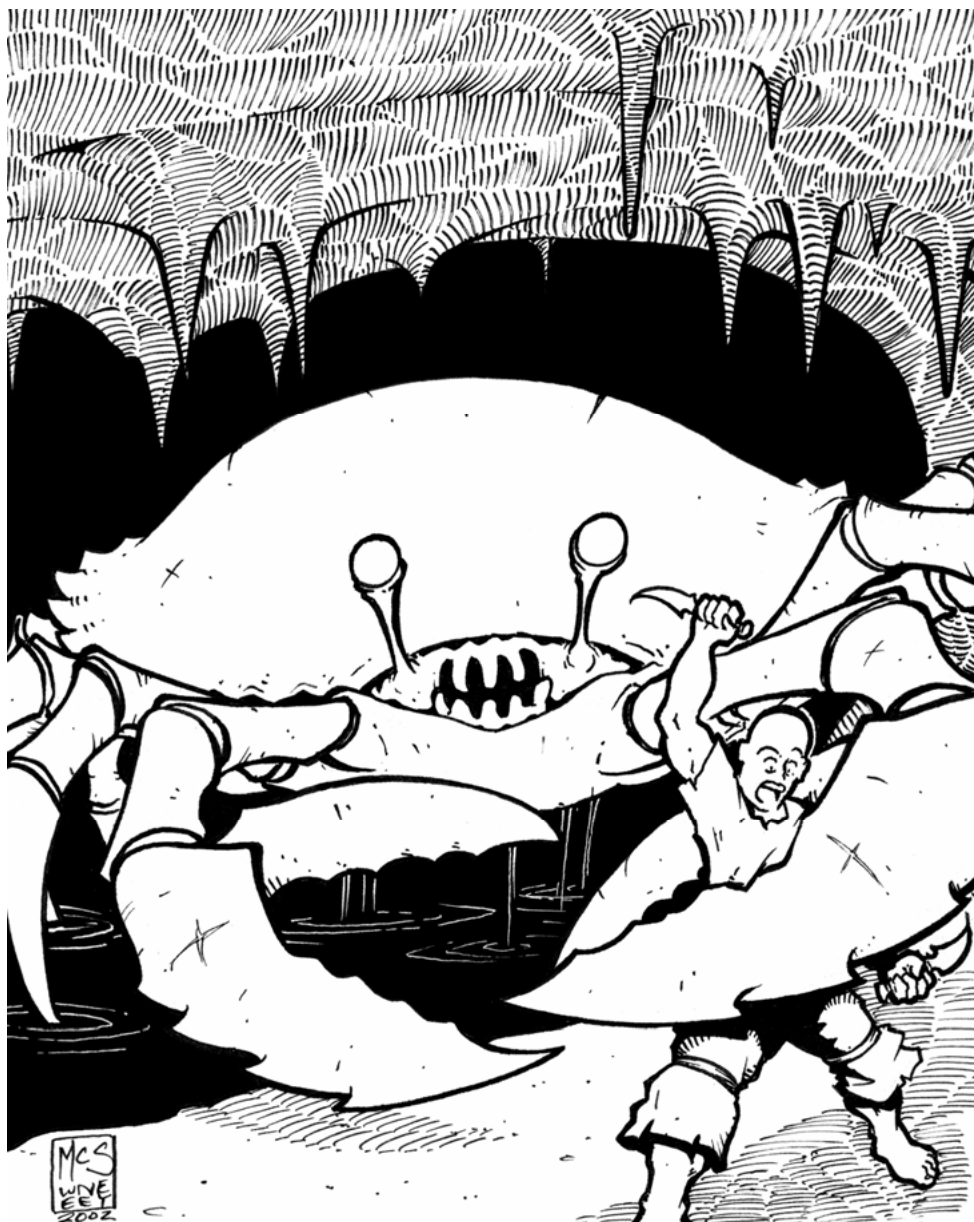




The Official Publication of the HackMaster Association



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WHAT IS THE HACKJOURNAL?

The HackJournal is a quarterly PDF fanzine designed specifically for (and by) the members of the HackMaster Association – an organization of HackMaster players and GameMasters who meet online and in person to discuss and play the HackMaster 4th edition roleplaying game.

This issue's game content contains GM's option material for the HackMaster game system.

HackJournal is published quarterly by:
Kenzer and Company
511 W. Greenwood Ave.
Waukegan, IL 60087

Post submissions for publication (in
future issues of HackJournal) on the
official Submission and Editing forum
of the Kenzer and Company website.

Electronic and e-mail submissions are
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Player's Advantage:

Noodlin Skill

By Steven P Rice (HMGMA#MO-1-01329-03)

Fishing: Noodlin

[Wisdom/Sophisticated/1 B.P.]

This character is skilled in the art of fishing without a line or net, using only his hands and/or feet. To fish in this way, the character wades into the water (usually a lake, creek or slow flowing river) and searches for holes beneath the water. When a hole is found, the character then sticks his hand or foot into the hole, looking to attract a bottom feeding fish living there. Use the table to determine if a fish or other creature is in the hole. A fish bites the character, inflicting 1d4 points of damage to the appropriate appendage. Now make a skill check.

A successful check means the character was able to snag the fish and pull it out. An unsuccessful check means that the fish let go or the character pulled out before grabbing hold of the fish. Apply damage even on failed checks.

1d20 Roll	Result
1-5	Character has snagged a water dwelling monster, treat as a random encounter
6-10	No fish present
11-20	An edible fish is present

There can be up to 2d10 Noodlin attempts made per hour. Druids who practice Noodlin receive a 1 point downward shift in temporal Honor per attempt, as this practice is not a good conservation practice; it catches fish while they are protecting their eggs after spawning.

Player's Advantage:

Talent: Linguistically Adept

By Steven P Rice (HMGMA#MO-1-01329-03)

Linguistically Adept: (5 BP)

[Any but Humans]

A character with this talent doubles the number of languages he can learn, up to a maximum of 14. The character may only reach Advanced level in half of the languages known. This talent does not give those Language skills; it only allows their purchase at the normal costs. This also does not affect the characters Intelligence score, it only allows for the learning of additional language skills. At least half of the languages purchased must be from the character's Available Languages list.

Variant: If you are using the new Language Rule from Knights of the Dinner Table #114, use the text below for this talent.

A character with this talent doubles the number of Language Families the character can learn from, up to a maximum of 14. Each language learned from the Isolate family count as one. The character may only reach Advanced level in half of the languages known. This talent does not give those Language skills; it only allows their purchase at the normal costs. This also does not affect the characters Intelligence score, it only allows for the learning of additional language skills.



Player's Advantage:

Adventuring 101: Proper Equipment (Part one)

By Joe Stevenson *HMGMA #NJ-3-00632-02* and
D. M. Zwerg *HMGMA WI-7-0027-01*

Introduction

Some of us old-school gamers have noticed a certain disturbing trend. Most gamers new to HackMaster and even quite a few so-called "old-school" who should know better, are NOT carrying what we "old-timers" consider standard adventuring equipment. Back in the day, our characters would not be caught dead without most of this equipment on them and survived as long as they did BECAUSE they carried all of this gear. This includes a 10' pole, 50' or more of rope, iron spikes, sacks, torches or a lantern, flasks of oil, a mule, and for some a sack of flour. The purpose of this series of articles is to help re-educate new and old-school players on the myriad and sundry uses of these essential pieces of equipment and thus hopefully again raise the bar for truly superior HackMaster play, both in home games and at major tournaments.

Each article will go into depth on what skills, if any, are needed to make and or use each piece of equipment, what uses can be accomplished without taking any particular skills, statistics for the equipment where it may have been lacking in the HackMaster® 4th Edition Player's Handbook (dang interns). Along the way, we'll go into how many of the items may be used in combination to dramatically increase treasure hauls and other functions.

This article is intended to be the first in a series touting the uses of common dungeon equipment.

Part 1 - The A-to-Zs of the 10' Pole

When I joined my first HackMaster campaign, I was so excited! It reminded me of the old days. After rolling up my character, I dutifully sat down and chose my starting equipment. I didn't have a lot of money, so I was very careful to make sure I had the essentials covered. I made sure I had the old standards: 50' of rope, torches, a bull's-eye lantern, iron spikes, grappling hook, etc. But I was shocked to find that the ubiquitous 10' pole was nowhere to be found!

At the first session, I sat down with the GM to discuss this oversight. After setting a price for this essential tool, I proudly added one to my list. One of the other players asked to look at my equipment list, so I handed it over. He asked, to my shock and dismay:

"What good are iron spikes?? Does anyone use a 10' pole??"

I did my best to explain, but he and the other players (all newbies and/or World of Hack Craft players) remained unconvinced. I finally responded; "You'll see"

By the end of the session, the 10' pole was the most used item.

The 10' pole is one of the most overlooked items in the dungeon crawler's arsenal. In fact, it is so overlooked that it was left out of the HackMaster equipment lists entirely. Many of the younger RPGers are probably wondering, "What good is a 10' pole?" but we old-timers know that the uses are almost unlimited.

At 10', a typical pole is much longer than a quarterstaff or a spear, and more the length of a light or medium lance or a long spear. Although these other items can be put to many of the same uses as a 10' pole, they should in no way be considered an ideal replacement as none of them can replicate the pure versatility. The greatest thing about a 10' pole is its price, the same as a quarterstaff or club, a.k.a. free.

Some lesser GMs may try to make an ordeal out of a player getting any equipment free, but anyone with a knife, dagger, hatchet or axe can easily construct a 10' pole, club or quarterstaff in less than an hour, even if the character does not have Carpentry or any other special skills. When looking at a medieval society, one must remember that skills we think of today as specialized, or as hobbies, were basic to everyday life back then, including the manufacture of wooden items such as fences, spoons, and even bowls.

Anyone with tools can make crude carving, but specialists would be needed only to make intricate carvings, joinery, furniture, and so forth, and to supervise building projects. Wooden handles, clubs, and so forth were as common then as using a TV remote or video game controller is today. I have personally whittled numerous tent stakes, carved simple objects, and even cut down a box elder sapling with a knife and carved it into a nice staff, taking extra time to add in a notch for holding a lantern as well as selective peeling of the bark.

Although any character with access to the wood can make a 10' pole in merely a few hours, GMs may also make them available for 2 sp or less. A typical 10' pole weighs 5 pounds or more depending on the thickness of the pole and type of wood (dwarven steelwood, ash and teak tending to be heavier and pine tending to be lighter).

Now then, so far I have mentioned that a 10' pole has a myriad of uses but have not gone into them. What follows are just a few of the 101 uses for a 10' pole. It is by no means complete, but it should be enough to convince players of the value of the 10' pole.

As you can see, even the half dozen or so uses I have mentioned may make you wonder why your character doesn't have one already!

