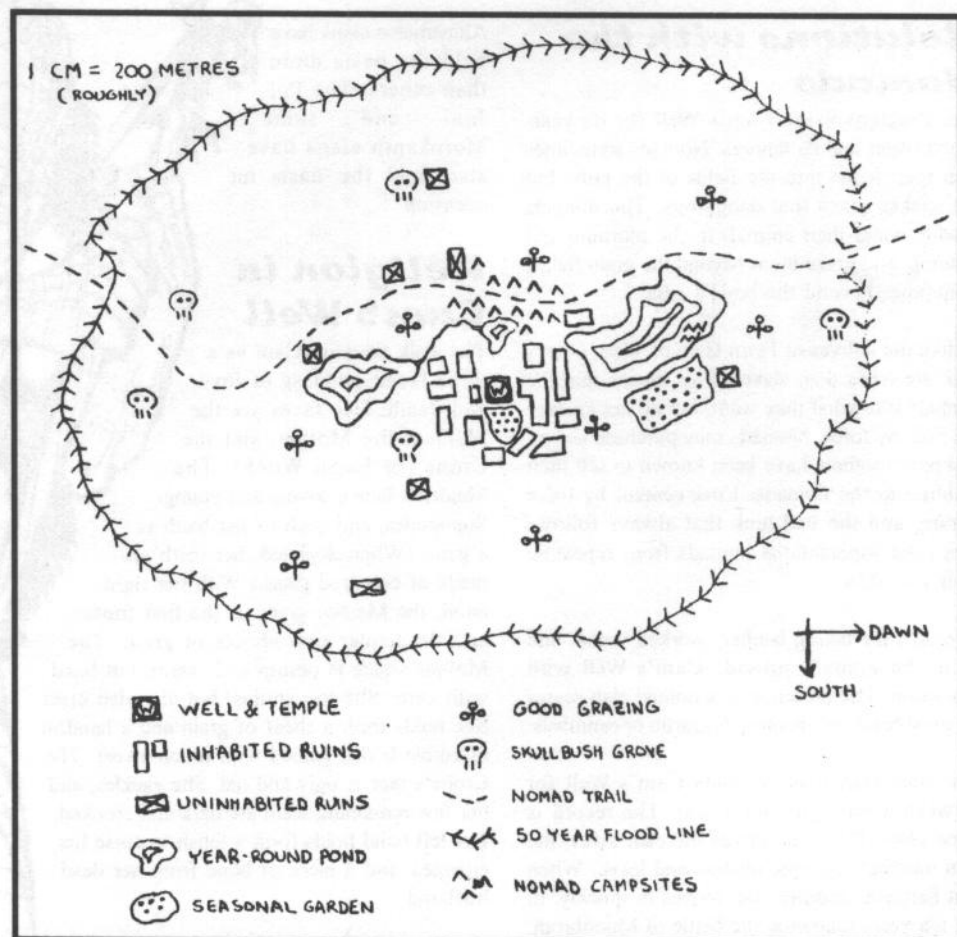
The Folk cultivate many native plants, as well as imported grain and flax. The skullbush is the most important native plant. Date palms, grapes, many herbs, and other edible plants also grow readily throughout the bowl.

Cam's Folk traditionally grew the native Praxian grains (spicegrass, holygrain, and arrowstalk). The Folk received a gift of seed maize from the Lunar Survey which followed the Battle of Moonbroth. In just a few years, maize became the principal food crop. Men plough, sow seed, and harvest the crops. When not occupied in the fields, they gather oilseeds and dates, herbs and roots. Women keep gardens, tend the ui, preserve and prepare food, spin, weave, and sew.

The Tale of Cam's Life

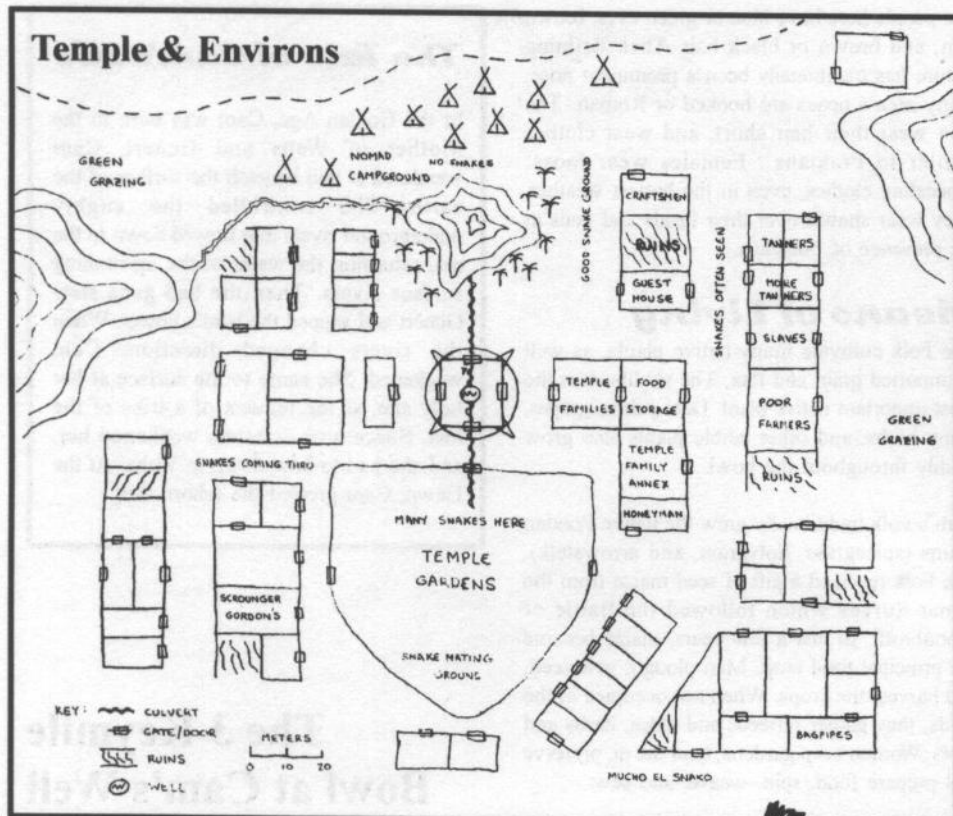
In the Golden Age, Cam was born to the Mother of Wells and Genert. Cam wandered at will beneath the surface of the earth. She controlled the mighty underground rivers that flowed down to the sea, returning the water of the up-running surface rivers. Then the bad gods slew Genert and sapped the land's power. When the rivers changed direction, Cam weakened. She came to the surface at her holy site, at the request of a tribe of the lost. Successive disasters weakened her, and she had to bow down to Waha. At the Dawn, Cam greeted the reborn Sun.

The 3 Keymile Bowl at Cam's Well





Temple & Environs



Cam's Folk have four holy days: two feasts and two fasts. The priestesses also lead Sacred Time rituals. The feasts are Freezeday, Disorder Week, Sea Season, and Freezeday, Movement Week, Earth Season. The fasts are Fireday, Death Week, Fire Season, and Fireday, Truth Week, Dark Season. Nomads stay away from the settlement on these days, whispering of unclean spirits.

The Temple of Cam

Large parts of the temple are in ruins, but the central part is in relatively good shape. The construction is mostly marble columns and caryatids, granite walls and stairs, and some dry-laid field stone. Some columns and walls bear decorations showing improbable human-animal hybrids, including various serpentine beings.

The central part of the temple consists of a dome over the well, resting on four granite walls forming a square. The dome is made of a single piece of milky white stone thin enough for some light to shine through. The dome is twenty metres wide on the outside. At its centre, it rises six metres above the walls.

Relations with the Nomads

The Praxians value Cam's Well for its year-round water and its tanners. Nomads sometimes turn their herds into the fields of the Folk, but the snakes make that dangerous. The nomads usually water their animals in the morning and evening, and graze them beyond the grain fields, sometimes beyond the bowl's edge.

Unlike the natives of Horn Gate or Weis, Cam's Folk are more than slaves. This means that the nomads take what they want, but do not enslave the Folk by force. Nomads may purchase slaves, and poor mothers have been known to sell their children to the nomads. Enslavement by force is rare, and the bad luck that always follows keeps the superstitious nomads from repeating their mistakes.

In return for taking leather, worked wood, and food, the nomads provide Cam's Well with protection. The presence of a nomad clan scares off most bands of chaotics, Gagarthi or cannibals.

A nomad clan usually holds Cam's Well for between a fortnight and a year. The record is three years. If no one drives the clan away, the clan members become restless and leave. When that happens, another clan moves in quickly. In the ten years following the battle of Moonbroth.

Alticamelus clans have held the oasis more than others. The Pol Joni and some Morokanth clans have also held the oasis on occasion.

Religion in Cam's Well

The Folk worship Cam as a three-faced goddess of love and death. Her faces are the Maiden, the Mother, and the Crone (or Earth Witch). The Maiden's face is loving and young. She smiles, and each of her teeth is a gem. (When depicted, her teeth are made of coloured glass.) With her right hand, the Maiden gives us the first fruits and the tender new shoots of grain. The Mother's face is plump and warm, but lined with care. She too smiles, but she also cries. She holds forth a sheaf of grain and a handful of edible herbs, gained with much sweat. The Crone's face is ugly and old. She cackles, and her few remaining teeth are dark and crooked. Her left hand holds forth a fetich to curse her enemies, and a piece of bone from her dead husband.



Travellers

Grantlands caravan

Xylo, an Etyries priest (truthful, idealistic, naive) and her group (20 Sable guards, 20 mule skinnners, 111 mules).

Route: Pimper's Block to Barbarian Town to Cam's Well to Agape to Raus Fort.

Travel Seasons: Dark, Sea. Typical cargo in: bronze tools, dyestuffs, wine, letters, special orders. Typical cargo out: carpets, slaves, letters, aloe, leather, beasts.

Paps caravan

Mriam, an Issaries Goldentongue (cheerful, unscrupulous, tough) and his crew (9 mounted guards, 25 mule skinnners, 130 assorted beasts of burden including camels imported from Pamaltela).

Route: Knight Fort to Barbarian Town to The Block to Cam's Well or Biggle Stone to Lokazzi.

Travel Seasons: Dark, Storm, Sea. Typical cargo in: bronze tools, wine, perfume, troll liquor. Typical cargo out: carpets, leather, beasts, paper.

The granite walls are a little over fourteen metres across on the inside, some five metres tall, and a metre thick. The walls flare out to two metres thickness at the corners. The interior of the central part is a single room, with a stone floor and the well at the centre. The room is sparsely decorated. Over the east, south, and west gates, there are giant snake skulls.

Four square gates lead out from the well area to the rest of the temple. Each is four metres wide and two metres tall. Each gate has a pair of large stone doors, barred with a stone bar that fits into matching slots in the doors.

Each direction has a significance. North is the direction from which danger comes, and it is the most mundane. The water from the spring/well normally flows down a culvert which passes under the north gate. East is the direction where the sun rises, and it is magical. South is the direction where the cosmic mountain lay, and it is holy. A small culvert passes under the south gate to bring water to the garden. West is the direction where the sun goes down, and it is the direction of mourning.



Two gates have ornate decorations. The south gate is the Marriage Gate. Seen from the outside, the right half of the gate is a statue of the Maiden, and the left half is a statue of the Great Mother. In the wedding ceremony, the couple passes through it, circles the well clockwise, and leaves through the same gate. The western gate is the gate of death. The Crone's arms form its sides. Funeral processions bring dead cultists through this gate.

Language

The people here speak their own language, unrelated to Praxian. It is, in fact, descended from the extinct language Earthspeech. The written form uses an obscure script, but is rarely seen. Many of the Folk also speak Tradetalk or Praxian.

Getting from one place to another in south-western Prax

The main caravan routes do not go through Cam's Well. One major route is Caravan Alley, which takes travellers along a short route from Sartar to The Block, The Paps, and Pavis. The Pavis Road is the other main route from Sartar. Caravans from Heortland travel by way of The Block and The Paps. Goods from Pavis and Corflu return by the same routes.

Caravans travel through Cam's Well when weather or political concerns prevent travel along the major routes. The caravans pick up goods at Lokazzi or Raus Fort, avoiding the delay and expense of boating up the Zola Fel.

Secrets for the Gamemaster

Part of the reason for the Folk's cultural continuity is Son of the Goddess, a giant and long-lived king cobra who lives in the temple. The current Son of the Goddess is three hundred years old, about 20 metres long, and very powerful. When an old Son of the Goddess dies, a new one appears from among the normal-sized king cobras. The old people teach the Son of the Goddess all their tales, and the Son then teaches their children over the succeeding generations. The current Son of the Goddess is the fourth since the Dawn.

Son of the Goddess eats all the dead of the oasis, except for those ui killed for food. The Folk bring him all human dead. He does not digest the bones, so temple workers place the bones of human dead into jars, which go into niches in the catacombs under the temple. The Folk know that being eaten by Son of the Goddess will guide their souls to the afterlife. They thus fear leaving the oasis, because dying elsewhere means becoming an unhappy ghost.

