

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons<sup>®</sup>

9440

# Al-Qadim

RUINED KINGDOMS

CAMPAIGN

by  
Steven Kurtz



# Ruined Kingdoms

## Adventure Book

Designed by Steve Kurtz  
Edited by Richard Pike-Brown with John D. Rateliff  
Interior Art by Karl Waller  
Cartography by David C. Sutherland III  
Typesetting by Nancy J. Kerkstra

Playtesting and Review by "The Next Generation" (Karen "Is it Evil?" Kurtz, Tamiko "Wanna Haircut?" Toland, Marketa "Genie Bait" Aschenbrenner, Peter "I Wish I Were a Necromancer" Schmidt, Jesse "I Send Da'ud for Invisibility" Sands, Manish "I Try to Gamble" Kothari, Mark "I've Got a Prelim" Barrerra) and Wolfgang "Make It Nastier" Baur.

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## Wihda hagg Tisan: Prologue: Nine Falling Stars

*In the junction of the lights of the stars. . . In your right hand, there is an iron ring and a seal. . . Make your heart the tablet to write on the verse. . . Recite it and chant it when people are asleep. It is the secret contained in the created beings; there is nothing but it. It is the greatest verse. Therefore make it accurate and get it. Through it, you will become a "pole" if you serve well.*

—as-Sabtö, from the *Zē'irajah of the World*

For the first time in his life, Adil is beginning to regret stealing something. In retrospect, the theft itself was easy, almost trivial. It was a clear, starry night outside the Mosque of a Thousand Fountains in Muluk. A rotund, distracted priest left the mosque for the short walk home, his heavy purse begging to be lightened. Adil had hoped the bulge in the priest's purse was gold—not this drab clay seal, covered with strange, barely comprehensible writings.

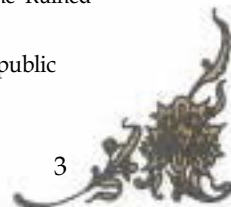
He would have returned it (if he couldn't have found an interested buyer, of course), but for some reason he found the writing on the seal fascinating, almost mesmerizing in its movement, illuminated by the bright starlight. He tried pronouncing words of the ancient language—and all at once realized that he shouldn't. By then, of course, it was too late. As if on cue, nine meteors streaked across the night sky overhead.

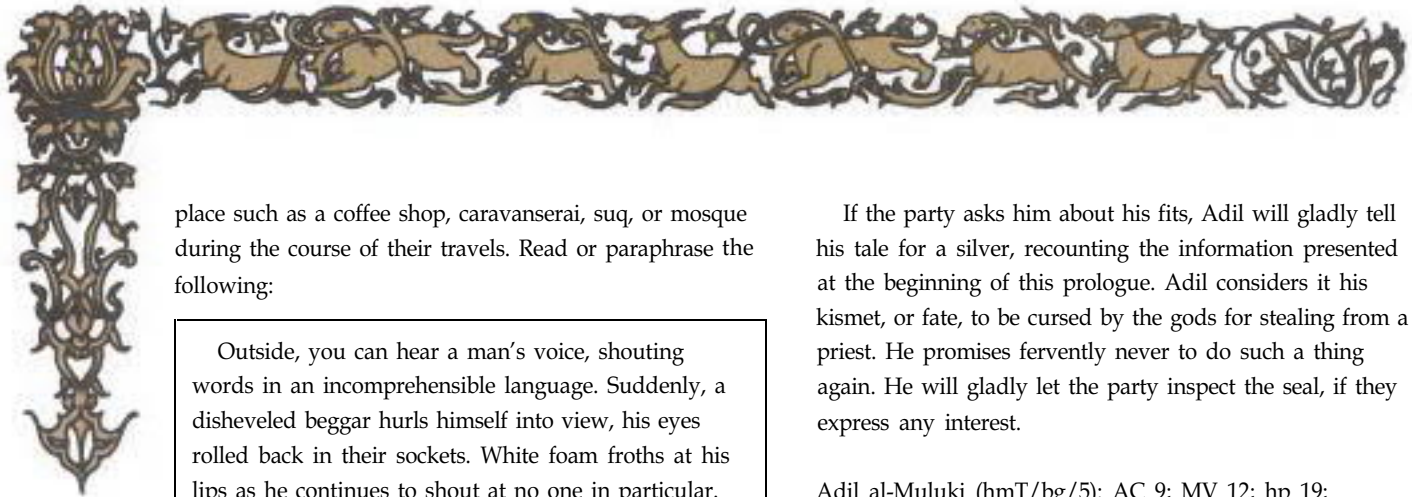
That was the night Adil blacked out. And then the nightmare began.

### Starting The Adventure

"Nine Falling Stars" is designed for a party of low-level characters (levels 3-5). The prologue is intended to motivate the party to travel to the Ruined Kingdoms, if they are not there already. It can take place anywhere in the Land of Fate. Although it can be played independently as a short and bizarre random encounter, it has added depth as the introduction to a mini-campaign in the Ruined Kingdoms culminating in the last adventure, "Kismet."

The adventure begins in any city 'or town when the party stops in a public





place such as a coffee shop, caravanserai, suq, or mosque during the course of their travels. Read or paraphrase the following:

Outside, you can hear a man's voice, shouting words in an incomprehensible language. Suddenly, a disheveled beggar hurls himself into view, his eyes rolled back in their sockets. White foam froths at his lips as he continues to shout at no one in particular. Bystanders draw away from the beggar in revulsion.

Despite your aversion, the beggar lurches toward you. His eyes roll down to gaze upon your group with frightening lucidity. The beggar speaks a few distinct words in an unknown, alien tongue before collapsing, exhausted, at your feet.

If any party members know the ancient language of Kadari (or state they are casting a spell such as *comprehend languages* or *tongues* before Adil approaches), they hear the beggar shouting, "Wake up! Wake up!" out in the streets. Once he sees the party, the beggar adds, in a prophetic tone, "The nine-fold stars have fallen! Waken, Lions of Tomorrow, for the gates of Tadabbur are thrown open!"

This demented beggar is none other than Adil al-Muluki, the unfortunate rogue who stole a cursed seal from a priest in Muluk (see page 3). This event took place either days, weeks, or months ago, depending upon the party's current location and its proximity to that city. Ever since, Adil has been living a nightmare. He has long blackouts, regaining consciousness in strange, new places he has never visited before. He is unaware of what he is saying or doing during these "fits," as he calls them. Somehow he has gained enough nourishment to survive during his long journey to the party's current location.

Adil is certain that the clay seal he stole is cursed and to blame for his current state, but try as he might he has no control over his actions once he blacks out. Upon recovering his senses, Adil looks at the party with a confused yet sane expression. Speaking in normal Midani, he pleads for food and alms "for poor Adil." Trying to invoke their sympathy (as all adept beggars do), Adil solicits them for any offerings "the great sultans" can afford.

If the party asks him about his fits, Adil will gladly tell his tale for a silver, recounting the information presented at the beginning of this prologue. Adil considers it his kismet, or fate, to be cursed by the gods for stealing from a priest. He promises fervently never to do such a thing again. He will gladly let the party inspect the seal, if they express any interest.

Adil al-Muluki (hmT/bg/5): AC 9; MV 12; hp 19; THAC0 18; #AT 1, Dmg by weapon; SA triple damage backstab; PP 50%, OL 37%, RT 25%, MS 50%, HS 70%, DN 45%, CW 65%, RL 30%; Str 8, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 14; AL N; copper begging bowl, walking stick, concealed knife.

## The Seal of Prophecy

Adil shows the adventurers a circular disk, roughly 4" in diameter, fashioned from ceramic or baked clay. Show players the front (color side) of Card 1, depicting the wheel-shaped symbol on the front of the seal.

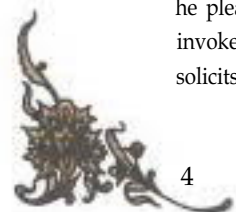
The back of the seal is covered with verses in an ancient language (Kadari):

*Embrace Fate, and she will smile upon you. The key to understanding lies through the mists of ignorance. Learn from yesterday to shape tomorrow.*

Do not share this information with the players unless one of the party members can read and write Kadari (or if someone uses *comprehend languages* or a similar translation spell).

The unfortunate bearer of the seal is seemingly cursed. He cannot lose the seal or give it away, for it magically returns to his person the moment he ceases to concentrate upon it. Furthermore, if at any time Adil is slain, the seal resurrects him as many times as he has points of Constitution. Thereafter, Adil becomes a revenant or any other form of undead the DM finds appropriate. The seal is protected using undetectable sorcerous enchantments, which block divination spells (short of a wish) used upon it. As a result, it does not even radiate magic.

Originally, the seal was intended to be used by a priest





of Zann skilled in divination magic. Unfortunately, Adil obtained the seal at the exact moment an ancient prophesy was fulfilled, imprinting it on Adil until the second half of the ancient prophesy is fulfilled:

*Should the gates of Tadabbur be opened, nine-fold stars will rain from the sky to signal Her return. When wheel meets wheel, the past becomes clear and the future open.*

By now, the party should be mystified and confused by Adil's predicament. This is to be expected and encouraged by the DM, who should have fun misleading the party with a gibbering, prophetic beggar. Until the prophesy associated with the seal is fulfilled, Adil will continue to suffer from fits of madness, during which he repeatedly babbles prophetic nonsense in Kadari.

The seal and its prophesy have their origins in the distant past, in a region of Zakhara currently known as the Ruined Kingdoms, where a race of terrible and powerful sorcerer-priests once ruled a vast empire. Known as the Geomancers, their history and background are described in Chapter Two of the Campaign Guide (the DM is encouraged to read that material before running the adventure). Although the Geomancers are thought to be long dead and forgotten, the most powerful of their kind, a sorcerer-priest named Tisan, was imprisoned at Tadabbur with a mighty talisman, which was created by a high priest of Zann named Suhail.

In his wisdom, Suhail knew that Tisan might some day be released by the removal of this talisman. To prepare for this eventuality, Suhail enchanted the clay seal and fashioned its prophetic curse. The clay seal is an enchanted key which can open a secret vault hiding ancient lore about the Geomancers. In the proper hands, this knowledge can be used to destroy, or at least re-imprison, the Arch-Geomancer Tisan. This secret vault is encountered in the later adventure, "Secrets of the Seal."

## The Nine-fold Stars

As forewarned by the meteor shower over Muluk on the night Adil stole the magical seal, Tisan's scarab

has indeed been disturbed. A desperate band of bounty hunters from Rog'osto, searching the hinterland jungles for treasure, accidentally stumbled across the outer ruins of Tadabbur. Having no knowledge of the terrible Geomancers, the group removed the talisman sealing the entrance of Tisan's prison below Tadabbur. One of the two surviving explorers, Raja al-Sadiq, is a potent, greedy, and ambitious sha'ir. Through her intellect and bravery, she managed to parley with the last Geomancer.

Tisan was both relieved and amused that her liberator had no knowledge of her history or true identity. Through her vague glimpses of the future before she was imprisoned, Tisan knew that her only weakness lay in a small seal, which could unlock the knowledge to destroy her.

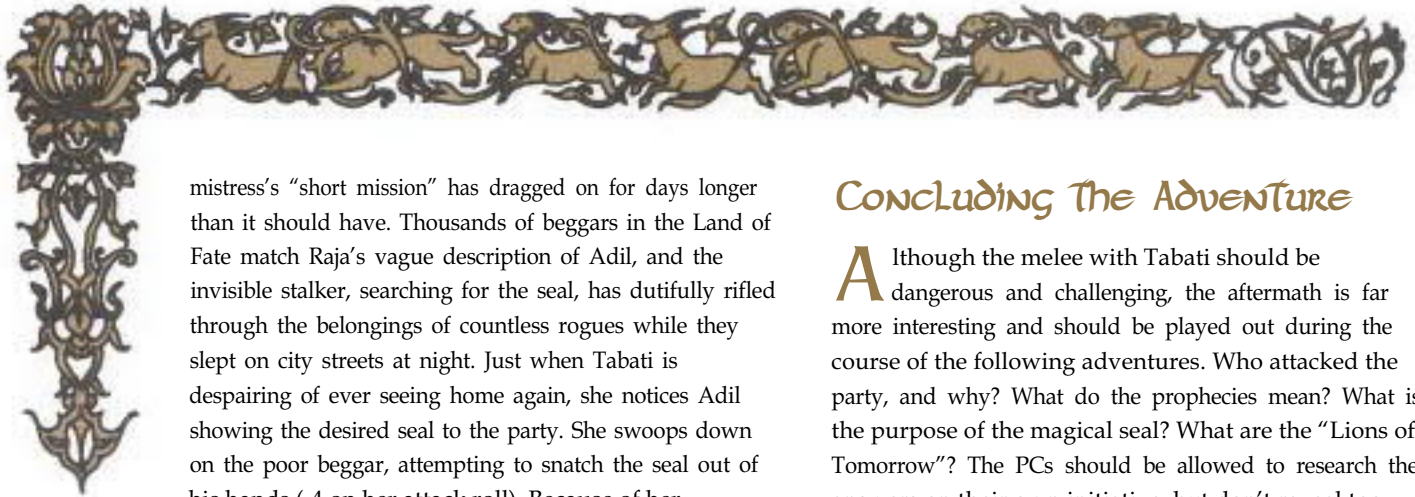
Considering her liberator's possible utility in obtaining the seal, Tisan struck a bargain with Raja. The Arch-Geomancer would have retrieved the item herself, but she was weakened after nine centuries of sleep and had more important long-range plans to set in motion. In exchange for the sha'ir's assistance, Tisan promised Raja rulership and power in a resurrected modern-day empire of Kadar. The pair entered into a magical contract (enforced with a *geas*) not to betray each other. Tisan agreed only because she can use a wish to negate the *geas* in the future—when she will inevitably desire to eliminate her arrogant and rude accomplice.

After striking this bargain with Raja, Tisan cast a *wish* to learn the location of Suhail's magical seal. But her divination spell brought only a vague response because of the seal's undetectable wardings. Collapsing in exhaustion, Tisan passed her sketchy information to Raja, who agreed to obtain the seal to the best of her ability. Herself heavily exhausted by her efforts to gain and win entrance to Tisan's company, Raja summoned a lesser servant to fetch the seal and eliminate its current owner. That servant is Tabati, a female invisible stalker who will eventually encounter the PCs in her search for the seal. Tisan and Raja will only be directly encountered in the last adventure, "Kismet."

## Raja's Servant

When the adventure begins, two weeks have passed since Tabati was summoned to retrieve the seal, and the invisible stalker is furious that her

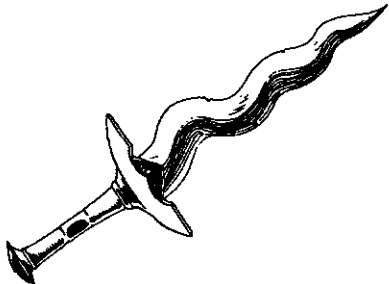




mistress's "short mission" has dragged on for days longer than it should have. Thousands of beggars in the Land of Fate match Raja's vague description of Adil, and the invisible stalker, searching for the seal, has dutifully rifled through the belongings of countless rogues while they slept on city streets at night. Just when Tabati is despairing of ever seeing home again, she notices Adil showing the desired seal to the party. She swoops down on the poor beggar, attempting to snatch the seal out of his hands (-4 on her attack roll). Because of her invisibility and silent approach, Tabati has a -6 bonus to surprise. After snatching the seal, she attempts to slay the unfortunate beggar, ignoring the PCs unless they come to Adil's aid.

If the beggar is slain, the invisible stalker flies away with her prize. Once she reaches a distance of a few miles, the seal *teleports* back to the beggar's body and *resurrects* him, as previously noted. If Tabati wasn't frustrated and enraged before, she becomes so now. Suspecting the PCs are to blame for the seal's sudden disappearance, she searches them out with murderous intent.

Meanwhile, the resurrected beggar finds the party and begs for help. He knows he was dead, and that the seal brought him back to life. He pleads for the party to assist him in removing its curse. By now, the enraged Tabati returns, mistakenly announcing her presence with a gasp of disbelief, followed by a howl of rage, at seeing Adil still alive. She hurls herself on Adil and the party, fighting to the death in her frustration.



Tabati, an invisible stalker: Int High (13); AL N; AC 3; MV 12, Fl 12 (A); HD 8; hp 41; THAC0 13; #AT 1, Dmg: 4d4; SA opponents have -6 penalty on surprise rolls; SD Invisibility (-2 penalty on enemies' attack rolls); MR 30%; ML 14; SZ L (8' tall); XP 3,000.

## Concluding The Adventure

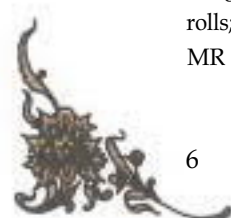
Although the melee with Tabati should be dangerous and challenging, the aftermath is far more interesting and should be played out during the course of the following adventures. Who attacked the party, and why? What do the prophecies mean? What is the purpose of the magical seal? What are the "Lions of Tomorrow"? The PCs should be allowed to research the answers on their own initiative, but don't reveal too much at the onset, or the importance of future revelations in the adventure "Secrets of the Seal" will be undermined. The cryptic references should eventually point the party in the direction of the Ruined Kingdoms. In particular, the reference to gates may lead the party to Dihliz, which is also dubbed "The Gateway City."

After the adventure, the party has a permanent, if unwilling, additional member: Adil. Even if the party ostracizes the beggar, he should turn up again and again during the future adventures, babbling prophetic nonsense in Kadari. Only after the vault containing the tome entitled *Lions of Tomorrow* has been opened will the party be free of Adil's annoying presence.

In addition to a prophetic new ally, the party should quickly realize that it has also gained some new and powerful enemies. At some point, Tisan will learn of Raja's failure, and she will not be pleased. The DM should see the last adventure, "Kismet," for more details on how the Arch-Geomancer punishes Raja for her ineptitude.

Getting to the Ruined Kingdoms could be a monumental journey. The next adventure, "Pilgrimage," should provide a convenient way of getting the party there in a hurry, regardless of their current location in the Land of Fate.

*Note to the DM:* If one of the players might enjoy or accept the notion of having a mildly cursed character, consider having the PC (preferably a rogue) take on the role of the insane, prophetic figure in the adventures. In other words, you could arrange for the PC—and not Adil—to discover the magical seal.





## Ithnayn hagg Tisan: Pilgrimage

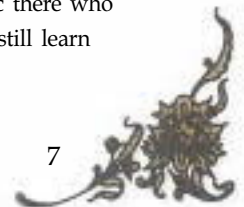
**W**hen the tremors started weeks ago, they were so faint that Nalv hardly noticed them at first. But as the winter nights grew longer, the upheavals gradually increased in their intensity, threatening to destroy the sacred shrine entrusted to Nalv's care. For weeks, he searched for the cause of the tremors and soon discovered a hole in the rocky hill near the shrine where the force of the earthquakes seemed to originate. Summoning all his strength, Nalv tried to enter the hole, but the heavy stone around the small opening resisted his most diligent efforts.

At first Nalv thought he could wait until the High Holy Days for help, when pious pilgrims would throng to the secluded shrine from the nearby trade routes. But the Holy Season was months away, and judging by the shrine's increasing damage from the regular upheavals, there would be nothing but a pile of rubble to greet the pilgrims this year if Nalv waited much longer. Taking to the air, the giant mason wasp began searching the trade routes for a group of generous pilgrims (or at least pious travelers) willing to help stop the mysterious earthquakes. . . .

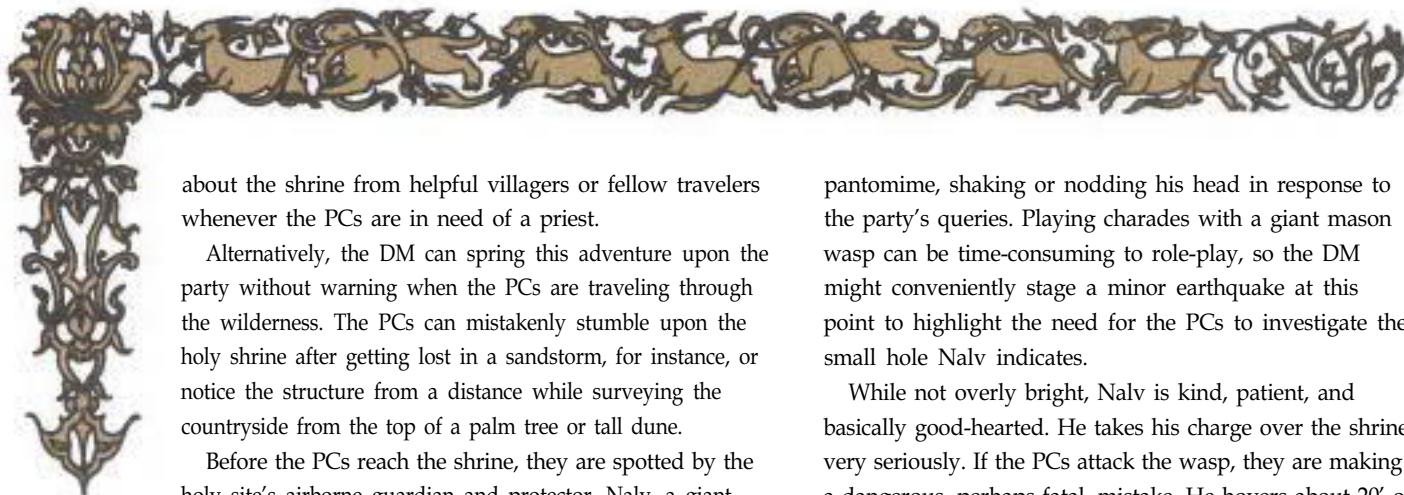
### Starting The Adventure

"Pilgrimage" is designed for a party of 4th-6th level characters. It provides the DM with a quick, though not necessarily easy, way of getting the party to the Ruined Kingdoms.

There are several ways this adventure can be worked into an existing campaign. If the PCs have completed the prologue, "Nine Falling Stars," they will be plagued by a raving, prophetic beggar and confused by his apocalyptic prophesies. As a sign of sympathy, concerned townspeople (and also trusted NPC mentors) will advise the party to make a short pilgrimage to the nearby holy shrine of Suhail min Zann, the site of many wondrous miracles (divine revelations, miraculous cures, etc.) during the High Holy Days. Although the Holy Days are many months away, the NPCs suggest that the PCs still might find a wise traveling priest or mystic there who can help them. If the DM has not run the prologue, the party may still learn







about the shrine from helpful villagers or fellow travelers whenever the PCs are in need of a priest.

Alternatively, the DM can spring this adventure upon the party without warning when the PCs are traveling through the wilderness. The PCs can mistakenly stumble upon the holy shrine after getting lost in a sandstorm, for instance, or notice the structure from a distance while surveying the countryside from the top of a palm tree or tall dune.

Before the PCs reach the shrine, they are spotted by the holy site's airborne guardian and protector, Nalv, a giant mason wasp. Scouring the nearby lands for any travelers to help him out of his predicament, the mason wasp lands at a respectful distance (out of bow shot) from the party and patiently waits for its approach. If the party retreats, the wasp takes to the air and lands in front of the PCs again. Quickly describe Nalv as a delicate, 6-long, jet-black mason wasp, with ruby-colored eyes and cherry-red front mandibles. Explain to the party that the mason wasp, unlike the common hornet, is a symbol of good luck in Zakhara (this should be common knowledge).

Although Nalv cannot speak Midani, he was taught by pilgrims years ago how to understand the language and communicate by writing. While the party approaches, he scratches out a long, formal greeting into the ground with his forelegs (*Greetings, generous pilgrims, in the name of the Loregiver and Zann the Most Wise! May peace be with you, and may Fate smile upon you and your journey!*). After introducing himself, Nalv explains the mysterious earthquakes that have started damaging the shrine, and he asks the party (whom he always addresses as "generous pilgrims") to investigate the small hole in the nearby hill, where he thinks the earthquakes originate. He gladly relates all of the information from the opening of this adventure. Although he can offer the party no reward for its assistance, he stresses that the party will be performing a pious and holy act by helping to stop the earthquakes.

To role-play the encounter to maximum effect, write out Nalv's responses to the party's questions on a separate sheet of paper with a large black marker. Of course, the encounter could be greatly simplified if a party member has access to the spells *comprehend languages*, *speak with animals*, or *tongues*. If the party doesn't have access to this magic and cannot read Midani, Nalv resorts to

pantomime, shaking or nodding his head in response to the party's queries. Playing charades with a giant mason wasp can be time-consuming to role-play, so the DM might conveniently stage a minor earthquake at this point to highlight the need for the PCs to investigate the small hole Nalv indicates.

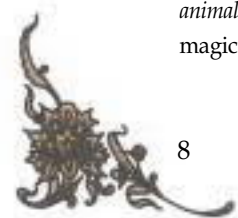
While not overly bright, Nalv is kind, patient, and basically good-hearted. He takes his charge over the shrine very seriously. If the PCs attack the wasp, they are making a dangerous, perhaps fatal, mistake. He hovers about 20' off the ground, catching everyone in a 15'-diameter area in his fire breath. Nalv can repeat this two more times if apologies and surrender are not immediately forthcoming. Should the party slay the giant mason wasp, everyone who participated must make a saving throw vs. magic at -4 or be afflicted by the evil eye for at least one month.

Nalv, a giant mason wasp: Int Low (7); AL NG; AC 2; MV 6, Fl 21 (B); HD 6+1; hp 37; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg: 4d4/4d4; SA: Poison stinger (save vs. poison or fall into a burning fever, onset time 1-4 rounds) or breath weapon (*cone of fire*, 5' wide at mouth, 15' wide at end, 20' long; inflicts 5d6 points of damage, half if save); SD: immune to fire; ML 11; SZ M (6' long); MC13: AQ.