A) Acrobatics. A pole is useful as a balancing rod while walking across a plank or tightrope. If leaned against a wall a pole can be walked up like a tightrope, as long as the angle is 45 degrees or less. If a flexible pole is held between two people, it can be bounced on like a trampoline or used to lift or throw a character out of a pit. If no helpers are present, a flexible pole could still be leaned against a wall and jumped upon like a springboard to get extra height, as long as it doesn't break. Shorter poles (like those on axes or a longer one broken or cut in segments) can be used as raised footing to increase the height of a leap.

Resting with one end on the ground (or inserted into a hole, braced against the ground and a root or log, etc, one may be able to do an acrobatic spin around the pole, reverse direction, and possibly even surprise a pursuing opponent with a swift kick or overbearing maneuver. In one is stuck in an earthen pit and has a hammer, a pole may be able to be driven into a wall and thus act as a stable platform to reach higher, and multiple poles could be driven in to form a ladder.

A similar result can be accomplished in a stone pit by jamming a pole in a corner (this works better if one has an assistant or another pole bracing the pole in place). With a bit of rope and some know-how or ingenuity, many of the concepts here become much easier. Two poles, one tied to each leg, can work as impromptu stilts. If one is dexterous, he could just hang onto the pole near the top and bounce, maintaining their balance as they go.

B) Bridges and Beams. The pole can be simply laid across a gap, and characters can walk over it. While walking across one pole can be risky if crossing a pit, multiple poles can be placed, and one can cross sideways (crab style) with feet on one pole, and hands on the other; this is a lot more stable.

If a character has the Rope Use and the Engineering skills, a sturdy rope bridge could be constructed. If the pit has a lip on all sides, a few poles angled the right way can provide a framework to lay boards across or "tightrope walk" across even if an individual pole is shorter than the dimensions of the pit. A bit of rope can make such structure much more stable and thus safe. Put across a corner of a pit, attached to the ceiling, or braced above a pit or cliff a pole can act as a beam on which to hang a block and tackle or even merely run a rope over to make lifting easier. Three poles can be tied together to form an A-frame for supporting a block and tackle and lifting loads, albeit this still works best above a pit as otherwise the lift distance will not be all that high, but how high do you really need to lift a cart or wagon to change a wheel anyway?

C) Climbing. Poles can be used to for an impromptu ladder, either by leaning it against a wall and climbing it directly (some 10' poles are specifically notched for this purpose, see Goods & Gear page 156 for details) or used in place of a rope by climbing the pole with your arms while your feet walk up the wall. Once to the top standing on top of a pole can increase the height one can reach by the height of the pole. Metal poles are usually sturdy enough for a Small or Man-sized character to shimmy up to the top. A ladder can be constructed with two poles and some rope, and a judicious use of the Rope Use skill. Metal poles are usually sturdy enough for a Small- or Man-sized character to shimmy up to the top.

D) Detecting and Disarming Traps. Poles are ideal for testing places where your arm might go for blade traps, or places your hands might go for electrical traps/runes. They are also useful for checking the floor/ground for weak spots, pits etc: This is the absolute most useful and vital ability of a 10' pole. Prodding with a pole can often detect pit traps, weak or false floors, and reversed gravity fields. In general, it negates the chance to fall into a pit, including an illusionary one; even in total darkness at the edge of the pit will be obvious to anyone tapping ahead with a pole. If one happens to fall into a pit, the GM may allow a Dexterity roll to use the pole to catch two edges of the pit and arrest the fall. The sudden lift of the poles end helps detect the reverse gravity fields those sneaky GMs are wont to include. The 10' pole is ideal for finding weak spots or false floors and braking through them at a safe distance, thus preventing the character from falling through. Traps such as pressure plates and the like can be set off from a safe distance,

E) Evaluating. Evaluating fluids for dangerous content: Much better and safer to find out that the pool of liquid is actually an acid by dipping the pole than one's arms. If the pole is metal, it can reveal acids OR caustic substances.

F) Fishing and Hunting. A 10' pole is ideal as an impromptu fishing pole. Just tie a line around one end and drop the line into the water. Good eats! Sharpened at one end it can be used for spear fishing, or to hold a net in place. A number of poles can be used to hold a larger net or quay. A pole that can span an outdoor pit, or a number of them used in conjunction, can be used as supports to lay brush, branches, leaves, cloth and or dirt on top of and thus cover the pit. Thin, relatively fragile poles work best for this task, as long as they are strong enough to hold the covering over the pit. If cut into kindling (see K below) and sharpened (see P below), the bottom of the pit can be set with pungee sticks. A flexible pole can be bent to form the spring action for a snare if no appropriate saplings are nearby.

G) Grabbing and Hooking. Great for picking up keys and other items: Tie a hook to the pole, and it can be used to grab items, especially if they have loops on them (like key rings). It can also be set with a ring at the end and a loop of rope run through to create a noose similar to that used by modern dangerous animal keepers to capture or muzzle snakes and crocodiles.

H) Hauling (single pole, litter, travois). One can use a single 10' pole to divide a weight(s) such as sacks tied on between two or more people to reduce encumbrance penalties. You can carry foes or bodies easily if you tie their hands and feet to the pole, and carry them as if on a spit. With two 10' poles and a bit of cloth, rope, or net one can make a litter to carry a wounded man (or objects) to safety. Two 10' poles and a chair or platform can form an impromptu sedan chair. Two 10' poles plus a bit of rope, netting or cloth, and maybe a short bit of wood can be fashioned into a travois (only works on roads, fields, grasslands, or other fairly open terrain).

I) Impaling. Sharpen the end to make huge stakes and set at an angle into the ground, like the British archers used to do. This tactics works great against cavalry. A number of poles can also be useful if one has the Construct Hasty Defense Works, serving as supports. Cut shorter and put at the bottom of a pit and they can act as spikes for additional damage, or covered with dung to pass diseases to the enemy.

J) Jamming and Bracing. A pole can be used to jam a door, brace a wall or support a ceiling at risk of collapse

K) Kindling. A pole can be chopped or sawed into small pieces for kindling, pegs or stakes, or even ladder rungs. Smaller pieces can also aid in caring for the wounded when used as splints for broken or fractured limbs, or used to inflict wounds as stakes or wooden spikes (such as in pits). Kindling can be tied or nailed to another pole at regular intervals to form a rough ladder, or between two poles to form a normal ladder.

L) Leverage. Poles can be used as a lever to lift heavy objects or to help hold oneself up in awkward positions.

M) Melee weapon. Poles can be used as is in place of a staff, and sharpening one end can quickly turn it into a makeshift spear.

N) Nudging or tripping. A well-placed pole can be used to trip foes. Even leaving a few on the floor can stall a pursuit. Cast invisibility on it for even more fun! They can also be used to nudge or push an opponent over an edge or cliff, especially if two characters each take an end and nudge as a team.

O) Opening. Pushing/pulling doors open, opening chests: Poles are great for pushing open doors that open away. This can protect the adventurers from scythe traps and the like. For doors that open inwards, a hook can be attached to one end (either tied to or screwed into the end).

A rope with a hook attached on one end of a pole allows you to flip open that chest the party thief just unlocked and declared free of traps, then backed away from before you tried the lid. That way you can stand up to 10' away to either side of, or even behind, the chest instead of dead in front of it.

P) Probing. Probing the floor/ground for unsafe ground, hole or burrows for hostile creatures, etc: Prodding with a pole can often determine if the ground is unsafe such as quicksand, ice, or even deep mud. When a pole starts probing around in a hole or burrow most animals will latch onto the pole and treat it as an invader, giving you a little warning before charging blindly into an unknown hole. This is a Gnome/Halfling-saver!

Poles are useful for probing the depth of that pool, stream, or river. It might also reveal something nasty lurking just below the surface.

Q) Lighting. Poles can be used to hold light sources at a distance for safety; in a pinch, they can be converted to really long torches! With luck, it might even get the light source far enough away for when the Heat Seeking Fist of Thunder spell hits!

As a last resort, treat it as portable firewood. The ability to dangle a light source across the mouth of a cave to attract fire while you are safely 8'-10' above or to one side can be priceless given the area of effect of breath weapons and Fireball spells.

Also, getting that extra 8'-10' of light ahead, especially for a Continual Light spell, could not only save your character's life but also give you more warning of pits or potential hiding-spots for enemies.

R) Reaching. Be it reaching up to knock items down from high places, gather food, or pass items a 10' pole is the ideal tool. You can push down items from the tops of shelves, etc. with an artful thwack of a pole.

Since nature has sought fit to protect its tastiest treats near the tops of trees, you can knock fruits out of trees without having to risk a dangerous climb. They are also a great way to hand things UP, especially with a hook attached. If the person who falls into a pit is the one with the rope, he can pass one end up - usually easier than trying to toss one end up. It is also good for pulling things upwards.

S) Spit. Tie a slab of meat to the pole, or impale it on the pole for cooking. Then are also good for punishing unruly henchmen or displaying either an enemy's head or a Group Honor Token proudly above the party in plain sight of all.

T) Tapping. Tapping with a pole can find hollow spots in solid objects; secret compartments, hidden or concealed doors, fail floors, etc.

U) Urging. A pole can be used to urge mounts or other beast to move while standing at a safe distance, like a cattle prod. It can also be used as a statue poker: You KNOW that statue is going to animate and kill you. Now, activate it from a safe distance!

V) Vaulting. A pole can be used to extend the distance that someone can jump. A person of decent dexterity (DEX 13+ or Acrobatic Skill Suite) should be able to at least vault twice the distance of the pole across or the height of the pole up. A less skilled person could "ride" a pole across a gap such as a pit as long as the height of the pole is greater than the depth of the pit.

Similarly, a pole could be ridden to the ground, and thus change vertical movement into more of a horizontal movement, to aid in a tumble roll to avoid damage from a fall.

W) Water travel. A pole is useful for sculling a raft or canoe.

X) Sampling. A 10' pole is invaluable for taking samples of liquids or slurries: Attach a tube for flask to the end with an adhesive or some twine, and you have an instant sampler.

Y) Yurts and other lodging. Poles tied together and covered with canvas or thatch can provide ample shelter from the element, either as a lean-to (or even an impromptu tent). If you already have a tepee, pavilion, tent, or yurt, you are already carrying at least one, if not more, poles anyway and might as well find a number of other uses for them!

Z) Teleport Detector/Portal Tester. Not sure about that shimmering portal? Stick your trusty 10' pole through. Tie a rope and you can toss it through, and see if you can pull it back. Suspect a teleport portal? The same test should reveal the truth. Again, it is also good for testing for Reverse Gravity spells.

Varying the Length: the Whys (and Why Not)

Poles come in a variety of lengths, diameters and materials of construction. The basic 10' pole is a wooden rod of 1" to 4" in diameter, typically oak, ash, or pine. Some are shod in iron or bronze at one or both ends. It may or may not be fluted at one or both ends, and could even be sharpened at the ends.