Son of the Goddess is a priest of Cam. The high priestess of Cam is effectively his allied spirit. Son of the Goddess creates the foe-cursors which protect the Folk's fields and homes. He also blesses the fetishes which most of the Folk wear. Son of the Goddess lives in the temple and catacombs under it. He only leaves during the High Holy Day festival on the night of Freezeday of Movement Week, Earth Season. Then he

The Dog-Faced Nomad

This tale is about a bison khan with the face of a blue dog. He slew his herd beasts whenever they displeased him. His method of slaughter became more cruel and sickening with each killing. He ran out of herd animals to kill, so he tortured himself to death. Then two adders carried his withered soul away in a jar. (The actual tale takes an evening to tell, and would require many pages just to transcribe.)

slithers all around the ruins accompanied by the ecstatic drumming, dancing, and singing of all the Folk. He blesses all the Folk's houses by flicking his forked tongue on their doors and fire pits.

Scenarios

The Lunar Census:

Sor-Eel has ordered a census of all of Prax. This corner of the land is nominally under his control, but his reach exceeds his grasp. The party is either put in charge of the census (if Lunar) or seeks to thwart it (if anti-Lunar). In the first case, the foes are the Sky Storm clan of Alticamelus riders who currently hold the oasis, led by Soon Winter (arrogant, chauvinistic, ferocious). In the second case, the Lunar commander is Irrumator (corrupt, obstinate, rude, arrogant, condescending). Short of outright combat, the two sides argue over who gets to do the counting, access to holy spaces, and anything else they can think of.

Holy Water:

Duke Raus wants a lot of holy water to defend against a vampire. (He plans to ring the fort every night for a couple years.) Having alienated the river folk, he sends his followers to Cam's Well. They are to secure a large quantity of holy water here or bring back someone who can make it at the fort. Any of the shamans or assistant shamans of Cam can make it, but will not leave. Holy water is not for sale, but might be given to friends. To become friends, the party can redeem from slavery four of Cam's Folk who were sold twenty years ago. They are being held by a Morokanth named Big Herd (indolent, greedy, courteous) near Agape. Transporting a mule-train of holy water is an exercise in itself.

The Barbarians:

Hearing of a fabulous jewel kept in a temple of fowl snake-worshippers, the adventurers try to steal it. The jewel is a carved chalcedony in the shape of a square, which carries secret knowledge and powerful enchantments. Son of the Goddess carries it in his mouth during his procession in the Earth Season festival. If the party attacks the temple, they blunder into wardings, spirits, and many poisonous snakes. In the holy of holies, deep underground, Son of the Goddess defends the jewel with his life and all the resources at his disposal. If he dies, the Folk suffer terribly. The survivors vow to regain the jewel wherever it may be in the Six Worlds.



[xxix.8901.food.seafood.1a]

"In his cups, he boasted of a grandmother murdered by Erigians for her collection of bears' paws, though history, unusually sober, prefers her dying in Neapolis, over prawns of inferior quality."





The Praxian Hyena

by Scott Schneider and Greg Stafford

"We don't have no stinkin' carnivores!" This is the rallying cry of most of the Beast Riders found throughout the Wastelands in Prax – and they are right!

Prax and the Wastelands are a strange place. Rich in animal life and plant life, these regions lack one feature to balance out the entire ecosystem: no major carnivores. Yes – there are desert jackals and vultures and hyenas, but these fulfil their more traditional roles as that of scavengers, rather than as carnivores. And there are reptilian hunters in the River valley. But, curiously, Prax and the Wastelands have a mysterious lack of large mammalian carnivores, given the diversity and richness of herbivorous animals.

And the reason for this is that the Praxian nomads KILL ALL PREDATORS ON SIGHT!!!

All Praxian peoples, from the mighty Alticameli to the small Ostrich People, if they are embracers of the Waha Way of Life, are religiously obligated to kill all mammalian carnivores upon sight. The only exceptions to this are the smallish predators like jackals, but also extending to Hyenas, whose haunting laugh brings night terrors to the dreams of Praxian children.

It is considered a religious duty, bound in the great Survival Covenant, whereby all the Humans and all of Eiritha's Children agreed to cast lots to see who would be The Eaters and who would be The Eaten. And the Animals lost, except in the case of the Morokanth, and all agreed that this would be the unchangeable way of life and death in Prax and the Wastelands. Because none of the other animals won, they were bound into the Survival Covenant, leaving no room for predators other than Humans to have any function for survival in the Wastelands. And so all large predators are killed by the nomads on sight, because they are not part of the Way of Waha.

However, Hyenas are a special case. Nomad legends and stories say that Hyena was the great spirit who was forced (or volunteered) for the ghastly job of devouring the body of Genert, after that deity was slain during the War of the Giants. Hyena and his children would then regurgitate the remains of Genert in a secret cavern deep within a hidden and sacred place in the Wastes. Coincidentally, Garzeen followers of the Genert cult must also ritually journey into the depths of the Wastes should they come upon a piece of Hyena skin, in fulfilment of an ancient vow or curse.

In this secret cavern, nymphs of the great earth patiently and dutifully gather up the regurgitated remains of Genert, or the pieces of Hyena skin of the Garzeen traders, and bind and stitch back together the body of Genert. It is said that when all of his body is restored, Great Genert will awaken bringing forth another golden age on the continent.

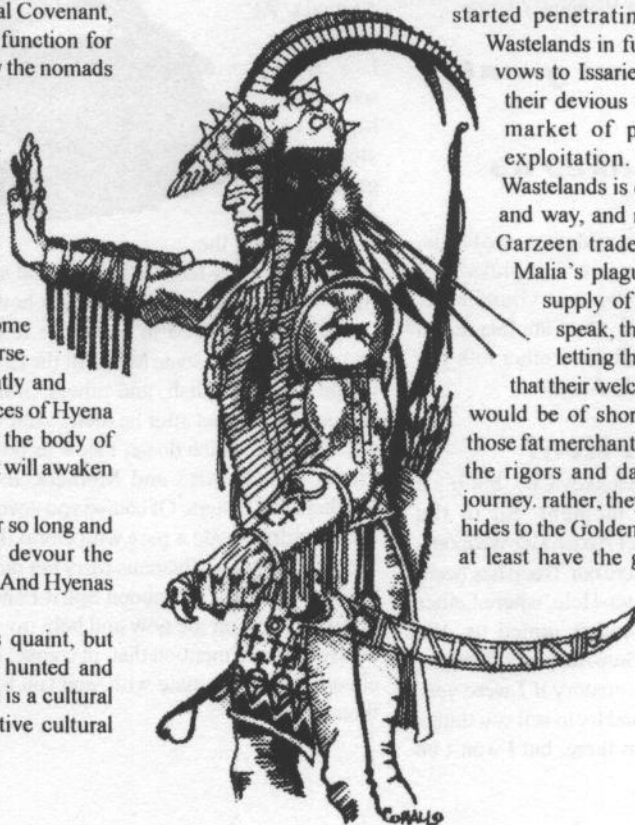
However, the nomads also say that as the nymphs labour so long and hard at restoring Genert, so does Chaos seek to destroy and devour the remnants. And thus the body of the Sleeping Giant slowly grows. And Hyenas are not killed on sight, as are other predators.

The current theory in Pavis is that the Hyena story is quaint, but doesn't really explain the unique relationship of hunters and hunted and Hyenas. The Grey Sages feel that though the killing of a Hyena is a cultural taboo in Prax and the Wastes, the one great rule of comparative cultural research is this: no taboo without its relaxation!

In the year 1587, a one-armed sage by the name of Grandon travelled throughout Prax, visiting most of the tribes and independents. He found in every single clan visited that Hyenas were never killed, except during certain prescribed sacred time rituals that re-enacted the pact between Genert and Hyena. Because of this pact, Hyena was allowed to devour and spit back up parts of Genert, thus transforming the deity into something else. At the same time, Hyena agreed that His occasional demise and dismemberment, with the promise of eventual reconstruction by the earth nymphs, would be more than adequate compensation for the vile deeds which Hyena would perform on Genert's body. Therefore, the nomad's allow hyenas to go about there disgusting tasks without killing them, except during the sacred time when they re-enact the pact between Genert and Hyena.

The Grey Sages have speculated that there is more to the myth of Genert and Hyena than just a nice myth, and that the legends serves several purposes in the nomad way of life. If there is a kernel of truth in the legends, then the body that is slowly growing in that secret cavern must be a strange and horrible amalgamation of Genert and Hyena, which, if allowed to come to life again, would be neither Genert or Hyena, but something totally different. This would be of great amusement to the Hyena Trickster spirit, and the ultimate joke on the continent of Genertela.

Secondly, the nomads may not be so naive or stupid as is commonly believed. When the Issaries Garzeen traders started penetrating the interior of the Wastelands in fulfilment of their sacred vows to Issaries, they encountered, in their devious trader minds, a captive market of peoples just ripe for exploitation. The journey into the Wastelands is dangerous in every step and way, and most of those cowardly Garzeen traders avoid the area like Malia's plagues. By keeping a large supply of hyenas on hand, so to speak, the nomads are in essence letting the Garzeen traders know that their welcome in their sacred lands would be of short duration, at best. For those fat merchants are not made to endure the rigors and dangers of this perilous journey, rather, they would rather give their hides to the Goldentongue merchants, who at least have the guts and experience to survive the quest.



What Father Gabran No-breeches Told Me

(for what it's worth)
by Chris Gidlow



Who are you?

I am Gabran No-Breeches, Horny One, Father to Baboons and foe to man, hero of a hundred tales...

Who are we?

We are Father Aedan Big Weapon's Troop.

What makes us great?

We are Baboons.

What else makes us great?

Your Fathers are strong, your Mothers are fertile, your Brothers and Sisters are disciplined and brave. Grandfather Baboon and Grandfather Mandrill are strong in us. Grandmother Earth bears young to feed us. All those other folk you meet are only-Men or only-Animals.

Where do we live?

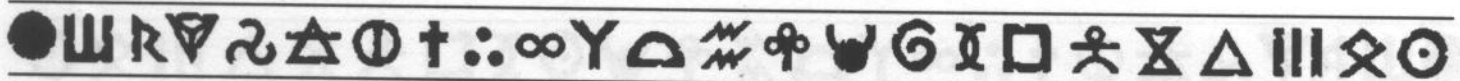
Well, we should live in Monkey City, but it's a bit ungroomed at the moment. So in the meantime we live in Father Aedan Big Weapon's Territory. This is everywhere our Troop has been, except for Day's Rest Water-Hole, where Father Ailil Outside Yellow-Feather joined us. We share that with Athrys Sun-Bottom's Troop. I wouldn't go outside our territory if I were you. Only-Men never groom, and try to sell you things to carry around. I've been there, but I won't be going back in a hurry.

How do we live?

We follow the ways of Grandfather Baboon. We walk through our territory, eating plants and only-Animals. At night, we find somewhere high to sleep, to give our ancestors the best places on the ground. We carry tools to help us and spears to fight with (one day I will tell you how Found Brother was inspired to make the first ones), and magic totems (some Mandrill the Horny One taught us to brandish, and others Grandfather Baboon brought us after he died). And we carry anything else which doesn't slow us down. You groom your Fathers and Mothers, then your Brothers and Sisters. Of course you never groom me. Mandrill made a pact with Gorakiki which Monkey broke, so Shamans carry her daughters. I groom Mandrill in Baboon Spirit Land. Some of his lice live on me now and help my magic. I nearly forgot to mention that, of course, Mothers choose Fathers to mate with, and you look after them.

What is important in my life?

The Troop. We looked after you when you were a Little Brother. I fought the bad spirits who came out of the night to eat you, and the Big Father fought the bad only-Animals and only-Men who came out in the day to eat you too. Soon you will become a Big Brother and I will teach you the ways of Grandfather Baboon and of Hykim his Father. But for now you must respect your Fathers and Mothers, and Brothers and Sisters who are bigger than you.



Will I always be a Brother?

Perhaps. I will teach you to ask Great-Grandfather Hykim to make your teeth sharp, your mane thick, and your weapon strong. Then you may become a Father and you can find a Sister to be the Mother of your Little Brothers and increase the Troop. This is the most important thing that can happen to you.

What happens when we die?

Grandfather Baboon will march with you to Monkey City. He will groom away all the wounds and scars you have. All Baboons are Fathers there, and only-Men and only-Animals scout for us and carry our tools.

What is the difference between Brothers and Sisters?

Ha! Ha! That old only-Man joke always brings tears to my eyes! Only-Men wear skins to cover their finest parts, because they are ashamed of them. So they never know who is a Brother or a Sister. Make sure you show them yours whenever you meet them!

What is the difference between Fathers and Mothers?

Fathers have strong teeth, long manes and mighty weapons. They defend the troop whenever it is threatened. They mate with Mothers and father more Baboons. They keep discipline in the Troop, settle disputes and deal with outsiders. Mothers have Little Brothers and Little Sisters on their breasts or backs. They are the most important Baboons in the Troop.