## Local History

Imam Suhail was one of the most powerful priests of Zann ever to walk the face of Zakhara. As described in Chapter Two of the Campaign Guide, Suhail was the architect of the Geomancer's defeat in the Ruined Kingdoms many centuries ago. After that evil force was banished from the world, Suhail wandered through the Land of Fate, destroying all records of the Geomancers he could find. When he knew that his mission on al-Toril was ended, he consulted the stars for an auspicious location to be buried, so that a future generation of heroes, *Lions of Tomorrow*, would easily discover his burial place should the last Geomancer ever be awakened.

During his travels, Imam Suhail befriended the Queen Mother of the giant mason wasps. As a sign of respect, she decreed that her followers would always watch over his final resting place. Since mason wasps are considered





harbingers of good luck and fortune, many pilgrims would stop at Suhail's grave on their pilgrimage to Huzuz. Miracles have been associated with the grave since the first pilgrims arrived centuries ago, and it wasn't long before a small shrine was erected near his sepulcher.

Over the years, the trade routes shifted slightly, leaving the shrine closer to the edge of the wilderness. After the initial surge of pilgrims, the number of visitors dwindled with each new year, so that successive Queen Mothers sent fewer and fewer guardians to the shrine. Today, only Nalv remains to perform what is essentially a ceremonial duty.

## Shrine of Suhail min Zann

The DM can place Suhail's shrine anywhere in Zakhara, though it should be relatively close to the party's initial location (there will be plenty of opportunities for travel throughout the Ruined Kingdoms, once the party gets there). Although the descriptions imply that the shrine is located in desert terrain, it can just as easily be nestled in the nearby foothills or mountains. It would be convenient if it were near a major pilgrimage route to Huzuz, such as in the deserts south of the Furrowed Mountains.

When the party arrives at the shrine, probably escorted by Nalv, show the players the front of Card 2. The shrine is built in a low-walled compound beside a low, rocky hill. The wells near the mosque are covered by leather tarps to keep brush and debris out of the clean water while the mosque is unattended. Within and beyond the outer courtyard, countless eroded tombs bear silent testimony to travelers who never survived their pilgrimage.

There is a locked wooden door in the mosque's outer courtyard, which can be easily picked (+20% on a rogue's Open Locks roll). This door leads to a supply room containing stone-working tools (including small picks, hammers, and chisels), extra ceramic tiles for the mosque's walls and ceiling, and the ingredients for making stucco. These supplies are used by visiting pilgrims to make repairs on the shrine when they arrive during the Holy Season.

The shrine itself is a small, domed mosque dedicated to Zann. Although the exterior has been eroded by time, the

recent earthquakes appear to have inflicted far more damage than the relentless elements. If the PCs inspect the building, they will note many small cracks in the foundation. The mosque's single dome is networked with fissures. Clearly, the holy site is deserted and has not been maintained in some time (the traveling priests, who arrive before the pilgrims in the Holy Season, have not yet come to complete the mosque's yearly repairs).

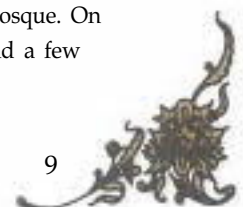
Inside the mosque, the earthquake damage is more apparent. Intricate blue tilework has been shaken off the walls and ceiling by the tremors and now covers the floor in a carpet of debris. Sunlight can be seen through the cracks in the dome overhead, though the supporting walls appear to be stable (for the time being, at least). Despite the damage, a number of verses written on the temple walls are still visible (common aphorisms attributed to Suhail min Zann). Translated into Midani by the modern pilgrims who maintain the mosque, only a few lines can be deciphered:

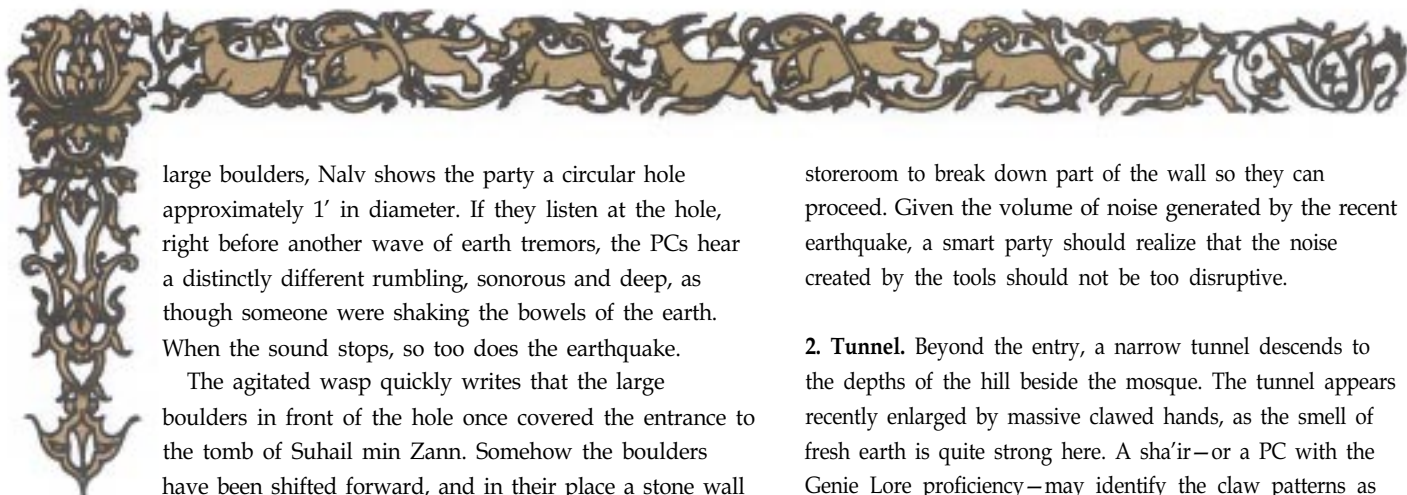
*We cannot destroy what we do not understand.  
Fate is a woman, carrying us towards our Kismet;  
only a fool thinks he can escape her embrace.  
We must learn from the mistakes of our forbears.  
The written word is a gift to the Lions of  
Tomorrow.*

Besides the supply of tools in the outer storeroom and the verses written on the inside walls, there is little to interest the party in the shrine.

## Source of The Tremors

By the time the party has had enough time to pitch camp and survey the mosque, the shrine is hit by another earthquake. Nalv notices the tremors first and urges the party to leave the mosque before the quakes become dangerous. The tremors come in waves about one or two minutes apart. While the ground is heaving, the party can watch as the cracks in the mosque snake up the walls a few more inches and the crevices in the dome open slightly wider. During the earthquake, Nalv leads the party to the rocky hill rising behind the mosque. On the northwestern face of the hill, hidden behind a few





large boulders, Nalv shows the party a circular hole approximately 1' in diameter. If they listen at the hole, right before another wave of earth tremors, the PCs hear a distinctly different rumbling, sonorous and deep, as though someone were shaking the bowels of the earth. When the sound stops, so too does the earthquake.

The agitated wasp quickly writes that the large boulders in front of the hole once covered the entrance to the tomb of Suhail min Zann. Somehow the boulders have been shifted forward, and in their place a stone wall has been erected. The wall is pierced by a wide, circular hole. A sha'ir may recognize this wall to be the work of genies.

## Tomb of Suhail min Zann

The DM should refer to the top half of the back of Card 3 for a map of the sepulcher. Unless stated otherwise, the small tomb is pitch-dark. The DM may wish to expand this tomb into a larger complex.

This tomb has recently been desecrated by a pair of insidious yak-men—He Who Pretends Holiness and He Who Subverts the Enlightened—along with their dao slave, Hasan. Arriving well before the Holy Days, when they hope to enslave some of the important priests visiting the site, the Pretender and the Subverter have established their new lair with Hasan's invaluable assistance.

If asked, Nalv will be happy to accompany the party into the tomb to punish the desecrators. Unfortunately, he is currently much too big to fit inside the tomb's fortified entrance.

**1. Narrow Entry.** The original entrance to the tomb has been narrowed by Hasan's *wall of stone* spell. This is pierced by a single air hole, allowing the Deceiver and Pretender to breathe while they wait in a deep trance for the pilgrims to arrive during the Holy Season. There are a few ways to bypass the magical barrier. First, the hole is big enough for a gnome or halfling to squeeze through, so the PCs can proceed if they magically shrink themselves. Second, the party can attempt to dispel the wall, which the dao cast at 18th level of ability (this is pretty unlikely for a low-level party). Third, the PCs can use the tools from the mosque's

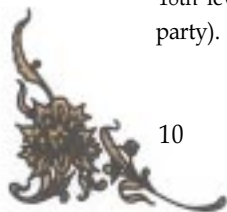
storeroom to break down part of the wall so they can proceed. Given the volume of noise generated by the recent earthquake, a smart party should realize that the noise created by the tools should not be too disruptive.

**2. Tunnel.** Beyond the entry, a narrow tunnel descends to the depths of the hill beside the mosque. The tunnel appears recently enlarged by massive clawed hands, as the smell of fresh earth is quite strong here. A sha'ir—or a PC with the Genie Lore proficiency—may identify the claw patterns as belonging to a dao by making a successful ability check.

**3. The Snoring Somnambulist.** The narrow tunnel opens into a wide cavern, formerly the antechamber to Imam Suhail's tomb, where his body was prepared for interment in area 4. The cavern is guarded by the less-than-vigilant dao, Hasan, who is sleeping in a wide stone shelf along the south wall. Hasan is a sound but fitful sleeper. The genie grumbles and talks in his sleep, quietly murmuring barely coherent phrases in Jannti, the language of the genies (for instance, *I'll show you horned runts. . . . Lose some weight, you fat little. . . . Just wait till I'm free. . . . Do I have to watch while you eat?*, etc.).

Unable to escape his servitude even while asleep, the dao tosses and turns on his bed of stone. Sometimes, when he turns over on his back in bed, his head tilts backward, his mouth plops open, and he snores. This eruption of snorts, wheezes, pants, and gasps is so loud that any PCs caught within 10' of the genie when he snores must save vs. magic or be subject to the effects of a shout spell. His snores are so loud and forceful that they can be felt on the surface above the cavern as the tremors of small earthquakes. The room where the genie sleeps, reinforced by the dao's magic, is not affected by Hasan's snores. There is a 1% cumulative chance per round that Hasan will start to snore while the PCs are in the chamber. Once he starts, there is a 5% cumulative chance, per round, that he will stop.

Though he is the slave of the yak-men, the dao is by no means a willing servant. Hasan hates his masters with a passion, as will quickly become apparent to any who can decipher his somnolent ramblings. Before the yak-men retired to their chamber (area 4), they ordered the dao to





slay any intruders on sight. They also ordered him not to leave the cavern he guards (area 3). Hasan was trying to think of a way to betray his masters without disobeying their orders, but the intellectual effort was too great, and the genie dozed off from mental exhaustion.

Although the genie is asleep, his subconscious mind is busily working on a way to escape slavery. So intent is the genie's desire for freedom, that unless the party actually wakes the genie by physically harming him (or conspiring to physically harm him), the genie's conscious mind will remain sound asleep until the yak-men in area 4 call for his assistance.

The genie can be coaxed and prodded while asleep to roll over and stop snoring, though this might (25% chance) induce an episode of sleepwalking. Otherwise, for every round the PCs spend in this cavern, there is a 10% cumulative chance that the genie will start sleepwalking. If this happens, he acts as though under the effect of a *confusion* spell for 1-10 rounds before returning to his bed. During this period, the genie is extremely susceptible to (nonmagical) suggestions made by PCs, so long as they do not violate the dao's orders (such as requesting him to leave the cavern). The PCs could ask the sleepwalking genie questions and learn about the yak-men's presence in the nearby chamber. Since the dao's eyes remain closed during the entire experience, he is not compelled by his master's orders to slay intruders.

Hasan, a dao: Int Average (10); AL NE; AC 3; MV 9, Fl 15 (B), Br 6; HD 8+3; hp 43; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 3d6; SA spells; SD spells; SZ L (10' tall); ML 15; XP 5,000. Spells (cast as an 18th-level wizard): *assume gaseous form, change self, detect good, detect magic, invisibility, (fulfill another's) limited wish, misdirection, passwall, spectral force, wall of stone* (each once/day); *rock to mud* (3/day); *dig* (6/day).

**4. Crypt.** The heavy stone doors standing ajar in the eastern part of the main cavern bear the epitaph for Suhail min Zann (*May he never be called to finish the task he started*). Ripped open by Hasan, the doors lead into the crypt, where the yak-men have torn apart and desecrated suhail's grave and scattered his remains throughout the room

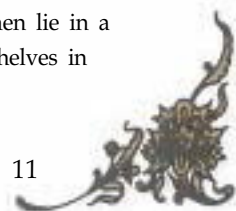


(except for his skull, which they saved for their collection; see below). A pungent, spicy aroma wafts out of the tomb—a strange mixture of wet ashes, cloves, and myrrh.

At the entrance to the crypt, the yak-men have placed two invisible *glyphs of warding*, which flash and explode for 10 hp and 16 hp of electrical damage, respectively, to whomever passes over them (save vs. spell for half damage). Triggering these glyphs will rouse the Subverter and the Pretender, meditating in the crypt beyond, on the following round.

The floor of the crypt is covered with white powder and bits of bone (Suhail's remains). Any priest will recognize the dust's sacred power. PCs of good alignment standing in the dust (or picking some up) are subject to the effects of a *prayer* spell, for the duration of the adventure. For priests of good alignment, touching the dust also acts as *oil of great devotion*. The dust of Suhail's remains lose all their magical ability when outside the tomb complex. The yak-men are not adversely affected by the dust.

Within the converted burial vault, the yak-men lie in a deep meditative trance. They rest in recessed shelves in





the wall, so they cannot be seen from the doorway. However, at this close distance, their heavy musk—smelling like cloves and myrrh—is overpowering. If the PCs bypassed the glyph at the entrance, they can examine the yak-men at their leisure, for they will not awake until they are physically harmed (i.e., take at least 1 hp of damage). If the party attempts to slay them while they meditate, allow weapons to hit for normal damage (the “sudden death,” rule does not apply unless the PCs have encountered yak-men before and are familiar with the vulnerable points in their anatomy).

Upon waking, the yak-men blast the party with the full power of their magical staves, calling to Hasan for aid. The yak-men’s harsh voices wake the dreaming genie in an instant. The sluggard arrives in 2-5 rounds, hoping to give the intruders enough time to finish off his wounded masters. In the meantime, the yak-men first hit the PCs with *hesitation\** and *mental domination\** to delay them until the dao’s unexpectedly late arrival. The yak-men are brutal, direct, and not amenable to negotiation.

If the yikaria are defeated, the party will discover that

each of them wears 1-3 pieces of ornate gold jewelry, worth 500 gp each for their alien and exotic manufacture. The yak-men keep the remainder of their valuables in a large iron trunk, toted everywhere by the reluctant dao. The trunk is warded by a *frisky chest\** enchantment and an invisible *glyph of warding*, which will inflict a *compulsive order\** spell upon the victim until its effects are successfully dispelled. Once the magical wardings on the chest have been eliminated, the party will find inside 5,000 sp; 2,000 gp; five blood red garnets (100 gp each); and an extensive collection of 48 human, humanoid, and demihuman skulls. If the party examines the skulls in the yak-men’s collection, one appears to be much older than the others. This is the skull of Imam Suhail, a minor holy relic in its own right.

In the description above and statistics below, spells marked with an asterisk (\*) come from the *Tome of Magic*.

**Yak-men:** Int Genius (18); AL NE; AC 4; MV 9; HD 5, hp 31, 24; #AT 1; THAC0 15; Dmg 1d10, by weapon type (staff), or by spell; SA spell use, command dao, unique *magic jar*; MR 10%; SZ L (8’ tall); ML 13; XP 3,000 each; for details see the *Land of Fate* boxed set.

**The Subverter—Magical items:** *staff of swarming insects* (24 ch.), *potion of extra-healing*; Spells (as 8th-level priest): *cause darkness, cause fear, command; aid, hold person, mind read\**; *dispel magic, grayer, rigid thinking\**; *mental domination\**, *modify memory\**.

**The Pretender—Magical items:** *staff of striking* (12 ch.); Spells (as 5th-level priest): *bless, command, cure light wounds; hesitation\*, hold person, silence 15’ radius; bestow curse*.

## The Skull of Suhail min Zann

If a PC of good alignment handles Suhail’s skull, the character will feel a nebulous link with the dead priest. Suhail’s spirit will telepathically inform the PC that it wishes to communicate with the rest of the party, and asks the character’s permission to use him or her as a medium (or to hand the skull over to a willing



medium among the party). Once the skull is in the hands of a willing channeler, the PC falls unconscious as the high priest's spirit takes possession of the character's body.

*I wish to thank you, worthy travelers, for your sacrifice in my behalf, but I am afraid that your adventures and hardships have only just begun. . . With these words, Suhail greets the PCs and informs them briefly of the Geomancers (see the Campaign Guide) and of Tisan's release from Tadabbur in the Ruined Kingdoms. He tells the party that they have been entrusted with the seed for Tisan's destruction. More specifically, he tells the PCs that the magical seal discovered in the prologue, "Nine Falling Stars," can help arm them against Tisan and her allies. The high priest then walks about the party, curing the sick, healing the wounded, raising the dead (depending upon the severity of the PCs' injuries after the battle), and so forth. I wish I could stay to counsel you further, but my link with this world is fading. After I am released tell the guardian of the shrine that the Lions of Tomorrow have awakened. He will know what to do next. My last request is that you repair my tomb and restore my remains to their rightful place in my sepulcher. Then, and only then, will my mission on al-Toril be complete.*

Reveal only enough information to keep the party from being completely confused. After their interview with Suhail, the party should understand that the magical seal functions as a key of some sort (what this key opens should still be a mystery)\* Feel free to give the players some general background information about the Geomancers, as presented in Chapter Two of the Campaign Guide, but do not reveal too much at once; lore about the Geomancers will appear much more precious to the party if it is acquired through the adventure "Secrets of the Seal." Finally, the party should learn that Tadabbur lies somewhere in the Ruined Kingdoms.



## Concluding The Adventure

Defeating the yak-men should be difficult, but not impossible, especially if the party has the foresight to invite Nalv to join it. While the wasp refuses to lead the way, Nalv hurls himself at the Pretender during the final battle, distracting the weaker yak-man so the party can concentrate on the Subverter. If the party is not capable of finishing off the yak-men before Hasan arrives, the dao's first action is to block their escape using a *wall of stone*. He attacks Nalv over other party members, hoping they will finish off the Subverter in the meantime. Otherwise, the party will have to fight both the dao and the yak-men (a possibly fatal combination). If party members are slain during the battle, they can be raised by Suhail's spirit afterwards (though the party doesn't necessarily know that).

Once the yak-men are slain, Hasan surrenders immediately. The genie will perform three tasks for the party in exchange for his freedom, using his limited *wish* ability. Because the genie knows that his long period of servitude is almost over, he performs his tasks quickly and willingly, without the usual entanglements. For saving the holy shrine from destruction, the party should be awarded a story award of 25,000 XP; if the party repairs the earthquake damage to the mosque and re-consecrates the tomb (in accordance with Suhail's final request), award an additional 15,000 XP.

Finally, if the party follows Suhail's advice and tells Nalv that "the Lions of Tomorrow have awakened," he flies off immediately to the hive of the Queen Mother. To fulfill a previous arrangement made with Suhail, the Queen Mother dispatches a group of her subjects to carry the PCs to the Ruined Kingdoms. The DM should play up the fantastic journey across Zakhara as much as possible, with the wasps carrying the party members over rivers, mountains, desert, and jungle with unusual speed. Regardless of the distance traveled, the trip takes a single day, and the wasps make it clear that the PCs are responsible for all of their own transportation in the future. It is suggested that the party arrive outside the city of Dihliz, where the next adventure, "Birthright," awaits.





## Thalath hagg Tisan: Birthright

Many years ago, the prosperous trader Batul al-Reehan al-Dihlizi decided to take a second wife. Now, his first wife, Liana, was a kind and beautiful woman with a pleasant disposition. When Batul asked her permission to marry again, Liana had little reason to disagree. As first wife, she was guaranteed supreme authority in the *harim*.

Liana was also very busy with their first child, whom Batul had already formally recognized as his heir with the qadis in the Ivory Palace. Even at this young age, the child's resemblance to Batul was remarkable, and Batul took great pride in this. Visitors would delight in pointing out how the child's slender nose, arched brows, and even the beauty mark near the chin matched Batul's features identically.

So Batul brought a second wife, named Mabruk, into the *harim*. From all outward appearances, Mabruk was respectful and generous with Liana, though inwardly her heart burned with anger and jealousy toward the first wife. Mabruk was cunning enough to conceal her hatred, and for a time there was peace in Batul's house, for the merchant was generous with his wives. Liana spent most of her allowance on treasures for the family's large villa, for as first wife, maintenance of the household was her responsibility. Mabruk, on the other hand, spent almost all of her fortune on books of sorcery and strange magical talismans.

A semblance of tranquillity settled on Batul's household. Within a year, Mabruk quickly conceived and bore a healthy son named Omar. This only increased Mabruk's resentment of Liana, however, for the first wife's child was already Batul's acknowledged heir.

Long after she had established herself as Liana's loyal friend and Batul's faithful wife, Mabruk decided to put into motion her plan for gaining dominance in the merchant's household. The first obstacle to Mabruk's happiness was Liana's child.

Summoning the genie Saleh from a magic ring, she commanded him to dispose of the infant heir to Batul's fortune. Now, the efreeti was not so dishonorable as to slay a helpless child in swaddling clothes. Instead, Saleh carried the infant to a distant land, where Mabruk would never learn of the efreeti's disobedience.

Unaware of Saleh's defiance, Mabruk meanwhile used her magical skills to



make it appear as though slave traders had broken into the house at night and stolen the child. In the morning, the household erupted into chaos. The family urged the emir to launch a full-scale investigation into the slave traders, who seemed to be responsible. The inquest turned up nothing, for the child was no longer in the city, and Mabruk covertly used her sorcerous abilities to mislead the investigators.

Devastated after the loss of her child, Liana was plunged into depression. Mabruk secretly poisoned her rival's food, preventing her from conceiving another child. The poison slowly took its toll on Liana's health as well. Healers considered her maladies to be caused by despondency. Within a few months after her child's disappearance, Liana died one night in her sleep. Thus Mabruk became Batul's first wife and the infant Omar became the acknowledged heir to the merchant's considerable fortune.

## Characters

This adventure revolves around the party and its interaction with important family members. The personalities for these pivotal NPCs are presented below; their statistics are compiled on page 3 of the 8-page booklet, for easy reference during play.

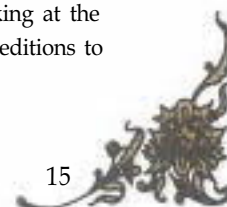
Batul al-Reehan al-Dihlizi (hmT/mr/12), the kind-hearted patriarch of the family, is the wreck of a vibrant and active man. Batul's once-strong body is gaunt and twisted with infirmity, but despite his affliction a smile still comes easily to his pale, sallow face. While searching for a new trade route to Talab through the Grey Jungle, the adventurous merchant contracted a deadly fever which left him in a coma. Although Batul eventually emerged from the delirium, the ailment had weakened his heart and destroyed his health forever. Now Batul spends almost all of his time at home or at the Mosque of Kor, whose priests do what they can to prevent a relapse of the disease. He is a virtual slave to exotic medicines imported from Kadarasto. Despite the advice of Korrite priests, Batul still oversees his trading company, though his poor health prevents him from undertaking long journeys. At the urgings of his wife, Batul has

allowed his son, Omar, to work in the family trading company. He fears Omar does not have the interest in business to be a successful merchant, however, and has quietly encouraged his son to pursue other interests.

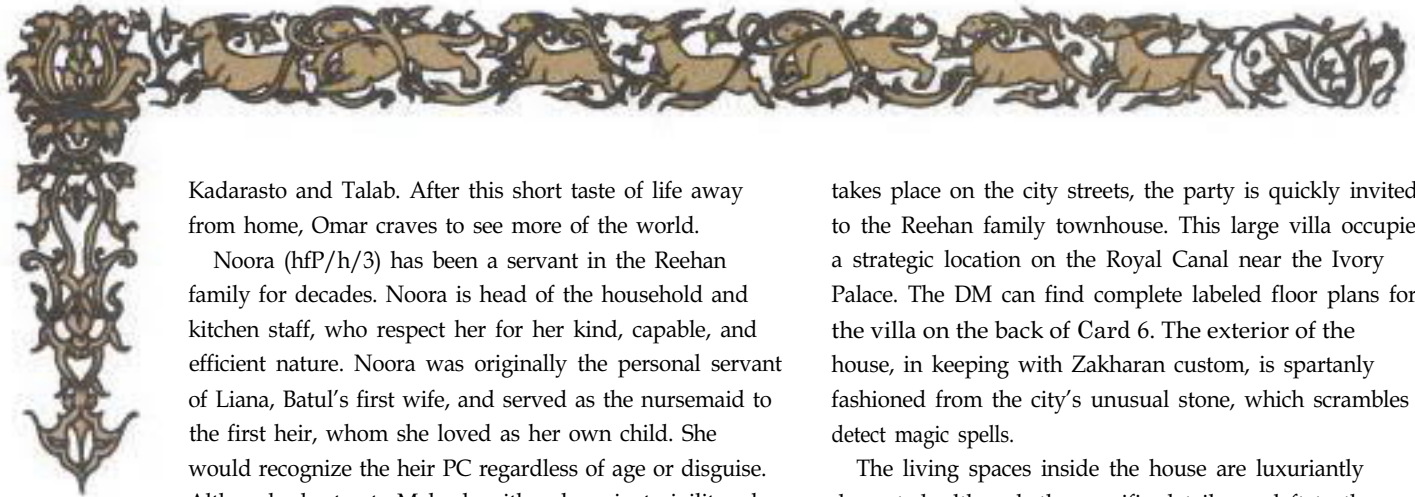
Mabruk al-Hanash (hfW/so/11) is the unquestioned ruler of the household. A statuesque woman whose beauty has begun to fade in middle age, Mabruk is a domineering, selfish, and unprincipled woman who mastered sorcery only to ensure her privileged place in society and magically conceal her aging appearance. She only married Batul for his wealth and carefully planned the elimination of Liana and her child with cold-blooded ruthlessness. Although she was quite cunning about hiding her cruel nature during the early phase of her marriage, over the years her manipulative tendencies have become clearly manifest to nearly all members of the family. She used to reinforce Batul's affection with numerous charms and love potions, but after his recovery from Grey Fever, Mabruk has come to despise her weak, infirm husband and currently delights in tormenting him about his lack of vitality. The one joy in her existence is her son, Omar. She will stop at nothing to protect his inheritance.