Occasionally, poles are constructed (primarily) of iron, steel, or bronze. Depending on the size and materials, poles can be modified with the addition of hooks, spikes and the like to improve their utility. While poles are generally listed as being 10', poles as short as 3' and as large as 15' are available. Treat poles between 3' and 5' as a Bo stick. Treat poles between 5' and 8' feet as a staff.

The standard length of 10' and the diameter of 2" may seem arbitrary to many, but this is not so. A 10' pole is extremely useful for mapping, the same length as a standard dungeon corridor is wide, is the base depth of a pit, and 5' shorter than a typical dungeon ceiling. It also tends to be the same or shorter than the typical height of most human dwellings. This allows for the greatest length, yet retains ease of use.

As for the diameter, it is the same for most pole arms, weapon handles, tools, and so forth. It just fits the human hand better than any other thickness yet maximizes strength. Thicker poles also tend to be heavier. Thinner poles are lighter but weaker. For example, a 1" diameter pole would weigh one-fourth the weight but only have one-fourth the break point as well. Such a pole would not cost any less if purchased but would be ideal for small characters and pixie fairies.

Although any character with access to the wood can make a 10' pole in merely a few hours GMs may also make them available for around 2 sp a piece (see table below). A typical 10' pole weighs about 7 pounds, more or less, depending on the thickness of the pole and type of wood, with Dwarven Ironwood, oak and hickory tending to be heavier and pine, elm and ash tending to be lighter.

The table on the following page gives the cost, weight and availability of various types of 10' poles. It also gives the weight in pounds such a pole can support at the center while being supported at each end, thus showing approximately the maximum weight that can be borne (amount of treasure that can be slung in the middle, maximum weight of a character that can safely cross it, etc.) In general, a pole can support five times that weight vertically as a brace or vertical climb.

Wood	10' Pole breaks at	Weight	Cost	Availability		
				Hi	Med	Low
Ash, Black	700 lb.	6.5 lb.	2 sp	95	90	85
Ash, White	850 lb.	8 lb.	25 cp	90	80	70
Elm	650 lb.	6.5 lb.	2 sp	70	65	60
Hickory	950 lb.	8.5 lb.	3 sp	80	75	70
Ironwood, Dwarven	1400 lb.	11.5 lb.	10 gp	25	15	5
Maple, Red	800 lb.	7 lb.	25 cp	80	70	60
Maple, Sugar	1,050 lb.	8.5 lb.	35 cp	75	60	45
Oak, Red	800 lb.	8.5 lb.	25 cp	85	75	65
Oak, White	850 lb.	9 lb.	25 cp	90	85	80
Pine	400 lb.	6.5 lb.	1 sp	90	85	80
Walnut, Black	600 lb.	7 lb.	5 sp	60	40	20
Yew	1,050 lb.	9 lb.	3 sp	80	70	60

Types of Wood

Ash: Ash is the standard wood used for pole arms and spears. It bends easily but is very hard to break, being more likely to split along the grain than against it. It is also the most common tree coppiced in medieval times. Although not as durable as hickory and some other hardwoods, it is significantly lighter and thus its preference in use in pole arms and in 10' poles. In general, if a 10' pole is available for sale it is most likely an ash pole.

Bamboo: Bamboo is technically a grass rather than a wood, but as some varieties grow to great heights and have very workable thickness, it is the preferred material for 10' poles in areas where samurai and ninja are found. No wood can match bamboo's flexibility and ability to withstand weight force, thus making it the premier material for pole-vaulting wherever it can be found. Unfortunately, its flexibility is also its downfall for use in weapons, as a lever, or even most pushing or jamming functions.

One added bonus is the fact that it has hollow sections, thus making it ideal for many functions extremely difficult to do with a normal pole, such as breathing under water, holding water inside of it like a canteen, or even acting as water pipes. Another problem is its rarity in non-oriental lands. Bamboo is thus almost never available for free and anyone except a professional pole-vaulter or a ninja is more likely to carry a different type of pole instead. Bamboo is not on the table due to lack of my finding hard data on this material as to break point and such.

Elm: Elm is incredibly difficult to split due to its interlocking grain. In addition, it has excellent bending and shock resistance properties. All in all an excellent pole material, especially for small characters and magic-users, due to its relative lightness.

Hickory: Like ash, this wood tends to split rather than break, and like ash, but unlike oak, hickory will dent

rather than splinter. It is very hard, strong, and sturdy, but heavy, being almost 50% heavier than ash, and thus not the preferred wood for pole arms. It is an excellent wood for striking weapons such as quarterstaves, clubs, and such both due to weight and resistance to damage.

It can bend quite a distance before breaking and therefore is the standard wood for pole-vaulting in areas where bamboo is scarce or unheard of. Due to the shock and splinter resistance, it is the preferred wood for tools and short-handled weapons such as axes, hammers, and picks. The dust is somewhat toxic.

Ironwood, Dwarven: One of the strongest and most durable woods in the Wurld, Dwarven Ironwood is also one of the heaviest. Although many believe that the term "ironwood" comes from the tendency of the wood to flake and otherwise react as metal when struck, it is said that Dwarven Ironwood is impossible to cut with a saw and must be split to be worked. This is partially true as it is very difficult to work with, dulling tools very fast. However, it can be sawn across the grain, then split down the grain and finally shaped with a drawknife.

It rots very slowly even if buried in the ground, with fence posts lasting for decades, if not hundreds of years, and remaining extremely tough. For this reason it is the preferred wood for doors in dwarven residences and dungeons and another is how much time and care must go into fashioning anything out of this material. The roots and lower bark are turned into pigment by the dwarves, which produce that orange-red color they use so often in clothing. Used by dwarves for short bows, crossbow stocks, poles, centering, doors, doorframes, and any other wooden work needing to be in place for over a century.

Dwarven Ironwood is the preferred wood of choice for discerning dwarf adventurers. Most other races do not use it only because of the difficulties in working it, but also due to its toxic properties. One advantage to dwarves is that the wood is particularly repulsive to insects and it is rumored that no Drider will cross a Dwarven Ironwood lintel. If made from a

branch, a 10' pole will be relatively straight yet tapered, but if made from the trunk the resultant pole can be of uniform thickness - but it won't be straight by any stretch of the imagination. The grain of Dwarven Ironwood tends to be very chaotic.

Maple: Maple is a fine-grained hardwood very resistant to shock and abrasion. It also is very stiff, heavy, hard, yet turns well on a lathe. For these reasons it makes for excellent 10' pole material especially for those who want a uniform thickness pole with no bends in it, unlike most other poles which tend to be tapered or erratic.

Oak: The default wood for doors and heavy construction, particularly by humans, oak is a very strong and durable wood. Unfortunately, it tends to splinter and thus is not the preferred wood for making 10' poles out of. Its strength and weight does make it a very good wood for weapons such as quarterstaves and clubs, but the roughness and tendency to splinter make it lousy for climbing.

Scraps of oak are even highly prized as for making fires as it burns for long time a very long time. It can be coppiced and is known for producing great suckers (long straight shoots) and thus a natural for 10' poles of uniform grain, extraordinary straightness, and relatively uniform taper.

Pine: Pine is very light softwood, but it is the easiest to test and thus the baseline for all the strength data in the chart above (due to the loss of too many interns while trying to generate this data the author had to do the testing himself). It is a natural wood to use for testing burrows and caves because it is less likely the creature will drag the character in.

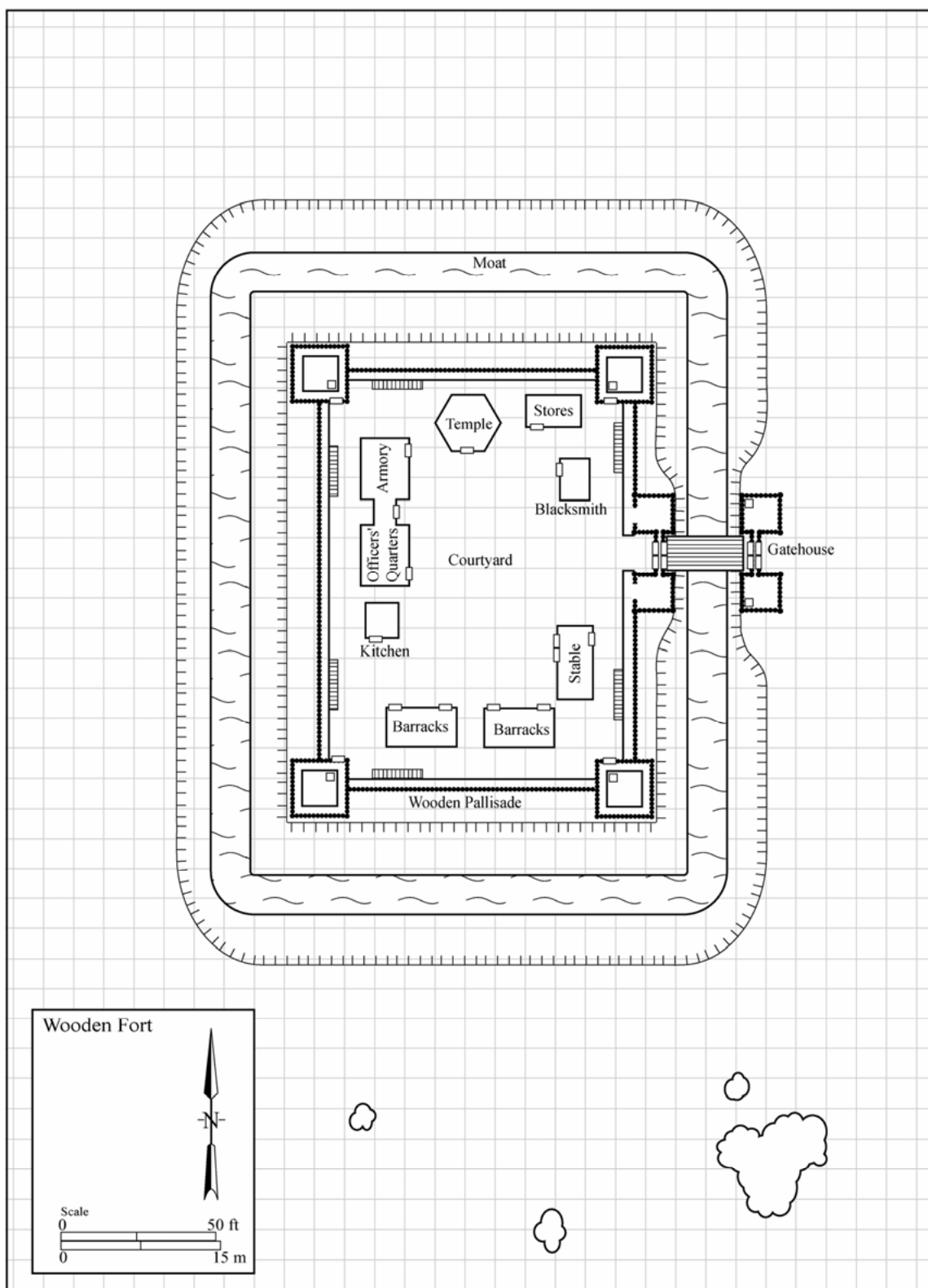
Teak: Teak is one of the preferred materials for quarterstaves and other combat applications. It is a dense hardwood that tends to dent rather than splinter. As I was unable to locate shear data on teak in time for this article, it was intentionally left off the table above, but included due to its use in modern martial arts weapons. A 10' teak pole weighs 8.5 pounds.