Who rules us?

We Fathers do. Father Aedan Big Weapon gives the troop its name. He has the Strength of Grandfather Baboon in him. I am your Shaman. Grandfather Mandrill speaks through me, spirits tremble and mortals flee. Father Ailil Outside Yellow-Feather has given many Brothers and Sisters to the Troop, and has shown us how to increase our territory. You must give respect to the Fathers, keep your eyes downcast and never argue or challenge us. If you anger us, you must make Mother position or we will give you a good biting. Here, look at my teeth!

Sorry, Father En..What makes a Baboon great?

Fathers and Mothers are great because they add Brothers and Sisters to the Troop. A Baboon Brother may become a Father if he is brave, disciplined and strong. They may petition Great-Grandfather Hykim for the divine magic to become a Father. If another Father has made the long march to Monkey City, then I will give the Little Father the magic to tell a Mother from a Sister. If not, he must march away to find another Troop where his Uncles will accept him. A Sister becomes a Mother when a Father sees the signs and mates with her. A Sister who chooses to mate with a Brother is still a Sister. You do not have the magic to change her.

What is evil?

Disobedience is the worst evil. We never leave a Mother in danger. You are nothing if you do not protect them. Never approach a Mother like a Father, or we will punish you. Remember to groom your Fathers, Mothers, Big Brothers and Big Sisters. Oh, I should have said: just have a look at any troop of only-Men. Anything they do which we don't is probably evil. Don't bother trying it or a Father will correct you.

What is my lot in life?

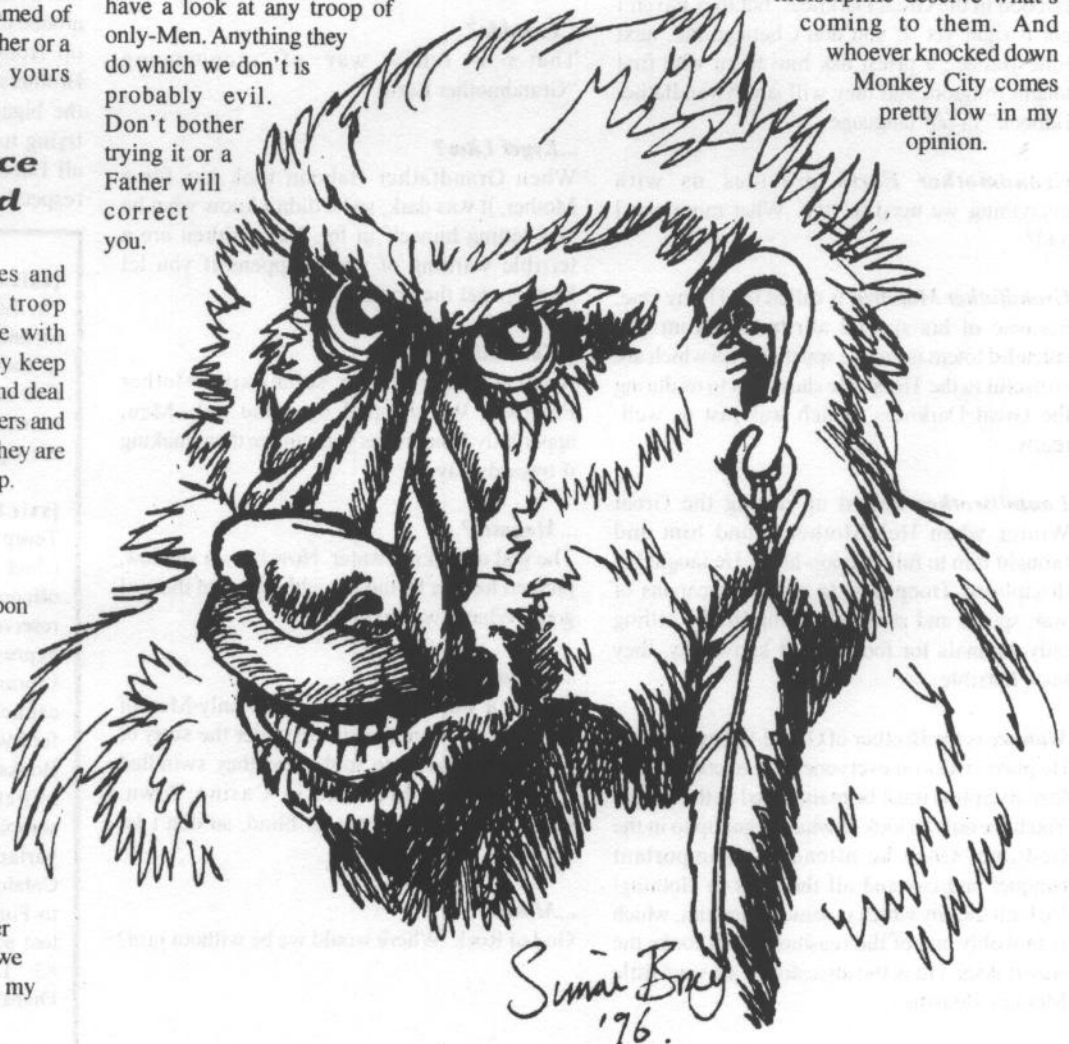
You must march at the side of the Troop. Look out for food and danger. Protect your Mothers. Soon, when you are a Big Brother, you will march in front and scout. Why not mate with a Sister if she asks you? It will help pass the time. Baboon Cousins in other Troops march out of their territory into the dark world to find magic, tools, territory and Mothers. I'll tell you about my adventures there another time.

How do we deal with others?

Who cares? Piss on them and make fun of them. Your Fathers will decide. Uncles and Aunts in other Troops deserve respect. Only-Men and only-Animals should be weighed up on their own merits, if they have any.

Who are our enemies?

Anyone who attacks your Mothers shows they are our enemies. Spirits who poison wells and cripple Little Brothers and Sisters and spread indiscipline deserve what's coming to them. And whoever knocked down Monkey City comes pretty low in my opinion.





Who are my gods?

Our ancestors are our gods. They help our Troop with their powers and knowledge.

Great-Grandfather Hykim is the first of them. He gives Brothers the power to become Fathers.

Great-Grandmother Mikyh helps Sisters to become Mothers.

Grandfather Baboon is the closest to us. He is the ancestor of all Baboons, and of only-Men as well. Everyone knows how his Brother, Monkey, tricked him into trying out a new weapon. He should have stuck with his old one, because this new one was much too big and needed two hands to use it properly. So he died from his experiments. Still, it did have some good results, as now he is the Judge of everyone else who dies. He maintains discipline among the Troop of the Dead. Thanks to him, Spirit Baboons behave properly when I call them up. If you fancy a laugh, have a look at some only-Man religion. They learnt it all from Grandfather Baboon in the Great Darkness, but they haven't got it right yet. If you don't believe me, next time you see a priest ask him them who first taught religion, and they will say "Grandfather Baboon" in our language.

Grandmother Earth provides us with everything we need to live. What more can I add?

Grandfather Mandrill is called the Horny One, because of his special attributes. From this splendid totem issue the spirit magics which are so useful to the Troop. He showed it to us during the Great Darkness, which was just as well, really.

FoundBrother turned up during the Great Winter when HelpMother found him and brought him to full Baboon-hood. He taught his disciplined Troop how to use the weapons of war, spears and stones, to bring life by killing only-Animals for food. Don't know why, they taste horrible.

Monkey is the Brother of Grand-father Baboon. He plays tricks on everyone. It is to control him that discipline must be maintained in the Troop. You have only to look at what he got up to in the Godtime. Once he attended an important banquet and covered all the gods in clothing! He built the city which is named after him, which is probably one of the reasons why it looks the way it does. He is the ancestor of all your little Monkey Cousins.

Gorilla is a Hero of our race. It is his spirit which protects Little Fathers who have to leave their Troops to find others. There are very many stories about his exploits. He gave his tail to Monkey in return for the position of Great Father in Monkey's Empire. Unfortunately, he is still waiting in Baboon Spirit Land, as Monkey has not set his Empire up yet.

I have heard you swear by other powers. Can you tell me the truth about...

...Aldrya?

She's responsible for plants. She does a really good job, if you like chaparral...

...Chaos?

All indiscipline in the world was caused by this. Broos worship it: that's why they can't tell who's a Mother and who isn't. Make sure you put up a struggle against it.

...Ernalda?

That's a funny way of pronouncing "Grandmother Earth."

...Kyger Litor?

When Grandfather Baboon took her for a Mother, it was dark, so he didn't know what he was letting himself in for. Her children are a terrible warning of what happens if you let Mothers get the upper hand.

...The Red Moon?

Another name for our submissive Mother Position. Worshipped by some only-Men, apparently. Sometimes you can see them making it towards Pavis.

...Magasta?

The god of making water. Now he is a shadow, pierced forever by the invisible spear of the evil gods. What a way to go!

...Monotheists?

This is a word to describe those only-Men of God Forgot. Monotheists are under the sway of Chaos, they have no souls, and they swindled me out of my breeches in Casino Town. Monotheism makes you go blind, so don't let me catch you at it.

...Mostal?

God of Rock. Where would we be without him?

...Orlanth?

Wind Face taught only-Men how to talk. Any only-Men you find wandering around without a troop of their own probably worship him. Best not be too rude about him, as Storm Bull is his Brother.

...Spirits?

Baboons who march away from their bodies are called spirits, and they are as helpful to us as any other Baboon. Since Grandfather Baboon led the way, many have marched after him, so now you can find all sorts of other spirits cluttering up the place. It is my job to keep them in their proper positions.

...Yelm?

That Sunny Smiler up there, who burns our bottoms. Some very strange only-Men worship him. They hold their spears in both hands and do not have any Mothers. Keep your tails to the wall if you have to go near them.

...The Nomad Gods?

Not a bad troop. Those only-Men you see riding around on only-Animals: well, Waha thought that up from watching Mothers carrying Little Brothers. They all picked straws and those with the biggest got to mount the others. They are trying to get back to the time when they were all Baboons. Hey, come back and show some respect!...

[xxix.8902.soc.politics.sartar]

"In the day one sun shines, in the night two moons glow, in the marsh three rivers join, in the hills four winds blow, in the year five seasons pass, in the land six heroes remain, in Sartar seven kings reigned, but the eighth king rules uncrowned."

[xxix.8903.rec.arts.lib.announce/threat]

Temple Circular from ANIAS, Deputy Chief Librarian: Know that it is a serious offence to remove any document from the reserve collection of the library, without the express permission of the Deputy Chief Librarian. The following 19,406 works cannot be located, and must be returned forthwith! #1, Vols. 43, 66, 69 of the Golden Books of Elephantis, urgently required by initiate Ficus Lovechild, currently completing his priesthood thesis on Ulerian variances; #2, "The Nochet Index and Cataloguing System Made Simple - How to Find That Missing Scroll in Minutes," lost somewhere in the Mezzanine stacks; #3 "Lady Uroxi - A Case of Mad Cow Disease?"...



A Loaf of Bread, A Jug of Wine, and Thou

by Ian Gorlick

This cameo adventure is intended for a group of non-Yelmations active near Sun County. It could be used for any group of foreigners interacting with an insular and patriarchal community.

An Overnight Stay

On a trip through Sun County, the party stays the night at a small settlement near the border. The residents of this small community are more accustomed to strangers than most Sun Domers, they have had no news for many weeks, and so they are more open and friendly. (Make the contrast more apparent by emphasising the standoffishness and hostility of typical Sun Domers in the other parts of the county). Even a few of the local women will talk to the party members. The party should be encouraged to relax and enjoy themselves.

At several points during the evening, members of the party should be made aware that at least a couple of the local women are willing to go further than just chatting. They will be discreet but their intentions are plain. If any of the party succumb to temptation (and what rough, tough, red-blooded adventurer would not), then he and the girl can sneak off into a convenient outbuilding and have a pleasant time.

The Morning After

The next morning after the party rides away, they will discover someone following them. It is one of the girls of the previous evening. She has taken the night's activities as the equivalent of a proposal, she wants to marry the adventurer with whom she dallied.

She is an attractive young woman. She is skilled in household arts like cooking, spinning, and weaving. She would probably make an excellent housewife. She has a spectacular dearth of combat and survival skills, and is completely unsuited to a life in the wilds or on the road. She is the daughter of a staunch patriarch, who will not approve of his daughter marrying an outsider. She is betrothed to a cousin, she doesn't want to marry him because he has bad breath and is a total bore. The fiancé is a competent warrior with lots of friends and a lot of pride, and will consider it a slight to his honour to lose his betrothed to a foreigner.

These are all concerns that the party should consider as they decide what to do.

The Options

The party can simply take the girl with them. This will result in the Sun County authorities charging the party with abduction. They will contact the authorities in Pavis County and the Lunar Grantlands requesting that the miscreants be sent back for justice. The book Sun County has some excellent examples of Yelmation justice that should be related to the players as they await an extradition hearing. Powerful friends and large bribes may keep them safe. If they are not sent back then the matter is not over. The father and fiancé have friends and are willing to undertake a private vendetta to cleanse their honour.