Mabruk's servant and companion is the scrupulous efreeti Saleh, a slave of the magic ring Mabruk wears. Saleh has taken the form of an older but muscular man, with dark skin and white hair. Saleh's cheeks and forehead are inscribed with elaborate tattoos, completing his disguise as a mamluk. The genie receives the largest dose of Mabruk's verbal abuse in the household, second only to Batul. He is not a mindless slave, though, and takes advantage of every opportunity to pervert her more important instructions. Saleh is honest and blunt to the point of being insulting. In all his long life, he has never told a lie.

Omar bin Mabruk (hmF/a/5) is the first and only child of Batul and Mabruk. Young and still quite naive, Omar has been sheltered from the harsh realities of life by his insular family. His parents have been careful to keep their most bitter arguments away from his sensitive ears, and over the years Omar has become accustomed to the fact that his parents do not get along. This saddens the young man greatly, for his loyalty is torn between both parents. At his mother's request, Omar has started working at the family business and overseen a few trading expeditions to







Kadarasto and Talab. After this short taste of life away from home, Omar craves to see more of the world.

Noora (hFP/h/3) has been a servant in the Reehan family for decades. Noora is head of the household and kitchen staff, who respect her for her kind, capable, and efficient nature. Noora was originally the personal servant of Liana, Batul's first wife, and served as the nursemaid to the first heir, whom she loved as her own child. She would recognize the heir PC regardless of age or disguise. Although she treats Mabruk with subservient civility, she secretly despises her evil mistress. She stays with the family only out of loyalty to Batul and her desire to see Omar brought up with a good code of personal ethics, a trait his mother sadly lacks.

Mabruk has also purchased six mamluks to guard her home's valuable property. Although she treats her slaves like furniture, the mamluks are on good terms with most other members of the household. While on guard duty, the mamluks are utterly stoic, disciplined, and silent, but once they have finished their third daily shift, the PCs will find them friendly—if rarely appreciated—individuals. Wali is a lover of poetry and smoked river eel (a local delicacy); Abu hails from the Pantheon states, where he developed a moralistic code of ethics; Mahmud has a secret lover, whom he visits during his off-duty hours; Hatim works extra shifts as the family gardener; Bashi is a mute who speaks in sign language; and Nadan has a secret talent for juggling. The DM can flesh out these minor characters as needed during the course of the adventure.

In addition to the mamluks, the family keeps a number of dangerous greyhounds in the house to thwart robbers and intimidate visitors. These war dogs have proven their usefulness more than once against burglars cloaked with *invisibility*. The animals are only friendly to household servants, mamluks, and members of the family; otherwise the dogs are quite inhospitable.

## Setting

The adventure takes place in the city of Dihliz, which is described in Chapter Four of the Campaign Guide. A map of the city can be found on the front of Card 4. Although some of the action in this adventure

takes place on the city streets, the party is quickly invited to the Reehan family townhouse. This large villa occupies a strategic location on the Royal Canal near the Ivory Palace. The DM can find complete labeled floor plans for the villa on the back of Card 6. The exterior of the house, in keeping with Zakharan custom, is spartanly fashioned from the city's unusual stone, which scrambles detect magic spells.

The living spaces inside the house are luxuriantly decorated, although the specific details are left to the DM's whim. Important rooms have 1-4 valuable objects of art, which might include rugs, tapestries, ebony furniture, porcelain, silver serving ware, and small artistic carvings. Obviously, the common workrooms, such as the cellars, stables, servant quarters, kitchen, and laundry room will not be so lavishly appointed.

Living spaces in the villa are clearly labeled on the floor plans. The mamluks typically guard the areas marked M with at least one greyhound, rotating to a new station every four hours (thus each slave has twelve hours on guard duty each day). Off-duty mamluks sometimes accompany family members on errands outside the house. Those dogs not guarding the entrances are allowed to wander about the house at their leisure, where they can harass visitors at will. Of course, it will be considered extremely bad manners for a guest to harm (or kill) any of the family's beloved pets.

## Flow of Events

"Birthright" is based on the premise that one of the PCs (henceforth referred to as the heir PC) was kidnapped at birth and transported across Zakhara as an infant. The character has no knowledge of his or her true identity as the heir to the Reehan family legacy. The heir PC can be male or female. As outlined in the adventure introduction, the heir was kidnapped in his or her early infancy by Saleh at Mabruk's command and abandoned near the home of a childless family, who promptly adopted the foundling, never revealing his or her mysterious origins. The DM can tailor this aspect of the character's life history to correspond to any existing background.





The DM should pick the heir PC very carefully. The most desirable choice for an heir would be a loner or independent PC (preferably an orphan), who has had little or no contact with his or her adoptive family in the past. While the narrative assumes that the heir is human, the Reehan family can just as easily be gnomes, elves, or halflings, reflecting the chosen PC's race.

As revealed in the "Characters" section, meeting the Reehan family will be both blessing and curse. Although some members of the family—particularly Noora and Batul—will be ecstatic over the PC's miraculous return, Mabruk has a vested interest in seeing that the PC leaves the city before his or her true identity as Batul's heir can be legally established.

Given that the upcoming family reunion may prove fatal for the heir, having a large group of dangerous friends at hand will be a definite asset. The other members of the party are thus involved in the family squabble whether they like it or not. Allies of the heir's family will regard other PCs as honored heroes for their role in protecting the heir's arrival in Dihliz; Mabruk will view the other PCs as dangerous bodyguards, who must be eliminated before the heir can be neutralized as a threat to the status quo.

## Starting The Adventure

Give the party members some time to themselves to get accustomed to Dihliz once they arrive, probably after the fantastic journey described at the end of the previous adventure, "Pilgrimage." Use the information presented in Chapter Four of the Campaign Guide to give the party a general feel and background for Dihliz before setting the events of the adventure in motion.

In this early stage of the adventure, feel free to drop hints that the heir PC is being recognized by more than one citizen. As mentioned in the introduction, the heir has been blessed with his or her father's distinctive facial features. Since Batul is a well-known figure in the city, especially among the merchants in the bazaars, the heir is going to draw a lot of astonished stares.

At first, merchants are reluctant to explain the reason for their astonishment ("You reminded me of a friend, that's all. Please excuse my familiarity."). If the PCs

diligently pursue this lead, they can learn two important facts: (1) by seeming coincidence, the heir PC is the spitting image of Batul al-Reehan; (2) Batul is one of the richest merchants in the city.

## The Nursemaid

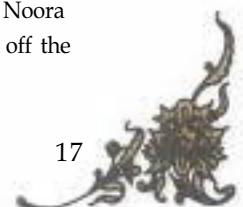
Batul is a popular fellow in Dihliz. Although many years have passed, most of Batul's numerous friends remember how his first child was tragically "kidnapped by slavers" at an early age. Rumors of the heir's possible return slowly start to circulate through the bazaar. When Noora, the chief servant in the Reehan household, shows up at the markets to purchase food for the day, she soon hears the rumors of the lost heir's return. Skeptical at first, she seeks out the party. It only takes one look to confirm that the heir has indeed arrived. With a squeal of delight, Noora throws herself on the heir, crying and blubbing that the PC has "finally come home, after all these years," and that his or her father had "given him (or her) up for dead." She introduces herself as the heir's nursemaid.

Describe Noora as a heavily overweight woman in her late fifties, with oily, pudgy fingers that smell faintly of fish, (she just finished eating a smoked eel kebab at the bazaar). She is dressed in silk garments and has a glowing smile. Tears of joy are streaming down her face. Noora tries to convince the heir and the rest of the party (whom she assumes to be his or her bodyguards) to come to the Reehan family villa ("Your father will be so pleased!").

The party might be a little cautious (or paranoid), but it should be fairly simple to verify Noora's claims. A number of merchants in the bazaar can vouch for her (and Batul's) identity. Of course, now that Noora has publicly fingered the PC as Batul's long-lost heir, suddenly everyone in the bazaar and on the streets will want to meet the PC, be his or her friend, or at least lighten his or her purse. His or her station (in Dihliz at least) is immediately increased by three points.

## A Stepmother's Welcome

If the party still does not want to accompany Noora home immediately, she does her best to shoo off the





opportunists for the time being (using some of her spells, if necessary, to prove her earnestness) and gives the party directions to the family villa. Noora runs home to tell the whole household of the heir's return, sending a messenger to recall Batul from a country estate, where he is quietly resting away from Mabruk's abusive temper.

Mabruk soon hears of the heir's return from her joyous household staff. Mabruk is far from pleased, but assumes the role of a concerned stepmother. Inwardly, she is plotting schemes to eliminate the heir before he or she accepts the family's salt bond. If the party declined Noora's invitation to accompany her home, Mabruk summons Saleh in the privacy of her chambers and rails at him for failing to dispatch the heir two decades ago as he was ordered. She now gives the genie a bow with poisoned, black-feathered arrows and orders Saleh to seek out the heir and shoot the PC before his or her arrival at the villa.

Saleh hastens to obey, but the efreeti finds cold-blooded murder distasteful. He wipes off most of the poison coating the arrows, drastically reducing the venom's effectiveness (onset time 2-12 rounds; inflicts 10 hp damage on a failed save vs. poison, 1d3 hp if the saving throw is successful) without violating his instructions. Cloaked by *invisibility*, he searches out the PCs and watches them for a while from the rooftops, waiting for the right moment. Compelled by his own sense of honor, Saleh aims his first poisoned arrow at the heir's turban or headdress as a warning (this called shot has a -4 penalty to hit). Saleh continues to fire on the heir for up to three rounds. He then *polymorphs* into a hummingbird and flutters away (Fl 42 B), thwarting pursuit in the public park, if necessary.

During the hail of arrows, PCs with the Awareness nonweapon proficiency will spot the archer in the same round if they make a successful ability check. Other characters must make a successful Intelligence check and scan the surroundings for 1-2 rounds before noticing the concealed archer on the rooftops. Describe the assassin as a tall humanoid figure whose features are concealed by long brown robes. When Saleh returns to his mistress, he reports hitting the heir with her arrows. Should the heir survive, he can always blame his failure on her inferior venom, not lack of obedience on his part.





If the party follows Noora home from the markets right after their introduction, Mabruk warmly greets the party in the gazebo of the outer garden (she keeps Saleh discreetly out of sight for now). With her beauty enhanced by minor glamours (like alter self and *friends*), Mabruk appears to be a beautiful, mature woman in her late twenties, though her natural age is two decades older. After introducing herself as Batul's wife (and the heir's stepmother), she apologizes that her household has been caught slightly off-guard by the heir's unexpected, but momentous, arrival. She briefly explains that Batul is resting in a quiet country estate and cannot make it home until the evening. Mabruk requests that the party do some sight-seeing around town until Batul arrives and her servants have had a chance to purchase enough food and refreshments for their welcoming feast tonight.

During the initial meeting, Mabruk appears to be completely sincere; her talisman blocks any magical attempts to divine her true thoughts, alignment, or truthfulness. By sending the PCs out onto the streets again without giving them food from her house, she hopes to avoid initiating the salt bond. Despite her protests, the party might realize this and request refreshments, but unless the food is presented by the host of her own free will, the salt bond commitment has not been formally established. Mabruk would not like to violate the family's bond of salt if she can help it. But when Mabruk gets truly desperate, later in the adventure, she will not hesitate to violate this sacred custom if she thinks it might protect her son's inheritance. At heart, Mabruk has no sense of honor. During the afternoon, while the party is out of the house, stage the half-hearted assassination attempt by Saleh, described previously.

If the party is scared off by the encounter, Mabruk's plan will have succeeded. She will, of course, hire bounty hunters like Nurudin (described in the "Visitor at Dawn" section) to bring her the PC's head, so she can be sure that the threat to her son's inheritance has been finally eliminated.

## The Grand Tour

Should the party retreat to the family villa, Mabruk will feign dismay and send for Noora, who will use

her healing talents to help restore the heir and other wounded party members. She also assigns Wadi to watch over the heir as a bodyguard. Mabruk descends to her laboratory to work until dinner unless the party devises some stratagem to flush her out.

Family servants flutter around like moths, catering to the party's wounds. The players can pump the servants for information, but only Noora has been with the family long enough to know what the family members are really like. She can provide general information about the members of the family but has no knowledge of Mabruk's murderous past and current intentions.

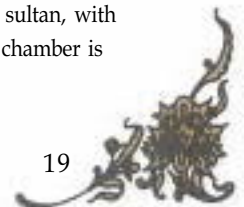
Noora gladly gives the party a tour of the house. Although she doesn't say so explicitly, only the *harim* (including adjacent sleeping chambers) and the laboratory are off limits to guests. None of the family servants has any knowledge of the secret doors in the house.

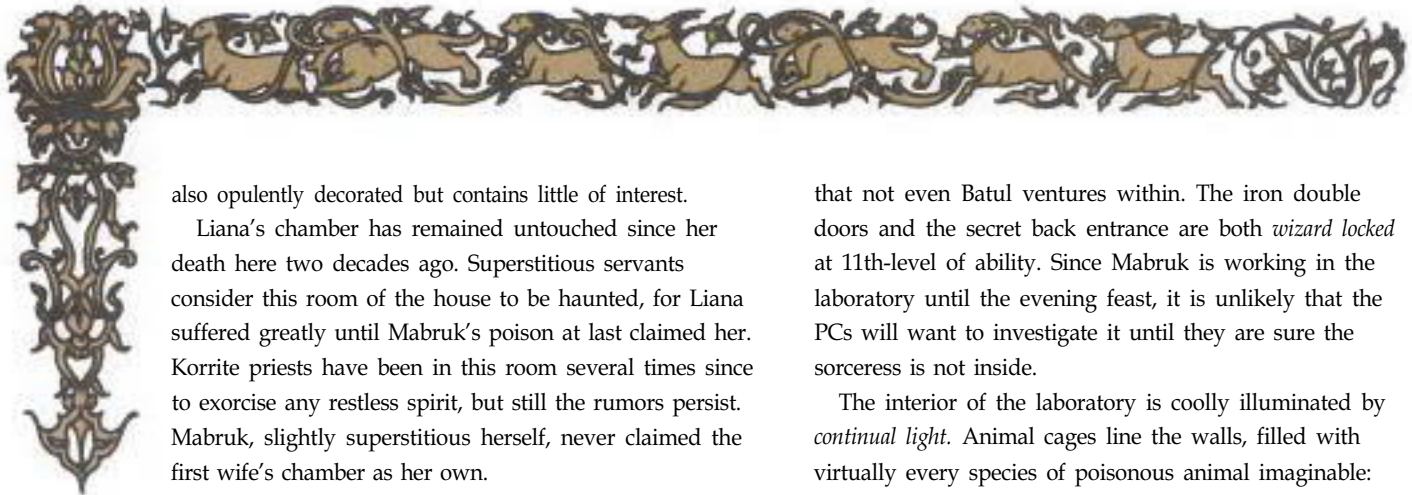
During the tour, play up the extravagant decor. The party should also recognize the elaborate security precautions. Noora explains that ever since the heir was kidnapped as a child "by slavers," the family purchased mamluks and war dogs to keep the household safe. She also drops the hint that the heir's kidnappers were never caught and thus might have been responsible for the earlier attack. This might lead the party off on a wild goose chase in Dihliz, but the search should uncover nothing (there are, after all, no slavers responsible for the kidnapping). Sooner or later the party will return to the villa.

## The Harim

Once they discover that the *harim* on the second floor is off limits, the party will undoubtedly be curious about its contents. Typically only women, small children, and Batul may enter. The *harim* is usually entered through a small guardroom, which is always attended by one of the mamluks and a greyhound. However, the secret staircase in Batul's nearby chamber is unguarded.

Batul's chamber is typically deserted (he has kept a discreet distance from Mabruk in the past few years), but with the heir's arrival, his bedroom has been prepared so as to keep up appearances. His room is decorated like that of a sultan, with priceless furniture, rugs, and tapestries. Mabruk's chamber is





also opulently decorated but contains little of interest.

Liana's chamber has remained untouched since her death here two decades ago. Superstitious servants consider this room of the house to be haunted, for Liana suffered greatly until Mabruk's poison at last claimed her. Korrite priests have been in this room several times since to exorcise any restless spirit, but still the rumors persist. Mabruk, slightly superstitious herself, never claimed the first wife's chamber as her own.

These ghost sightings are nothing more than the cruel mischief of Saleh, cleverly trying to arouse suspicions about his mistress by using his create *illusion* ability, since he cannot betray her directly. To heighten the impact, he creates a "haunting" infrequently.

Saleh has been banished to the *harim* for the day after failing in his mission against the heir. He mopes in Liana's room invisibly, but if he notices PCs in the *harim*, he tries to attract their attention to the room with an illusion of a ghostly woman quietly weeping on her bed.

Describe the apparition as if it were an actual ghost. Ask each PC to roll a saving throw vs. fear (secretly give them a +4 bonus). The efreeti has had a lot of practice with this particular illusion, and he can be quite convincing. Saleh dismisses the illusion before the party becomes suspicious. The invisible efreeti discreetly returns any items removed by thieving PCs to where they belong.

If the party members mention Liana's "ghost" to any members of the family, they risk revealing that they were snooping about in a forbidden area of the household. Only Noora is willing to overlook this and discuss the tender issue with the heir, asking other PCs to leave the room. She reveals that the ghost has been spotted in that same room several times before. One of the servants reportedly once heard Liana's ghost say she was murdered, but the servant caught ill and died soon afterward (also poisoned by Mabruk). Noora thinks that Liana's spirit could not rest until the heir returned safely home.

## The Laboratory

During her tour, Noora is more explicit about warning the PCs away from Mabruk's laboratory, mentioning that it is forbidden to every member of the household and

that not even Batul ventures within. The iron double doors and the secret back entrance are both *wizard locked* at 11th-level of ability. Since Mabruk is working in the laboratory until the evening feast, it is unlikely that the PCs will want to investigate it until they are sure the sorceress is not inside.

The interior of the laboratory is coolly illuminated by *continual light*. Animal cages line the walls, filled with virtually every species of poisonous animal imaginable: venomous lizards, tree frogs, snakes, and spiders. Of greater danger, a pair of giant pit vipers, *charmed* by Mabruk, slither freely about the laboratory. They will attack anyone other than the sorceress or Saleh as soon as the intruder ventures inside.

After the two slithering guardians have been eliminated, the party may search the laboratory, which is designed for the manufacturing of deadly and debilitating poisons. The shelves near the caged creatures are covered with devices for extracting venom from live animals. The raw venom is then combined with various herbal components and distilled into more insidious concoctions by Mabruk.

There is a *wizard-locked* iron strongbox in one corner of the laboratory. Unless preceded by a successful Find/Remove Traps roll, opening this chest releases a gas-filled globe, which shatters and releases a cloud of *death smoke*, as per the 5th-level wind spell. The chest contains Mabruk's spellbooks (containing the spells she has currently memorized and five extra spells per level, to be randomly determined by the DM), a *scroll of protection from poison*, and eight small vials, all labeled: *potions of vitality*, *sweet water*, *extra healing* (x3) and *poison* (x3). The last three (lethal) potions are incorrectly labeled as *invisibility* potions. Wrapped in a silk shawl at the bottom of the chest are a dozen black-feathered arrows, envenomed with type E poison, identical to the arrows used in Saleh's assassination attempt.

Giant poisonous snakes (2): Int Animal (1); AL N; AC 5; MV 15; HD 4+2; hp 22, 26; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg: 1d3; SA: Poison (Save at -2 or suffer debilitation for 1-12 days; onset time 1-4 rounds); ML 9; SZ M (12' long); XP 420.





## The Father's Arrival

Just as the shadows darken in the late afternoon, Batul arrives at the villa with Omar, leaning on his son's arm for support. The similarity between Batul and the heir is frightening at first. The feeble merchant enfolds the long-lost heir in his arms and welcomes him or her home (sniff, sniff). Play up this touching moment for all the melodramatic mileage you can get, with Batul bringing up old memories of the heir's distant infancy. Mabruk, trying to maintain the illusion of a happy family, mentions that Batul's chambers beside the *harim* have been readied for the night. Batul smiles in surprise, for he expected to be sleeping in the guest quarters tonight.

Omar embraces his half-brother or -sister and welcomes him or her home. He is genuinely pleased at the heir's arrival, since that will free him for the life of adventure he craves. He should strike the party as enthusiastic but slightly naive about the dangers of adventuring.

The welcoming feast takes place in the huge banquet hall. Family and honored guests (including all PCs) are seated on the northern raised area. Musicians fill the southern section. In the lower, central area, the marble fountain has been decorated with white hyacinths, which fill the air with their delicate fragrance.

During the feast, Mabruk appears happy and soft-spoken, deferring to her "beloved" husband. Batul, delighted at his wife's recent charming behavior, does nothing to change her into her more typical foul moods. Batul encourages his heir to recount his or her life story up to the arrival in Dihliz, and Omar prods his half-brother or -sister for details about his or her adventures. For his part, Batul explains that his business has prospered in the past decade. He mentions that he is looking forward to the "recognition" ceremony in the emira's palace tomorrow, when the PC can be established as his legal heir. Batul regrets rushing his newly returned son or daughter but emphasizes the need for haste because of his ill health. The family keeps to pleasant topics during dinner. If the party brings up the topic of Liana's death, the family defers that discussion to a less festive date.

After the feast, Batul and Mabruk go upstairs to the *harim* together in a show of family unity. She protects the privacy of

the *harim* with a *wall against noise*. The party is now free to pursue their own interests. Since Mabruk is upstairs with Batul, they may now choose to investigate the laboratory.

During the early morning hours, Saleh conjures another illusion of Liana in the *harim* to torment Mabruk. Batul and Mabruk get into a heated argument over whether or not Liana's room is haunted. Batul barricades himself in his chambers for the rest of the evening and sleeps fitfully until morning.

## Visitor at Dawn

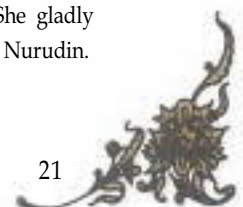
After the argument, Mabruk realizes she must prevent the heir from reaching the "recognition" ceremony—salt bond or not—or all her hopes for Omar will be ruined. Desperate and no longer trusting even her own genie, she casts *change self* and spends the remainder of the night in the seedier depths of the floating bazaar, where she hires an unscrupulous bounty hunter named Nurudin al-Kalaab to murder the sleeping heir before dawn. His statistics appear on page 3 of the 8-page booklet. Mabruk then returns home to await news of Nurudin's success.

Nurudin moors a canoe in the canal outside the house and scales the walls to the PCs' sleeping chambers. If the heir PC is not in his or her appointed chambers, the assassin quietly searches the nearby rooms. Before long, the hunter finds his prey.

Unless the party has stated that they are keeping a watch, Nurudin attempts to sneak up on the sleeping PC and backstab him or her with his poisoned scimitar. If the rogue fails his Move Silently roll, his scabbard scrapes on the window sill as he enters the room (or the door creaks as he swings it open after picking its lock). Having wasted his surprise, he attempts to immobilize the PC and any guardians with his magical rope. If all else fails, he grabs the rope, leaps out of a window, then runs to the canal and dives in, drinking a potion to hasten his escape.

## Revelations over Breakfast

In the morning, Noora arrives to wake the PCs and invite them to breakfast, where the family awaits. She gladly helps tend any injuries incurred while fighting Nurudin.





Breakfast is held in the gathering hall (31 on villa map), a three-walled chamber with a colonnade overlooking the lush garden. Batul appears troubled; Omar sits to his left, looking naive and oblivious to any of the previous night's developments. Mabruk's condition will depend upon whether or not the party has disturbed her spellbooks and cache of potions in the laboratory. Exhausted after the night's activities, Mabruk is dependent upon her potion of *vitality* to keep her awake. She will drink the liquid in the appropriately labeled vial, so long as the gas globe in the chest does not appear to have been tampered with. Provided the party didn't do something nasty like switch the labels of the *poison* potions, Mabruk appears well-rested and alert.

If the party has taken her spellbook and potions, Mabruk will be unable to memorize any spells. Concealing her grey hair and wrinkled face behind elaborate veils, Mabruk comes to breakfast anyway, wanting to be present with witnesses if the heir is discovered murdered in his or her chambers. If the heir has survived yet again, she wants to be on hand to thwart his or her "recognition" ceremony.

Unfortunately, even with the veils, it is clear even to the naive Omar that his mother is exhausted.

By now, unless the party members are as clueless as Omar, they should have their own suspicions regarding the possible murderer, especially if they discovered the poisoned arrows in Mabruk's laboratory. If they accuse Mabruk, Batul sides with the party against his treacherous wife. Regardless of the party's actions, Batul will accuse Mabruk of Liana's murder. He has done a lot of thinking since the visit by the "ghost" last night and the bounty hunter's attack. Mabruk's motives are now clear (to Batul at least).