Walnut: A dark hardwood prized for its durability and beautiful finish, walnut is particularly stiff and thus an excellent material for rigid poles.

Yew: A flexible, durable, fine-grained wood most noteworthy for its use in elven longbows, yew is also useful for pole-vaulting, travois, and other applications relying on both strength and flexibility.

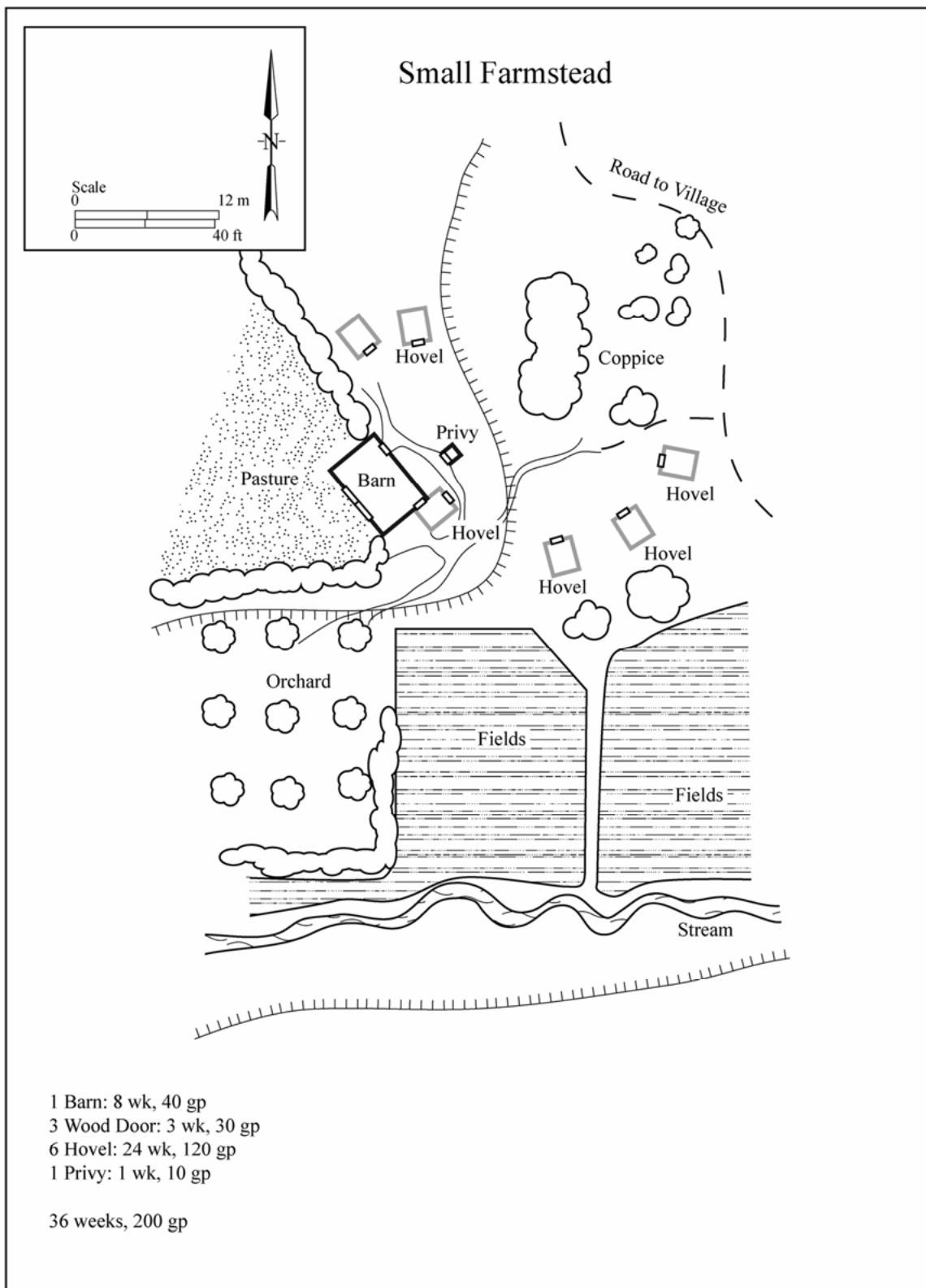


Dungeons Ready to Occupy:
A Modest Wooden Fort
Art by James Montney (HMGMA# MI-01-01486-03)



Dungeons Ready to Occupy:
A Hovel, plus costs

Art by James Montney (HMGMA# MI-01-01486-03)



All Things Magic: Legion of Spell Crackers for Spell Liberty

By Jay Rutley (HMGMA# CAN-1-00799-02)

Name of Members: Crackerjacks, Weefles
(derogatory)

Location: No centralized location, Crackerjacks can be found in most cities with formalized magic academies. A vault of knowledge is maintained, but often relocated.

History: Long ago, when the Mage Advocates first condoned the legal copyrighting of spells and began to enforce individual magic-user's variations on spells, one of the most vocal opponents was an elven magic-user named Acildridus Ovuley. He loudly argued that magic was a force of nature and could not be quantified and sold by mere mortals, specifically by the upstart humans.

While he did manage to find many allies in his elven kin (and those of an anarchistic bent among the "younger" races), it was not enough to stop the movement by the arch-mages, who were eager to add their names to the history books (not to mention spellbooks) and pocket a tidy sum at the same time. The Mage Advocates codified the practice and many students of the arcane arts suddenly found many useful spells outside of their price range.

As Acildridus predicted, corruption ran wild, with Masters at famed academies putting their copyrighted spells on the course curriculum, thus forcing apprentices to pay extravagant fees. Some magic-users were accused of stocking dungeons throughout the land with scrolls of their copy written spells, and numerous government kickbacks were discovered.

Believing the matter to be so absurd that it would soon take care of itself by its own accord, Acildridus took a hiatus from magical society and spent many decades involved in spell theory at his tower, located on an Aubrey Knot (SSG pg 77) high on a cliff side waterfall in the elven forests. When he returned from seclusion Acildridus was surprised to learn that the church of Thrain had taken over the enforcement of Spell Copyrights. By this time however, it had become a standard practice and he found it well entrenched in the minds of the latest batch of younger magic-users.

Gathering a few like-minded individuals, Acildridus formed the League of Spell Liberty as an aid to those apprentices and adventurers that couldn't afford to pay the licenses. Over the years however, many magic-users of a more criminal, anarchistic, and just plain lazy nature have formed the bulk of the membership, and now they struggle to "free all magic", and have renamed themselves the Legion of Spell Crackers.

Purpose: The Legion stands for the freedom of spells and the concept that magic cannot be owned. Therefore, they see it as their duty to spread the knowledge of copyrighted spells throughout the land, so that no few wizened arch masters can earn coin from the labors of honest (or mostly honest) adventurers and professionals in need of their magic to defend the lands from monsters and enemy countries.

In reality, many members join the Legion just to "stick it to the man". More than one has been led down this path by not being able to afford an instructors required spell when training at a kobar. This has led to a black-market at many Magical Academies and shady deals with Thieves Guilds throughout the World. There have even been talks with Zealots of Draper in regards to finding a way to "hack" the licensing keys held by the church of Thrain.

Master of Society: The nominal leader of the Legion is still Acildridus Ovuley, an elven generalist magic-user. When dealing with fellow members of the Legion however, he goes by the alias of "Master Acid". Most members of the Legion adopt a suitably colorful alias to use when speaking or meeting with fellow members, so as not to lead the authorities to other members if caught.

Specialty School: None, although there is a definite trend towards Abjuration. Many of the members of the Legion are Anti-Mages, and even if they aren't, most enjoy having a way to mess with the magical workings of stodgy old masters.

Opposed School: None.

Alignment: Any non-Lawful. No member of the Legion would ever pay a spell copyright or copyright one his own spells.

Symbol: The symbol of the Legion is that of a spell book with a crack running down the cover. It is very rarely worn openly however, due to the somewhat less-than-legal nature of the society.

Days of Import: The Legion has few large gatherings, but the main one is on the anniversary of the day the custody of the spell copyright system was handed to the church of Thrain. Originally, it was known as "Folly Day", when Acildridus and his students would meet to lament the state of affairs and compare notes on spell cracking techniques. Lately however, it has turned a bit darker with a "Hell Night" when many of the younger and more chaotic members go out and get "payback" on old mentors and magic shops.

Raiment: There is no typical garment common to the Legion, although many of them tend to have odd

accessories such as nose rings, dyed hair or black leather coats.

Advancement: There are nine levels of status within the Legion, starting with "Weefle" and ending with "Elite Master". Each level of status allows access to higher-level cracked spells from the Legions libraries. They feel that limiting access by accomplishment weeds out wannabes, infiltrators and annoying Charlatans.

A Weefle is a prospective member that has somehow found out about the group (usually via a contact from an academy, or by finding a copy of Spell crackers Journal) and wishes to join. To enter the Legion, a Weefle must first contact a member by figuring out a series of clues, and then deliver a spell to the society that they have cracked themselves. To advance further, the member must continue to donate new spells that they have cracked. It doesn't matter if the Legion already has the spells in its library; it is the effort that counts.

Level	Title	Required Donation	Access to
1	Weefle	Any Cracked Spell	Cantrips
2	Wilson	2 levels of Cracked Spells	1st Level Spells, Spellcrackers Journal
3	Joeboy	3 levels of Cracked Spells	2nd Level Spells, Masking Spell
4	Cracker	4 levels of Cracked Spells	3rd Level Spells
5	Hacker	5 levels of Cracked Spells	4th Level Spells
6	Phreak	10 levels of Cracked Spells	5th Level Spells, The Vault
7	Master Cracker	15 levels of Cracked Spells	6th Level Spells, Spyware
8	Master Hacker	20 levels of Cracked Spells	7th Level Spells
9	Phreak Master	30 levels of Cracked Spells	8th Level Spells, Key Decrypter
10	Elite Master	Special Service to the Legion	9th Level Spells, Remote Key Decrypter

Members: Crackerjacks come from varied backgrounds, some are poor sons of farmers that showed an aptitude for magic but were unable to afford the fees for licensed spells, while others are nobles that fancy the romantic ideal of "free magic". Others are troublemakers that are looking to fight the system, and some are just plain cheap.

Most members of the Legion are quite intelligent, as spell cracking isn't easy. There is a tendency for members to be know-it-alls and somewhat pompous about their abilities while speaking under their aliases, but they tend to be shy about such matters in the company of those who know their real names, for fear of arrest or punishment by the church of Thrain.