The party could send the girl back. She will only go if her chosen man promises to come back within a reasonable time (less than a year) and claim her hand in honourable marriage.

They could give her the promise and then forget about it. This will work for a while, but if he has not come back within a year and is still known to be at large in the region, then she will run away from home and come looking for him.

They could do the honourable thing, and the offending party member can try to negotiate for the girl's hand. The father's approval is essential and he is going to be very hard to persuade. The fiancé's approval is not necessary, but if his pride is not assuaged somehow then he and his friends will bear a grudge for many years. The negotiations are going to be very delicate. Sun County is a strict patriarchal culture with extreme sexual repression. This girl has challenged the very roots of Sun County morality. Orlanthi or Praxians with their more liberal attitudes to women or decadent Lunars with their looser morals are unlikely to be aware how severe the matter is.

Yelmation Justice

If the complete facts come out, as they probably will, then Yelmation justice will move against the offending party member, and most heavily against the girl.

If the girl is judged to have behaved improperly, she will probably be badly beaten or publicly flogged. If she is revealed to have given up her maidenhood, then she will probably be sentenced to death. The party is unlikely to know this, and the girl will not to think to tell them because it is a fact of life to her. Make the players role-play their encounters with the Yelmations. Listen carefully to the players for any hint or admission that sexual impropriety has occurred.





This is the time to hit the party really hard in their consciences. They may be worried about their companion, but their hearts should be bleeding for the fate of that poor young woman. Make them feel her fear and suffering. Make them wrack their brains for a way to save her from her unjust fate.

What happens to the player character? The offending character may be fined, flogged, branded, or sentenced to death depending on how severe his offence is judged to be. This will depend heavily on how he conducts himself in the negotiations and trial. (Make him role-play!) The rest of the party will probably get off with heavy fines, and a severe beating, and maybe some hard or dangerous labour. If you have any really dangerous adventures in which you want to get the party involved, then have the court sentence the offender and his friends to work off their offence by taking care of a dangerous mission for the benefit of Sun County. A sentence of death might be commuted to performing a life-threatening mission.

What happens to the girl? If the party can come up with a way to save her then let them do so, then consider whether there will be any long term consequences. Otherwise, things will take an ugly turn. The girl will be sentenced to death and the priestesses of the dark aspect of the Earth will be charged with carrying out the sentence.

Death of a Maiden

The crones of Ty Kora Tek, the ritually-scarred priestesses of Maran Gor, and the axe-wielding war-maidens of Babeester Gor will take the girl out into the wilderness to her horrible death. The Earth-women will insist that the offending male also come, "part of his punishment awaits him in the desert where the girl must die." He is going to be alone in the wilderness with this terrifying crew of vicious women. He should be in deadly fear. Before they set out, have some of the Sun Domers whisper tales of the horrible tortures these women have inflicted on men in their power.

In a barren place, far from any habitation, the expedition will stop. As the sun sets the man and girl will be given a pick and shovel and told to dig a grave. When the grave is deep enough they will be told to stop. Ask the player to make a Scan roll, no matter what he rolls tell him, "You can't be sure if that grave is big enough for two, or only one."

The Earth-women will bind the two prisoners. The shirt will be stripped from the man's back and he will be scourged with thorn branches. The girl will be stripped naked and also scourged, though less severely. Then the bloody branches and bunches of grass will be bundled up inside her ripped clothes. The bundle of clothes will be cast into the grave. The priestess of Ty Kora Tek will pronounce the rituals of burial, formally making the girl dead and stripping her of her name and her family.

The leader of the Babeester Gor party will now present the man with a choice. Either he can be buried alive in the grave before him, or he can swear an oath before Babeester Gor. The oath will bind him to 1) say nothing more about the events he witnessed tonight except that the girl was buried alive, 2) one year from this date he must present himself to the girl and offer her an honourable

marriage, which she may decline, 3) in the interim he must court the girl properly and make provision for her upkeep. Should he break the oath, the warrior-women of Babeester Gor will hunt him to the ends of the Earth and make his final hours an agony that defies description.

The girl will be sent off to a safe, neutral place to live for a year and establish a new identity. The Chalana Arroy temple in Horn Gate is a good place if the party is based in the Grantlands. The priestesses can use their influence to secure her a place there. The man will be escorted back into Sun County, where the populace will be told - "The girl is dead, she was buried alive, her blood and name lie in an unmarked grave." They will also announce "The goddesses have placed a heavy geas upon this degenerate man, his fitting punishment is to live with it rather than be given the death he has otherwise earned."

And They Lived Happily Ever After?

If the party was sentenced to carry out any missions then they may now do so. Afterwards they may leave Sun County. They will have left a lasting reputation behind themselves.

The offending man must now live up to his oath. He will have to make regular visits to the girl for the next year, or secure her permission to be absent for prolonged periods. He can't explain it to his companions. If they find out he has to get them to keep quiet, for his sake and the girl's. At the end of the year, it is up to you what happens. She may not want to marry the lout after all the trouble he has caused her. She may decide to join Chalana Arroy or Babeester Gor and make a career. Or she might decide she does love him and settle down to make him happy (wife, children, responsibilities - just what an adventurer needs!).

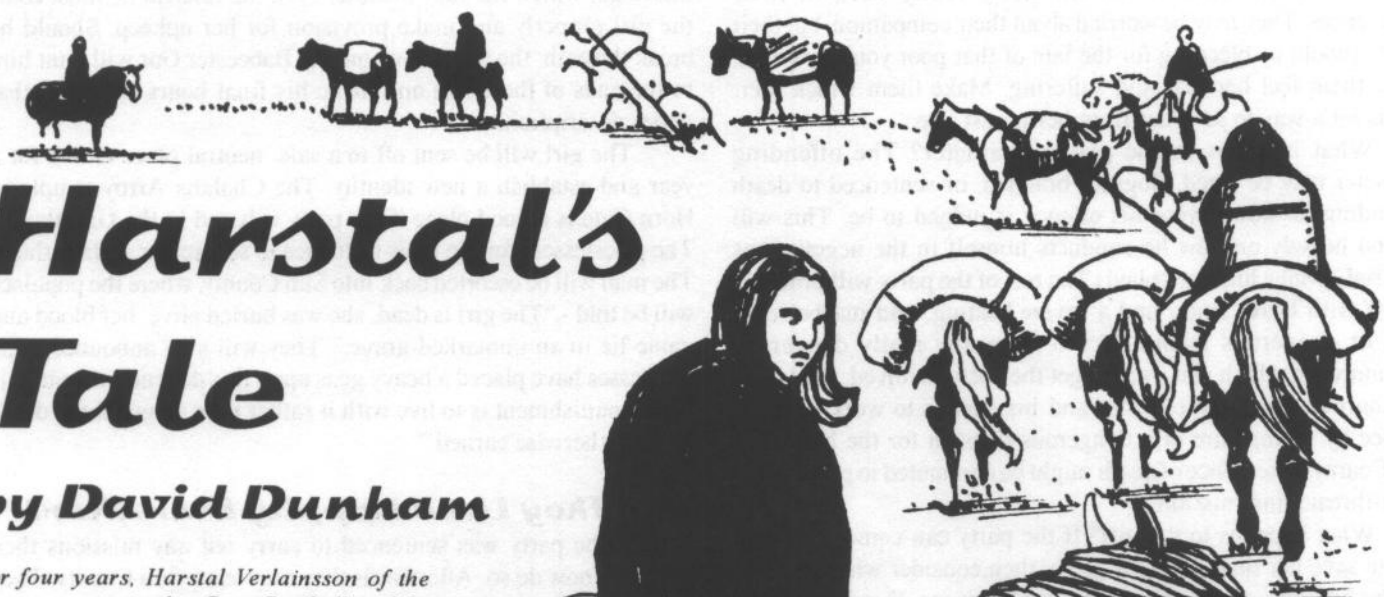
The Counting Knot by Greg Stafford

The Praxians have a ritual which they hold at various Grazelands. Each tribe has its own site.

Inside this site is the Counting Knot. The three which I saw were all on a stout horizontal bar which was the size of a man's head. From it hung several ancient knotted leather ropes. The elders sat underneath, in the shadow of the bar (which was called Halkswaha Bar), and debated what kind of a year it was. First, the men spoke, then stopped unless asked by one of the Eiritha priestesses. If a general agreement could not be made then the most highly respected Eiritha priestess made the decision. One among them was appointed to tie the correct knot and, amid great drumming and shouting by the assembled tribespeople, tied in another record of the year's history.

Not surprisingly, the different tribes quantify the varying years differently. One which is poor for the bison is often acceptable to the impala.

I counted up all these three which I investigated closely. They had 157, 231, and 36 knots each. I asked Karabar if this was the number of years since they came to the Grazelands. He laughed and said it was the number of years since Halkswaha started everyone counting, and that his ancestors had been here for thirty six generations since Waha sent Arstanveks the Founder out of the Place of Once-told Secrets.



Harstal's Tale

by David Dunham

For four years, Harstal Verlainsson of the Locaem apprenticed to Sora Goodseller of the Hendriki. He kept the accounts of the caravan, and also compiled this log.

Our caravan left from the Building Wall, which resembles nothing so much as the coral Sora had obtained from some mermen in Nochet. In fact, less scrupulous traders are said to break off pieces of the wall and sell them to unsuspecting Sairdites for the price of coral. Sora proposed to use the Grazelands route¹ through Dragon Pass, since there were rumours of unrest in Sartar. She hired nine Grazers, or Pure Horsemen, of the Green Crown tribe².

Their leader, Avarkorda, wore many eagle feathers and gold disks in his hair. His face was painted with a red diagonal line under his left eye, and he had tattoos much like our own. He wore two gold earrings in his left ear, and a silver bracelet set with amber from Imther. The mane and tail of his horse Apple Stealer were also decorated with feathers and gold hoops. The horse also had a wide red stripe painted on its flank. He carried a bow in a golden case, several of the short lances these people use either from horse or on foot, and a sword in a mother-of-pearl inlaid scabbard of Esrolian make. I

estimated the total value of his possessions (not counting his horse) at 2000 sovereigns. The other warriors were named Barsdarin, Chukorda, Penroste, Dastandros, Saraskos, Yanorpolti, Hendron, and Jendetarl. They were of like appearance, though their decorations were not as elaborate, worth perhaps 1000 sovereigns, and some carried a mace or axe instead of a sword. Sora argued with Avarkorda when he refused to take the Runnel Path, insisting she was mistaken. Sora was quite sure she had taken that route before, but finally had to give in³. For the rest of the day I had to talk to the guards. I know

little of their language, but luckily they all had some Trader's Talk. Avarkorda did most of the talking, but Penroste was more fluent.

Avarkorda pointed out Sunelf Hill, where the wood people worship Yelmalio, and said we were in Green Crown tribal pastures. We were soon met by three young warriors, carrying bow cases but no lances⁴. They wore feathers, but had a only single gold earring each. They led us to their tribe's camp, a circle of free-standing tents. The outer circle was made up of warrior's tents, and surrounded by a crude fence of brush.

Inside were more tents, with a large white tent which served as a temple at the centre. Something in this tent glowed redly all night and made deep rumbling sounds. Weeds grew up around the tents, which appeared to have been pitched here for at least a season. Children stared at us, but kept their distance, and were strangely quiet.

Jardanraltan, king of the Green Crown tribe, gave us hospitality. His tent was filled with many fine items, including a rug woven in Kralorela⁵. Serving maidens in soft leather dresses brought platters of venison and round barley and wheat loaves.

Everyone waited until Jardanraltan ate before starting. I found it hard to drink the sour milk⁶ we

were served, but the Grazers drank bowl after bowl of the stuff. Jardanraltan asked many questions about Esrolia, and I found it easy to believe he had once led many raiding parties there. An elder gave a puppet show of the Feathered Horse Queen and her warriors chasing the Red Emperor out of the Grazelands. Sora found it amusing, but I couldn't make out the words.

We travelled through Seven Foals Vale to Rich Post, where Sora traded with the local tribes. Though the town was a major market, the shrine to Issaries⁷ was in poor repair, and I myself polished the statue and donated beeswax candles worth 15 sovereigns. I was pleased to see the shrine to the Red Goddess was even more run down. We continued climbing the Dragonspine Hills, which were covered with yellow-orange flowers called Kargzant's Kiss, and almost looked like they were on fire.

As we headed down into Hiia's Valley, a dozen riders galloped down a hill, whooping and yelling something even I could tell was hostile. Our guards immediately charged them, dodging the arrows fired at them. I raised my crossbow but Sora stopped me⁸. The horsemen were now thrusting at each other with their lances, leaning far out of the saddle as they rode by each other. Someone fell, and I cast a Longview to see who

it was. One of the attackers was trying to rise, but Chukorda managed to capture his horse. I was surprised to see everyone using decorated lances

that appeared oddly defenceless with no earthworks¹¹, and traded a pig for some spices. Sora herself roasted it, and I learned that her reputation as a cook was well-earned. Our escort refused to eat it, saying that it was unclean¹². The Venderi also paid in coin for ten ells of blue cloth, and the Grazers seemed proud that their slaves had money.