### Confrontation with Mabruk

**B**atul asks the rest of the party to apprehend Mabruk, so she can be brought to justice before the emira. Unless Mabruk has taken a *vitality* potion, she is slow to react to the rush of the PCs (+2 penalty on her initiative rolls). Her first action will be to rub her magic ring, summoning Saleh to her aid. Saleh is now thoroughly disgusted with his mistress; her willingness to forsake



even the sacred bond of salt and plot against the lives of her guests places her beneath contempt. The genie arrives promptly, but he cunningly betrays her with his greeting: "Who shall I kidnap or assassinate for you now, oh most powerful mistress?" Hearing that, even Omar loses faith in Mabruk.

Obligated to protect her because of the ring, Saleh puts up a *wall of fire* in front of the PCs. On Batul's command, the mamluks run through the flames (each taking 2d6+15 points of damage) to grapple the genie. The mamluks keep Saleh busy so the party can concentrate on Mabruk.

Should the party need help because of the previous night's encounter with Nurudin, Batul can lend them his magical *jambiya* and *potion of flying* (useful in circumventing the wall). Noora can help in the battle by casting *silence, 15' radius* and *hold person*.

After summoning Saleh, Mabruk's first action will be to cast *death smoke* on the terrace. If Omar might get caught in the area of effect, she opts for *sundazzle* instead, using the party's temporary blindness to withdraw back into the *harim*, where she entrenches herself further behind a *shield of winds*.

Mabruk does not plan on retreating any further. Her life's purpose, seeing Omar as the heir of the Reehan family, lies dashed in ruins. She only desires to take the heir PC with her when she dies. For the rest of the battle, Mabruk concentrates her remaining magical attacks on him or her.

## Concluding The Adventure

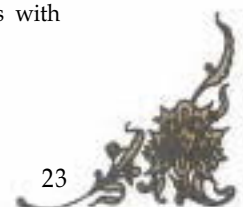
Should Mabruk be captured, the DM should keep any trial scene as brief as possible, culminating in her sentencing and execution. After that grisly business is concluded, Batul asks the emira for a special audience, in which the merchant formally declares the PC to be his lawful heir. Omar is relieved and makes preparations to start a life of adventure. Unless the party extends him an invitation, he goes off to found his own adventuring party. Batul makes it clear that the PC can claim his or her inheritance only if he or she agrees to forsake adventuring and devote his or her full

attention to the family business. Until that day, he names the emira (a skilled merchant in her own right and an old family friend) as trustee of the inheritance. The emira is more than happy to manage Reehan's considerable finances until his heir decides to accept the mantle of responsibility. Make it clear to the heir that accepting his or her inheritance is the equivalent of retiring his or her character, unless the PC happens to be a merchant rogue.

Successful completion of this adventure should give the party a secure base from which to launch further explorations of the Ruined Kingdoms and will also relieve the PCs of petty concerns like lodging, transportation, and food so they can pursue their own long-term goals in the area (like discovering more about the Geomancers). Until the heir accepts his or her inheritance, he or she can enjoy elevated station and can expect a monthly allowance of 100-500 gp, depending upon the DM's generosity. The PC can collect this allowance at any of the four major cities in the Ruined Kingdoms. Batul generously rewards the other members of the party for their support during the adventure with a lump sum of 5,000 gp. In addition, the party may keep Mabruk's magical items and spellbook.

As for Saleh, he will be happiest with an honorable master like a paladin or a moralist priest who likes to deal in an honest, direct, open-handed manner. As seen during the course of the adventure, Saleh is quite independent, abrasive, condescending, and sometimes rude. Unless the owner of the ring keeps him on a tight leash, he could cause quite a bit of trouble for a new master.

Of course, the entire party is invited to spend as much time as the PCs like in the Reehan family villa in Dihliz. Noora remains in Dihliz to care for Batul, whose health seems to have improved slightly since the heir's sudden appearance. Batul moves permanently into one of the guest rooms, vacating his old chamber for the new heir. News of the heir's good fortune circulates through the city like wildfire, and if he or she is unmarried the PC will, before long, begin receiving introductions to dozens of feasts from families with marriagable sons or daughters.







## Arba'hagg Tisan: The Giants' Topiary

**K**adufi, Wadufi, and Padufi have lived along the banks of the Abdo River for as long as they can remember. In the lush, verdant solitude of the Grey Jungle, the three sisters have devoted their lives to art. Each is a tree sculptress with her own distinctive style, modeling their works of art on jungle animals. Occasionally a group of more interesting travelers pass by their home, either beating their way through the jungle or floating down the Nogaro. For the lonely giants, this is cause for great celebration.

### Starting The Adventure

**T**he Giant's Topiary" is a designed for a party of medium (6th-8th) level characters traveling through jungle terrain.

The adventure starts when the giants' pets, three enormous tigers, spot the party and report back to their lofty mistresses. The sisters, tired of sculpting jungle animals in the small trees near their home, are delighted by the prospect of visitors and leave at once to welcome their new guests, whom they hope to convince to pose as models for new tree sculptures.

Kadufi, by far the most charismatic of the sisters, approaches the party with all three pet tigers and a friendly, open smile. If the party is traveling through the jungle by river, Kadufi meets them in a stretch of shallows, while her pets lounge on massive tree limbs overhanging the water. As the tigers hungrily appraise the PCs, Kadufi expresses her joy at their arrival. The giantess offers the party ten tusks of ivory if they will pose as models for her and her sisters. Should the party not be interested in the ivory, which could easily be sold for quick cash in Dihliz or Kadarasto, Kadufi will mention that she and her sisters have found a few items in the jungle ruins that the PCs might find very, very interesting.

Meanwhile, Wadufi and Padufi, moving like shadows from tree to tree, circle behind the party and remain concealed in the foliage with poisoned arrows nocked. Refusal of Kadufi's generous offer will be construed as a grievous insult.



## The Giant Sisters

Kadufi, Wadufi, and Padufi are jungle giants with a passion for artistic expression. Like many artists, they are temperamental, highly subject to flattery (when it pertains to their art), and used to getting their own way. They are not evil and have no intention of harming the party, provided the PCs behave politely and agree to pose for them.

Kadufi (hp 78), the eldest, is physically the most attractive and has the most charming personality, so long as she is not angered. She also has the least artistic ability, butchering her tree sculptures beyond any semblance of attractiveness. Her younger sisters do their best to assure her of her artistic virtuosity. The PCs are best advised to do likewise.

Wadufi (hp 67), the middle sister, has no talent for tree sculpture and she knows it. Her attempts at art are infrequent and disastrous; she only continues as a hobby and for competitive rivalry with her sisters. Wadufi much prefers to hunt and care for the family pets. She is not a conversationalist.

Padufi (hp 56), the youngest, is the only real talent among the three sisters. Her tree sculptures are beautifully proportioned masterpieces. Padufi is shy and aloof. She cares for little besides her art, and has no patience for models who do not know how to take direction. Padufi sometimes expects her models to bend or twist in aesthetically pleasing but anatomically impossible directions. Posing for the youngest sister can often be a painful experience.

The giants each tower over 18' tall, and their long, greenish hair hangs down to the middle of their backs in cascades of thick waves. The sisters have pale yellow skin and dark brown eyes. Their heavily muscled and lithe bodies are accented by scant leopard-skin attire, pouches, a scabbarded great scimitar (obtained through trade), a massive longbow, and a quiver of poisoned, red-plumed arrows. The pouches contain personal toiletries, extra bowstrings, whetstones, fire starters, tinder, sinew for repairing clothing, tools for making their tree sculptures, and 1-4 sapphires (1,000 gp each).

The sisters share three huge tigers as pets; the tigers

have acquired their large size from constant feeding. The giants treat them like house cats, but the tigers view all visitors as a possible source of food. Sometimes one of the tigers will accompany Wadufi on her hunts, but for the most part these beasts remain at home to guard their mistresses during the night.

Jungle giants: Int Average (10); AL N; AC 3; MV 15, Cl 6; HD 11; THAC0 9; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg: 2d8+9 (scimitar) or 2d6+9/2d6+9 (arrows); SA: surprise, poison arrows (save vs. paralyzation at -2 or be rendered immobile for 2d6 turns); SD: camouflage (60%); SZ H (18' tall); ML 16; XP 6,000; MC 13: AQ.

Wild tigers (3): Int Semi (3); AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 5+5; hp 45 each; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg: 1d4+1/1d4+1/1d8; SA: Rear claws (2d4 each); SD: Surprised only on a 1; SZ L (9' long); ML 10; XP 975 each (due to above-average hit points).

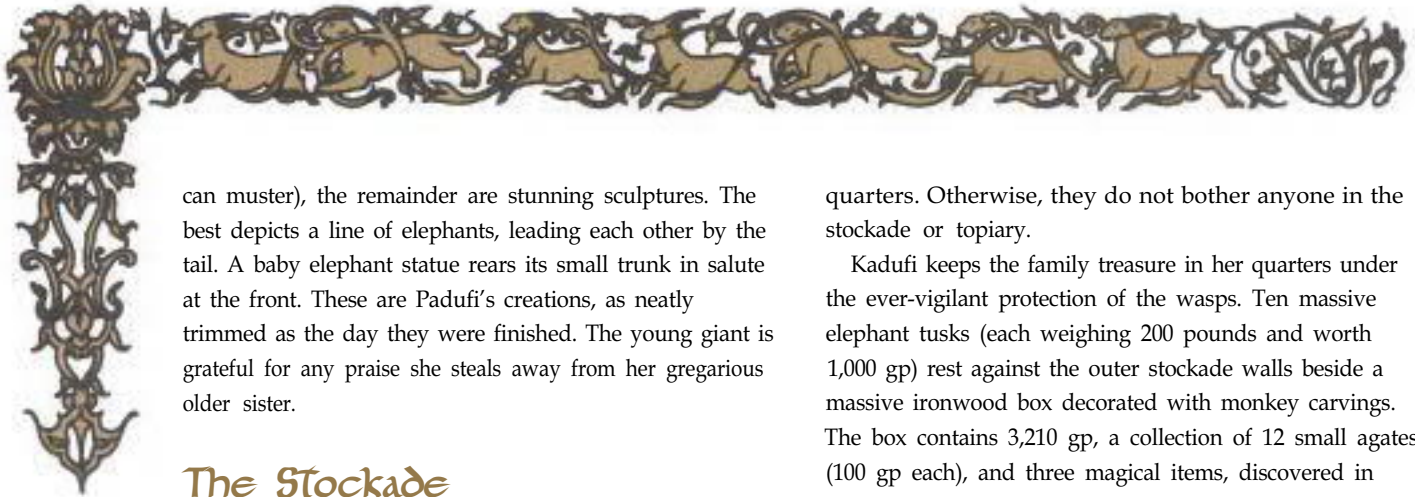
## The Topiary

After the party accepts Kadufi's invitation, Wadufi and Padufi emerge from the foliage and put away their bows, greeting the PCs. Wadufi seems less than thrilled by their acceptance, and the PCs notice a frightening glimmer in Padufi's eyes. The youngest giant surveys the party intently, picking out the subject best suited for her next masterpiece. The tigers sniff the party hungrily, but are batted away by Kadufi in annoyance ("Bad Kitty!").

Kadufi is all smiles and cheerful chatter as she leads the party to their home, a walled compound deep in the jungle, surrounded by bizarre topiary. At this point, the DM should show the front of Card 3 to the players.

The giants' sculptures are fashioned from thick, leafy trees, standing 10'-20' high. Kadufi immediately points to some which have been shredded and hacked into unrecognizable shapes ("Isn't that the best sculpture of a griffon you have ever seen?"). On cue, the sisters let loose a torrent of praise. The PCs are best advised to join in. Though about half of the sculptures are mangled monstrosities with lofty titles (the best Kadufi and Wadufi





can muster), the remainder are stunning sculptures. The best depicts a line of elephants, leading each other by the tail. A baby elephant statue rears its small trunk in salute at the front. These are Padufi's creations, as neatly trimmed as the day they were finished. The young giant is grateful for any praise she steals away from her gregarious older sister.

## The Stockade

Surrounded by the eclectic topiary, the giants' home is a circular stockade over 200' in diameter, formed by massive teak and ironwood trunks 40'-50' high which have been painstakingly carved by Padufi with leafy designs, interspersed with animal and monster icons. The stockade is pierced by a single gate. When the giants are away, the gate is locked by a clever latch mechanism, released by tugging on a vine suspended 20' above the ground that passes through a hole in the gate.

The interior of the stockade smells rank, like animal sweat and blood. The circular inner courtyard serves as the giants' living room, slaughterhouse, and kitchen. A huge fire pit, large enough to accommodate a pair of elephants, rests in the center of the yard. The packed earth floor near the fire pit is stained black with dried animal blood and crawling with large, black flies.

A sloped roof, made of stretched animal hides stitched together with sinew, wraps around the perimeter of the stockade. Leopard skin curtains hang from the ceiling, separating the private living area from the inner courtyard. Standing screens further divide the giants' personal rooms. Elephant hide rugs cover the packed-earth floor, and the interior stockade walls have also been lavishly carved by Padufi.

The giants' quarters are decorated with brightly plumed arrows and a huge nest of giant wasps near the ceiling. The sisters are adept at handling these insects, who enter and leave the compound via the central courtyard. The giants nourish the hive with a portion of their kill and harvest wasp poison, with which they envenom their arrows. The wasps will attack anyone (besides the giants) foolish enough to investigate these

quarters. Otherwise, they do not bother anyone in the stockade or topiary.

Kadufi keeps the family treasure in her quarters under the ever-vigilant protection of the wasps. Ten massive elephant tusks (each weighing 200 pounds and worth 1,000 gp) rest against the outer stockade walls beside a massive ironwood box decorated with monkey carvings. The box contains 3,210 gp, a collection of 12 small agates (100 gp each), and three magical items, discovered in nearby ruins: an *amulet versus undead* (7th level), a stone of good luck, and an *amulet of inescapable location*.

Giant wasps (14): Int Non- (0); AL N; AC 4; MV 6, Fl 21 (B); HD 4; hp 20 each; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg: 2d4/1d4; SA: Poison (save vs. paralyzation at -2 or be rendered immobile for 2d6 turns); SZ M (5' long); ML 8; XP 420 each.

## Guests

The giants prepare a feast for the PCs after their arrival, cleaning and roasting five wild pigs captured by the sisters that morning. Take time to describe the pig slaughter, with the sisters feeding scraps to their pet tigers and wasps afterwards. During the feast, Kadufi flatters the PCs and negotiates payment for their service as models— either the elephant tusks or the three magical items in the family hoard. The giant will permit minor divinations to be cast on the amulets to verify their potency, but she refuses to yield them up for *identify* or *divination* spells until after their term of service has ended. She does not herself know what the magical items' powers are.

Kadufi is deliberately vague about the length of service required, saying only that she and her sisters want the opportunity to sculpt each of their guests and add new masterpieces to the family topiary. She assures the party that all meals will be provided during their stay, and the party is free to pursue their own interests every morning, while the sisters hunt. Kadufi urges the party not to stray too far from the stockade during the day and warns the party to stay out of the giants' private quarters, because of the untamed wasps.

It should become quickly apparent to the PCs that they





are glorified prisoners of the giants, who have no intention of releasing the party for the time being. Each day at noon the giants round up the party. Until nightfall, the sisters clip away at the topiary, with varying degrees of success and skill. In the evening, everyone feasts on the giants' morning kill. So pass the days, in seemingly endless succession.

The party will undoubtedly become anxious after only a few days of posing for the giants. While it takes little effort to pose for either Kadufi or Wadufi, posing for the artistic genius, Padufi, is a nightmare. Seemingly unaware of her own strength, the young giantess sometimes adjusts her models' poses with brutal jerks and twists.

Attacking Padufi is a big mistake. She is already frustrated by the constant praise she must shower on her older sister's inferior art and an insolent model only adds insult to injury. Padufi reacts very violently, drawing her scimitar with a snarl and fighting to kill. The other two sisters watch the battle, holding back the tigers and the rest of the party. The sisters do not interfere in the combat until the end, when they prevent either the abused PC or Padufi from killing the other. After the fight, Padufi regards the PC with undisguised hatred. The moody young giantess waits for an opportunity to catch the PC alone and exact her revenge.

## Concluding The Adventure

The DM may wish to extend this adventure, using Kadufi's mention of nearby ruins to keep the party active and occupied during the morning while the sisters are hunting. Kadufi and her sisters are certainly knowledgeable about ruins up to a week's travel away from their lair and might be convinced to lead a party of excellent models on a supervised excursion. Otherwise, the DM may care to stage random jungle encounters to amuse the PCs during their sojourn with the sisters.

Sooner or later, especially if they have earned Padufi's enmity, the party will want to leave, treasure or no treasure. Obviously, PCs who escape or talk their way out of their agreement are not entitled to the giant's promised reward (unless they can think of a way to steal it). A kind DM might allow a cash-rich party to purchase the magic amulets from the giants for no less than 3,000 gp each.

The simplest escape plan—leaving while the giants are hunting in the morning or asleep at night—will bring the three sisters and their pet tigers to retrieve them by the following nightfall with a hail of poisoned arrows. Should the party attempt to escape by air (via *flying carpet*, for instance), the giants release their horde of wasps, who carry paralyzed party members back to the giant's lair. If the party arrived via boat, the giants will have pulled the ship out of the water and hidden it in the jungle to thwart escape downriver.

The sisters' greatest weakness lies in their high estimation of their own artistic achievements. Flattery will get the party everywhere with them. For instance, a silver-tongued PC might convince Kadufi that her art is of such inestimable quality, that he or she desires to depart at once and spread the news of the giant's virtuosic skill. There is one disadvantage to using this tactic with the giants. If the PCs convince them that their art might be of value to the citizens of a nearby city, the giants will insist that the party purchase one of their sculptures as proof. An impoverished party might have to give up some (or all) of their equipment to satisfy the sisters (cutting/slicing instruments are preferred).

Should the party fulfill their contract with the sisters (requiring about 1-3 months per PC), Kadufi honors their agreement. If the PCs have been especially cordial guests during their long stay, Kadufi might show her gratitude by accompanying the party for an equal amount of time, provided she is treated fairly and receives a share of the treasure.





*KhLams hagg Tisan:*

## TALISMAN

**K**ing Sharaman is dying. The lethargy that has plagued him for years has worsened recently, and in his dreams he has seen glimpses of magnificent jungles in Paradise, where the temples still flash blue and green in the morning light.

But before he can prostrate himself at the throne of Her Serpentine Majesty, the king has one last duty to perform. A dazzling, pure-white diamond is mounted on his forehead, receptacle and record for all the memories of his long, long life. This talisman must make a pilgrimage after Sharaman's passing and be presented to his appointed successor. In the long, humid evenings, the king dreams of a group of distant pilgrims, who will bear the talisman on its ritual journey.

Sharaman has done his best to soothe his frightened servants. They, too, know his end draws near. The serpent lord calls Taj, his most faithful friend and follower, entrusting him with one final mission.

### Starting The Adventure

**T**alisman" is intended for a party of medium (5th-7th) level characters. Although it can begin anywhere in Zakhara, the adventure takes place in the lush eastern jungles of the Ruined Kingdoms. It will be useful for a party member to have proficiency in the ancient language Kadari. At least one member of the party must be of good (preferably lawful good) alignment, or Sharaman will not consider them for his important mission. Finally, the DM is urged to read about the Cult of Ragarra in Chapter Three of the Campaign Guide before running the adventure.

One night, perhaps while recovering from a recent adventure, the party is approached by Taj, a herald serpent (see the 8-page booklet included in this sourcebox). Taj informs the PCs that they have been chosen by his king, "the Ancient One," for a mission of utmost urgency. Taj promises to lead the PCs to his monarch, but they must depart at once for the Ruined Kingdoms.

Despite his size, Taj is anything but threatening to the party. Because of his



anxiety about his dying king, Taj's voice is high-pitched and nervous. His eyes constantly dart about while he speaks. He will gladly submit to divination spells, like *detect good*, *detect lie*, and *fire truth*, if it will help convince the party to visit his monarch.

Taj is willing to discuss the information presented in the introduction, but always refers to his king as "the Ancient One." Taj should make it clear that his ruler is old and dying, and desperately needs the party's help to make a pilgrimage on his behalf as soon as possible. Taj prefers to defer discussion of other topics (including possible rewards) until the party's audience with the king.

Taj desperately wants the party to visit his king and fulfill the monarch's dying wish. If the party is insistent about monetary compensation, the frustrated serpent describes Sharaman's seemingly vast hoard of wealth. Of course, try to describe this from the perspective of a snake, who has brought shiny offerings to his king for centuries. Taj is unsure what will happen to the treasure after Sharaman's death, but he assures the party of his king's kindness and generosity, stressing the Ancient One's ability to heal the wounded, cure the afflicted, and raise the dead.

If the party is threatening or attacks, Taj uses his spells to *enthrall* the attackers while he escapes under cover of *invisibility*. He pesters the party on subsequent days, showing up at the most awkward of moments (at the public baths, for instance). Make the PCs feel cursed until they agree to accompany Taj to his king. This is one incredibly persistent snake!

Taj, a herald serpent: Int Very (12); AL NG; AC 5; MV 24, Cl 18; HD 4+4; hp 25; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg: 1d4/1d4; SA: poison bite (save or suffer complete amnesia for 2-8 hours); SD: spells; ML 8; Spells (once/day at 4th level of ability): *comprehend languages*, *friends*, *hypnotic pattern*, *hypnotism*, and *invisibility*.

## Getting to King Sharaman

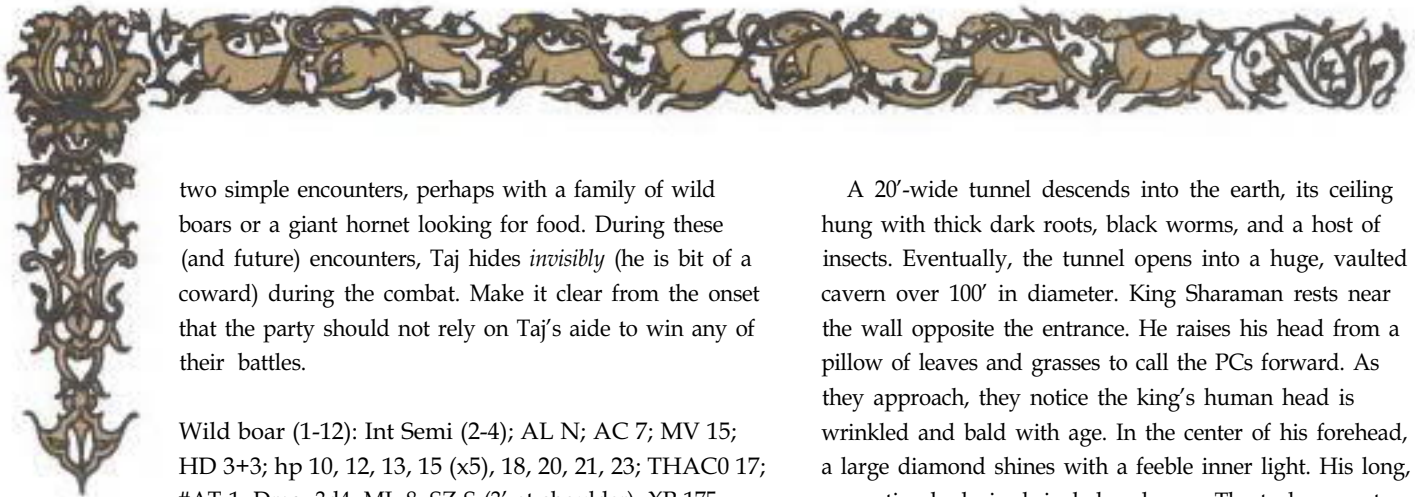
King Sharaman's home lies near the Doors of Shajar (see the **colored mapsheet** of the Ruined Kingdoms). Traveling to these ruins should be a major

undertaking requiring careful preparation, especially if the party is starting the adventure outside the Ruined Kingdoms. Finding the Doors of Shajar, though, should not pose a problem, because of Taj's diligent efforts. The serpent should not slow the party down, as he can move with fantastic speed through even the densest foliage.

Do not rush through this early stage of the adventure, especially if the party is traveling from an arid region of Zakhara. Take your time describing the noises, sights, and smells of the jungle: stress the unusual abundance of water and cool rainfall in the mornings and evenings; the persistent chatter of the birds, animals, and insects (at night, this can be unnerving until the party becomes accustomed to it); the magnificent hardwood trees stretching into a canopy far overhead; the crumbling stone ruins, which occasionally peek from beneath a carpet of vines and creepers; and the delicate smell of orchids, gently wafting down from the canopy overhead.

To relieve any mounting tension, feel free to run one or





two simple encounters, perhaps with a family of wild boars or a giant hornet looking for food. During these (and future) encounters, Taj hides *invisibly* (he is bit of a coward) during the combat. Make it clear from the onset that the party should not rely on Taj's aide to win any of their battles.

Wild boar (1-12): Int Semi (2-4); AL N; AC 7; MV 15; HD 3+3; hp 10, 12, 13, 15 (x5), 18, 20, 21, 23; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg: 3d4; ML 8; SZ S (3' at shoulder); XP 175.

Giant hornet (1): Int Non- (0); AL N; AC 2 (4); MV 6, Fl 24 (B); HD 5; hp 31; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg: 1d4; SA: poison (save or suffer 5d6 points of damage and paralysis for 2-12 hours; ML 10; SZ M (5' long); XP 650.

## The Doors of Shajar

In the outlying forests of the Grey Jungle, about a hundred miles west of Dihliz, the Abdo River winds its way through a lush valley until it merges with the Nogaro. At the eastern mouth of the valley stands a huge stone dam, which once forced back the Abdo into a large reservoir for a nearby city. The city has long since been swallowed by the jungle, and the massive dam has been sundered by time and the relentless river. Only the two gargantuan statues of Shajar remain, buttressing the ends of the fragmented and vine-covered dam, like a pair of vast doors to the valley. The pitiless Abdo runs its course freely beneath the statues' stern regard.