Few members have the Personal Grooming/Shaving skill.

STPs: Arcane Lore, Spellcraft, Glean Information, Sleight of Hand, Bartering, Street Credentials, Speed Reading, Magically Efficient (bonus)

Weapons Permitted: Same as for the member's class.

Armor Permitted: None.

Ability Restrictions: Intelligence 15+

Spellcrackers Journal - The Spellcrackers Journal is a publication put out by the upper echelon members of the Legion of Spellcrackers to both reveal new methods of cracking the latest spell encryption, but contains rhetoric regarding the immorality of copyrighting spells in the first place. As such, it is also somewhat of a recruiting magazine often left in the lavatories and frat houses of Magical Academies.

The journal comes out every 1d6 months and is free to members. Non-members can purchase it via special (often illegal) channels for roughly 3d6 x 100 gp per issue. Each issue is comparable to a traveling spell book in size, weight, and page count and is delivered by a variety of means, whether by unseen servant, teleportation or an apprentice lugging it to a member, it will eventually find it's way to those to whom it is due.

When attempting to crack a spell a magic-user may use an issue of Spellcrackers Journal as a reference, in which case it will count as supplying 100 gp per page of the issue towards increasing the chance of success of a spellcracking roll. (So a 20 page issue will "count as" applying 2000 gp towards the success of the attempt, i.e. +20% for a first level spell, +10% for a second level spell, etc.).

An issue of Spellcrackers Journal can only be used once, and only if it is the latest issue available. The church of Thrain is quick to modify the spell keys in response to cracking attempts. Once either used or becoming a back-issue, a copy of the journal is only good for offsetting the daily variable 6d4 gp cost.

Members of Legion can attempt to write an article in the Journal as well under their alias. Any time they successfully crack a spell, they may write an article about the procedure. If accepted and published the member will gain base Honor equal to the level of the spell cracked. The chance for any article to be published is equal to the level of the cracked spell + the authors Charisma (not modifier, the full ability score)

Each issue also has a membership form that will inform the reader where they can leave their information if interested in the Legion. Prospective members are scryed upon and other divination spells are used to ensure that they aren't an undercover plant. If it all checks out, the Weefle can expect some coded directions for a meeting.

Masking Spell - Upon reaching Wilson level in the Legion, the member will be presented with the Spell Mask spell. This will be taught to the member by a higher-ranking Crackerjack and there is no need to roll to see if the character learns it (although it still counts against the magic-user's spell limit from Intelligence). This spell is used to make cracked spells in members' spellbooks appear as something else. Very useful when attending an academy for advancement, or running into some crotchety Mage Advocates in the wilderness.

The Vault - Once reaching Phreak level in the Legion, the crackerjack is teleported to Acildridus's vault and is allowed to choose any one spell (that he could cast) and add it to his spell book. A higher-ranking member teaches this spell, but a learning check must still be made as normal. In addition, once per month after that, the member may petition access to the vault for purposes of spell research or spellcracking. The vault counts as an excellent library that is fully stocked, giving the character +15% chance to all research/spellcracking rolls made in it.

Spyware - Upon making his first steps onto the plateau of master hacker, the Crackerjack will become privy to one of Acildridus' original methods for getting around spell copy protection. This spell will be taught to the member by a higher level Crackerjack and no Learn check is required (although it still takes up space and counts against his spell limit).

Key Decrypter [EPV 2,500/GPV 25,000] - A rare magic item designed by Acildridus, the Key Decrypter is a gem that when placed over a protected spell in a spell book or scroll will project a stream of arcane sigils into the air in front of the user. The crackerjack can attempt a Spellcraft check (+10% difficulty per spell level) to crack the spell at no cost. Each attempt takes 2d8 turns, and the decrypter can be used once per day. The Key Decrypter is a sign of status and "eliteness" among the Legion, granting a +2 permanent Honor to anyone granted one. It is considered very uncool to sell or lose one, and any character doing so is treated as though they just broke a Blood Oath. Rumors persist within the Legion that the Church of Thrain has created a "Key Decrypter Buster" that can thwart the gem. Further rumors state that Acil is working on creating a "Key Decrypter Buster Buster".

Remote Key Decrypter [EPV 10,000/GPV 150,000] Even rarer than the Key Decrypter, this is the ultimate tool in the freedom of magic. Only the Elite Masters of the Legion are entrusted with its power, and there are many out in there in the Wurld that would abuse its power. This magic item acts as a Crystal Ball that target spellbooks. Once locked on to a specific spell book, the user can read it as though he had it in front of him, learning another magic-user's spells and even scribing

them into his own book! It also acts as a Key Decrypter as above.

The remote use can be activated only once per week, and takes a full hour of concentration before the link is forged to the targets spell book. In this time, the target spell book must remain stationary; so many remote key decryptations take place at night while the target magic-user is asleep. Once the link is made the gem will project an image in the air that represents the spell book, due to its less than perfect translation, the user will suffer a -25% penalty to his chance to learn such a spell. If the target spell book is destroyed in some manner, or if the spell being copied is cast from the book while the decrypter is in use, the gem will explode for 1d6 damage per total spell level in the target book in a 15' radius (save vs. spell for half). If the spellbook is merely moved while the magic-user is learning from it, he must save vs. spells or lose a point of Intelligence in the same manner as overusing a crystal ball.

Friends/Allies: Thieves Guilds, Tinkers, Frat Boys in various Magical Academies

Foes/Enemies: Mage Advocates, Church of Hokalas, Church of Thrain

Sayings: Hack the Planet! - Spellcrackers of the Wurld Unite! - Magic Should Be Free! - Did you hear? Poadrus added a numerical encryption to his latest version of the Laughter spell! Ha, I cracked that in 10 minutes! - STFU Newb! - Mess with the best, die like the rest!"

NEW SPELLS

Mask Spell (Abjuration/Illusion)

Level: 1

Range: 0

Duration: 3 months

Area of Effect: 1 spell

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 turn/page

Saving Throw: None

This secret spell is one of the ways that the Legion of Spellcrackers still exists this day. When cast upon a cracked spell in the magic-user's own spell book it causes the text to appear as though it were a different spell (usually Push) to the reader. Only by a Spellcraft check, Read Magic spell, or actually attempting to cast or scribe the spell will someone find out that it is anything else than what it appears (although it will always take up the number of pages of the original, so some may get curious when Push takes up more than six pages...)

The caster is still able to read and memorize the spell as normal however. The material component is a vial of invisible ink (usually costing 25 gp, but stingy magic-users can attempt to use lemon juice or other such type of "ink" with a mishap chance at the discretion of the GM).

Spyware (Evocation)

Level: 3

Range: Touch

Components: S, M

Duration: Permanent

Casting Time: 1 Round

Area of Effect: 1 spellbook **Saving Throw:** Special

By touching another magic-user's spellbook, the cracker is able to insert an insidious form of magical energy known as Spyware. This spell sits inert in the spellbook until the owner memorizes his spells.

Any copywritten spell for which the owner memorizes with a valid spell key (obtained from the Church of Thrain) will be studied by the spell and sent back to the caster to a gem (of at least 200 gp worth, and held in the hand when casting Spyware), bestowing a +1% chance to crack the spell.

This gem holds bonuses for many spells, and keeps a running total for each one. It can hold up to 50% bonus for any given spell, with a maximum 200% worth of bonuses stored. The caster does get a sense of what bonuses to what spells he's getting.

When the spellcracker wishes to attempt cracking a spell he may decide to "drain" the gem for its held bonuses. He must take all of the bonuses at once, and can't spread them out over multiple attempts, and any accrued bonuses for other spells are lost as well. Often crackers will cast multiple versions of this spell on a target's book so as, which allows the use of multiple gems. Once used, the gem is cracked into worthless shards and cannot be used again.

This spell can be dangerous, however. When Spyware infects a spellbook, it makes it harder for the owner to memorize spells. The owner will find that it takes 5% longer to memorize his spells for each instance of Spyware cast upon his book.

This spell can be easily identified via Detect Magic. If cast upon the book while "dormant" the caster can make a save vs. spell to fool the Detect Magic. If used while the owner is memorizing spells (and therefore "active"), it will automatically be detected.

Identify plus many other divination spells can inform an infected user as to who is inside their book. Spyware can be dispelled as normal.

Finally, if the target spellbook is destroyed while infected, the backlash will detonate the gem causing 1d4 points of damage plus half the of the percentage points stored within as damage to everyone within 10' (save

vs. spell for half). If the gem is kept in a pocket or something similar, all of the damage will go to the holder (no save).

The components are a gem of at least 200 gp worth, and subtle gestures. The spell was designed to be inconspicuous, and can be masked with a Sleight of Hand check.

The caster must succeed at a save vs. spells to insert Spyware into a spellbook that has magical protections upon it (as defined by the GM). For example, the GM might dictate that any spellbook with Permanency cast upon it requires this saving throw.



Rustlers of the Night: Shark

By Peter Bowkett (HMGMA# UK-3-02054-05)

DESCRIPTION: Sharks are voracious predators that are the unstoppable eating machines of the sea. Driven by hunger, Sharks live purely by instinct.

Common: This category includes Sharks that are generally uninterested in people except in the rarest of circumstances, such as Hammerheads.

Man-Eating: Larger and more aggressive predators than common Sharks (for example, Tiger Sharks), this category will attack anything in the water smaller than itself.

Great White: If any shark deserves the title of Man-Eater, it is the Great White; it will eat anything in the water, edible or not. Their distinctive gray-white coloring gives them their name.

Greater White: A bigger, meaner version of a Great White, 1 in 10,000 Great Whites are born with an Intelligence of 5-7 (Low). Coupled with its natural abilities and predator cunning this creature is a formidable foe.

COMBAT/TACTICS: All these Sharks can sense blood in the water up to 1/2 mile away per 3 HD. Sharks suffer from a form of HackFrenzy known as a Feeding Frenzy, whenever there is a lot of blood in the water a Shark must save vs. HackFrenzy or attempt to eat anything in sight until it has eaten its fill (1d8 hp per Hit Die) or fails a fatigue check.

Common: Common Sharks only attack anything larger than themselves when in a feeding frenzy, at which time they will bite at anything in the water.

Man-Eating: More Aggressive than Common Sharks, these are still only opportunist killers, taking an unwary human in the water if there is no easier prey around, they will circle potential prey as if curious until they attack.

Great White: The most aggressive of the normal sharks, on a solid hit a great white will thrash its head from side to side to rip off a bigger chunk of meat, any hit of 18+ generates a critical. Unlike most Sharks Great Whites and Greater whites are not at all curious about their prey, attacking without warning and will attack people without hesitation.

Greater White: The Greater White is always a 12 HD specimen with a minimum of 7 hp per die.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: These creatures will hunt and eat anything that they can sink their teeth into.