I was completely unprepared for the spectacle we found in Redburn Valley. Dozens of bright red horses¹³ pranced in rows. Covered wagons of every colour followed, some trailing incense. Beside them, in step, marched warriors in armour like huge turtle shells, carrying naked swords¹⁴. On a golden horse rode a woman old enough to be my mother, but as lovely as Estal of Durnsa, though she was as tall as I am.

with no tips⁹. Finally, the attackers were driven off. Chukorda was very pleased with himself, saying he now had ten horses and could buy a wife.

We continued cautiously. On reaching the river, we could see the grimy smoke rising from Smoking Ruin¹⁰. When we entered the Maresmile tribe's pastures, we were approached by four Venderi, or field slaves. When they were about ten paces away, they fell to their faces and crawled the rest of the way, whining piteously in a language much like Esrolite. Apparently they sought permission to trade with the caravan, which Avarkorda granted. They took us to a longhouse





She wore a cap of eagle feathers, a white leather jacket covered in beadwork, and a skirt of iridescent green plumes. Gold bracelets completely covered her arms, and she wore long, feathered gloves. Around her neck hung a priceless ruby the size of my fist. The breeze blew a bright gingery perfume, and I felt giddy. The hand puppet had not prepared me for the Feathered Horse Queen. Sora and I dismounted, while our escort reared their horses and waved their lances as she passed.

We crossed Jaldon's Wrong River at the aptly-named town of Tollford, and continued downstream. We passed a slow-moving wagon pulled by four horses, driven by a youth not old enough to wear a feather. Seated cross-legged next to him was a shaman in trance, the left half of his body painted with Grazer designs, the right tattooed much like the Aggari. Under the wagon's coverings something was brightly glowing even in daylight, and there was an odd smell, like a lightning strike close by.

As we headed down past the many cataracts, one of the mules slipped, breaking its leg and spilling part of the load. Sora was concerned that we had somehow offended either a mountain spirit or the river, since her mules were normally so sure-footed. Avarkorda confessed that his tribe didn't get along well with the Sky Bow tribe who lived here, so I was left to heal the mule as best I could while they both held a sacrifice to the local spirits.

We made it out of the mountains into Maregraze Vale with no further incident, though the river was still interrupted by cataracts every hour or so. Sora set up a camp and sent out two riders, who returned with a group of Hoof Dancer tribesmen and a herd of horses. Enasdril Firehand, the most senior of the Hoof Dancers, refused to deal with a woman, so I had to negotiate on Sora's behalf for a pure white horse. Luckily Sora used Mindspeaking to tell me what to say, though she still ended up paying three times the usual price for a stallion of its quality. This didn't seem to bother her, and she named the horse Snowflower, started riding him, and wouldn't let anyone else care for him. I think this horse was the real reason she chose the Grazelands route.



Harstal's Footnotes

- 1) Sora could have taken either route, though with her mules the advantage of river travel through Sartar would be reduced. (This advantage was no longer available to the Lunars after they made the Ducks the scapegoats of Starbrow's Rebellion.) The Grazers set a high escort price, making their route more expensive.
- 2) Technically the subdivisions of the Grazers are patrilineal clans.
- 3) Grazer escorts vary the route they lead caravans on, to ensure the traders don't remember the path.
- 4) They were in the Rider age group.
- 5) Many Kralorelan floor coverings have solar motifs.
- 6) Koumiss.
- 7) This is probably the same altar that Sartar set up as a gift to the first Feathered Horse Queen.
- 8) Sora is apparently aware of the mock attacks staged on caravans through the Grazelands, used to justify the high price of guards.
- 9) Coup sticks.
- 10) After two troll armies defeated a force of dragonewts in a battle called "Uz Eats Dragonewts," they were defeated by the main dragonewt army, and their corpses burned as an insult. For over 400 years, the ruins where the pyre was built have kept smoking, and no troll has been able to contact their ancestors who were burnt there.
- 11) The vendref keep many Orlanthi customs, such as architecture, but the Grazers no longer allow them any defences.
- 12) Grazers eat no herded animal except horse.
- 13) Probably painted.
- 14) The traditional armour of the Hiia Swordsman cult. Hiia supposedly wore turtle shell armour when he first met the Grazers in Dragon Pass. The Feathered Horse Queen's vendref bodyguards have special dispensation to ride, so these may be on foot for political or ceremonial reasons.

Why Little Brother Don't Come To Visit My Home No More

by Scott Schneider

As the youngest of Dad's sons, Little Brother could expect to gain little in the way of inheritance, except for what he could take through force (a joke), acquire through theft (he's good at that!), or trick through guile (a master!). Once, he came to visit Big Brother Storm Bull Storm, who was celebrating our latest victory in King Genert's palace with his boon companions (that's us – we make a lot of noise). Storm Bull sat drinking (sprawled guzzling) with his fellow warriors, watching the antics of a large, tuft-eared cat, who had the ga-metal skulls of Bull Storm's latest triumph tied to its tail. The table roared with laughter as we all watched the cat run around and around in circles, trying to escape from the hideous metal heads chasing it.

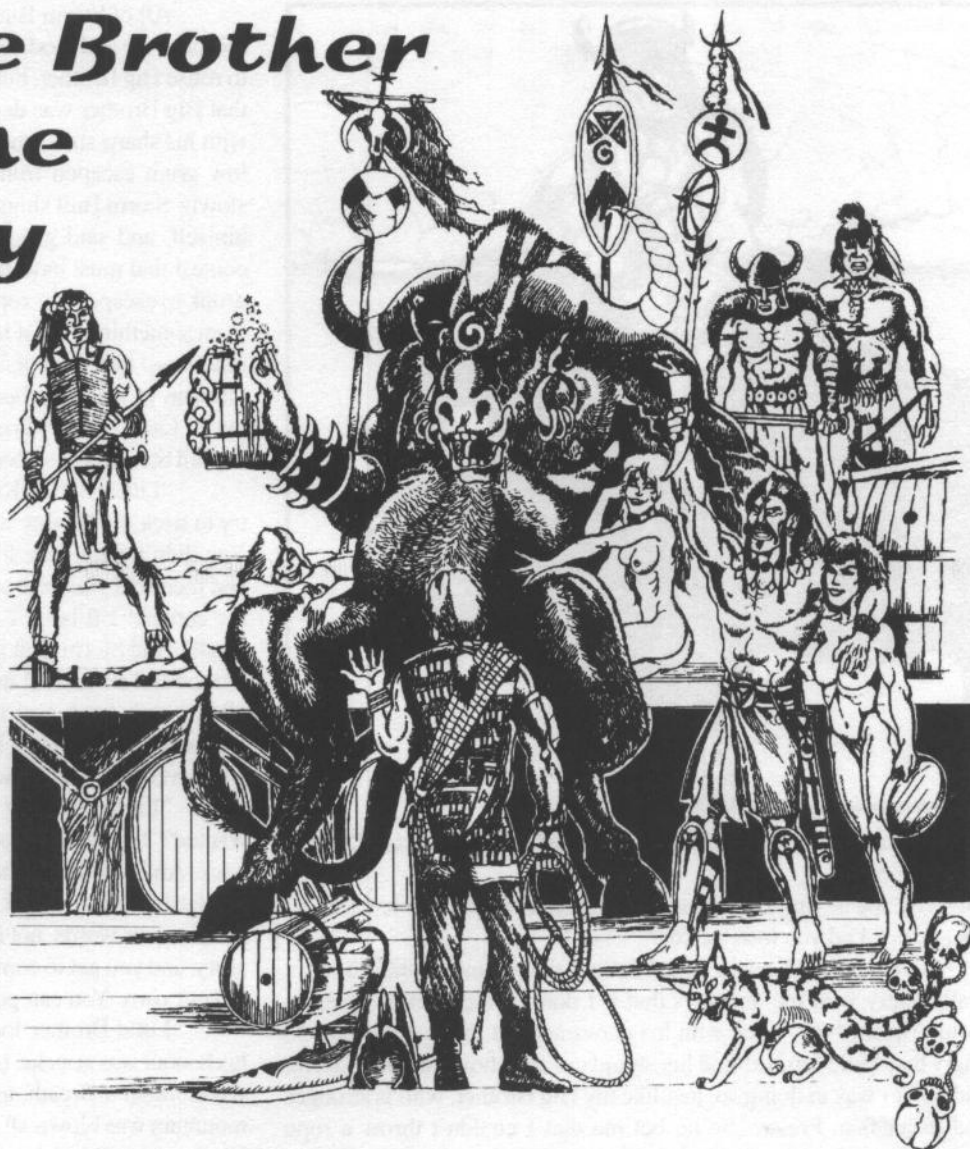
"Little Brother! Little Brother! What brings you to my King's Home? Did you run away again? And what do you have in your bag?"

"Oh, nothing but some toys I picked up, oh great and glorious Storm Brother. I just came by to see how you fared. By the way, I heard from Brother Wind-Spirit Master that you have just destroyed all of the small Jarla-Folk, again heaping enormous glory and honour on our family's name. Father must be real proud of you. With all of your triumphs, will you leave me nothing else to day, no deeds to gain such praise of kindness and compassion as you always do? Of course, I've come to honour you by sharing in your victory party!

As usual, Little Brother spoke words that sounded long-winded and compli-, complicat-, fancy to Storm Bull. And, as usual, Storm Bull was suspicious. But, as usual, Storm Bull had drunk a prodigious amount of kvass and ale.

"Of course there are always enough foes for everyone to conquer and destroy," bellowed Storm Bull. Come, sit down, pick up a horn and a wench (hear! hear!) and guzzle sweet lips and drink."

"No, no, I must be going soon, and just stopped for a moment," said Little Brother. "But... I was wondering if you could help me with



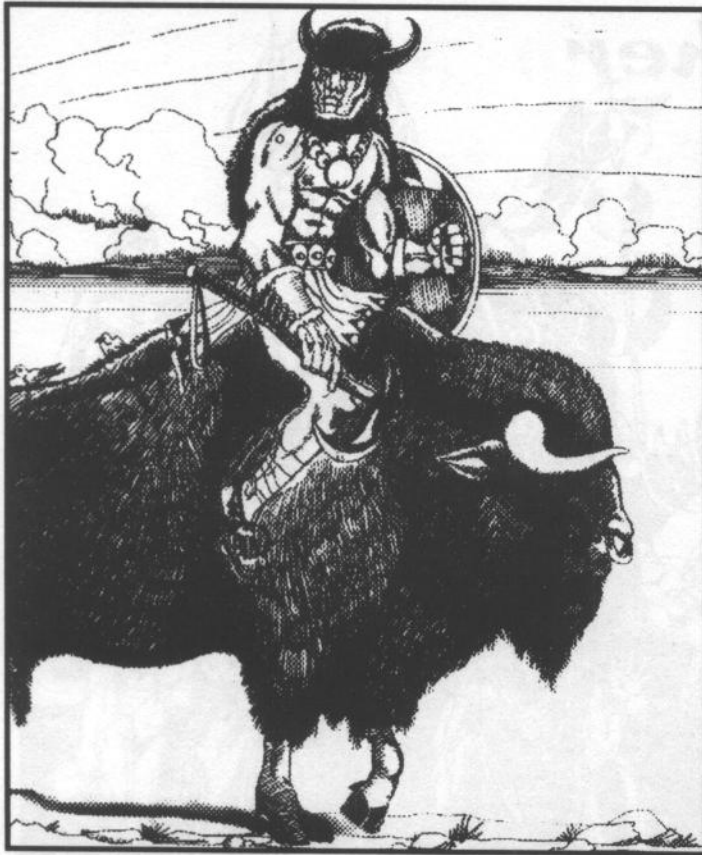
something. I made a small bet with Fralar, Mother's Bed-Husband, that You were so fast that no one could throw a rope around You, and, if someone could possibly get it around those big shoulders of yours, that the rope couldn't hold. Mother's Bed-Husband didn't believe that, but I know you better."

"Uh, What kind of trouble are you in now, Little Brother? Who is this Frolart?... Did you say... bet? What are the stakes?"

"Oh, nothing important, Big Brother. I'm just looking for a pet cat of Fralar's that was lost. Looks kind of like that one over there." Little Brother pointed to that ragged, howling creature with the skulls attached to its tail. The cat stopped its squallings, arched its back, and purred at Little Brother.

It then went back to its yammering. "I, uh, I promised that I would find my Mother's Bed-Husband's pet. But since Fralar can't see too well, any cat will do. How about I take that one and be going?"

"Little Brother, Teller-of-Stories, Little Brother, Stay-at-Home in-Caves! I may be drunk (cheers), and I may be dumb (more cheers), but I'm not stupid. That's a pretty shitty story, and what do I have to do with finding a damn cat? Why did you make a bet that concerns



me? You speak with one word but blow with another. What are you not saying? Did you lose the cat?"