At this point, Taj informs the party that his king has always loved cooked meat, and he suggests that the PCs prepare some as an offering for Sharaman. Any kind of red meat or fowl will suffice as a gift, with the exception of fish (serpent lords hate fish).

About a mile past these imposing ruins, Taj leads the party to a wide cave opening near the river, flanked by tall ironwood trees. Two teak serpents (see page 8 of the 8-page booklet) lower from branches and advance threateningly on the PCs, but upon catching sight of Taj, they withdraw into the cave to announce the party's arrival.

A 20'-wide tunnel descends into the earth, its ceiling hung with thick dark roots, black worms, and a host of insects. Eventually, the tunnel opens into a huge, vaulted cavern over 100' in diameter. King Sharaman rests near the wall opposite the entrance. He raises his head from a pillow of leaves and grasses to call the PCs forward. As they approach, they notice the king's human head is wrinkled and bald with age. In the center of his forehead, a large diamond shines with a feeble inner light. His long, serpentine body is shriveled and grey. The teak serpents and over a hundred venomous snakes throng in a protective, writhing mass around the king's body. At a word from the king, the snakes reluctantly slither away (including Taj), leaving the PCs alone in the cave with Sharaman.

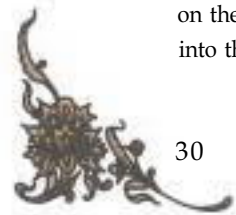
*I am King Ssharaman, Sssultan of all ssnakes in the Grey Jungle. In the name of Her Ssserpentine Majessty, who watchess over all, I greet you and welcome you into my kingdom. . . . With these words, Sharaman introduces himself and explains that he has summoned the party here to perform a ritual pilgrimage on his behalf.*

*The stone on my forehead containsss all the memoriesss of my life. Before I can enter Paradise, it mussst be touched to the headsstone in the Temple of the Ssserpentine Empress, deep in the heart of the jungle. My beloved Taj will show you the way.*

At some point, the PCs may present any offerings of meat they have brought. Barely strong enough to lift his head from the pillow, Sharaman asks the PCs to feed it to him slowly. After the meal, his lids start to close, but with visible effort, the king remains conscious. Sharaman now warns the party of an evil cult which operates at the heart of the Grey Jungle, serving the forgotten goddess Ragarra (see Chapter Three of the Campaign Guide for more details about her cult). If the party fails to bring a gift of meat, Sharaman does not have the strength to warn them about the cult but rushes ahead to complete his instructions.

*I have sent my ssservants away, sssince I feel my death approaching, and you might not survive the fury of their grief. Once I have passed away, take the talisman from my forehead. It will show you the truth in all things.*

*Then, though it may displeassse you, open my head and*





take out my brain. When you are in the Temple, be sure to draw a gallon of holy water from the sssacred well and take it along with the brain and the talisssman to my daughter and anointed sssuccessor, Sharamaaz. She will know what to do with them.

Finally, Sharaman explains that the temple's secret treasure, collected by his servants over the centuries, is the party's reward for undertaking this perilous quest. With that, the king closes his eyes and breathes his thanks with his dying breath. The party is best advised not to dally in the cavern longer than is necessary to retrieve the talisman and remove Sharaman's brain.

When Sharaman dies, the talisman drops from his forehead and rolls across the ground to its chosen bearer. The DM should pick this character carefully. Paladins, rangers, or wild priests are preferable over hierarchical priests, wizards, and rogues. The talisman itself is a huge, flawless diamond (worth at least 10,000 gp) glowing with a faint inner light. In addition to storing the memories of Sharaman, it functions as a *gem of seeing*. For the duration of the adventure, the bearer can also *speak with animals* (snakes only). Though the talisman does not allow its bearer any kind of mental control over snakes, he or she is entitled to a -4 bonus on reaction rolls when encountering snakes in the wild.

Opening up Sharaman's head should not be a pleasant experience for the party. Inside his skull, the brain is like a shriveled melon and can be carried in a sack or large pouch without damaging it.

There are no furnishings or treasure in Sharaman's cavern (his hoard of wealth is stored in the temple at the center of the jungle). If the PCs search the chamber, they find nothing of interest.

After one turn, two teak serpents and a dozen poisonous snakes, concerned about their king, return to the cavern to see if he is still alive. If the PCs are still dallying about, the snakes attack the party in their grief and confusion. The bearer of the talisman is keenly aware of the snakes' sorrow and irrational hostility, and with some quick talking he or she might be able to buy the party enough time to withdraw without bloodshed.

Teak serpents (2): Int Animal (1); AL N; AC 3; MV 9, CI 6; HD 8+8; hp 50 each; THAC0 11; #AT 2; Dmg: 1d6/2d6; SA: constriction; SD: camouflage; ML 10; SZ H (30' long); XP 3,000.

Common snakes (12): Int Animal (1); AL N; AC 6; MV 15; HD 2+1; hp 12 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg: 1; SA: poison (save at -1 or suffer an illness lasting 1d4 days, onset time 2-8 rounds); ML 10; SZ S (5' long); XP 175.

## Through The Grey Jungle

The party encounters Taj while leaving the cavern. After mastering his grief (he is too intelligent to blame the party for the king's death), Taj warns the party to flee with him before other snakes arrive. Addressing the chosen PC with utmost respect (*most honored bearer of the sacred stone*), Taj pledges to aid him or her in the quest, effectively ignoring the rest of the party. For the remainder of the adventure, Taj acts as the chosen PC's eager servant. He is reluctant to enter battle, however, and will only fight to defend the bearer from certain death.

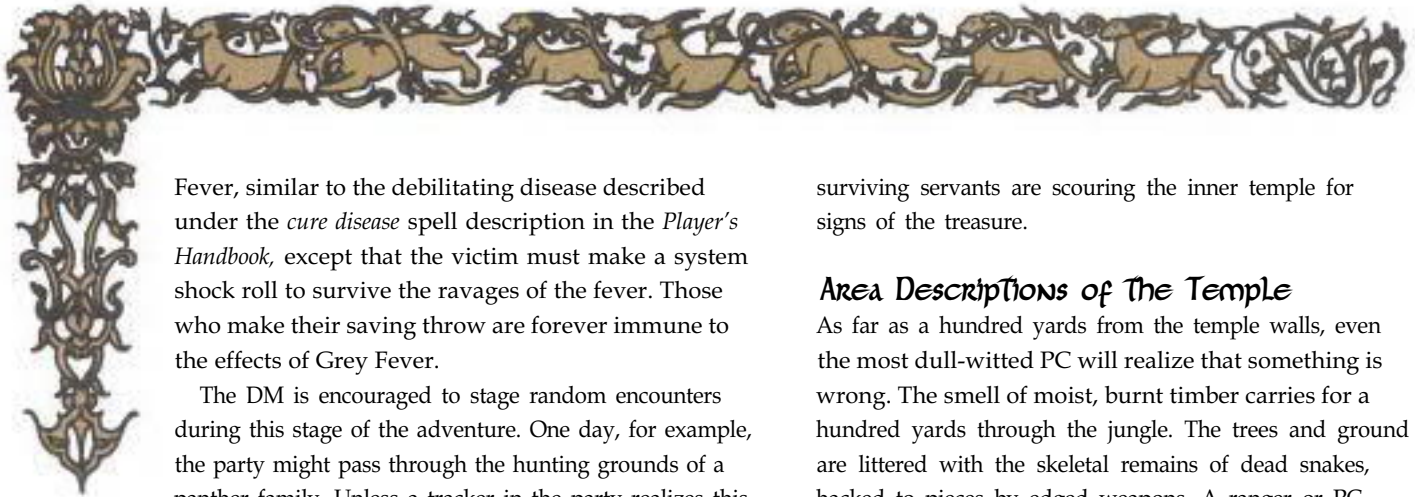
Taj does not know much about the cult of Ragarra, except that they are evil, depraved, and the arch-nemeses of Her Serpentine Majesty. They can sometimes be found in the ruins of the Grey Jungle, making their vile sacrifices to their vengeful goddess. More than that he cannot say.

The first goal in the party's quest, the Temple of the Serpentine Empress, is indicated on the **colored mapsheet** of the Ruined Kingdoms. The temple lies roughly 60 miles away from the Doors of Shajar, a difficult two-week journey through thick jungle. Because of the dense undergrowth, riding any kind of mount other than an elephant is impossible.

As soon as the party begins its journey, the jungle sounds should seem harsh and threatening, with the roar of wild beasts echoing through the campsite at night. The PCs are plagued by mosquitoes and insects, which descend in a cloud every evening to feast and infect the PCs with a deadly jungle disease known as Grey Fever. Have each member of the party make a saving throw vs. poison. Those who fail contract Grey







Fever, similar to the debilitating disease described under the *cure disease* spell description in the *Player's Handbook*, except that the victim must make a system shock roll to survive the ravages of the fever. Those who make their saving throw are forever immune to the effects of Grey Fever.

The DM is encouraged to stage random encounters during this stage of the adventure. One day, for example, the party might pass through the hunting grounds of a panther family. Unless a tracker in the party realizes this and directs the party around it, the PCs will be attacked that night by a pair of black panthers protecting their territory. On the final evening before they arrive at the temple, the PCs unwittingly camp near a hollow tree, home to six giant, poisonous toads. These creatures emerge at night to attack.

Black panthers (2): Int Semi (3); AL N; AC 6; MV 15; HD 4+1; hp 21, 26; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg: 1d3/1d3/1d8; SA: rear claws (1d4+1 each); SD: Surprised only on a 1; SZ L (6' long); ML 8; XP 420.

Poisonous toads (6): Int Animal (1); AL N; AC 7; MV 6, hop 6; HD 2; hp 8, 9, 11, 13, 14; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg: 1d4+1; SA: poison bite (save at +2 or fall comatose and die within 24 hours); SZ M (5' long); ML 7; XP 175.

## Temple of The Serpentine Empress

The cult of Ragarra, based in Kadarasto, has known about this temple for years. Sensing Sharaman's weakness, the high priestess of the cult, Awatef, sent her eldest daughter Anaiz to claim the temple in Ragarra's name, aided by a score of lesser segarrans (see the 8-page booklet).

In the past few weeks, Anaiz has explored (and defiled) most of the temple, but she still has not discovered Sharaman's legendary treasure, a source of increasing frustration. Once she finds it, Anaiz hopes to use the gold to expand the temple into a second base for the cult of Ragarra. For the time being, she and her nine

surviving servants are scouring the inner temple for signs of the treasure.

### Area Descriptions of The Temple

As far as a hundred yards from the temple walls, even the most dull-witted PC will realize that something is wrong. The smell of moist, burnt timber carries for a hundred yards through the jungle. The trees and ground are littered with the skeletal remains of dead snakes, hacked to pieces by edged weapons. A ranger or PC with the Tracking nonweapon proficiency will notice the heavy tracks of unrecognizable humanoid creatures with tails.

Use of divination magic is frustrated in the temple, the result of potent wards woven by successive generations of serpent lords. The entire structure uniformly radiates magic; scrying and location magic on the temple are useless.

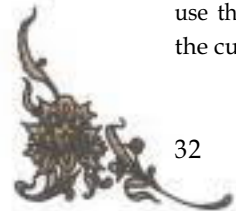
The jungle ends abruptly at the outer temple walls, making it quite easy to sneak close without any chance of detection from those inside. The white plaster covering the outer surface has corroded away in the high humidity and is now choked with vegetation, making the walls easy to climb.

The DM's temple map is included on the back of Card 2. A brief area description of the complex is given below; the DM can expand these descriptions, if desired.

**1. Main entrance.** Less than half of Anaiz's segarrans survived the temple's conquest, with the rest slain by Sharaman's wards and guardians. Not to be left short-handed, after the battle was over and the flesh of vanquished enemies devoured, Anaiz animated the human forms of the slain segarrans, turning them into guardians of the main entrance and outer temple ward. They will attack enemies on sight and fight until destroyed.

Zombies (11): Int Non- (0); AL N; AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 6, 8, 9 (x2), 10 (x3), 11 (x2), 12, 15; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg: 1d8; SD: immune to enchantment, poisons, and cold magic; ML Special; SZ M (6'); XP 65.

**2. Monuments.** The outer ward is filled with scores of crumbling, obelisk-like monuments, rising to a height of





10' from the weed-choked flagstones. Though their names are all worn away, these are monuments to dead serpent lords.

Anaiz, with the help of her servants, has recently started toppling the monuments, thinking that treasure may be buried beneath them. So far she has discovered nothing noteworthy.

Should the PCs spend some time inspecting the monuments, they might discover a solitary snake, who somehow survived Anaiz's assault. Sensing the presence of Sharaman's talisman, it crawls out to wriggle humbly at the feet of the chosen PC. Should the bearer question it, he or she might discover what befell the temple, although the information will be learned from the perspective of a snake. It will gladly accompany the party in the temple, though it fears the priestess of the "human-lizards." If necessary, use the stats for the common snakes previously encountered in Sharaman's cavern.

**3. Well.** The temple's sacred well has been smeared with snake blood and excrement by Anaiz. The desecrated well is polluted when the party arrives. It doesn't take a religious expert to realize that the water from the well is no longer holy, complicating the PCs' efforts to fulfill Sharaman's dying request.

**4. Inner courtyard.** The buildings along the perimeter of the inner courtyard were gutted by fire after they were thoroughly searched by Anaiz for treasure. When the temple was built and maintained by human hands, long ago, these buildings were used as store rooms, cloisters, dormitories, and dining rooms. Today they only contain cracked plaster walls and the burnt, rotten remains of the ceiling joists.

Anaiz has placed a specialized glyph of warding employed only by the cult of Ragarra at the entrance to the inner courtyard. Normally invisible, the glyph flashes when discharged, revealing a floating, greenish crocodile claw. If the victim fails his or her saving throw vs. polymorph, the glowing green claw strikes in the center of his or her chest, *polymorphing* the unfortunate PC into a baby crocodile within one round.

This effect is permanent unless reversed by a successful *dispel magic*.

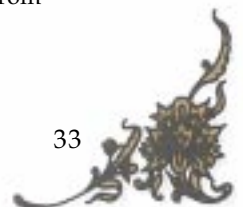
**5. Inner Temple.** Still largely intact, the inner temple is the largest structure still standing, with the most places to hide treasure. Despite minor signs of decay, this structure appears to be in excellent condition. The roof sports beautiful carvings of dozens of statues of rearing snakes, many with human heads.

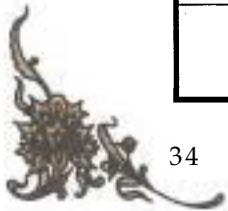
The inner temple is surrounded by a raised patio. As a minor precaution, Anaiz has cast *wyvern watch* on the steps leading up to the main patio (**area 5a**) from the inner courtyard. Four lesser segarrans always stand watch here, patrolling the patio and guarding for any surviving snakes, which they promptly hack to pieces.

The inner temple (**5b**) can only be entered from the southern doors, which lead out onto the patio. Inside, the temple soars to a height of 50' in the center of the peaked roof. The inner walls, once covered with painted silks and velvet, have been slashed and destroyed in Anaiz's search.

The inner temple is dominated by a huge golden statue of a snake, reclining on a magnificent couch which extends almost the entire interior length of the chamber. At first glance the statue appears to be of solid gold, but closer examination reveals that it is merely gold leaf over a plaster or stone idol. The snake has a cobra's head but a woman's face, her eyes focused in the distance and her lips curved in a sublime, mysterious smile. A diamond shape is painted in the center of her forehead.

Anaiz and her five remaining lesser segarrans are working in this chamber, chipping away at the snake statue (the only place in the temple they haven't searched). Anaiz is a darkly beautiful woman, with ebony-colored skin and intense black eyes. She is currently in a foul mood, screaming threats and insults at her servants, ordering them to work harder, faster. Like all Ragarra's priestesses, Anaiz wears no armor, only revealing garments, her backpack, and low boots. A scimitar, dagger, and an unusual ebony baton, carved at one end with a crocodile head, hang from her belt.







At the first sign of trouble, she will cast aid upon herself from behind a protective line of segarrans. On following rounds, she will try to silence opponents, cast *protection from good*, 10' radius, and from within this protective circle use her rod of rending to destroy opponents' weapons and armor. She will then leave the circle and wade into melee, touching vulnerable opponents and casting *bestow curse* or *cause disease*. Should she be badly wounded and find escape via *pass plant* impossible, Anaiz will attempt to drink her potion and *polymorph* into a mobat. She will then attempt to fly to the cult's headquarters in Kadarasto.

Anaiz, priestess of Ragarra (hFP/o/8): AC 6; MV 12; hp 51; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon, spell, or magical item; Str 15, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 13; AL CE; THAC0 16; XP 5,000.

Spells: *command*, *cure light wounds*, *detect magic*, *entangle*, *pass without trace*; *aid*, *barkskin*, *charm person or mammal*, *silence 15' radius*, *wyvern watch* (already cast); *bestow curse*, *cause disease*, *locate object*; *plant door*, *protection from good 10' radius*.

Magical items: *ring of protection +2*, *potion of polymorph self*, and a *rod of rending* (the ebony baton) with 21 charges remaining. The rod's powers are detailed in the Campaign Guide; its command word is *ymazzig*.

Lesser segarrans (9): Int Average (10); AL CE; AC 1; MV 9; HD 5+5; hp 28, 29, 30 (x2), 33 (x2), 34, 36, 37; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg: by weapon +2 (scimitar: 1d8+2) or 2d8 (bite); SA: fight and save as 5th-level warriors; MR: 10%; SZ M (6' tall); XP 1,400.

### Touching The Headstone

Although the serpent statue appears to be made of plaster covered with flaking gold leaf, this is nothing more than a powerful illusion. In reality, the statue is solid gold, weighing at least 60 tons (the reason for the inner temple's massive foundation). The statue's face bears a sly smile, and a huge diamond, over 3" in diameter, gleams brightly in its forehead over 30' above the floor.

The statue's potent disguise can be foiled by *true seeing*, the *true sight* ability of a 6th-level or higher hakima, or by

peering through the talisman, as suggested by Sharaman himself.

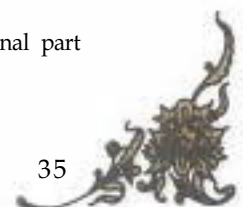
If the bearer touches the talisman to the diamond in the statue's forehead (this could pose a small problem, because of the high elevation), several good things happen.

First, the refuse and desecration of the temple by Anaiz and her followers is immediately cleansed. Though the physical damage they inflicted to the building is not repaired, the temple is reconsecrated as a bastion for the forces of good in the jungle.

Second, a new monument rises from pavement in the outer courtyard (area 2) bearing Sharaman's name. The epitaph, written in Kadari, reads: "Husband of Maazara, Father of Sharamaaz, Two-hundred-and-twelfth restorer of the Temple."

Finally, a heretofore-undetectable secret door opens in the base of the serpent's statue, leading to a vault containing the temple's treasury, the contents of which were promised to the party by Sharaman. Inside, the party finds several ceramic urns containing a total of 5,230 gp; a priest scroll with *cure disease* (x2), *remove curse*, *neutralize poison* (x2), *cure critical wounds*, and *raise dead*, cast at 16th level; a *scroll of protection from elementals*; a fully charged *staff of the teak serpent* (described in Chapter Seven of the Campaign Guide); a *shield +3*, emblazoned with a coiled serpent; and a *scimitar +4, defender*. Once the party has emptied the treasury of all that they desire and exited the chamber, the secret door disappears.

After Anaiz and her servants have been either slain or driven away, the party members may remain in the temple for as long as they like. On the day following the restoration of the temple, snakes of all kinds start to reappear around the inner and outer courtyard. Using the talisman-bearer as an interpreter, they express their thanks to the entire party for ridding the temple of Ragarra's presence. They wish the PCs good luck on the second part of their mission. Now that the sacred well (area 3) has been re-sanctified, the party can draw as much of the holy water as it can carry, although only one gallon is necessary to fulfill the serpent lord's dying request. When the party is fully recovered, Taj approaches the bearer, eager to complete the final part





of Sharaman's mission by delivering the talisman to the serpent lord's successor.

## Crossing The Nogaro

**T**aj informs the party that Sharaman's daughter, Sharamaaz, lives approximately 60 miles northeast of Dihliz in a collection of ruins called the Leaning Towers (see the **colored mapsheet** of the Ruined Kingdoms). The DM should use the ideas presented in the previous "Grey Jungle" section to make the party's journey through the forests memorable.

Besides any random encounters the DM may inflict upon the party, perhaps the biggest obstacle will be the mighty Nogaro River itself, which is infested with crocodiles. By the time the party reaches the Nogaro, Anaiz's mother Awatef will know about her daughter's failure, either through divination or from Anaiz herself following her escape. Awatef is a vengeful woman. She sends a trio of her strongest giant crocodiles (along with Anaiz, if she survived the encounter at the temple) to eliminate the PCs when they cross the Nogaro. If the PCs use magical means to circumvent the river, the crocodiles attack on the night after as they camp on the eastern bank (-2 bonus to surprise). The DM should make it clear that the crocodiles have not met the party by chance, nor are they entirely natural creatures: perhaps they can whisper vile curses at the party before they attack (in Awatef's female voice), or their eyes may flicker with greenish flame.

Giant crocodiles (3): Int Animal (1); AL NE; AC 4; MV 6, Sw 12; HD 7; hp 44, 49, 53; THAC0 13; #AT 2; Dmg: 3d6/2d10; SD: surprise; ML Special; SZ H (30' long); XP 1,600 each (due to above-average hit points).

## The Leaning Towers

**S**haramaaz lives in an ancient ruined stronghold now practically engulfed by the jungle. Nine massive towers, once tall and majestic, are cracked and corroded by the merciless humidity. Several spires lean dangerously to the side, threatening to topple at

the slightest touch. The ruins are infested with snakes, who salute the bearer of the stone, welcoming him or her to their home by wriggling playfully over his or her arms and legs.

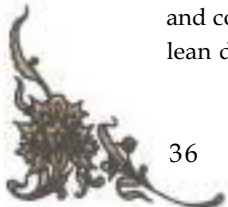
Beneath the ruins, in the cavernous cellars, lives Sharamaaz. Unlike her father, Sharamaaz's face is young and beautiful, her serpentine body white as snow. A diamond talisman glows brightly in her forehead. Attended by a host of servants similar to her father's entourage, she greets the PCs graciously, thanking them for undertaking her father's pilgrimage, and immediately heals, cures, or raises any party members who were wounded or slain during the course of the adventure.

When the bearer presents her father's talisman, Sharamaaz asks that it be touched to her own. When this happens, the dim light in the older stone transfers over to Sharamaaz's diamond. At the same time, tears start pouring down her face and she smiles triumphantly, reliving all of her father's memories—and the memories of his ancestors before him. The serpent queen is lost in a tearful trance while she assimilates and understands these memories. She does not regain awareness of her surroundings for one full day.

Meanwhile, the bearer should note that Sharaman's diamond is now cold and dark. It still radiates strong magic however, but it now has only the powers of a *gem of seeing*. At the DM's discretion, the PC who bore the stone in the adventure may gain the permanent ability to speak with snakes (whether he or she keeps the diamond or not).

Although a search of Sharamaaz' home reveals no treasure, the walls of her lair are very interesting. Covered with ancient magical runes (anti-screaming and anti-teleportation wards), these inscriptions were placed here by the castle's original inhabitants, many centuries ago. One wall also bears a prophetic riddle, written in Kadari during the same epoch:

*Our proud lions vanquished here,  
Sorrow for our fallen friends.  
Eight of nine we'll never fear,  
Buried where the walls descend.*





*Our proud lions come once more,  
Sorrow for their fallen friends.  
Ninth of nine will fear restore,  
When in Tadabbur descend.*

Written by Imam Suhail centuries ago after defeating the Nine Council of the Geomancers, the poem also speaks of a Geomancer who escaped, "Ninth of Nine." According to Kadaran legend, the ninth wizard descended into a secret fortress, called Tadabbur, and was never seen again. Let the party members ponder this riddle for as long as they like. When Sharamaaz reawakens, she will explain it, if the PCs wish. The Geomancers are described in Chapter Two of the Campaign Guide.

Sharamaaz, a serpent lord: Int Genius (17); AL LG; AC -2; MV 6; HD 16; hp 82; THAC0 5; #AT 1; Dmg: 4d6; SA: Constriction, spells; MR 70%; ML 16; SZ G (50' long); MC 13: AQ.

Spells: *bless, command, cure light wounds* (×7); *aid, enthrall, hold person* (×2), *know alignment, silence 15' radius, slow poison* (×2), *withdraw; cure disease* (×2), *dispel magic, protection from evil 10' radius, protection from fire, prayer, remove curse* (×2); *divination, neutralize poison* (×2), *protection from lightning, tongues; commune, dispel evil, insect plague, raise dead; blade barrier, heal, heroes' feast; holy word.*

## The Brain of Sharaman

After discussing the riddle, Sharamaaz asks the party for her father's brain and the holy water from the temple. When these are brought forward, she takes two ceramic bowls, an iron knife, six ordinary flight arrows, and six empty vials from her lair. Using great care, she takes the knife in her teeth and slowly cuts Sharaman's brain in half. The halves are separated

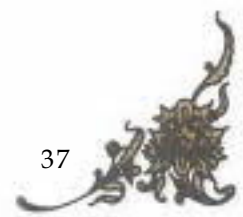
into the two bowls. Next, the serpent queen pours holy water from the temple over each half of the brain, all the time speaking strange, magical words. When the ceremony is complete, all that remains in each bowl is a crystal clear liquid. She empties the contents of one bowl (made from the left half of Sharaman's brain) into the empty vials. These are now *six potions of extra-healing*. She pours the contents of the other bowl (made from the right half of Sharaman's brain) over the six arrows, turning them into *arrows of lesser segarran slaying*. As a reward for completing her father's quest, the party may keep Sharaman's talisman, the potions, and the arrows.