Greater White: When a Greater White moves into an area its first action is to kill or scare off any lesser predators, including other Sharks. It will stay in an area until the food source runs out (i.e. people stop swimming, or sailing), where as a Great White or other man eater will take swimmers if the opportunity arises a Greater White will hunt them down, sink their boats and play with them first.

ECOLOGY: Sharks don't make good pets.

YIELD:

Medicinal: Shark meat is delicious

Spell Components: Nil

Hide/Trophy Items: Nil

Treasure: 10% Chance of swallowed treasure

Other: Shark teeth make excellent arrowheads or spear points. Sharkskin can be used for many items. Greater White teeth and skin can be enchanted to +3.

Shark:	Common	Man-Eater	Great White	Greater White
AKA:	Deep Hunter	Man Hunter	Devil Fish	Bastard Devil Fish
HackFactor:	6	8	14	20
EP Value:	200-400	400-800	2,000-3,000	4,000
Climate/Terrain:	Temperate to Tropical Ocean	Temperate to Tropical Ocean	Temperate to Tropical Ocean	Temperate to Tropical Ocean
Frequency:	Common	Uncommon	Rare	Very Rare
Organization:	Solitary	Solitary	Solitary	Solitary
Activity Cycle:	Any	Any	Any	Any
Diet:	Carnivore	Carnivore	Carnivore	Carnivore
Intelligence:	Non (0)	Non (0)	Non (0)	Low (5-7)
Alignment:	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral Evil
No. Appearing	1-6	1-4	1-2	1
Size:	M (5' to 10' long)	M to L (10' to 14' long)	H (15' to 25' long)	H to G (25' to 30' long)
Movement:	6"	9"	12"	15"
Psionic Ability:	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Attack/Defense Modes:	Nil/Nil	Nil/Nil	Nil/Nil	Nil/Nil
Morale:	Brave (14)	Fearless (19)	Fanatic (20)	Fanatic (20)
Armor Class:	6	5	5	5
No. of Attacks:	1	1	1	1
Damage/Attack:	1-8	1-10	2-12	4-16
Special Attacks:	Nil	Nil	Thrashing	Thrashing
Special Defenses:	Nil	Nil	Surprise 5 in 10	Surprise 6 in 10
Magic Resistance:	Standard	Standard	Standard	Standard
Hit Dice:	4 to 6	6 to 8	9 to 12	12
Fatigue Factor:	5	5	5	5
ToP:	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

GameMaster's Workshop: The Grand Goblin Archaeological Society

by Andrew Franklin (HMGMA#OK-4-00193-01)
and Paul Backstrom (HMGMA#MN-1-00103-01)

NAME OF MEMBERS:

Fellows (of the Grand Goblin Archaeological Society)

LOCATION: The Grand Goblin Archaeological Society is comprised of chapter offices that can be found in most of the larger Universities.

HISTORY: Founded an untold number of centuries ago by Millerite Goblins (see HackJournal issue #7) in order to expand their study of other cultures, the society floundered initially until it experienced a revival under the leadership of Baaky Magonis. The Grand Goblin Archaeological Society has since absorbed a number of similar societies, and recently (about 100 years ago) made the decision to extend membership to worthy non-goblins.

PURPOSE: To foster archaeological research on assorted human & demi-human cultures and then share the results of that research through publications, lectures, seminars, and collaborative efforts with other academic societies

MASTER OF ORGANIZATION: Sir Naganpogol Baaky Creetin, a Millerite Goblin Priest, is the current President (elected term of four years). He has been a good gatherer of knowledge, having practiced archaeology (or at least the tomb-raiding variety) in his younger days and he was recently reelected as President. His greatest scholarly interest is the comparative study of winemaking. The Editor of the *Journal of the Grand Goblin Archaeological Society* is considered the Society's second-in-command and many Editors are later elected President.

ALIGNMENT: Any non-evil.

SYMBOL: A compass rose on an open book.

DAYS OF IMPORT: Founder's Day, the 22nd of Jevarkiev is celebrated by all members as a day of great revelry where the Society's founders are honored through the presentation of new findings and preparations for new research projects.

UNIFORM/SOCIETY MARKINGS: All Fellows sign their name with FGGAS (Fellow, Grand Goblin Archaeological Society) and wear their symbol as a carved piece of ivory jewelry. Fellows also adhere to an informal dress code of tasteful upper-class clothing.

SPECIAL GESTURES/MOVEMENTS: None

ADVANCEMENT: In order to be inducted into the Grand Goblin Archaeological Society, an individual must have performed a great service to the Society and be nominated by at least three Fellows. Confirmation as a new Fellow must occur within two months by a ¾ vote of the sponsoring chapter's Fellows. Those candidates who do not garner enough support for their membership are not summarily dismissed, but are instead considered Honorary



Fellows. Most candidates become full Fellows, but many Elves, controversial theorists, and ex-explorers have problems getting their nominations confirmed. The Grand Goblin Archaeological Society also has the honorary rank of Senior Fellow, which is awarded to those Fellows with at least five years of service who have written 10 or more articles in the Journal of the Grand Goblin Archaeological Society. Fellows applying to become Senior Fellows must have their petition ratified by a 2/3 vote of the chapter's Fellows.

MEMBERS: Any scholarly being that can write and speak in Ancient Goblin, do acceptable cultural research, and is not innately evil (thus no nefarian members) is eligible for membership. Once nominated, two months remain for the necessary votes to be gathered in favor of the new member

STPs: Fellows receive Languages, Ancient: Goblin, and both Culture and Reading/Writing for any one race as bonus skills. They receive Knack for Languages as a bonus talent, regardless of race. Recommended skills are Ancient History, Local History, World History Customs and Etiquette, Languages (Ancient and Modern), Current Affairs, Glean Information, and any additional skills appropriate to the character's area of research.

WEAPONS FAVORED: Khopesh (subject to class restrictions)

ARMOR FAVORED: None

ABILITY RESTRICTIONS: Intelligence 13, Wisdom 10

POWERS: All members of the society receive extensive training in languages and cultures, allowing them to know a number of languages as if their INT was a full 2 points higher and to attempt an unskilled Customs and Etiquette check for unfamiliar cultures in a manner similar to unskilled Sophisticated Task check. Fellows' training with planar transport devices and spells allow them catch potential errors just in time to attempt a correction (they may re-roll any mishap involving these devices or spells but they must live with the new result).

FRIENDS/ALLIES: Circle of Sequestered Magic (COSM)

FOES/ENEMIES: Shadowlords

SAYINGS: "Today is a good day to learn!"

Author's Note: Millerite Goblins are *not* a suitable player character race at this time, nor were they ever planned to fill the role of PCs. This article was intended to fill a niche, as a multiplanar group of knowledge-seekers provides a framework for HMA members to connect outside of tournaments through a shared interest. It gives the HMA an organization that collects knowledge and that might hire PCs to investigate old ruins. This is a GM toolkit, so if it is too much as is, consider adapting it for an archaeological or scholarly organization that fits your campaign scale.

Homebrewed Hack articles and the game mechanics therein are not tournament-sanctioned. They are presented as unofficial GameMaster's option material only.

HackJournal Coupon Sheet

Limit one printed sheet per HMA member. Three rolls on the HSST (GMG p132) are recommended for anyone using multiple sheets. Coupons are invalid without GM initials, if removed from coupon sheet, if validation area is incomplete, or in the hands of non-HMA members. GMs should initial coupon check boxes each time a coupon is used. Sheet expires four (4) months after GM validation.

VALIDATION AREA

MEMBER NAME: _____

MEMBER #: _____

GM SIGNATURE: _____

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HackJournal #20 coupon

GM#: _____

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GM Initials: _____

NIGHT OF THE LIVING DICE **Double the number of undead turned/commanded**

To redeem: Present to GameMaster. Authorized by HMA HQ.
Limit one use of one coupon per player per game session.
Not valid in conjunction with any other coupon.

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PLAYER # _____

GM Initials: _____

WIDOWS AND ORPHANS LOVE YOU **Gain +2 Honor**

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Not valid in conjunction with any other coupon.

USES: ☐

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GM Initials: _____

THAT ALL YOU GOT? **Negate any blow suffered in melee**

To redeem: Present to GameMaster. Authorized by HMA HQ.
Limit one use of one coupon per player per game session.
Not valid in conjunction with any other coupon.

USES: ☐

HackJournal #20 coupon

GM#: _____

PLAYER # _____

GM Initials: _____

CAN'T BUY ME MAGIC **Gain 1d4 random cantrips [magic-users only]**

To redeem: Present to GameMaster. Authorized by HMA HQ.
Limit one use of one coupon per player per game session.
Not valid in conjunction with any other coupon.

USES: ☐

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GM#: _____

GM USE ONLY

LITTERBUG **Lose 100 gp worth of material components**

To redeem: Announce use to players. Authorized by HMA HQ.
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Not valid in conjunction with any other coupon.

USES: ☐

HackJournal #20 coupon

GM#: _____

GM USE ONLY

DISTRACTED! **Character forfeits all attacks for one round**

To redeem: Announce use to players. Authorized by HMA HQ.
Limit one use of one coupon per GM per gaming session.
Not valid in conjunction with any other coupon.

USES: ☐

HackJournal #20 coupon

GM#: _____

GM USE ONLY

BUMP ON THE HEAD **Lose 10 Mastery points in a skill already possessed**

To redeem: Announce use to players. Authorized by HMA HQ.
Limit one use of one coupon per GM per gaming session.
Not valid in conjunction with any other coupon.

USES: ☐

HackJournal #20 coupon

GM#: _____

GM USE ONLY

CHANGE OF HEART **Fail save vs. apology even if it already succeeded**

To redeem: Announce use to players. Authorized by HMA HQ.
Limit one use of one coupon per GM per gaming session.
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USES: ☐



The Absent-Minded Mage

You magic-users out there may have noted that there are a few (OK, more than a few but substantially less than many) spells listed in the *The Spellslinger's Guide to World Domination's* "School" Spells by Levels tables that don't appear in Appendix A: Spells. Well, the brownie familiar and I started looking around in the basement (damn, I know I should have picked Locate Object instead of Stinking Cloud when I advanced to fourth level but that's ancient history now...) and found some of them underneath an empty can of Nulur's Spray Pigments. Now where are those second level spells? I guess they'll have to wait for a future issue.

Steve Johansson

HMGMA # IL-10-00002-01

Corpse Link (Alteration)

Level: 1

Range: Touch

Duration: 8 Hours + 2 hrs./lvl

Area of Effect: One clothed corpse

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 round

Saving Throw: None

This spell may be cast upon a single dead creature no larger than size Large. It causes the target to become effectively weightless and suspended approximately one foot above the ground. In addition, a nearly invisible silver cord fastens itself to both the caster and deceased such that the corpse trails five feet behind the magic-user as the latter walks or runs.

This spell is customarily used to retrieve the bodies of dead companions without unduly burdening the survivors. The spell only acts upon the corpse itself (plus a little safety margin to allow for clothing). Armor, gear and carried equipment are not affected and will weigh down the corpse making the spell ineffective.