"Uh, Well, I guess, Big Brother, that I kind of did. Fralar's really angry with me and says that if I don't bring back his pet, he would rip my belly open with his claws and eat my ... And I got so angry that I told him I'd find his stupid cat and show him how strong and swift I was in doing so, just like my Big Brother, who is stronger and faster than Fralar. So he bet me that I couldn't throw a rope around you and hold you. I told him that I could. But I know that I can't. Can you help me with this, Big Brother?"

"Why, of course, Little Brother. But then, I made a bet that I need your help with. OK?"

With that, Little Brother pulled a rope out of his bag, and a sharpened stick. With the rope, he tied a loop at one end, and then began to twirl the rope around and around his head, making the secret sign of Little Brother. Storm Bull followed it and followed it and followed it, getting dizzy and dizzy. Little Brother let the twirling rope fly, landing around Storm Bull's shoulders; at the same time, Storm Bull, having drunk a little too much (it's never too much!!) at his victory celebration, and getting the whirly from watching Little Brother's rope tricks, suddenly threw up a great stream of ale and kvass, and promptly passed out cold. He crashed to the floor, narrowly missing some of the naked serving wenches (bring on the women!!). Little Brother was pulled down in a heap, the rope burning his hands as he tried to hold on.

All of Storm Bull's companions roared with laughter, calling for more ale and food. Little Brother tried, despite his burning hands, to rouse Big Brother, but nothing worked. In fear, because he thought that Big Brother was dead, Little Brother began to poke Big Brother with his sharp stick, sticking him here and there. After many stabs, a low grunt escaped from Storm Bull's lips, his mighty head shook slowly. Storm Bull sluggishly got himself up to his hooves, scratched himself, and said groggily: "Little Brother! Little Brother! What a contest that must have been. Did I win? I guess that I was a little too drunk to escape your rope, and my head still rings, and my flanks hurt from something I must have fallen on, and I have too much water that must pass! Let's go outside to relieve my loins, and breathe in Father's Domain to clear my head! And shut that cat up! It makes my head hurt!" Little Brother brought the cat outside with them. (That's what we call Storm Bull's Secret Spray Oasis, known only to us Berserkers.)

"Little Brother Know-It-All! Little Brother Wet-Breeches! You try to trick the Mighty Storm Bull with fancy words and silly games. You didn't come here for my triumphs. As usual, you cause trouble, and then find you have to fix it. It's no matter to me, now it's time for my contest! I'll bet... I told you to shut that cat up. It's hurting my head!" And Storm Bull grabbed the squalling cat by the tail, twirled it around and around till its tail snapped off except for a tuft, and fling it all the way back to Little Brother's home in the Western Hills. (Meooooow!!!) And a howl like that of a cat was heard thereafter whenever the wind blew right.

"Little Brother! Little Brother! Isn't that what you really wanted? To get your cat-brother back? Well, I helped you get him back. And now it's my turn for a contest. I bet that I can blow harder and farther than you can, anywhere and forever if I choose. Your wind is all in your words, not in your deeds, and that is why I always get the glory, and you get to come to the victory celebrations of others instead of your own. You can go first."

Little Brother looked worried, but had to go along, because his honour was at stake. Little Brother sighted a mountain, filled himself with Umath's Breath, and blew and blew, and blew. The top of the mountain was blown off, landing in the middle of the Pentlands. Little Brother was pleased with himself.

"Good try, Little Brother. Good try. But not good enough." Storm Bull then turned his back on Little Brother, scratched his head, rubbed his horns, belched and took a deep breath. Little Brother tried to see what Brother Storm was up to, and crept up behind his brother. With that, Storm Bull, Conqueror of Foes, Vanquisher of Slime, Guzzler of Ale, and Biggest of Big Brothers, let go the malodorous Bad Wind which he had been holding, blowing the shocked Little Brother out of Genert's Land, back to the distant hills of Little Brother's mother, the laughter and jokes of Storm Bull's boon companions ringing in Little Brother's ears. (Let's all make the Bad Wind Noise together. Ready? Go!)

"Ha! I'm through being the BUTT of your jokes, Little Brother (get it!! Ha! Ha!). Never come back to my King's Hall again, unless I'm not home." And Storm Bull and his boon companions went back to Genert's Hall to lift another several horns.



Ingineu

Swordsmith

A Humakti Sub-cult

by Duncan Rowlands

Ingineu was a Sword of Humakt when the World Council of Friends ruled Dragon Pass in the early Dawn Age. When Ingineu's mother revealed to him that his father was in fact Humakt, he became vain and arrogant, believing himself to be the greatest warrior of his time. He travelled for several years, fighting duels and participating in several of the small wars which punctuated the early Dawn Age, but although he was respected as a warrior no-one believed his claims of divine parentage. This disbelief grew to offend Ingineu so much that he determined to seek out his father and gain his acknowledgement.

After much searching Ingineu discovered a way into the Old Time and found his way to the Tourney Fields where Kargan Tor, God of Conflict, presided over the fights of the young gods before Death was found. Here he found many demigods and other immortals fighting, and Humakt sitting in the place of Kargan Tor. Ingineu sought to prove himself before his father and fought many of the beings there, defeating them all, but Humakt would not speak to him.

Ingineu was growing increasingly angry at Humakt's refusal to acknowledge him when he saw a large, burly man carrying a huge hammer approaching with a cart full of fine weapons of many types. Ingineu thought in his arrogance that if he could defeat this newcomer then Humakt would be forced to acknowledge him and so he challenged the newcomer (whom he only belatedly noticed was limping). All present were shocked by Ingineu's impudence at challenging Lodril, but Lodril accepted the challenge on the condition that if Ingineu lost then he must work for Lodril as his thrall. Ingineu, confident in his own ability, agreed to this condition and they prepared to duel. Ingineu launched a dramatic attack immediately the duel commenced, but his sword failed to penetrate Lodril's leather apron. Unfortunately, Ingineu had rashly over-extended on his attack and was unable to bring his sword up in time to parry the blow from Lodril's hammer which struck him on the head, rendering him senseless.

As a consequence of this Ingineu went to work for Lodril at his forge for several years, learning the secrets of smithing and the greater lessons of humility and respect. After he had learnt these lessons Lodril released him from his service and laid upon him the geas that he must always carry a hammer in memory of his arrogance and his chastisement, but never use it in combat.

Ingineu returned to Kargan Tor's court and showed Humakt the things that he had learnt at Lodril's forge. Humakt recognised the changes in Ingineu and the humility he now expressed, and accepted him as his son.



The subcult of Ingenew Swordsmith is the source of the high quality, and frequently enchanted, swords possessed by Humakti, and many Humakti armourers belong to this subcult. The members of the subcult may learn several skills and spells not usually available to other Humakti. The subcult teaches the skills of Enchant, Evaluate, Craft/Armouring and Craft/Swordsmithing; and the Spirit magic spells of Armouring Enchantment, Heat Metal, Ignite, Magic Point Matrix Enchantment, Mould Metal, Strong Hammer and Spell Matrix Enchantment. The subcult also teaches the Divine magic spells of Bless Forge and Enchant Iron.

Members of the subcult of Ingenew Swordsmith must never knowingly supply poor quality goods or overcharge fellow Humakti. They must always carry a hammer in remembrance of Ingenew's history, but never use one in combat. This hammer may be merely a piece of jewellery, or a functional smithing tool. Members who wish to become Swords of Humakt may include the skill of Swordsmithing in the list of optional skills for acceptance.

The subcult of Ingenew Swordsmith is prevalent in Dragon Pass and is also common in the Holy Country. Occasional shrines are known to exist in Western Relios and other areas where members of the subcult have travelled. A shrine exists in the Humakt temple in Pavis, established by the Sartarite immigrants in 1603. Shrines to Ingenew teach the Divine spells of Bless Forge and Enchant Iron.

Humakti in these areas will rarely buy their martial equipment, particularly swords, from armourers who are not members of this subcult, as they can be sure they are getting top quality goods for a fair price when dealing with their co-religionists. This almost guaranteed market, together with customers from outside the Humakt cult, results in Ingenew smiths almost never being short of work or money. Smiths using a temple's facilities must donate 20% of the profit from the sale of goods to the temple in addition to their normal tithes.

Special Ingenew Skill

Swordsmithing (Craft, 00%)

Whilst the craft skill of armouring enables a person to make normal weapons, shields, armour and smithing tools, this special skill allows the manufacture of high quality swords from suitable raw materials provided the user has time and access to requisite tools. A person's Swordsmithing ability may never exceed their ability in armouring. A successful use of this skill creates a sword with +1 armour point, whilst a special success results in a sword with +1D3 AP and 10% less encumbrance. A critical success creates a sword with 1D3+3 AP, 20% less encumbrance, +5% to hit and parry, +1 damage and -1 strike rank (but never less than one).

A skill roll above a person's Swordsmithing skill but below their armouring skill results in a normal sword being created, whilst a roll above both ability scores results in a sword with -2 AP, -5% to hit and parry, -1 damage and a 20% increase in encumbrance, although the sword may be re-forged. A fumbled skill roll results in a totally ruined lump of scrap metal unsuitable for forging, and a dangerous accident.

Ingenew Spirit Magic

Heat Metal

variable, touch, temporal, passive

This spell causes 1 ENC of metal to heat up by one level of heat intensity per point cast, making the metal malleable for forging. It takes about a minute to heat up to full temperature and optimum forging temperature is 88% of a metal's melting point. The caster can control the heat imparted to an item to prevent unwanted melting.

Mould Metal

2 points

range 1m, temporal, active

This spell enables the caster to shape a metal item which has been heated to at least 50% of its melting point, either by normal fire or magical heat. Normal weapons and armour, and items up to the size of a wagon axle, may be shaped by means of this spell. The caster must concentrate upon the shape desired for between one and five minutes, depending on the shape's complexity, and the caster must be familiar with the shape to be able to produce good quality work. The caster must also succeed in a relevant craft skill roll. The item retains whatever shape it has when the caster ceases to concentrate or the spell expires. This spell is often used to create finely detailed embellishments, such as animal heads, on sword pommels and other equipment, and to mend such items. An item mended by this spell will regain its full armour points without destroying any enchantments held.

Strong Hammer

2 points

touch, temporal, passive

This spell may only be cast on a smithing hammer and adds 10% to the user's craft skills of armouring and swordsmithing. It enables a smith to shape any metal with a hammer made of a weaker metal, such as forging iron with a bronze hammer, which is not normally possible.

Ingenew Divine Magic

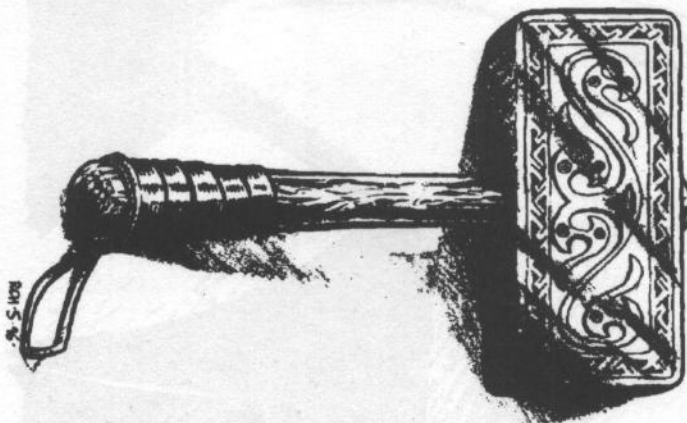
Bless Forge

1 point

ritual enchantment, reusable

This ritual may be performed over a member's favourite smithing tool, usually his hammer, or upon an entire forge. The area affected by the spell is either just the person using the tool in the first application or everyone working in the forge in the second. It is, of course, much more mobile in its first application.

Each point of Power sacrificed in the enchantment increases the intensity and duration of heat metal spells and the duration of strong hammer spells by a factor of one. Thus a one point enchantment doubles the effect of such spells while a two point enchantment triples the effect. In addition, any damage taken in the course of smithing, such as accidents or handling hot metal, is reduced by the same factor.



No-Go: Both the easiest and hardest route to the top of the Plateau of Statues. The way up is comparatively safe, save for Desiccation Bees, the risk of death by thirst, and ambushes. But the trail ends at a dark and forbidding castle of madness, haunted by boggles. To enter the Plateau, one must enter the castle, brave the boggles' hospitality, and survive.

Only Safe: The only fully human settlement in the Hills is found in a fairly lush canyon on their western edge. Only Safe is inhabited, guarded, and ruled by an itinerant population of berserks, their slaves, and friends. Fierce khans guard entry to the valley and the untainted spring which rises at one end. The Storm Bulls here are not famous for their friendliness to strangers.