## Concluding The Adventure

The party is now free to leave, but Sharamaaz makes it clear that the PCs are always welcome in her home. She tells the party that she is preparing to leave and return to her father's home near the Doors of Shajar, so she can keep a closer eye on the sacred temple. She would be glad for the party's company during the journey, and she could be a valuable source of information about the cult of Ragarra and the Geomancers. If party members are ever wounded or slain in the future, Sharamaaz could be a powerful and convenient ally (except for the fact that she lives out in the middle of the jungle). It is suggested that the DM award the party 25,000 XP for successfully completing the adventure.

At the DM's discretion, if Taj and the party are getting along exceptionally well, he may remain with them as a kind of party mascot or henchman. Otherwise, he joins the service of his new queen.

Finally, this adventure introduces the party to the cult of Ragarra. Awatef will never rest until her daughter Anaiz is avenged, and the cult appears again in the adventure "Retribution."





Sitta hagg Tisan:

## Curse of The Serene Isle

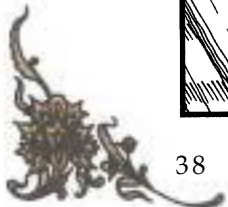
Located near the busy trade routes that link Rog'osto, Dihliz, and Medina al-Afyal, the island of Sahu was once home to an ancient civilization. Today, the Isle of Serenity is covered with the ruins of strange metallic towers, similar to the mysterious spires of Rog'osto. Unlike Rog'osto's intact spires, however, Sahu's towers are toppled and twisted heaps of grey metal, littering the island's low shores in random clusters.

Sahu has recently acquired a sinister reputation, since quite a large number of ships that stray too close to the island never return. The losses are far too numerous to be attributed to the dangerous reefs and shifting sandbars that lurk beneath the northern and southern coasts of the island. Some sailors whisper that the island is the recipient of a strange and ancient curse left behind by its former inhabitants. Others claim that a marid has claimed the island as her home and destroys any who venture too close to her lair. The truth—while far less fantastic than either of these speculations—is no less dangerous.

### Starting The Adventure

"Curse of the Serene Isle" is a brief aquatic mini-adventure which takes place off the northern coasts of Sahu. The adventure can easily be relocated to just about any other coastal region in Zakhara—for example, it can easily be adapted to explain the mysterious disappearances of ships and pearl divers near Gana and Jumlat in the Pearl Cities (see the *Land of Fate* boxed set for details).

The party could be headed to Sahu for several reasons. First, the merchants of Dihliz might be worried about the ship disappearances near the island and could hire the PCs to investigate (for a total reward of 5,000 gp). The influential metalsmiths' guild of Rog'osto, ever vigilant for a new supply of the unique steel alloy, might hire the PCs to bring them back a small sample of metal from Sahu's ruined towers. Otherwise, the DM can handle this as a random encounter when the party just "happens by" Sahu during the course of its travels, sailing too close to the island out of ignorance. This encounter is





perfect for the otherwise uneventful sea voyage in the next adventure, "Secrets of the Seal."

## Sahu's Real Curse

Some Afyalese merchants know that the waters north of Sahu have been claimed by a mysterious sea creature named Perizade. The monster's existence is not widespread knowledge, since the merchants have negotiated a toll guaranteeing safe passage across Perizade's territory, a long stretch of reefs known as the Horn of Sahu (see the **colored mapsheet**). This short cut through the reefs can save 1-4 days sailing time to Dihliz, an advantage which most merchants are unwilling to casually disclose. Most merchants believe Perizade is a genie of some kind and have started circulating rumors to that effect, hoping to scare others from their new short cut.

Thus far, few people realize that Perizade is, in fact, a gigantic dragon turtle with some unusual, though relatively minor, magical abilities. Perizade has recently acquired spell-casting abilities from a wandering sea mage. In exchange for free passage through the dragon turtle's territorial waters, the mage agreed to teach Perizade how to speak Midani and wield a few useful magic spells. Perizade has proven to be an apt pupil (she is unusually bright for a dragon turtle) and has already learned five spells. She hungers to learn more magic, just as much as she is eager to expand her hoard to include more gold and magical items.

Perizade, a spell-casting dragon turtle: Int Exceptional (14); AL N; AC 0; MV 3, Sw 9; HD 14; hp 100; THACO 7; #AT 3; Dmg: 2d6/2d6/4d8 (2d8/2d8/4d12 when *enlarged*); SA: breath weapon (60' by 40' by 40' cloud of steam, 20d6 points of damage, half if save, thrice/day), capsize ships (see below), casts spells as a 4th-level wizard; SZ G (40' diameter shell, 60' diameter when enlarged); ML 17; XP 14,000.

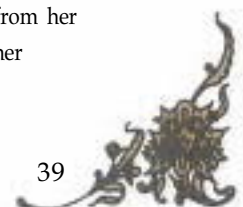
Spells: *detect magic*, *enlarge*, *ventriloquism*; *blur*, *invisibility*. Perizade's unique spell-casting powers are similar to those used by western dragons, in that they can be cast at will, once/day.

## Attack from Below

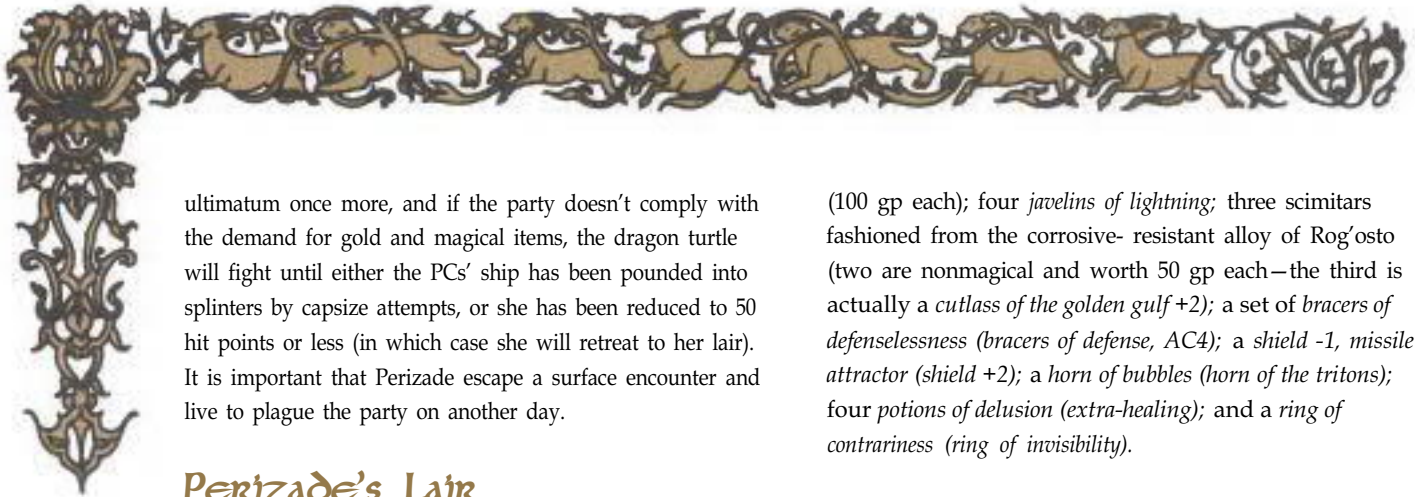
Perizade gained a whole new way of life after she learned just a few minor spells. The dragon turtle now has a simple but effective method of gaining treasure from passing ships without revealing her true identity. Perizade will approach ships from below and tap the bottom of the hull, loudly and powerfully enough to jostle the ship and announce her presence but without doing any damage (at first). Perizade remains about 10'-20' below the water's surface and first casts *enlarge*, appearing to the ship passengers above as a light patch 50'-60' wide against the darker background of the sea water. As panic breaks out on board, the dragon turtle then casts *ventriloquism* and delivers the following ultimatum while still safely concealed below several fathoms of water:

"I am Perizade the Invincible, Queen of the Waves, Keeper of the Sea, Watcher of those who Pass Above! All who travel through my domain must pay a toll. Place gold or magic in a chest and drop it overboard. Hear and obey, or join the remains of countless other foolish mortals who now mingle with the reefs below!"

If the PCs refuse to part with their cash and are intent on attacking (and the DM doesn't think they stand a chance), the DM can have an NPC sailor or trusted henchman tell the party about the large numbers of ships that have mysteriously disappeared in these waters during the past. Should the party decide to antagonize the mysterious toll collector anyway, Perizade will first cast *blur* on herself, then rise out of the water and attempt to capsize the party's vessel. Because the dragon turtle is enlarged, ships under 30' long have a 95% chance of being capsized; ships 30'-90' long have a 50% chance of being capsized; and ships over 90' long (either war galleys or dhows) have only a 20% of being capsized. Even if the vessel isn't capsized, each party member on board must make a Dexterity check or be thrown to the deck and unable to act during the following round. Perizade will make sure to cover the decks with her breath weapon of scalding steam while the crew is still recovering from her capsize attempt. After this, Perizade will bellow her







ultimatum once more, and if the party doesn't comply with the demand for gold and magical items, the dragon turtle will fight until either the PCs' ship has been pounded into splinters by capsizing attempts, or she has been reduced to 50 hit points or less (in which case she will retreat to her lair). It is important that Perizade escape a surface encounter and live to plague the party on another day.

### Perizade's Lair

The dragon turtle dwells in a small network of sea caves under the Horn of Sahu. Since the entrance lies under 70' of water, Perizade's lair can be approached only with the aid of magical spells or items that permit underwater breathing.

A map of the lair appears on the bottom half of the back of **Card 3**. Movement in the lower caverns is complicated by a strong current, which flows through the network of sea caves at a rate of 10' to 120' a round, depending upon the tide. When the currents are fast, even strong swimmers are likely to be swept through the lower caverns, back out into the sea. When the currents are slow, the lower caverns become a favorite stop for sharks, who like to rest near the cavern floor after feeding.

The upper caverns are reached through a wide, recessed opening near the roof of one of the lower grottos. The current in these upper caves is slow or nonexistent, making it a perfect home for Perizade. The uneven, sandy floor drops away at two sinkholes, which may be expanded as the DM sees fit. These narrow, water-filled tunnels might eventually lead explorers to the realm of the locathah, in the ocean depths between Rog'osto and Afyal.

Perizade's trove is strewn along a 10'-wide stone ledge along the back wall of her lair. Her treasure includes some cursed items, as few sailors are foolish enough to pay a toll with a beneficial magical item unless absolutely necessary. Unaware of their curses, Perizade proudly displays these magical treasures on the top of her hoard. She is sure their presence will somehow increase not only her own magical power but also her prestige among other dragon turtles. If identified, the items will appear to be the useful items named in parentheses.

Perizade's treasure includes 2,926 gp; six small pearls

(100 gp each); four *javelins of lightning*; three scimitars fashioned from the corrosive-resistant alloy of Rog'osto (two are nonmagical and worth 50 gp each—the third is actually a *cutlass of the golden gulf* +2); a set of *bracers of defenselessness* (*bracers of defense*, AC4); a *shield -1, missile attractor* (*shield* +2); a *horn of bubbles* (*horn of the tritons*); four *potions of delusion* (*extra-healing*); and a *ring of contrariness* (*ring of invisibility*).

Common sharks (1-6): Int Non; AL N; AC 6; MV Sw 24; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4; HD 6; hp 19, 24, 27, 28, 32, 41; SZ M; ML 10; XP 270.

### Concluding The Adventure

Keep in mind that this mini-adventure is intended as a device for the DM to legitimately lighten the purses and reduce the hoards of magical items carried by all but exceptionally powerful parties. The DM can have Perizade request a monetary amount, commensurate with the current wealth of the party, or leave the amount of the toll vague. Unless the party is exceptionally powerful, antagonizing Perizade would be an invitation to disaster. She will use *detect magic* to verify the magical nature of any tolls dropped overboard. Although a clever party might fool Perizade in the short term with *fool's gold* or *Nystul's magic aura* cast on copper coins or a mundane item, once the enchantment wears off the PCs will have earned a long-term, bitter enemy.

Perizade knows her lair well and will seek to ambush an exploring party in the lower caverns, where any sharks might be stirred into a frenzy by the smell of blood and where her large size makes her less vulnerable than her opponents to the strong current. If wounded to below 50 hp, she will retreat to her upper lair, where she will make one last stand. When brought to 25 hp or less, she will attempt to surrender. In exchange for her life, she will give up her treasure and promise to leave this region of the Crowded Sea forever.

Should the PCs manage to rid Sahu's waters of the dragon turtle's menace, they will immediately earn the gratitude (and aforementioned reward) of Dihliz's merchants. If not, Perizade can return to plague the party during another voyage, rising from the depths to demand another toll whenever the party drifts too close to Sahu.





## Sab'hagg Tisan

# Secrets of The Seal

*Should the gates of Tadabbur be opened, nine-fold stars will rain from the sky to signal Her return. When wheel meets wheel, the past becomes clear and the future open.*

—Prophesy of the Seal

*Embrace Fate, and she will smile upon you. The key to understanding lies through the mists of ignorance. Learn from yesterday to shape tomorrow.*

—Inscriptions on the Seal

**E**xhausted after a long day, you sink in bed and quickly drift into sleep. You begin to experience an uncomfortable sensation, as if you were physically sliding off the bed and falling into a bottomless abyss.

*Did you truly think I would forget you, Ashtarek? A silvery female voice rings in your head, echoing through the darkness. While I slept I dreamed of you, dreamed of our next meeting. . . .*

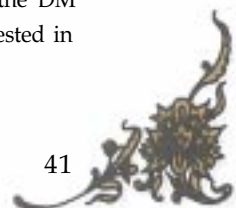
The darkness takes shape and a woman, raven-haired and ruby-lipped, steps forward, her face more lovely than the moon. With a warm smile, she says, *It doesn't have to end like last time. . . .*

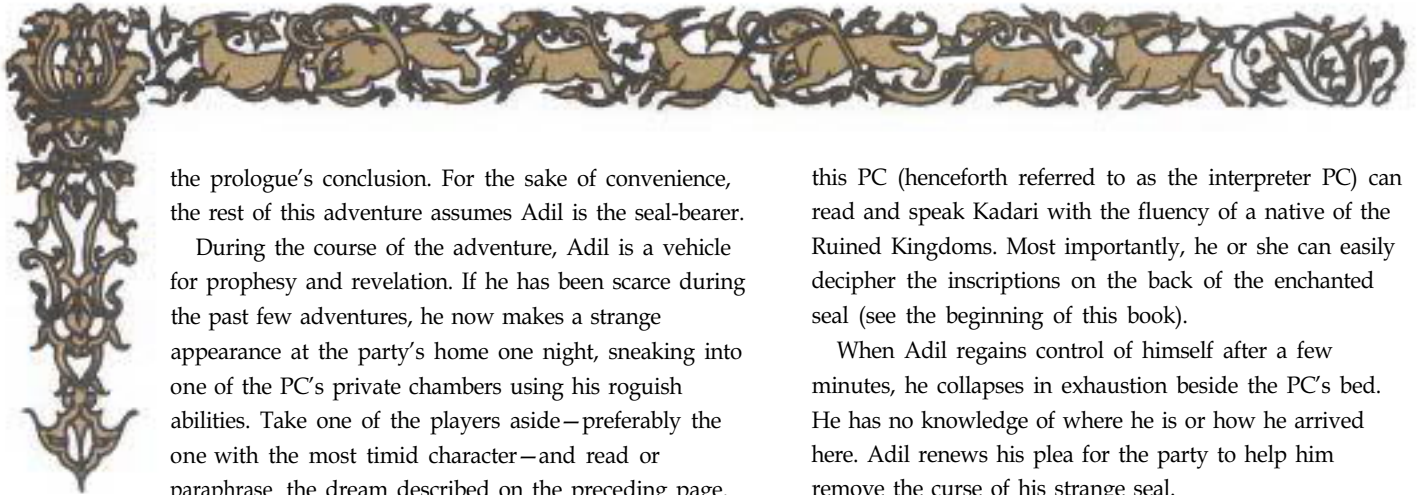
Suddenly her face clouds in anger. **CURSE YOU, PRIEST!**

. . . and you abruptly find yourself lying in bed, something cool resting against your forehead. When you open your eyes, you see a disheveled beggar leaning over you, backlit by the silvery moonlight streaming through the open bedroom window. He is pressing a strange clay seal to your brow.

### Starting The Adventure

**D**esigned for a party of 7th-9th level characters, "Secrets of the Seal" continues the events started in "Nine Falling Stars," where the party was introduced to Suhail's enchanted clay seal and its unwilling bearer, Adil al-Muluki. The DM should refer to the prologue for background information about the seal, its unusual *gens*, and Adil's character description. Alternatively, the DM may have chosen to have a party member become the seal-bearer, as suggested in





the prologue's conclusion. For the sake of convenience, the rest of this adventure assumes Adil is the seal-bearer.

During the course of the adventure, Adil is a vehicle for prophesy and revelation. If he has been scarce during the past few adventures, he now makes a strange appearance at the party's home one night, sneaking into one of the PC's private chambers using his roguish abilities. Take one of the players aside—preferably the one with the most timid character—and read or paraphrase the dream described on the preceding page.

While her strength is returning, Tisan has only one way to harass the party—dreams. Using the geoglyphs in the Hall of Nightmares in Tadabbur, Tisan projects a carefully constructed image of herself into the sleeping mind of one of the PCs. Of course, she has no desire to reveal her true form to the PC—her strong, muscular body, heavily tattooed with magical geoglyphs, is exotic and imposing, but hardly inspires confidence or trust. She has chosen a more pleasing appearance for this first interview, during which she hopes to impress the PC with his or her ignorance of the past and maybe enlist him or her in her cause.

Strangely, Tisan refers to the PC as “Ashtarek.” Let the party puzzle over this for the time being. Only powerful divination spells (such as *commune* or *legend lore*) will reveal that Ashtarek was one of the Lions of Yesterday, Imam Suhail's younger brother and supporter in his battles against the Geomancers. At this stage in the adventure, the party can learn nothing more about Ashtarek or his history.

Fortunately, Adil arrives by the character's bedside in one of his prophetic reveries and places the clay seal on his or her forehead. The seal's anti-geomantic wardings disperse Tisan's mental incursion, but the PC has merely traded one strange encounter for another. While the PC is still lying in bed, Adil speaks in his strange prophetic voice. If the party completed the adventure “Pilgrimage,” the PC will recognize the voice of Suhail min Zann:

*Seek the southern shores where the Lost One dwells. Only then will your dream be safe.*

As in the prologue, Adil repeats the prophesy of the seal, interspersed with a torrent of gibberish. Although Adil speaks in Kadari, for some reason the PC understands the ancient language (even if he or she hasn't learned it before). For the rest of the adventure,

this PC (henceforth referred to as the interpreter PC) can read and speak Kadari with the fluency of a native of the Ruined Kingdoms. Most importantly, he or she can easily decipher the inscriptions on the back of the enchanted seal (see the beginning of this book).

When Adil regains control of himself after a few minutes, he collapses in exhaustion beside the PC's bed. He has no knowledge of where he is or how he arrived here. Adil renews his plea for the party to help him remove the curse of his strange seal.

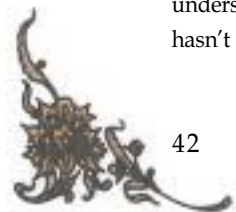
## The Beggar's Prophecies

By now, the party should have learned to take Adil's ravings seriously (especially if the interpreter PC recognized that the beggar spoke with Suhail's voice). The spirit of the ancient high priest is trying to communicate with the party through the beggar, but Adil's undisciplined (and unwilling) mind makes the task difficult.

When Imam Suhail imprisoned Tisan in Tadabbur, he knew that if the wards were ever unwittingly broken, the world would be totally unprepared to resist her terrible evil. To counter the Arch-Geomancer's awesome power, Suhail compiled a legacy of arcane knowledge in a magical tome, *Lions of Tomorrow*. Thus armed, Suhail hoped a future generation of heroes might defeat Tisan if she ever escaped her prison. Fearing that Tisan would stop at nothing to seek out his legacy and destroy it, Suhail wisely hid *Lions of Tomorrow* in a magically protected vault named Al-Asirr, the Secret. Its only key, the magical clay seal, was carefully enchanted so the high priest could guide its bearer to the vault.

The party has three clues to solving this adventure. The seal's prophesy affirms its power to open the future to new possibilities. If the seal's destiny is not met (i.e., the party doesn't recover *Lions of Tomorrow*), Tisan's victory is assured. The party will be at the top of Tisan's list of enemies, since only the party has the potential to destroy her.

Second, the beggar's ravings include a reasonably specific clue to the location of Suhail's vault. “Seek the southern shores where the Lost One dwells” is a blatant reference to the Isle of Afyal, The Lost One is the Elephant Isle's mysterious deity, who is mentioned in the Campaign Guide.





If the party does not recognize this, magical divinations or scholarly inquiries (at the Ministry of Secrets or the Mosque of Zann in Dihliz, for instance) should reveal this information rather quickly. Otherwise, the DM may care to change Adil's hint to the more obvious clue: "Seek the southern shores of the Elephant Isle."

Finally, the inscriptions on the back of the seal are intended to guide the PCs through the various tests once they reach Al-Asirr. These clues are discussed in greater detail in the area descriptions.

## Nightmares

Although Tisan's attempts at dream intervention were thwarted by the seal the first night, there is nothing to prevent her from trying to disturb the party's sleep on subsequent nights. Since it can be time-consuming for the DM to invent lots of nasty dreams with which to plague the party, it might be easier to describe the effects of the nightmares (such as PCs moaning and crying out in their sleep; waking up screaming in the middle of the night soaked in sweat, and so on).

In game terms, the loss of restful sleep means spellcasters cannot regain spells. The effects are less dramatic for warriors and rogues, but the exhaustion gradually deadens perceptions and slows reflexes. For every two days a PC goes without restful sleep, he or she suffers a cumulative +1 penalty on initiative, surprise, and proficiency rolls (+4 penalty maximum).

There are several ways to block dream intervention. Some magical items (such as a *talisman of mental fortitude*, a *scarab of protection*, an *amulet of proof against detection and location*, and a *ring of mind shielding*) and spells (*protection from evil*, *non-detection*, and *mind bar*) effectively block the power of Geomantic dream glyphs. The bearer of the seal is also immune to their effect, and he or she may lend its protection to another by pressing the seal to the victim's forehead. Of course, each magical item protects only one party member, and most of the spells have a short duration.

The most effective ward against dream glyphs is salt water, which disperses the magical power of all geoglyphs. When the party approaches within ten miles of the sea, Tisan's ability to scry on the party and invade their dreams

is effectively blocked. Thus, by pursuing this adventure, the party unwittingly evades Tisan's attentions (this is no coincidence, just as it is no coincidence that Suhail concealed *Lions of Tomorrow* on an island). Once the party takes ship to Afyal, Tisan's nocturnal torments cease unless the party returns to the mainland of the Ruined Kingdoms.

## Across The Crowded Sea

The PCs will have to find a way to cross the Crowded Sea and travel to Afyal. This journey can be as easy—or as difficult—as the DM cares to make it. A constant procession of ships makes the journey between Dihliz, Rog'osto, and Medina al-Afyal. It should cost anywhere from 125-250 gp per person to book passage to the City of the Elephant, depending upon the size of the ship and the party's bargaining ability.

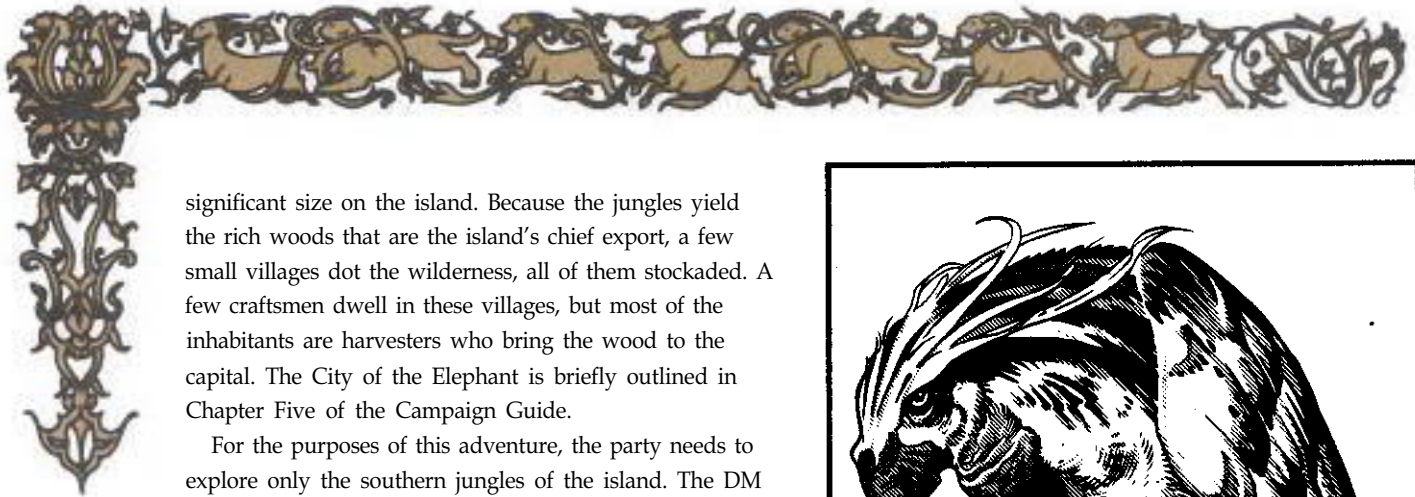
Alternatively, if the PCs wish to bypass Medina al-Afyal altogether, they may desire to hire (or even buy) their own ship so they can explore the southern coast of the Elephant Isle on their own schedule. This is obviously the preferable course of action, as it will be far less time-consuming than a detour through the island's capital in the north. It is also the more dangerous option, though, for the waters along Sahu and the southern coast of Afyal are considerably more treacherous than the standard trade routes, with numerous opportunities to ground a vessel on hidden shoals and reefs. The DM is referred to the *Golden Voyages* sourcebox for details on simulating a long voyage in the Crowded Sea. As if the navigational hazards were not dangerous enough, the reefs of Sahu and Afyal are teeming with countless dangerous monsters waiting to prey upon unwary travelers. The DM is encouraged to run the short aquatic adventure, "Curse of the Serene Isle," to liven up the sea journey.