Only one Corpse Link may be active at any given time and the caster may opt to prematurely dispel it. It is ineffective if cast upon a living or undead target.

Fist of Stone (Alteration)

Level: 1

Range: Touch

Duration: 1 turn/level

Area of Effect: 1 creature

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 segment

Saving Throw: None

When this spell is cast upon a creature, its hands curl and take on the density of granite. The chief benefit of this is that it allows the subject (if unarmed) to engage in deadly hand-to-hand combat instead of having to utilize punching (Table 12E in the Player's Handbook). Fist(s) of Stone inflict 1d6 points of damage plus Strength bonus (subject to a +6 hp bonus cap).

The material component is a small rock.

It is rumored that the Arch-Mage Zarba had a hand in this spell's creation when he was a mere apprentice.

Fool's Silver (Illusion)

Level: 1

Range: Touch

Duration: 2 hr./level

Area of Effect: 27 cu. in./level

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 round

Saving Throw: Special

By means of this spell any mundane object, be it lead slugs, iron bars or a wooden candlestick, can be made to appear as if it were pure silver. This is a visual illusion only and so does not affect the mass of the object. If the intent is to counterfeit currency, it is best to utilize lead, brass or iron tokens to facilitate the hoax.

Any creature handling the "silver" is entitled to a saving throw vs. spell, which can be modified by the creature's Wisdom. An additional +4 bonus is applicable if the object in question is unduly light (e.g. a wooden object).

The area of effect is 27 cubic inches per level – i.e., a 3 inch cubic volume or equivalent, equal to about 400 silver coins. Creatures stuck only by silver weapons may be affected by melee weaponry enchanted with Fool's Silver provided that they are not immune to illusions, are able to see the weapon in question and fail their saving throw.

This dweomer may alternatively be employed to disguise the true nature of an object or coinage. Certain theft conscious Illusionists are known to cloak their pocket money beneath an illusory silver façade as the spell's duration may be immediately terminated by its caster.

The material component is a bit of fleece and a pinch of silver dust.

Lightning Bug (Alteration)

Level: 1

Range: 0

Duration: 5 rd./level

Area of Effect: 10-ft. radius

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 round

Saving Throw: None

When this spell is employed, the magic-user creates a luminous drone that he is able to control. The Lightning Bug sheds a 10-foot radius of yellow light. In addition, the caster may mentally command it to fly in any direction at a 15" movement rate as long as he remains within visual contact of the bug. Solid barriers prevent the passage of a Lightning Bug, although it can pass through tiny cracks or holes.

Using the bug requires the magic-user to concentrate. However, if his concentration is broken, the spell does not end – the bug merely becomes motionless until the magic-user again concentrates, subject to the duration of the spell. A successful Dispel Magic cast on the magic-user or the Lightning Bug ends the spell as does magical darkness. The material component of the spell is an actual lightning bug (any species of the family Lampyridae).

The Grevans

Part Two: A History

By Jolly R. Blackburn



"The Grevans have a word for war, *Furvaan-mauss* — the *Great Dragon*. War, and the many battles that comprise it, is a living creature, they are taught — a great writhing god, sorting out the worthy from the unworthy — like pebbles from the miner's sieve.

To the Grevan warrior, it is only through the blood-letting of fierce combat that he is able to truly enter into fellowship with the gods and earn their favor. It is how he makes known his name to the *Faarmaaki* — "fellowship of the departed" — Ancestors who have fallen with honor in battles past.

Such a concept is alien to the Grevan warrior's counterpart — the typical Abgreerian soldier. The Legionary soldier sees combat only as the means to push forth the glory of the Kingdom and to enforce its will. If victory is illusive and cannot be achieved, then there is no point in pushing the fight.

The Abgreerian would prefer to withdraw — or hold his ground until an advantage presents itself. And barring that, until one can be engineered.

It is victory, above all else that motivates the Abgreerian soldier. And although he will fight bravely, to the death if need be, he does not relish death, nor does he drive himself toward it blindly as the Grevan so often does.

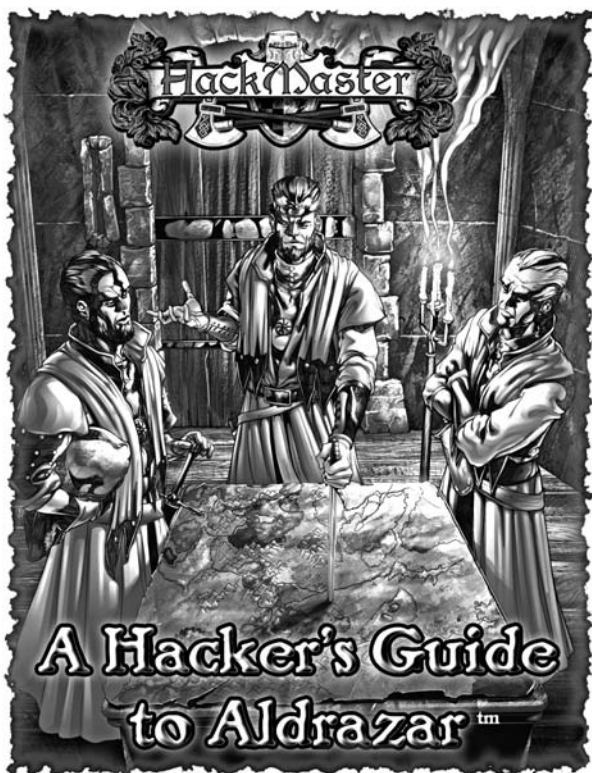
In contrast, Grevans do not entertain the notion of victory or defeat with such weighty regard. Grevan warlords hold council to discuss the best strategy and course of action, but the battle itself is joined for one reason only — to demonstrate the Grevans' unshakable will and the burning desire and willingness to embrace the Great Dragon.

In the mother city of Abgreer on the slopes of Scavian Hill, there is a temple to the "*Unkown God of Peace*".

It is an expression of Abgreerian hope — that someday the 'nameless god' will be unveiled and she will make herself known. That the countless enemies of the Kingdom will be quelled and in their place peace will spring eternal.

To the Grevans? Peace is intolerable — a weak form of death. An old Grevan proverb sums it up best, "He without enemies is lost. The gods will not remember his name. Better to look into the eyes of a foe as he strikes you down than to grow weak by the counting of days. Better that the whole world is set against you." "

Erdain Rilsh
War on the Grevan Steppes



Land of a Thousand Clans

The history and origin of the Grevan-speaking tribes has been a subject of intense debate among historians. Although the nations of the Eder Soult have been feeling the impact of Grevan aggression for generations, it has only been recently (in the last 25 years or so) that Grevans themselves began showing up along the frontiers to the far north.

Before their arrival, the borderlands had been overrun for years by waves of various races — most of which had been displaced from their own homelands hundreds, perhaps thousands of miles away by other groups who had in turn been displaced by Grevan incursions.

Abgreer and Darkhaid in particular, found themselves fighting such uprooted barbarian hordes for generations — before ever encountering the



A 'true' Grevan readied for battle.

Grevans firsthand.

Most of what we know about the Grevans today is through the writings of the Abgreerian military historian, Erdain Rilsh — one of the few writers on the subject who actually had intimate first-hand knowledge of the race.

Erdain was serving as a battle-physician for the garrison manning the fortified city of New Emberton (C7-14-F02) in 108 TR when it was overrun and sacked by Grevans under the leadership of Rang Taw (See **The Good, The Bad and the Ugly**: KODT 120).

Taken prisoner and enslaved, Erdain spent eight years in captivity on the Grevan Steppes. Learning the language and much about Grevan culture before eventually escaping, he has written at length about his experiences among his captors. And, although many suspect him of embellishing the tale, he is widely regarded as the foremost authority on the subject of the Grevans.

Forge of the Gods

According to their own oral tradition, writes Erdain, the Grevans passed through the *‘Forge of the Gods’* before moving into the *Northern Wastes* and eventually making their way south in *The Barrens*. A sojourn that took several generations.

Although the “Forge” is considered by many to be a

mythical setting (described at length in the religious tome, **The Menus Kai**) it is in fact a real place. An inhospitable region of fire and ice in Aldrazar’s arctic circle, the Forge is an ice-locked region marked by enormous mountains, glaciers, and active volcanoes.

This, of course, suggests the Grevans passed over the top of the world from the other hemisphere. Which, if true, says even more about their sturdiness as a race than their military exploits.

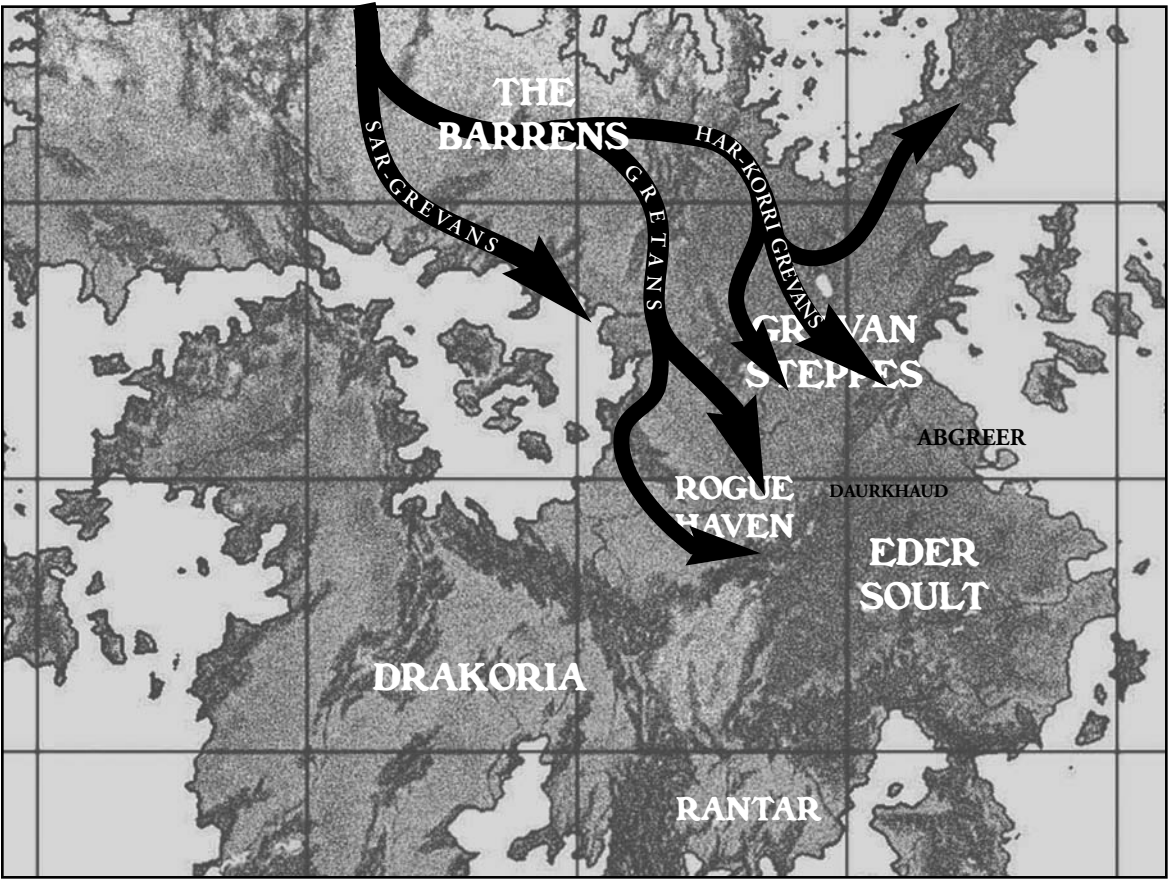
Other historians, however, believe the Grevans always lived on the fringes of civilization in the Northern Wastes and were simply prodded into migrating south, at first as the result of famine, or plague and only later by the sheer momentum of their conquests and amazing prowess in battle.