Than-Ulbar: The nearest approach to a city in the Wastes, Than-Ulbar spreads like a cancer in and around an old blown-out volcano. Lava tubes and chewed-out tunnels criss-cross the area. The volcano, already hollow, has been riddled with crawlways for the goblins. The volcano's crater

holds a bottomless lake and is Than-Ulbar's source of water. This place is reputedly the largest temple to Thanatar in the world and is rumoured to hold the skull of Atyar deep within its precincts. The goblins who dwell here raid the western wastes, ranging as far as Kralorela and Teshno's for trophies.

Upward Crack: This is a narrow crevice leading to the top of the Plateau of Statues which requires climbing gear and great dexterity. It opens just south of the Valley of Pinnacles. Near the top it is very rocky and climbs to vertical surfaces, and in one place the rock angles past vertical (climbers must cling upside-down to the rock). Often, creatures at the top roll boulders down on unfortunate climbers.

Valley of the Pinnacles: Volcanic cones dot the valley floor, otherwise roamed by degenerate humans and other krjalki.

Weeping Valley: No one is known to have ever returned from this valley, whence moans, howls of pain, and shrieks constantly emit. The Storm Bulls of Only Safe say that many brave men have gone to Weeping Valley and returned, but that none of them ever speak about what they found there.



Sandy & Jeff's Notes:

- (1) This dialogue, skipped over by the sorcerer-author of the log, was pretty funny. The party was dying of thirst and the kindly boggle kept tossing gold coins to them, to their frustration.
- (2) Jaranx, a High Llama Rider, had died on the way. Not his Llama, though.
- (3) All extremely appetising to them in their dehydrated state!
- (4) This bag contained all the chaos monsters that ever fought the boggles and lost.
- (5) Water was a very serious problem all the time the party was in the Wastes, and even more in the parched Hills. The problem of water supply was constantly on their minds.
- (6) Slagstone the uzko remained bright orange to the end of his life.
- (7) A primitive firearm.



The Plateau of Statues

Extracts from Jeff Okamoto's log of Sandy Petersen's Glorantha-spanning campaign

Upon reaching the top, we studied the castle. It was black and forbidding, with an open door. We went in, and followed a kind of tunnel to an open courtyard. Standing in the middle of the courtyard was a boggle.

"Water, water!" we cried.

"Here, have some gold!" was just about all it would reply¹.

This interplay lasted for awhile during which some other boggles dragged away Jaranx² and his llama. After more meaningless dialogue we discovered where they had taken him. Suspended over a banquet of potato chips, hardtack, and chilli peppers³ was the llama, which was excreting on the table below. And glued to the wall was Jaranx. Also in the room was a large clear cylinder filled with a clear substance: glass. Needless to say, none of us ate anything.

One of the boggles remarked, "Gee, he sure isn't much of a lively decoration, is he?", referring to Jaranx. So some other boggles proceeded to tickle the life back into him, to the amazement of all of us. The problem now was to get him down. Slagstone managed to solve that, using the table, the glass cylinder and his poleaxe.

With Slagstone punching and chewing his way through the plasterboard walls, we managed to reach a room filled with leather bags of all sizes. One gave a view down onto a huge landscape while another contained more wine than its size should have allowed. We drank deeply and filled our skins. The boggles invited us to look into a huge sack (20+ feet high), but we declined⁴.

Jaranx then asked a boggle for a way to get out onto the Plateau. It replied, "Follow your nose!" whereupon Jaranx's nose lengthened greatly. As we followed its curving path through the castle, it shrank back into his face, so that when we found a tunnel leading out it was only a foot long. It wouldn't grow any shorter. Slagstone offered to hack off about eleven inches, give or take an inch, but Jaranx declined. We marked the tunnel and descended onto the Plateau of Statues.

The first thing we noticed on our descent was a giant boggle about a hundred feet tall standing outside the castle. The only visible landmark was a kind of hill so we headed for it. It turned out to be a cooled lava flow. Heading west, we saw a huge statue of the mighty Storm Bull. It had horns of iron and was wielding a steel sword. The statue was atop a building with an open door leading to darkness. Varn wanted to go in but we quickly convinced him not to.

Low on wine, we headed towards the area marked on our map with Water Runes. There we found many fountains with clear, sweet water. We indulged ourselves. Strangely, there was one fountain that was empty. We put some water in it as a token of thanks and left.

Now we headed for the Stasis Runes for that was where Gorfang wanted to go. On our way though, we came across a gigantic corral with a huge horned man (not The Horned Man, said Jaranx). He was an Eiritha herdsman and he said that these animals fed on Truth and that to pass we would have to speak one. We did and continued on.

We finally got to a large city with buildings of stone, interspersed with buildings made of the Minerals of the Octamony. Inside each of these was a statue of that kind of Mostali, holding and/or wearing an object of its trade. Sometimes there were also objects lying on the ground. Slagstone took some things from the Lead Building but the rest of us took nothing. After spending the night, on Godsdays, we then traced our route back to the boggle castle.

Upon returning to the castle, we found that every single tunnel had been marked in the same way we had marked our initial exit! We chose one at random and went in. By bashing through more walls we made it to the exit. Sadly for us, it was only here we realised that we didn't have enough water to get back to Only Safe⁵. So, we tried to find our way back. We were getting thirsty as we tried to find our way back to the Plateau. Still inside the castle, Slagstone saw a passing boggle who was drinking something from a skin.

"What are you drinking?"

"Here, try it!"

So he did. And he turned bright orange⁶.

We made it back to the Brass Building and were about to leave when we heard something inside the Iron Building. Investigating, we saw three dwarfs (Mostali?), one of whom had the chaotic feature of vomiting acid, and who would drink potions every so often. One of them had a thunderstick⁷, the others iron great swords. We defeated them, quickly stripped them of weapons, potions, and the thunderstick. Gorfang contented himself with taking enough armour to make a suit for himself. We filled up with water at the fountains and headed back to the castle. Along the way we thought we were being followed but couldn't get real proof.

Back at the castle, the giant boggle didn't want to let us back in. Fortunately, we were able to dodge his clumsy attempts to stop us and made it back inside the castle. We made it through okay, but at the exit stood an armed and armoured boggle. Slagstone quickly engaged it while the rest of us slipped past. It was a difficult fight for Slagstone because whenever he damaged the boggle, it would simply blow itself back up through its thumb! Eventually, he wounded the boggle in so many places that it couldn't blow itself up quickly enough before Slagstone was able to escape.



Down Under Surfacing: Impressions of RQ Con Down Under

by Michael O'Brien

(with some help from co-organisers John Hughes and Andrew Bean)

While that venerable RPG RuneQuest is struggling - or at best moribund (for there's talk of a new edition coming out) - Greg Stafford's fantasy world of Glorantha, the setting for RQ, is alive and prospering, with an assortment of fanzines, internet groups, live action freeforms and conventions, all devoted to the "suarish, bulging lozenge" that is Glorantha. And in January 1996, it was Australia's turn to play host to the worldwide RQ tribe.

Unlike the previous RQ Cons, which were held in plush hotels in the United States, RQ Con Down Under was based at a government primary school in the outer eastern suburbs of Melbourne, Victoria. Despite the difference in the quality of our surrounds (and the size of the chairs), the Australian con was by all accounts a great success. RQ Con Down Under was truly a meeting of the clan; happy, relaxed and with a true co-operative spirit, with the local convention fraternity giving us tremendous support. It was a chance to meet, to put faces to names only seen on the net, to chew the cud or chew the scenery, role-play, brainstorm and plan future projects.

Why a Primary School? Two reasons. Well, it was cheap, so cheap in fact, we could afford to bring out international guests. Rather than have a hotel/convention centre/university suck up our available funds, we invested in airfares for Greg Stafford, creator of Glorantha and Chaosium's designated personality, and Brits David Hall & Kevin Jacklin, chief designers of our Home of the Bold freeform (whose work to stage it was truly prodigious and inspiring) and Nick Brooke, the walking Gloranthan encyclopaedia, whose energy levels were astounding. We also invited Sandy Petersen, but he was up to his armpits in DOOM's successor QUAKE and couldn't be spared. As I know from personal experience that Sandy barely takes time to breathe at cons, he was greatly missed.

Oh, and the other reason why we chose Bayswater Primary School? I work there, it was school holidays, and we had free run of the place before, during and after, making it very easy to set up, run things and pack up. In contrast, RQ Con II was held at a busy hotel near the San Francisco airport; together with us we had the Kindergarten Teachers of America and the Red Cross in adjoining convention rooms, leading to a great deal of confusion (and some bemused faces, you bet!)

RQ Con Down Under was a smaller con on the scale of the such things; we had about 140 attendees, but this included 18 from overseas (not including our special guests) and over half from interstate. Many attendees have commented on how friendly and intimate the con was. There seemed to be very few attendees standing around bored; you could always drop into someone else's conversation about Glorantha if you had

a moment free, and our canteen, well-stocked and cheerfully managed by the sainted Lynn James, served as a focal point where people met to chat before heading off to the Nephilim Seminar, the Mythos demo, the various tournaments, the communal singing at Lunar Tunes or whatever.

Lowlights were few. Probably the worst thing we had happen was a canteen break-in on the first night. However, Primary School security ain't what it used to be, and within minutes the malefactor, a local "known to the police" was pinned to the ground by "Grip" and "Fang", the School Department rottweiler security hounds. The stolen slab of coke and box of jelly snakes were taken away as "evidence" by the cops. Fortunately the blagger just walked past "priceless" copies of *Wyrms Footnotes* and other out-of-print Chaosium material from the heyday of RPGs. Other lowlights included the bizarre weather conditions, even for Melbourne - 39 degrees one day, followed by hailstorms and freezing winds the next; and one Loki the Unsworn failing to turn up to run his Cthulhu tournament without apology or explanation, apparently the third time he has done this, and I for one will never trust the likes of him again.

Unlike most Australian role-playing cons, RQ Con was divided equally between role-playing and other activities, though we of course indulged in what is becoming an Australian con staple, Live Action Trollball. Full crunch and slo-mo Trollball were the order of the day, out on the Primary School footy oval, and were some of the best games I've seen for a long long time, featuring a special appearance by Neep the trollkin heroquester, aka Su, Wes Nicholson's 4 year old daughter. Them defeated Uz (Oz) 14-13, but the giant referee can't count*.

For the inveterate Gloranthan-holic, one the highlights of the con was Greg Stafford's address. Outside, and surrounded by a golden dusk, Greg recounted for the first time the full story of the many incarnations of the Red Goddess. Her dismemberment, descent, illumination ('Life is suffering, but suffering is not life') and gradual reascend is a beautiful and moving story, partially inspired by the Sumerian myth of Inanna. Over sixty attendees sat spellbound and speechless while Stafford spoke, and one of my fellow organisers John Hughes was said to have almost converted to the Lunar Way during the address, but ultimately saw sense (for non-Gloranthans out there, the Lunars are the often the bad guys of RQ, sweet and seductive, misunderstood and deadly).

Greg's storytelling was followed by the "Orlanthi Storytelling Contest", where attendees had the chance to tell their own tales of Glorantha. While a few overstepped the 10 minute time limit, the standard was excellent. I took time off my organising duties

to tell my tale about the Red Emperor (in which he gets up and has a pee), and although I don't think I quite had the Elvis impersonation that's part of it down pat, it was accepted with the air of wry, disgusted amusement I wanted it to be.

Gloranthan overload continued on the Sunday with the Gloranthan Lore Auction, where Stafford, ably assisted by 'the puppet-master' Nick Brooke - so-called because even Greg admits he knows more about Glorantha than he does - answered any question for a dollar. Well, I should say *almost* any question, for there are 7 questions Stafford will not answer. And yes, someone did waste a buck asking him "What are the Seven Questions?" - Greg's answer: "That's one of the Seven!"

However, the crowning glory of RQ Con Down Under was undoubtedly our feature event, the 81 player freeform "Home of the Bold". The Library wing of the school was transformed into the city of Boldhome, occupied by the evil Lunar Empire and with rebellion smouldering in the back alleys. This was the third running of this monster LARP, now a smash hit on three continents. With its multitude of characters, myriad plotlines (including the enigmatic "Trollkin Sex Manual") and detailed timeline, HotB is of about telephone book thickness, and a tribute to its tireless designers David Hall and Kevin Jacklin. While the RQ hard-core got a tremendous kick out of chewing scenery as Sartarite chieftains and Lunar nobs for 8 hours on the trot, the overall plot - Rise up in rebellion and overthrow our evil oppressors! Crush the revolt and punish the rebels! - is universal enough for non-Gloranthans to take on quickly, and soon found themselves immersed in the game. There truly was a real buzz of excitement and energy after the dinner break (spit roast!), when everyone knew there were only 2 hours to tie up the countless sub-plots running all over the place. So who won Home of the Bold in the end? The rebels or the Lunars? Put it this, a crucial moment in the game happened like this: early on, in Geo's Inn, that hotbed of sedition, it looked like one Orlanthi tribal king actually had all the Orlanthi rebels on side and united. He talked of freedom, he talked of lifting the Lunar Yoke, he talked of the common traditions of the people. Everyone was united, committed, inspired. It was very un-Orlanthi. From the back of the room, John Hughes, one of the referees, called out, "And when the land is free, who will be king?". The rest, so they say, is history...