The DM should use the **colored mapsheet** of the Ruined Kingdoms to determine the travel time and possible hazards on the trip to Afyal.

## Isle of The Elephant

The island of Afyal is a lush, verdant tropical paradise. The capital is the only settlement of





significant size on the island. Because the jungles yield the rich woods that are the island's chief export, a few small villages dot the wilderness, all of them stockaded. A few craftsmen dwell in these villages, but most of the inhabitants are harvesters who bring the wood to the capital. The City of the Elephant is briefly outlined in Chapter Five of the Campaign Guide.

For the purposes of this adventure, the party needs to explore only the southern jungles of the island. The DM should feel free to place Al-Asirr in any of the three ruin sites in Afyal's southern tip. Although Imam Suhail would have chosen a site as close to the sea as possible, the coast might have shifted slightly during the past several hundred years, so even the ruins ten miles up Afyal's southernmost river are not to be discounted in the party's searches, since they still lie close enough to the sea to block the power of Tisan's geoglyphs.

The southern jungles of Afyal teem with wild beasts and monsters; the Grey Jungle east of Dihliz, described in the adventure "Talisman," are tame by comparison. The DM should run a few random encounters while the party searches the southern jungles for the ruins. The following two encounters are intended to make the jungle search more memorable.

### Birds of Prey

The first encounter involves a trio of elephant birds, scouring the jungle for prey. If they spot a large-sized party (perhaps the PCs and the ship's crew on shore leave), these human-sized raptors will rejoin their flock, then return for their prey with a score of reinforcements. The flock can be driven away by slaying half its number, but the birds return on subsequent days for relentless air strikes. The only way to end these assaults for good is to locate and destroy the nests, secreted over 200' high in the upper reaches of the jungle canopy. Other than 14 eggs, the nests contain no treasure.

Elephant birds (23): Int Animal (1); AL N; AC 5; MV Fl 18 (C); HD 3+3; hp 12 (x6), 15 (x6), 18 (x6), 21 (x5); THAC0 17; #AT 1 or 3; Dmg: 1d10 (heated stone) or 1d4/1d4/1d6; SA: Heated rocks, overbear opponents; SZ M (5'); ML 7; XP 420; MC13: AQ.

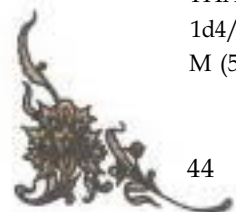


### The Lost One

A few days after defeating (or at least evading) the elephant birds, the party encounters a large herd of elephants watering themselves and playing in a large stream in the jungle. This should be an opportunity to relax, have some fun, and make new friends. The elephants are extremely intelligent and gentle, even docile. If approached peacefully and if a mode of communication is established (a *Speak with Animals* spell, for instance), the herd will be glad to help the party search the jungle.

Before they will offer their assistance, however, the elephants ask the party to accompany them to a "holy place." That evening, the elephants carry the party to a large clearing in the jungle, centered on a white marble statue of an elephant. The herd of elephants marches in a circle around the statue for one turn, after which the statue begins to glow in a soft white light. This light is a manifestation of the Lost One, the reclusive deity of Afyal, who inhabits the spirits of the island's elephants. He is an eccentric but otherwise benevolent god.

Have each member of the party present at this





ceremony roll a saving throw vs. spell at -4 penalty. Those who fail their save strip off all their gear and clothing and run into the jungle, bringing pieces of wood back into the clearing. Most of these charmed PCs will spend the rest of the evening carving small elephant statuettes (tiny idols of the Lost One).

A few talented PCs (rawuns, most likely) will devote their time to composing long, poetic verses in Affa, describing the beauty and natural perfection of the elephantine form. These chosen few have been "touched by the Lost One," as Afyal's natives put it. They permanently retain their ability to speak and write Affa so that they may proclaim the ancient poetry of Afyal throughout the rest of Zakhara.

In the morning, the herd will gather the carvings and will spread them reverently across the jungle. For one full week, the party has the willing service of the herd (if the party needs the elephants' help for longer, the strange ceremony will have to be repeated). The elephants will do any task for the party short of physically harming another creature (except in self-defense, of course).



Attacking the herd is a big mistake. Rather than scattering, the elephants act in a coordinated fashion to stamp the offenders into the jungle floor (the LAST thing you want to do on the Elephant Isle is to attack an elephant).

The day after the ceremony, the elephants lead the party to the ruins of Al-Asirr. They refuse to approach within a mile of the ruins, since they despise Neegabashi, the evil giant who inhabits them. The elephants gladly point the way with their trunks, however, and patiently wait for the party to complete their explorations.

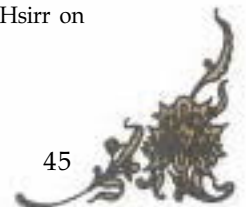
Elephants (12): Int Low (7); AL N(G); AC 6; MV 15; HD 11; hp 54, 57, 65 (x4), 67, 68, 70, 73, 77, 80; THAC0 9; #AT 5; Dmg: 2d8/2d8/2d6/2d6/2d6; SZ L (11' tall); ML 7; XP 4,000 each.

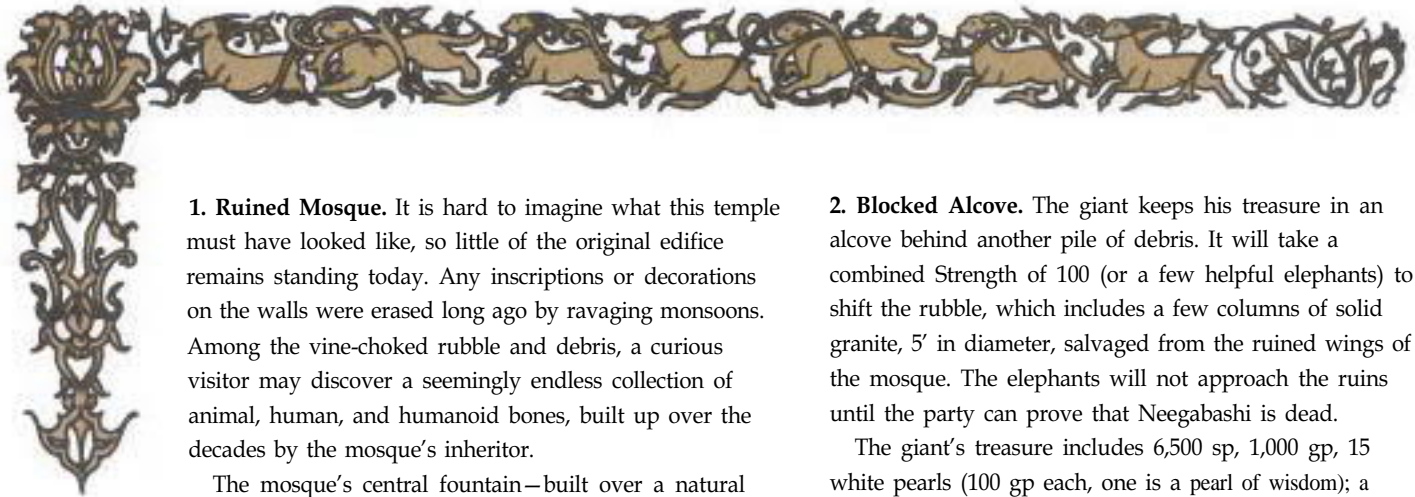
## The Ruins of Al-Asirr

Many centuries have passed since Suhail first constructed a small mosque on the southern shores of Afyal. When the high priest arrived, the island was still home to unenlightened natives who revered the Lost One, the ancient elephantine god of Afyal. Even the House of Alon, who founded the enlightened city of Medina al-Afyal, had not yet arrived on the Elephant Isle at the time. Now advanced in years, Suhail converted some of Afyal's natives, convincing them to assist in building a small mosque to Zann. The high priest carefully chose a site above the small network of natural caverns, and the temple with its small underground complex was completed in less than a decade. Few of Suhail's older followers survived the temple's construction.

Today, Suhail's mosque stands in ruin, the converted natives having long since abandoned it. The site would have been altogether consumed by the jungle, were it not strategically located on a hill not far from the ocean. A number of predators have taken up residence in the decaying edifice over the years, the most recent of which is Neegabashi, a decrepit and vicious island giant, who seized the lair from a mated pair of vishaps in his youth, two hundred years ago. He has lived in the ruins ever since.

At this point, find the map of the Ruins of Al-Asirr on the back of **Card 4**.





**1. Ruined Mosque.** It is hard to imagine what this temple must have looked like, so little of the original edifice remains standing today. Any inscriptions or decorations on the walls were erased long ago by ravaging monsoons. Among the vine-choked rubble and debris, a curious visitor may discover a seemingly endless collection of animal, human, and humanoid bones, built up over the decades by the mosque's inheritor.

The mosque's central fountain—built over a natural spring—has crumbled into a rectangular pond in the middle of the ruins (area 1a). The brackish water is now home to various larvae, insects, and small fish. The water is not drinkable by human standards, though Neegabashi finds it quite tasty.

Only the northern wing of the mosque remains standing (area 1b), providing some shelter from violent tropical storms and concealment from the jungle's aerial predators. The giant lives here, behind a rampart of debris 10' high. Though easily climbed, it is difficult to scale the pile of debris without making a noise. Unless the party is flying or magically silenced, there is only a 1-in-10 chance to surprise the island giant in his lair. The rampart of debris doubles as an unlimited supply of throwing rocks.

Neegabashi is an imposing one-eyed giant, standing 18' tall. A single ivory horn erupts from his bald forehead, and his small, beady eye darts quickly about with evil cunning. The advancing years have only served to mature the giant's evil: when he was young, he contented himself merely with hunting and slaying; now he enjoys torturing his prey before eating it. The giant keeps a small supply of pointed flints in his lair for this purpose.

Neegabashi is ruled by his stomach and is perpetually hungry. He makes frequent trips into the jungle and down to the sea in search of food (the elephants have enough sense to stay out of his way). His hunting forays typically last 1-8 hours.

Neegabashi, an island giant: Int Ave (8); AL CE; AC 7; MV 15; HD 13+4; hp 72; THAC0 7; #AT 1; Dmg: 1d10+10; SA: Hurl rocks (for 2d20 points of damage); MR 10%; SZ H (18' tall); ML 14; *Land of Fate* boxed set; XP 7,000.

**2. Blocked Alcove.** The giant keeps his treasure in an alcove behind another pile of debris. It will take a combined Strength of 100 (or a few helpful elephants) to shift the rubble, which includes a few columns of solid granite, 5' in diameter, salvaged from the ruined wings of the mosque. The elephants will not approach the ruins until the party can prove that Neegabashi is dead.

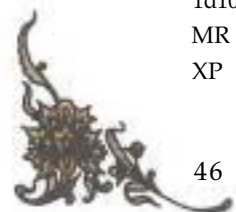
The giant's treasure includes 6,500 sp, 1,000 gp, 15 white pearls (100 gp each, one is a pearl of wisdom); a mahogany statuette of a boy riding a hippocampus (1,000 gp); a gold-plated nautilus shell, carved with a wave-like pattern (worth 1,200 gp); a delicate incense burner with four compartments, shaped in the form of a rose (800 gp); an ivory-hilted *dagger* +3; and an unlocked red leather box, reinforced with bronze (100 gp), containing a *talisman of free action* and a scroll of *protection from genies*.

**3. Secret Symbiot.** Paraphrase the following:

Reached through a narrow stone archway, this small alcove contains an intact stone statue of a woman standing on a short, cylindrical pedestal. Though her facial features are eroded away and she is missing one arm, the statue's other intact hand holds up a circular stone disk, meticulously inscribed with a nine-spoked wheel.

Unlike the statue and the rest of the upper mosque, the stone disk has weathered the centuries rather well. It is a careful replica of Suhail's magical seal, though it cannot be separated from the statue in any way. The disk radiates faint alteration magic, a *preservation* enchantment cast by the high priest.

Although the wall behind the statue contains a secret door, a searching party is much likelier to first discover Neegabashi's secret symbiot: a crafty mimic called Dilaal. The mimic typically masquerades as the alcove's narrow stone archway; he has secretly lived in the ruins with the giant for decades, living off Neegabashi's scraps and garbage. As a result of frequent feeding, the mimic has grown to prodigious size. Having eaten recently, Dilaal ignores a large party unless they inadvertently prod him while searching the walls for secret doors. Quite intelligent





(and possessing a wry sense of humor), he will gladly chat about Neegabashi if the party can establish some mode of communication. Although the mimic has no treasure, he does know the location of the giant's hoard (area 2).

The bare stone wall behind the statue conceals a secret door, triggered by pressing a small pressure plate worked into a cracked floor-stone. Behind the door, wide stone stairs lead down into darkness.

Dilaal, a common mimic: Int Ave (10); AL N; AC 7; MV 3; HD 8; hp 51; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg: 3d4 (smash); SA: glue; SD: camouflage; SZ L; ML 15; XP 1,400.

## The Catacombs of Al-Asir

The catacombs and vaults immediately below the ruins contain numerous burial vaults. The DM can find a map of this level on the back of **Card 5**. Unless stated otherwise, there are no light sources on this level. Most corridors and rooms are simply decorated with glazed tiles. Vaulted ceilings typically arch 10'-20' above the dark tiled floor.

The walls and ceiling of the catacombs crawl with squirming insects. These feed on each other and on the mold which thrives in the cool, moist vaults. Don't hesitate to spring a few minor encounters with giant ants, spiders, or centipedes on the PCs in this part of the adventure to keep them on their toes.

**4. Burial Vaults.** Constructed when the high-priest's life-long followers succumbed to the ravages of old age, these tombs were sealed with immense limestone slabs which can only be budged by combined Strength of 100 or more points. Few of these tombs have been plundered, as the natives were too frightened of the site to return after Suhail's departure. The island giant—and his secret symbiot—have kept modern tomb robbers out of these catacombs for centuries.

Although none of the tombs has any kind of magical treasure (or undead, for that matter), there is a 1-in-4 chance that some minor gold jewelry or small pieces of art might have been buried with any given follower. The DM is encouraged to flesh out these tombs as desired.

**5. Mosque Archives.** This long, vaulted hall served as a library for the mosque's sacred writings. Now the walls are lined with gaping, diamond-shaped alcoves, filled with mold and crawling with insects.

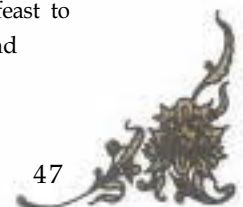
The long-secret repositories concealed behind the east and west walls once contained Suhail's most holy writings. The eastern secret vault, improperly cleaned out by one of Suhail's acolytes, still contains a magical scroll entitled *The Path to Self Awareness* (this treatise is effectively a *tome of understanding*, described in the *DMG*). The scroll is tucked away in the back of a high niche, out of sight. Its detection is further hindered by a large colony of yellow mold, which has covered all of the scroll niches to a depth of one inch. The scroll is probably undetectable except by magical means, such as detect magic.

Some years ago, the yellow mold gained sentience due to the strange radiations of the magical scroll. It senses creatures within 60' and uses its power of *suggestion* to lure victims closer. Although the mold is highly susceptible of fire, such drastic measures are likely to destroy the magical scroll as well. To recover the scroll intact, a PC must cast *continual light*, which will render the mold dormant for 2-12 turns.

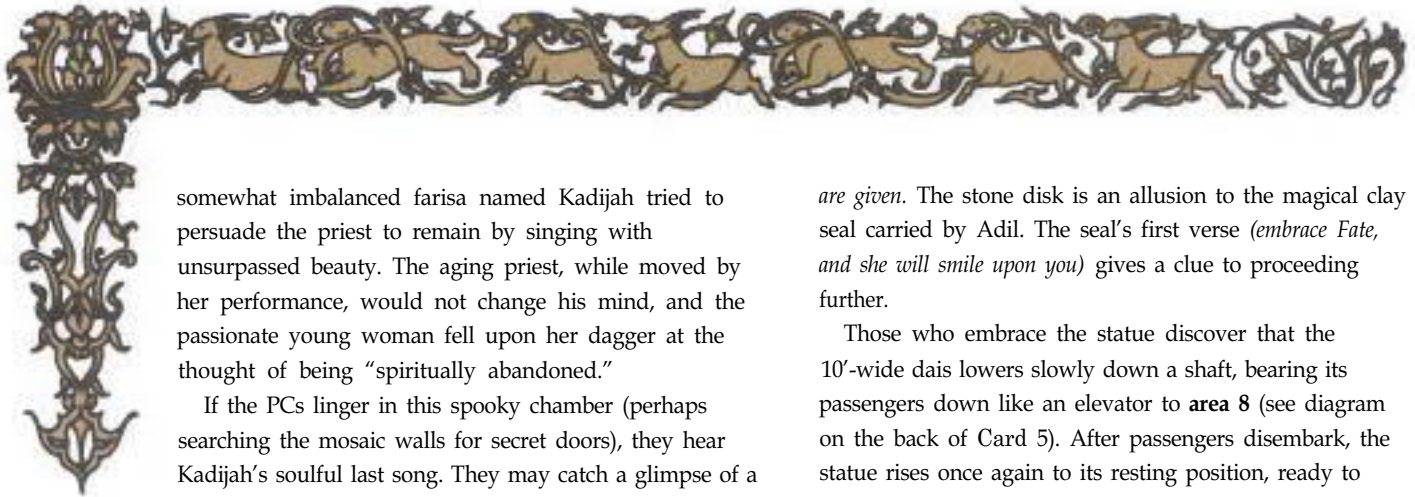
Yellow mold: Int Animal (1); AL N; AC 9; MV 0; HD N/A; THAC0 N/A; #AT 1; Dmg: N/A; SA: poison spores (save vs. poison or die; Intelligence check or lose one point of Intelligence), cast *suggestion* twice/day; SD: harmed only by fire; MR 20%; SZ L; XP 120.

**6. Hall of Lions.** The hall's magnificent appearance has changed little over the centuries: the walls, floor, columns, and ceiling are covered with golden mosaics depicting a pride of lions. The mosaics are so masterful that the lions' eyes seem to follow the PCs about the room.

It was in this chamber that Imam Suhail announced to his few surviving followers his intention to leave Afyal and return to the mainland to resume his wanderings. The high priest's followers, many of whom had spent the past decade of their lives building the mosque, were devastated. During a farewell feast to their teacher, held in this hall, a fanatical and







somewhat imbalanced farisa named Kadijah tried to persuade the priest to remain by singing with unsurpassed beauty. The aging priest, while moved by her performance, would not change his mind, and the passionate young woman fell upon her dagger at the thought of being “spiritually abandoned.”

If the PCs linger in this spooky chamber (perhaps searching the mosaic walls for secret doors), they hear Kadijah’s soulful last song. They may catch a glimpse of a beautiful grey owl watching them from the upper balconies. This is the lonely and misguided hama of Kadijah, whose spirit never left these chambers. A hakima or mystic can identify the owl to be a hama, or spirit, by making a successful Wisdom check.

Kadijah is lost. Since her spirit was not strong enough to lift itself to Paradise, she remained trapped here, unable leave the scene of her violent death. After an eternity of solitude, she is now ready for the afterlife. Kadijah needs only to be shown the way out of the ruins, and her spirit will soar up to Paradise. She cannot communicate with the PCs unless they employ tongues (*speak with animals* will not suffice).

For the rest of the adventure, Kadijah will quietly follow the party, haunting it with her sad songs until the PCs ascend to the surface. If the party attacks, the hama vanishes, only to reappear at a later date.

Kadijah, a hama: Int Ave (9); AL N; AC 2 (7 on Ethereal Plane); MV 1, Fl 30; HD 1; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 2; Dmg: 1d3/1d3; SA: Fear; SD: Immaterial; ML 8; SZ S; XP 120; MC13: AQ.

#### 7. Fate’s Embrace. Paraphrase the following:

This small chamber contains a tall, well-preserved statue of a smiling human woman, her arms outstretched in welcome. In one hand, she carries a cylindrical disk of stone inscribed with a nine-spoked wheel. The statue rests on a raised, circular dais inscribed with strange, alien words.

The verse on the dais, written in Kadari, is the familiar Zakharan proverb: *We have no Fate but that Fate which we*

*are given.* The stone disk is an allusion to the magical clay seal carried by Adil. The seal’s first verse (*embrace Fate, and she will smile upon you*) gives a clue to proceeding further.

Those who embrace the statue discover that the 10’-wide dais lowers slowly down a shaft, bearing its passengers down like an elevator to **area 8** (see diagram on the back of Card 5). After passengers disembark, the statue rises once again to its resting position, ready to transport more passengers.

## The Vaults of Al-Asirr

Incorporated into a number of caves hollowed out by the sea, this level of Suhail’s vaults has a number of magical wardings and protections, intended to foil Geomancer divinations. Any attempts to cast divination (such as *detect magic*, *clairvoyance*, *augury*, etc.) and transport spells (such as *dimension door* and *teleport*) automatically fail on this level, wasting the spell. All other types of magic work normally here. A map of this level appears on the bottom half of the back of **Card 4**.

**8. Arrival.** The statue lowers the party down onto a wide raised platform in a natural cavern. The PCs can call the magical elevator down for the return trip by standing on the platform and reciting its proverb: *We have no fate but that fate which we are given.*

Of its three exits, two empty into dark caverns (**area 9**), while the third leads into an impenetrable curtain of silvery mist (area 10). The magical seal’s second verse (*the key to understanding lies through the mists of ignorance*) should strongly hint that the party explore the last, misty exit.

**9. Caverns.** This network of natural caverns, originally containing the mosque’s storage rooms (**area 9a**), wine cellar (**9b**), well (**9c**), and treasury (**9d**), was carefully cleaned out after the structure was abandoned by its original inhabitants. Curiously, the walls are utterly devoid of any kind of moss, mold, or lichen. There is no evidence of the insect life that infests the upper catacombs.

The caverns are cold and quiet, but sooner or later, if the PCs strain to listen, they might hear a low, gushy,



slurping sound slowly approaching their position. This is nothing more than a giant albino slug—a 40'-long, white, amorphous monstrosity—that keeps these caverns immaculate. Originally a large natural slug, the creature has mutated and grown over the past centuries because of the nearby mist's strange, magical radiations (see area 10). Luckily for the slug, the caverns are extensive and mold grows quickly, for it has a voracious appetite. Barely sentient, it senses a change of diet approaching and heads immediately for the party: The creature is afraid of the silvery mists in **area 10** and will not pursue the party there.

Although the giant slug has no treasure (having devoured everything in its path), a kind DM might have one of the caverns contain a modest cache of treasure hidden behind a loose stone, perhaps a small coffer filled with 38 gp, 11 pp, a large pearl (worth 200 gp), and a *potion of extra-healing*.

Giant slug: Int Non; AL N; AC 8; MV 6; HD 12; hp 62; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg: 1d12; SA: spits acid (4d8 points of damage, save vs. breath weapon for half damage); SD: immune to blunt weapons; SZ G (40' long); ML 12; XP 5,000.

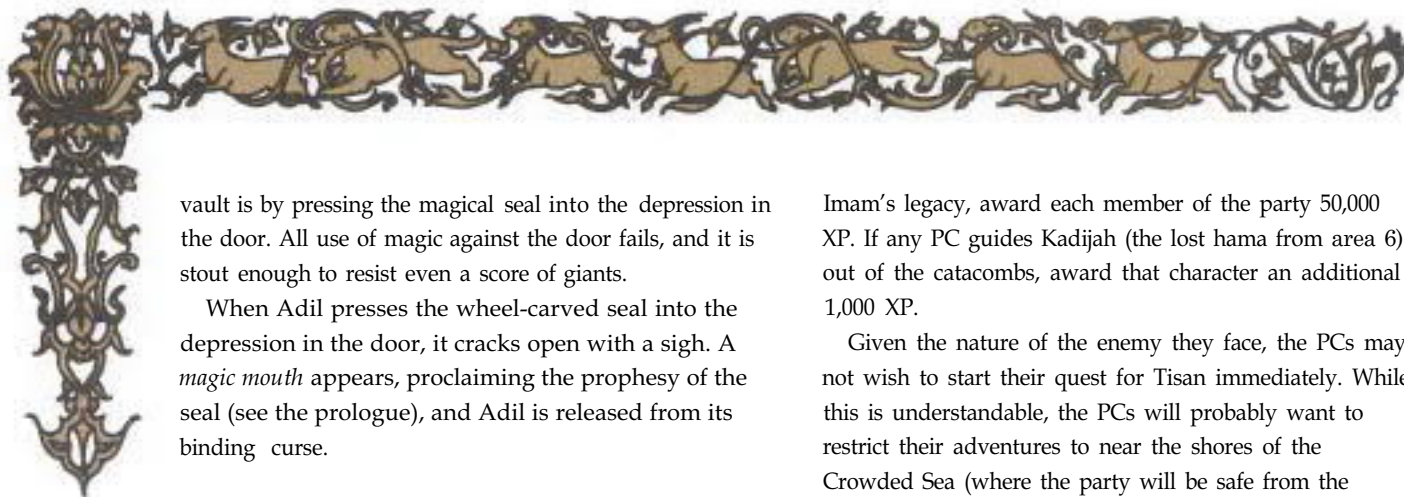
**10. Through the Mists.** To further ward Lions of Tomorrow from detection, Imam Suhail has shifted it entirely to the Ethereal Plane. The mists in this chamber are actually a two-way gate into that warded domain. Read or paraphrase the following:

As you walk through the mists, you lose all sense of time and direction. At first, the mists are so thick you cannot see more than a few feet in front of you. Suddenly, you see a large stone cube, perhaps 20' high, looming in front of you. Its surface is covered with silvery runes that flow like quicksilver.