Erdain writes that the Grevans arrived in the Barrens as part of one mass exodus from the north around three hundred years ago (275 to -300 TR) under the guiding hand of a venerable matriarch named, Varuna.

As they began their drive south they mercilessly overran every population center they encountered.

“It was as though they [the Grevans] were a great broom and the gods were sweeping the land clean with broad strokes.” reports Erdain.

No one can be sure, but what *is* known is that the



Above: Grevan migration routes from the Northern Wastes/Barrens to the Eder Soult.



Sar-Grevans tracking somewhere in the Santello Forest

Grevans are relative newcomers to the Grevan Steppes, and that they are rapidly changing the political landscape as they encroach on the Eder Soult.

As the Grevans advanced through the Barrens, many who stood in their way chose to pick up (based on the Grevans' reputation alone) and flee, creating a domino effect that stretched all the way to the borderlands of Abgreer and Daurkhaud, as one group displaced another.

Those who chose to stand and fight were inevitably killed or enslaved.

The Great Departing

The migration south took many years and followed a pattern that would repeat itself again and again. The Grevans would advance then settle down in a newly conquered area (sometimes for a generation or more) and then inexplicably pick up, abandon the region and go on the march again. Presumably in search of new enemies.

For reasons unknown, as the Grevans reached the heart of the Barrens, they split into three major migratory groups. These groups would become known as the *Sar-Grevans*, the *Gretans* and the *Har-Korri*.

According to Erdain, the Grevans refer to this split as the "Wurda-Meer" or 'the great departing'. Whether the split was by design or by chance as the Grevan horde advanced and was pulled in different directions is unknown. But it's apparent the Grevans themselves consider the split to have been an event of enormous importance. Which suggests the migrating tribes choose to part ways.

The sage, Greytar concludes the wandering tribes had grown to such great numbers as they crossed the Barrens the sparse landscape could no longer sustain them enmasse and the 'splitting the herd' was a calculated decision.

Others still suggest that infighting among the tribes had become so problematic by this time there was no other way to resolve their differences.

Regardless of the reason for the parting, separated by time and distance, each group eventually became distinct from the others as each came into contact with new cultures and races. Taking on new gods, intermarrying with those they had subjugated, and slowly transforming.

The *Sar-Grevans* slowly made their way down the mountain passes to the south until they eventually arrived on the shores of the inner-sea of Santello.

They bitterly became embroiled with war against the elves and Sarlangans (Grel) who occupied that region. Today, their culture reflects the mixing of those races. Several Sar-Grevan tribes are sea-faring now and have been reported as far west as the northern shores of Markor Reemus.

The tribes which make up the modern-day *Gretans* migrated into the wilds of Rogue Haven. They have been heavily influenced by the numerous human barbarian populations they encountered and absorbed into their bloodline.

The third group, who refer to themselves as the



A pair of Gretan raiders in the wilds of Rogue Haven



Above: A 'true blood' Har-Korri Grevan

Har'Korri (True Bloods), is the group most commonly associated with the word, 'Grevan' today. This is for good reason, for they literally regard themselves as the only 'true' Grevans'.

While the three groups still share a common tongue and religion with each other, they have become so racially and culturally diverse in other areas any bond they once shared is all but gone today.

In fact they generally view each other with suspicion and are hostile toward one another.

Sar-Grevans and the Gretins are a subject for another day.

For now this series will focus on the Har'Korri. Note: For purposes of this series whenever 'Grevans' are mentioned henceforth the reader should assume the writer is referring to the Har'Korri.

Way of the Grevan

For several generations after the Great Departing, Grevan culture among the Har'Korri (like the Sar-Grevans and Gretins) became increasingly diluted as the conquerors moved toward the southeast.

Each new victory brought change to the tribes.

Not surprising considering the fact it became common practice for the warriors to choose wives from those they had enslaved. Wives who reared and taught the children (both Grevan and those of mixed-blood) and brought their own gods as well as their own ways to the hearth in the family lodge.

Further threatening the Grevan way of life was the fact the 'thousand clans' became increasingly fragmented as they migrated — to the point of feuding and warring against one another. Bleeding themselves white in some instances after several prolonged campaigns.

Had fate not intervened the Har'Korri may have well faded into the tapestry of those they had vanquished

and lost their identity completely.

In -95 TR a spiritual and cultural revival of sorts took place among the Har'Korri. In that year (according to Erdain), three Grevan matriarchs were 'touched with madness by the hand of Wyangnore' and began prophesizing and advocating a return to 'Grevus Fuun' (which roughly translates to the "Way of the Grevan" or the "Old Way").

Although they weren't actually siblings and sprung up from different clans the matriarchs came to be known as the "Three Sisters." or simply, "The Sisters." And the message they brought stirred the Grevan heart.

The Sisters called for the Har'Korri to strictly adhere to the ancient Grevan laws. Of purging their lodges of foreign gods and embracing the *Grevus Fuun*. Grevan gods were the only gods worthy of worship, they insisted. Inter-marriage outside the bloodline was offensive to their gods and those born of mixed-blood should be bannished or killed outright. Nothing short of keeping the Grevan bloodline 'pure' was acceptable to the gods.

The message the Sisters hammered home struck a chord with many Har'Korri and a movement of reawakening swept the tribes as Grevans turned back to their true heritage. Many, however, were resistant to such reforms and the divisiveness among the clans increased.

Erdian claims the Har-Korri refer to this period of time (which spanned and entire generation) as the "*The Honing of the Blade*" — a thinning of the ranks mandated by Wyangnore as the Grevan bloodline was purified and 'tempered'.

Around -37 TR, under the instructions of the Sisters a band of Har-Korri moved into Kardainya, to the ruins of the ancient monastic mountain fortress of Gurfa.

There among the ruins, the band found Nangrus — fragment number four of the **Lost Tablets of the Ages** (see KODT 120), just where the Sisters said it would be.

After acquiring Nangrus, the Har'Korri fought bitterly amongst themselves for nearly fifty years, to the point where they were so weakened and fragmented, their advance toward the Eder Soult ground to a standstill.

Countless chieftains during this period attempted to re-unify the Har'Korri under their control and seize possession of Nangrus — but old grudges ran deep and the thirst for vengeance rendered such attempts futile.

It wasn't until Rang Taw's fulfillment of prophecy that the final piece fell into place and Har-Korri were unified once again.

With Nangrus as the guiding hand of the Grevans, Sheehaab as the voice and Rang Taw as the fist, the Grevans are poised to cross the Valznor River invade the Eder Soult.

The Grevans Today

As a realitive new enemy to the area understanding the Grevans has proven to be a difficult challenge for



Temple of Raam

Located in the remote mountain monastery of Gurfa in Kardainya, the Temple of Raam stood unmolested for nearly six centuries before being destroyed in a cataclysmic explosion in the year -2356 TR.

Raam, Frog Guardian of the NetherDeep, is a minor diety who enjoyed an elevated status after his worshippers came into possession of Nangrus (Fragment #4 of the Lost Tablets). For years, from their mountain fortress, the Raamian sect 'meddled' in the affairs of others around the globe using the stone's powers.

Since the Temple was destroyed on the eve of the "*Year of Long Shadows*" (a year during which all magic on Aldrazar ceased to work) there are many who wonder if the Raamian's somehow brought about this event. Others simply claim the Temple was destroyed when the magical containment spells keeping the stone's power in check failed.

Whatever the reason, local folklore claims nothing ever "grew, crawled or grazed" on the mountain's slopes again and that an enormous fire blazed from the ruins for the 'span of a man's life.'

Today, the Raamian sect is small and secretive. There are Temples to the Frog Guardian in Abos, Hundise and Shirl Tet.

Besides the lost tablet, Nangrus — the Temple of Raam was rumored to have a vast collection of relics, magical weapons and ancient tomes. Rumors abound around these treasures, and more are said to be lying in hiding in subterranean chambers beneath the Temple ruins. These chambers are sad to have gone undetected by the Grevans during their short foray into the ruins. □

those who have suddenly found themselves in their path of destruction. They are unlike anything the armies of Abgreer or Daurkhaud have ever faced.

A warrior race who inexplicably attack targets with no apparent strategic value while by-passing those that do. Even when they could easily do so.

Who attack with great determination and resources to push in one direction one month and then suddenly shift and push in another direction the next — often against a different enemy.

An enemy who seems to view diplomacy solely as a tool to deceive or to stall, and who seems incapable of compromise.

Greatly feared, the true nature of the Grevan has been cloaked by misperception and wildly imaginative folk tales — tales fueled by the Grevans' seemingly wanton destruction and passion for aggression.

Among the Darkhauadians for example, it is widely believed that the Grevans are cannibals. And the Moaar'Jeeb of Abgreer teach that the Grevans are 'demon-spawn' — sent by the gods as retribution against a kingdom which has lost its direction.

Understanding the Grevans is further frustrated by the fact that, as we've seen, not ALL Grevans are cut from the same cloth. Something that is hinted at by the fact that the region they currently occupy is commonly called the "*Land of a Thousand Clans.*"

Although Grevans love to inspire fear, and even encourage such tales, the truth is that such notions are not entirely accurate. Grevans are not cannibals (although they have been known to eat the heart of a fallen enemy).

And, their unquenchable thirst for conquest is not driven by the mere desire to expand borders and hold ground.

Grevans thrive on war. And if there are no worthy enemies to be found they will set out to look for new ones. But that doesn't explain the Grevan's baffling behavior entirely.

Later in the series we will try to get into the Grevan's head and see what makes him tick as we take a closer look at them as an official **Hacklopedia of Beasts'** entry. □

If you can find one...



Back in 2003, **Kenzer and Company** actually produced a Grevan miniature. The piece is no longer in production and if separated from its blister pack it might not be evident just exactly what it's supposed to be.

But it's worth checking out those mini racks at your local FLGS or Ebay. Good luck!