* Nor was the trollish crowd literate. The traditional chant goes, "Give me a T, gimme an R, gimme an O, gimme an L, gimme another L. What does it spell?" To which the correct response is "Don't know!"



Plants of the Tunnelled Hills

More selections from Noted Botanist Rodin Greenbeak
(as translated by Eric Rowe)

WIREVINE

Filum Vitus



I had been told by my guides that Mostal's Graveyard was completely devoid of plant life, but as a good scholar I determined to check for myself. It was well I did too, for all about the edge of the ash-laden valley were clumps of small vines and shrubs, struggling to survive. Most of these were degenerate versions of native species. The one exception is the Wirevine plant, which I have seen only in this one valley.

The Wirevine is a robust variety of ivy with tendrils reaching out up to six feet from the base. Pentaform leaves are interspersed with aerial adventitious roots. The nominal feature is of course that the entire vine is metal. This is no doubt a reflection of the ambient chaos of the area, and I was surprised to find the plant so regularly formed across the several samples I harvested.

Trading later that week with some nomads, I noticed their possession of a handful of Wirevine leaves. It seems they trade irregularly with some of the Broos from the region. The Wirevine is one of the few sources of metal in the area and commands a high price from the nomads, who melt it to create weapons.

Despite my best culinary efforts, addition of any part of Wirevine in what I deemed a safe food preparation proved impossible. Sucking on a small leaf did at least provide a nasty, bitter metallic flavour.

Gamemaster Notes: Fully grown Wirevine plants produce about 2 ENC of medium-grade bronze, but Broo bands regularly harvest the area and usually take all the larger plants.

WEEPWORD

Fletus Radix



The Weepwort is the only plant I have classified as a vegetable in all my travels in the wastes. It is a scraggly purple-red root topped with small greyish tendrils that serve to identify it. It can be found in sparse clumps in only the driest parts of the wastes, including the Tunnelled Hills.

I had been alerted to look for the greyish tendrils and thus was able to gather several specimens. Half of them are promised to the Bison shaman who told me of them while we stayed in Only Safe. He promised they were safe from chaos and had potent magical essence. Further questioning on the subject only confused me as he began rattling on about spirits, visions, and other primitive rituals. I knew only proper biological analysis would determine their exact effects.

In the process of my examination of the plant, I extracted a reddish fluid from it. After it proved to have no harmful effect on my mice I tried a bit myself. The feeling created was intoxicating. The juice clearly has some sort of unusual hallucinogenic qualities. For the next few minutes I was unable to function and saw flashes of strange visions. The one most clear to me was of me working at my desk in Nochet, with a dark shadow approaching me slowly from behind.

When I regained my senses I noticed my companions all staring at me. According to them I was doing a great deal of moaning and thrashing about. All this was accompanied with enough tears dripping off my beak to thoroughly wet the front of my smoking jacket. Unfortunately, I was left with little sample material after all my experiments, and so have not had the opportunity to do further experimental study on this plant.

One of the lamentable reasons I did not return with any samples for storage is that Weepwort is delicious. I ate it raw, fried, boiled and stewed. Nothing lessened its sweet, beet-like flavour, and if anyone comes across some, the taste is worth the tears.

Gamemaster Notes: As Rodin discovered, Weepwort is a powerful hallucinogen. It also has a POWx5 chance of correctly predicting a future event in vague terms. Rodin's vision referred to his mysterious disappearance in 1616.

SNEEZEWEED - BLISTERWEED - BLINDWEED (Wakboth's Grass)

Sternuere - Pustulare - Occaecare (Herbae)

This festering pustulent weed caused our party no end of trouble in our travels about the Tunnelled Hills. It is virtually indistinguishable from the native scrub grass of the region. The only difference at all is the chaotic nature of this weed. If it were not so irritatingly common, I would classify it only as a chaotic aberration of the normal variety.

The chaos of these weeds manifests once you are well into a patch. Small dust sized particles are disturbed and lifted into the air where they affect passers by with one of three nasty effects. As is evidenced by the nomenclature, the effects are blindness, sneezing and blistering. The effect lasts only a few minutes, but in this place that can be lethal. We were fortunate only to be breaking out in blisters during one Broo raid.

The natives of the area differentiate the varieties by their effect. I, however, can not determine any actual botanical differences and remain unconvinced that it is not just one plant with a limited set of chaotic effects. We were never in one spot long enough to test my theory, so I have retained the tripartite nomenclature.

Lastly, all these nasty weeds are virtually tasteless. Bland as can be. Not to mention my stomach was upset for days afterwards.

Gamemaster Notes: This is one of those rare times Rodin is actually correct about a plant. Each patch manifests all three chaos effects. On any day determine randomly which effect any particular patch will have. The effects last 1d6 minutes and affect all who fail a CONx3 roll.





GUTWRACK (Raven's Treat)

Intestinum Doloris



One of the many chaotic cacti in the Tunnelled Hills region is the Gutwrack cactus. It stands about three feet tall and resembles a short rounded pillar. The spines on the Gutwrack are very tiny and soft, incapable of pricking a careless finger. A mature Gutwrack can be a full foot in diameter. This is caused by the abundance of water stored within its central stem.

In a desperately arid region such as this, such a source of water can be tempting. Don't let this fool you, though: the water can be lethal. And, if the water doesn't get you, you'll be that much easier for the broos to catch. My recommendation is to avoid water from any plant in this region unless the situation is life-threatening already. It is very difficult to distinguish this cactus from several other safe varieties. I have included a sample sketch as an additional guide.

With the poisonous water removed the cactus can act as a staple, if a bit bland, starchy food. I suggest scraping off the needles first though: they tend to tickle the throat.

Gamemaster Notes: Gutwrack acts as a poison of POT3D6. What few people know, including Rodin, is that if the water is kept away from the cactus for a day it loses its toxicity. It only remains poisonous while in the actual cactus.

DEATHSPINE

Spiculum Mortis



I first learned of this chaotic monstrosity of a plant when one of our guards carelessly leaned against a large cactus. There was a sudden popping sound, then foot-long spines were shooting in all directions. The unfortunate guard was beyond even the aid of healing magic, while two other guards and several horses required considerable medical assistance.

Closer examination of the plant remains, and then subsequent safe examination of other specimens, provided me with the following information. Each Deathspine (as I later learned was the native name for them) has several dozen wicked spines. The interior of the plant is a collection of gases, which is not my speciality and I have no solid guesses to their nature. When one of the spines is moved it somehow triggers a reaction in the gases causing the entire cactus to explode.

As with the rest of the chaotic vegetation in this area, it is best just to avoid the plant. The Deathspines, in particular, can be recognised by

their seed sacs. Each plant has several small sacs near the top of the cactus. When the plant explodes these are shot into the air and scattered by the wind.

For proper preparation of Deathspine, set it off at a safe distance. Then collect the pieces for a fine stew. The spines themselves can be used as excellent backscratchers.

Gamemaster Notes: When touched, the Deathspine explodes, sending spines in all directions. Everyone within 10 meters who fails a POWx5 roll is hit by a spine. If the roll is fumbled they are hit by 1d3 spines. Anyone within a meter of the Deathspine is hit by 1d10 spines. Each spine does 1d10 damage.

MALIA'S CURSE

Maledictum Malium



Malia's Curse is an innocent looking succulent with bright red flowers. At maturity the plant grows no higher than a few inches. The red flower can completely shade the plant, growing up to a foot in diameter. When not in bloom you can still identify this dangerous plant by the pink tint of the plant apex.

The flower is said to have been a favourite of Malia's before she turned to the ways of chaos. Once turned, her red flower became as infested as she was, and it overflows with disease. Anyone contacting the plant is in serious danger of contagion. Even being near it can be hazardous.

This is a great pity because the flower is rumoured to give one who wears it great luck with the ladies. As we had no white lady present to assist in a cleansing I did not gather any. I still regret not having a chance to at least nibble one of those lovely red petals.

Gamemaster Notes: Each Malia's Curse is packed full of infestation spirits so that anyone touching it while in bloom must make a CONx5 roll to avoid catching a random disease. While not in bloom there is no danger. If a flower can be picked and cleared of disease it can be worn until it dies several weeks later. While it is worn the wearer has an effective +3 to APP with members of the opposite sex.

LEECHPLANT

Sanguisugae Herbum



The Leechplant is a small desert scrub found in several of the chaos-tainted areas I have travelled. It rarely grows over a foot in height and it is so scraggly it usually contains fewer than four branches. Close examination of the

tiny leaves will reveal that each leaf resembles a small saucer. I have not been able to determine any reason or adaptive use for this.

An easier way to identify Leechplant is to spend time near one. They seem to drain your strength and make you terribly weary. I have heard tales of men who went to sleep near one and never rose again. Simply passing close to them appears to hold no danger, but it is wise to examine the flora in your area before you go to make camp.

Despite its rough and barren appearance, the Leechplant is rather good to eat. It must be ground up a bit first or you might scratch your mouth. After it is prepared, though, it can be added to salad for a little extra zing if you have no dried bread handy.

Gamemaster Notes: For every hour spent within 50 meters of a Leechplant, a person loses one point of temporary CON. If they have spent more than one hour they must make a current CONx5 roll or fall asleep where they are. If a person's CON reaches zero they no longer have the strength to continue breathing. Temporary CON is regained at a point a day.

[xxix.8900.soc.tasty-beverage.1]

From the "Meditations on a Tea Ceremony" by the venerable exarch Lap-Sang Su-Chong:

"It is when one partakes in the divine drink* that one is closest to oneness with the Void. The unfolding of the aroma and taste, a the liquid draws out the essence of the humble plant, mirrors the mind's awakening and apprehension of the nature of the cosmos. Just as a humble plant has within it the potential for the sublime, so do we contain within us the essence of the divine. To lose oneself in the smell and taste of tea is the first step in the path to enlightenment...

"...you have heard of the drink that the benighted foreigners call Ko Fee and I must tell you to beware this dangerous brew. Whereas tea will lead one to the void, this Ko Fee will lead one along mistaken paths. You can easily tell one who is caught up with this invidious drink, as he exhibits none of the serenity of the truly enlightened: his eyes are wide and bloodshot, his hand quivers as an outward show of his inward turmoil, and he can no longer seek the rest and recuperation of sleep and dreams. Truly this Ko Fee is a temptation that is best to be avoided, and yet more evidence for the wrongfulness of foreign ways."

*The introduction of tea is credited to the emperor who introduced civilised arts to the world: Shavaya, the emperor of Splendour.

The Tunneled Hills and Plateau of Statues



Weeping
Valley

Bagogix

Duck
Valley

Only Safe

Mostali
Graveyard

Akka

Than Ulbar

Valley of Pinnacles

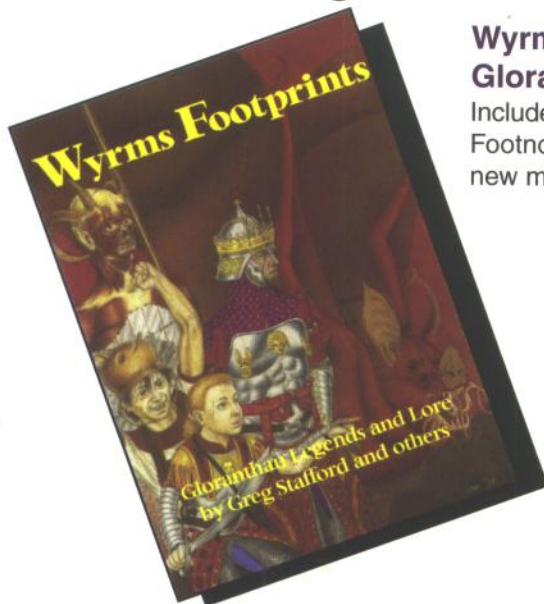
No-Go

Upward
Crack

Bloody Path



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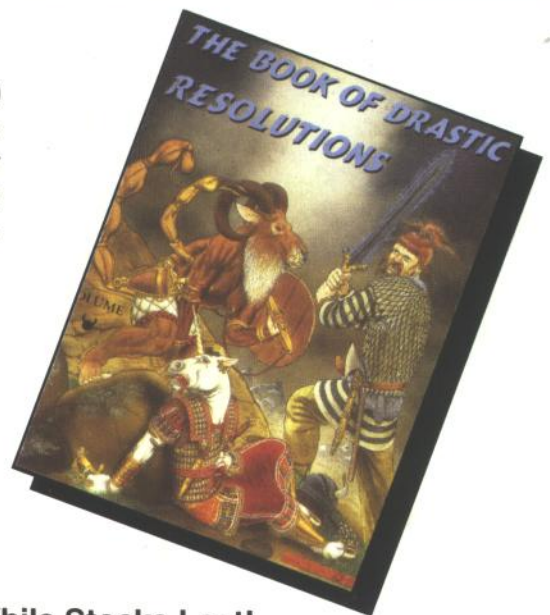
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