The runes completely cover the stone's outer surface,

circular door has a small depression in its center, a mirror image of the magical seal carried by Adil: a nine-spoked wheel, the Geomancer *asfr*. The only way to enter the





vault is by pressing the magical seal into the depression in the door. All use of magic against the door fails, and it is stout enough to resist even a score of giants.

When Adil presses the wheel-carved seal into the depression in the door, it cracks open with a sigh. A *magic mouth* appears, proclaiming the prophesy of the seal (see the prologue), and Adil is released from its binding curse.

**11. Vault of the Hidden.** Once unlocked, the door swings down into a dark cylindrical vault, 10' in diameter. Resting on a small shelf near the base, the party finds a large crystal box (worth 1,000 gp) containing four *scarabs of protection*, a book with heavy metal bindings, and a gold-hilted scimitar in a faded crimson sheath. The tome is *Lions of Tomorrow*, detailed on Chapter Two of the Campaign Guide. The scimitar, called Breaker of the Ninth Chain, is a sentient *holy avenger* (see the back of **Card 1**).

## Concluding The Adventure

**M**aking it back through the mists should not prove challenging, although the hungry giant slug from the caverns might have tracked the party to **area 8** looking for a snack. The mimic Dilaal might also pose an unpleasant surprise while the party is leaving the dungeon. If they can communicate with it, perhaps the PCs can persuade the creature to become a new mascot. Unless the PCs defeated Neegabashi at the onset, they will have to contend with the giant before they can safely depart the ruins.

Now that the party has discovered *Lions of Tomorrow* and Breaker of the Ninth Chain, the PCs will at last have some 'clue as to the nature of the enemy they face, and they should realize why Tisan's dream invasions mysteriously abated as soon as the party approached the sea. For completing a major story goal and recovering the

Imam's legacy, award each member of the party 50,000 XP. If any PC guides Kadijah (the lost hama from area 6) out of the catacombs, award that character an additional 1,000 XP.

Given the nature of the enemy they face, the PCs may not wish to start their quest for Tisan immediately. While this is understandable, the PCs will probably want to restrict their adventures to near the shores of the Crowded Sea (where the party will be safe from the Tisan's geoglyphs) until they feel prepared to deal with her. Of course, the party's latest addition, Breaker of the Ninth Chain, will urge the party to press on to Tadabbur with all speed.

Although Breaker will only tolerate a lawful owner, there is one exception to this rule: the PC who was referred to as Ashtarek by Tisan in the introduction. This PC is actually the reincarnation of the ancient paladin Ashtarek. Breaker will adopt this PC over all others (unless there is a paladin in the party) and try its hardest to reform him or her. For this character, the blade performs as a sentient *cursed scimitar +1*, until he or she adopts a lawful alignment. The scimitar is strangely silent over Ashtarek's past relationship with Tisan.

Unless the party has grown overly attached to the beggar Adil, the former seal-bearer asks to be left off at the next port of call (preferably Rog'osto on the mainland) so he can resume his occupation. If the party decides to go straight after Tisan in Tadabbur, he will reluctantly accompany the party further, although he will not hesitate to vocalize his complaints, The seal is no longer magical.

By completing this adventure, the party will have unlocked the vaults to Suhail's powerful legacy of knowledge (the book) and might (the scimitar). Put together, they have the power to destroy Tisan. Although the party now knows where she dwells, Tisan is hardly going to wait for the party to hunt her down, as will be seen in the last adventure, "Kismet."





## Thimaanya hagg Tisan: Retribution

Once again, Prince Nari, Heir Apparent to the Throne of Kadarasto, Champion of the Poor, has gone out on a routine jungle patrol, with a prominent noblewoman as his “spiritual advisor.” Everyone thinks this beautiful—if somewhat mature—woman might be Kadarasto’s next princess. If the rumor is true, neither has confirmed it.

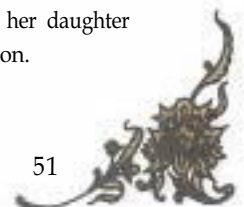
When the summer rains abated, the patrol started its routine sweep of the jungle. These expeditions will continue until a particular group of lawless bounty hunters are apprehended and brought to justice. It might not happen this month, or even this year, but sooner or later, one member of the patrol will have her revenge.

### Starting The Adventure

“Retribution” is intended for a group of high (7th-10th) level PCs, and should be run as a random jungle encounter with Prince Nari, Awatef, 20 battle-hardened soldiers, and 20 members of Awatef’s personal guard. This scenario describes Awatef’s attempts to exact revenge on the PCs for the death of her daughter Anaiz in the adventure “Talisman.” Even if Anaiz survived, Awatef cannot let her daughter’s defeat go unpunished.

A dashing and handsome young warrior, Prince Nari has a charming disposition and a friendly smile. However, beneath this clever facade lies a calculating and ruthless personality. His purpose in aiding Awatef is two-fold. Not only will it increase his reputation at home to bring home another group of pillaging bounty hunters; it will also firmly establish his connection with the cult of Ragarra, a secret society he has been courting for some time (he also has contacts with many other disreputable secret societies). He has no romantic feelings for Awatef whatsoever.

Despite the onset of middle age, High Priestess Awatef remains in remarkably good physical condition. Awatef has no romantic inclinations for Prince Nari either. She is merely using him as a passport to safety should she encounter any war bands from Dihliz (where she is hardly popular) and to make certain her revenge is complete. Nothing would please her more than to see the murderers of her daughter brought home to Kadarasto for public humiliation, torture, and execution.





## Threat of Violence

Sooner or later, Nari's patrol runs into the PCs. Depending upon how nasty the DM feels, this might occur while the party is emerging from another random encounter or exploring ruins. As his horsemen fan out to surround the party, Nari haughtily introduces himself and demands to see the PCs' exploration papers, sanctioned by the Ministry of Secrets in Dihliz. Even if documents are produced, Nari shakes his head and claims that their papers have sadly expired. He suggests that the party give up its weapons and accompany him back to Kadarasto, where the whole matter will be straightened out. The PCs should recognize a trap when they see one, since Awatef is regarding them with undisguised hatred. Pulling out weapons while surrounded by bow-wielding soldiers might not be the best idea, though, as a hail of up to 80 arrows during the first round might inconvenience even the most powerful of heroes.

If the party does try to fight, Nari blasts them with a 10 HD fireball from his *handglyph* before closing to

melee. After firing a single volley of 40 arrows, the honor guard closes to melee the party while the horsemen maneuver themselves to keep the party surrounded and thwart escape.

Awatef first summons four mobats (a special power of Ragarra's priestesses; the creatures arrive in 2-5 rounds). She then turns eight of her honor guard into lesser segarrans using two create jungle minion spells (see page 1 of the 8-page booklet and Chapter Three of the Campaign Guide for details). She prefers to stay out of melee at first, casting her offensive spells as needed. Once her spells are exhausted, or if she herself is physically threatened, she casts *jungle avatar*, changing herself into a greater segarran, a terrible, 30'-long reptilian monster with the head and tail of a crocodile. In this form, she wades into melee with her magic staff. While a frightening sight, the segarrans do have one major drawback in melee. After slaying an enemy, they must stop and devour any remains, a time-consuming process that leaves them more vulnerable to attack (+4 penalty on AC).



## Probing for Weaknesses

Instead of immediately resorting to force, a clever party may attempt to surrender and learn more about their adversaries' weaknesses. Before this can happen, however, the party will be stripped of obvious weapons and magical items (pointed out by Awatef using *detect magic*) and securely bound with durable rope. Once gagged, obvious spell-casters are stripped of their components and holy symbols. The party's equipment is carried on Awatef's horse by day and stored in her personal tent at night.

Characters with the Rope Use nonweapon proficiency may be able to escape (+4 penalty on ability check), but the 1-20 rounds of obvious wriggling will invite discouraging blows from Awatef and her guards. Those trying to loosen their bonds more gradually will take up to ten times as long, but since Prince Nari has already mentioned that they are heading back to Kadarasto, time is a luxury the party can afford. At night, the characters will be hung upside down, suspended from a tree-limb 10' above the ground and guarded by eight of the guards, who sleep in their saddles during the following day.

While captured, the party can learn several important facts, simply by observing their captors. It becomes clear that the prince and Awatef view the party quite differently. Nari views the PCs with the hooded eyes of a predator. There is no personal animosity there. He is clearly vain and intensely conscious of his self image (the amount of time he spends preening and adjusting his armor in the morning will demonstrate this best). If the PCs question him prudently (i.e., in a fawning, ingratiating manner), they may learn that his motive in capturing them lies in the power and glory it will gather him in Kadarasto.

Awatef, on the other hand, makes it abundantly clear why the party has been captured—to avenge the death or defeat of her daughter. She explains in excruciating detail the public torture and humiliation the PCs will receive in Kadarasto. Awatef's greatest weakness is her passion. Although deferential to the prince to his face, she shows little respect for him behind his back. She has no intention of paying him any mind or lending him any support after his usefulness to her has ended. Any show of

defiance by the PCs will provoke her to violence and may also cause her to lose her tongue as well.

The PCs' best plan would be to start an argument between Nari and Awatef. Now that the party is captured, the priestess no longer thinks she needs the prince's assistance, and she is eager to be rid of his vain and bothersome presence. Any verbally adept PC should be able to get the two shouting at each other before long. If this occurs, Prince Nari rides off in a huff with his horsemen, leaving Awatef alone with the PCs and her Honor Guard. Their fight is so heated that Nari storms off without taking his share of the PCs' equipment as payment for his assistance.

Following the prince's departure, Awatef is very agitated. She paces around the camp, talking to herself, trying to control her emotions. Once she has composed herself, the trip to Kadarasto proceeds as before, except there are fewer guards to watch the party during the evening. At night, the priestess casts *wyvern watch* on her tent, to guard herself and the PCs' equipment while she sleeps. Even the most dimwitted PC will realize that the chances for a successful escape won't get any better than this.

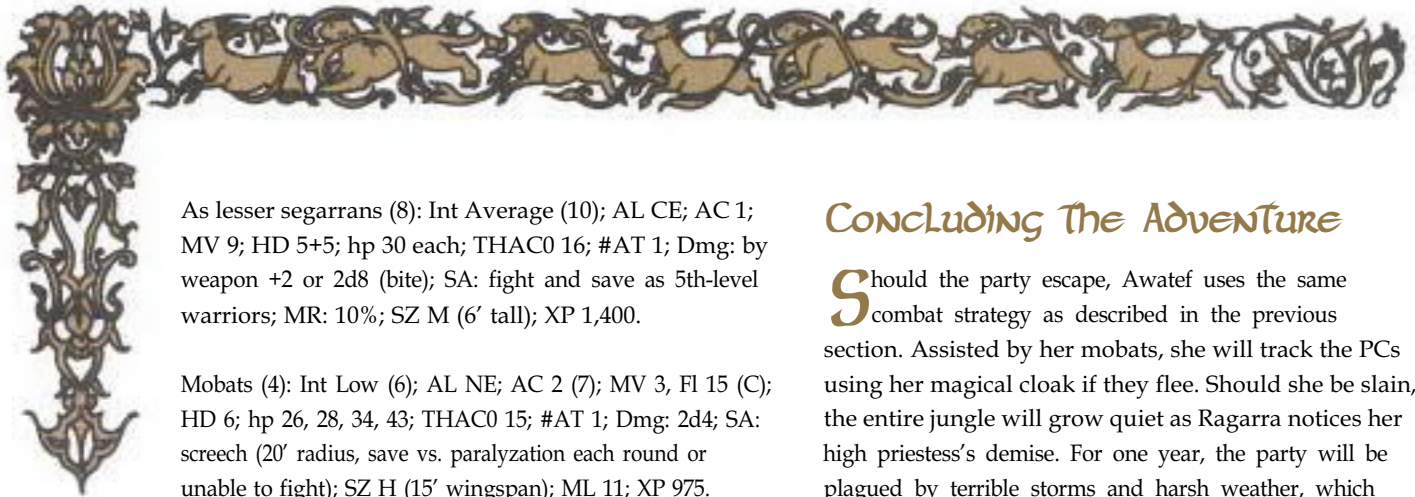
Awatef, high-priestess of Ragarra (hfP/o/12): AC 5; MV 12; hp 58; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon, spell, or magical item; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 13, Wis 17, Cha 15; AL CE; THAC0 14; XP 10,000.

As greater segarran: Int Highly (13); AL CE; AC -2; MV 4, Sw 12; hp 58; THAC0 14; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg: by weapon +6 or 3d6/2d10; SA: retains use of spells and magical items; MR 20%; SZ H (30' long),  
Spells: *command*, *cure light wounds* (×4), *detect magic*, *entangle* (×2); *aid* (×2), *barkskin*, *charm person or mammal*, *silence 15' radius*, *wyvern watch*; *bestow curse*, *call lightning*, *cause disease*, *dispel magic* (×2), *protection from fire*; *create jungle minions* (×2), *protection from good 10' radius*, *rending* (×2); *jungle avatar*.

Magical items: *leather armor +2*, *staff of withering* (21 ch.), *cloak of the bat*, *potions of invisibility* and *plant control*,

Honor Guard (20) hmF/a/2: AC 7; MV 12; hp 14 each; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; AL CE, XP 120.  
Leather armor, shield, short bow, and scimitar.





As lesser segarrans (8): Int Average (10); AL CE; AC 1; MV 9; HD 5+5; hp 30 each; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg: by weapon +2 or 2d8 (bite); SA: fight and save as 5th-level warriors; MR: 10%; SZ M (6' tall); XP 1,400.

Mobats (4): Int Low (6); AL NE; AC 2 (7); MV 3, Fl 15 (C); HD 6; hp 26, 28, 34, 43; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg: 2d4; SA: screech (20' radius, save vs. paralysis each round or unable to fight); SZ H (15' wingspan); ML 11; XP 975.

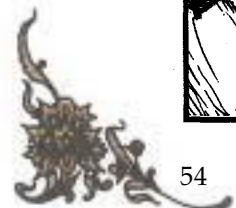
Prince Nari ibn Aman (hmF/a/10): AC -2; MV 12; hp 74; #AT 5/2; Dmg by weapon (scimitar: 1d8+3); SA specialized with scimitar; Str 17 (+2, +3), Dex 17, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 16; AL NE; THAC0 11, XP 5,000. Magical items: *lamellar armor* +3, *shield* +2, *giant slayer scimitar*, *longbow* +2, *handglyph of fire* (2 ch.), *potion of extra-healing* (x4).

Prince's Horsemen (20) hmF/a/3: AC 6; MV 9; hp 21 each; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; AL NE, XP 175. Studded leather, shield, light lance, composite longbow, scimitar, and jambiya.

## Concluding The Adventure

Should the party escape, Awatef uses the same combat strategy as described in the previous section. Assisted by her mobats, she will track the PCs using her magical cloak if they flee. Should she be slain, the entire jungle will grow quiet as Ragarra notices her high priestess's demise. For one year, the party will be plagued by terrible storms and harsh weather, which seem to follow them around. This curse can be lifted by a priest of 11th level or higher. There are no further attempts on the PCs' lives, however, as the cult is plunged into confusion without Awatef's passionate leadership. If the party spares the priestess's life or if she escapes, Awatef will never rest until she is avenged for this latest humiliation.

Harming or otherwise antagonizing the Crown Prince of Kadarasto is a dangerous mistake. More information about the ambitious young Nari can be found in Chapters Five and Six of the Campaign Guide.





## Tisan hagg Tisan: Kismet

*We have no fate but that fate which we are given!*

—Zakharan Proverb

**T**hrust into the “modern” enlightened world, Tisan now finds herself very much alone. While she doesn’t miss the abrasive and venomous personalities of her fellow council members, when they all worked together there was little her Nine Council couldn’t accomplish. Wihda, Ithnayn, Thalath, Arba’, Khlams, Sitta, Sab’, Thimaanya. With their help, she could recapture a world that had forgotten them.

Who could stop them? That pretty child who calls himself the Grand Caliph? The thought of his ribboned legions marching into the fiery maelstrom of her Geomancy makes her laugh. Modern Zakharans are too soft, too incompetent, too feeble to withstand the ancient ways. *They don’t even remember me! ME, the greatest Geomancer who ever lived!*

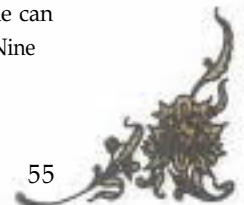
Tisan is busy now, much too busy to deal with an annoying and pitiful band of mercenaries, the only ones on the entire continent who seem poised to discover her reawakening. *So what if they know I’m alive. I have an empire to rebuild. I have old friends to reawaken.*

*My counselors will be SO glad to see me again, after all this time.*

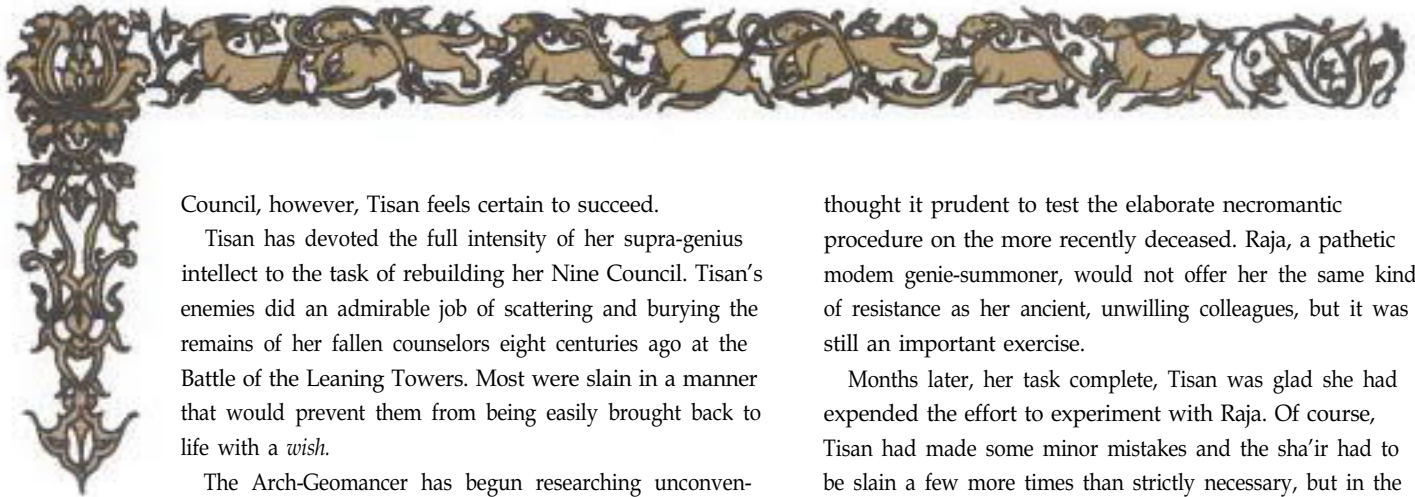
### For The DM™

**K**ismet” is the finale for powerful (9th-12th level) characters, drawing together the events begun in “Nine Falling Stars” and continued in “Secrets of the Seal.” Unless the party has completed these prequels, this adventure should only be used with a very powerful (12th-15th level) party. Chapter Two of the Campaign Guide contains additional background information on the Geomancers, should the DM care to expand the scenario.

Having regained her strength, Tisan wants nothing less than to reestablish a modern Geomancer empire. Tisan is not foolish enough to think that she can accomplish this on her own. Backed by the full power of an assembled Nine







Council, however, Tisan feels certain to succeed.

Tisan has devoted the full intensity of her supra-genius intellect to the task of rebuilding her Nine Council. Tisan's enemies did an admirable job of scattering and burying the remains of her fallen counselors eight centuries ago at the Battle of the Leaning Towers. Most were slain in a manner that would prevent them from being easily brought back to life with a *wish*.

The Arch-Geomancer has begun researching unconventional ways to recalling the long-dead. Her archives in Tadabbur are preserved remarkably well, and during the past few months she has put together an ancient and elaborate necromantic ritual, long-abandoned by the Geomancers after they discovered easier methods of prolonging their lives.

Tisan realizes her eight counselors will not rise willingly from graves eight centuries old. The Arch-Geomancer has never been shy about magical coercion, though; she *will* have her Nine Council back.

## Tisan's First Experiment

**A**t first, Raja thought she would have the upper hand in dealing with the ancient sorceress Tisan, who had seemed so weak and powerless after their first confrontation. Then, once she had seen glimpses of Tisan's power and fury, for the first time the sha'ir was truly afraid.

When Raja's invisible stalker failed to recover the magical seal Tisan had requested (during the adventure "Nine Falling Stars"), the Geomancer's dark fury threatened to eclipse the sun. The ancient sorceress seized Nadan, Raja's lone surviving adventuring companion, and brutally tortured him in front of the sha'ir's eyes. Tisan slew him and raised him several times, just to illustrate that she would not tolerate future failures. The Geomancer forced Raja to help change Nadan, twisting him into something horrid and quite insane.

Afterwards, Raja tried to flee.

Of course, Tisan prevented her.

With a carefully worded *wish*, Tisan had shattered the *geas* preventing her from harming Raja. Now Tisan spoke a word, slaying Raja's gen familiar, and ordered her fiendish servants to carry the screaming sha'ir to her workroom.

Before attempting to recall her eight counselors, Tisan

thought it prudent to test the elaborate necromantic procedure on the more recently deceased. Raja, a pathetic modern genie-summoner, would not offer her the same kind of resistance as her ancient, unwilling colleagues, but it was still an important exercise.

Months later, her task complete, Tisan was glad she had expended the effort to experiment with Raja. Of course, Tisan had made some minor mistakes and the sha'ir had to be slain a few more times than strictly necessary, but in the end Tisan still considered her research a complete success.

Tisan has now turned her attention to gathering the remains of Thalath, her only true ally in the council. Her fawning puppet while alive, Thalath will require the least amount of coercion to join her service, or so Tisan hopes.

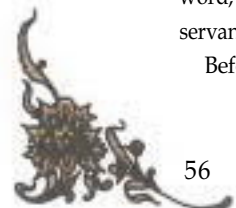
While absorbed in her current task, Tisan has directed Raja to find the bearers of the seal and destroy them. The possible outcomes of their continued existence are too risky for Tisan to tolerate. She once underestimated a barbarian priest from the savage western deserts. Never again.

## The Undead Sha'ir

**T**he game statistics for all characters described in this section appear in the 8-page booklet for convenient reference during play (see pages 4 and 5 of that booklet).

Raja al-Sadiq is now Tisan's willing slave, completely and utterly. Passing through death's door so many times has somewhat withered her sanity, but still Raja endured, much to Tisan's surprise. Raja no longer hates her mistress. In fact, she hardly remembers much of her mortal existence anymore. The past is a blur of suffering in her mind that the enslaved lich no longer cares to investigate. She will move on into the future of her painful new existence, content to obey her mistress's commands.

The sha'ir is no longer a pretty sight. Although she has been given the plain, short-sleeved robes and ornate gold jewelry that Tisan favors, they hardly conceal Raja's burned and shriveled flesh. Tisan has returned all of her slave's original magical items, so that the sha'ir may better accomplish her mission. Not surprisingly, the still-vain Raja prefers to conceal her odious appearance with illusions that make her appear young and alive. In time these feelings will fade, but for now Raja is still extremely conscious of her





appearance. Alas, the illusions cannot conceal the reek of burned and rotting flesh.

Raja's first task was to find a gen who would serve her. That was more difficult than it might at first appear, as few gen wish to associate with an undead sha'ir. Finally, after weeks of searching, her call was answered by a diabolical efreetikin named Kiorimah. Kiorimah is well suited to his new mistress, though he would hardly call her a stable or friendly employer. The ambitious gen cares only for the status and prestige that his new appointment will eventually earn him on the Elemental Plane of Fire.

With Tisan's blessing, Raja next spent weeks researching how to call a powerful, wicked genie named Ten-Fingered Hand ("the Hand" for short). A tasked slayer genie, the Hand is a ruthless killing machine, a pitiless creature who lives only for death and slaughter. With Tisan present at his summoning, the Hand was given an offer he could not refuse. He has joined Raja on her current assignment as her personal bodyguard and assassin, and he is confident his assignment will soon be over. The DM should try to evoke the same emotions associated with the Terminator movies when role-playing the following encounter with the Hand.

Finally, Raja has a cobalt-blue stoppered bottle hanging from her belt. This genie prison contains the recalcitrant marid Bababdulla, an insolent but powerful creature required to complete 101 tasks for the bearer of the bottle. While difficult to control, the genie has proved useful in a number of sticky situations, and Raja has been loath to dismiss him. Aware of the genie's animosity, Raja now only calls him from the bottle for short, easily-monitored tasks. This mercurial marid could be the party's only chance for salvation in the upcoming ambush.

Now that she has a new entourage, Raja can devote all her energy to finding the PCs. Raja will force the bearers of the seal to pay for her pain and her current undead existence.

## Raja's Nocturnal Ambush

Using the tracking abilities of the Hand, Raja starts hunting for the party, starting at the location Tisan last contacted them, at the beginning of "Secrets of the Seal." Sooner or later, Raja is going to catch up to the PCs in the wilderness, but the exact scheduling of the

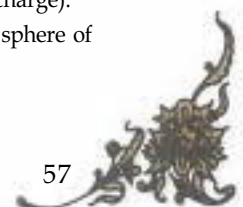
ambush is left up to the DM.

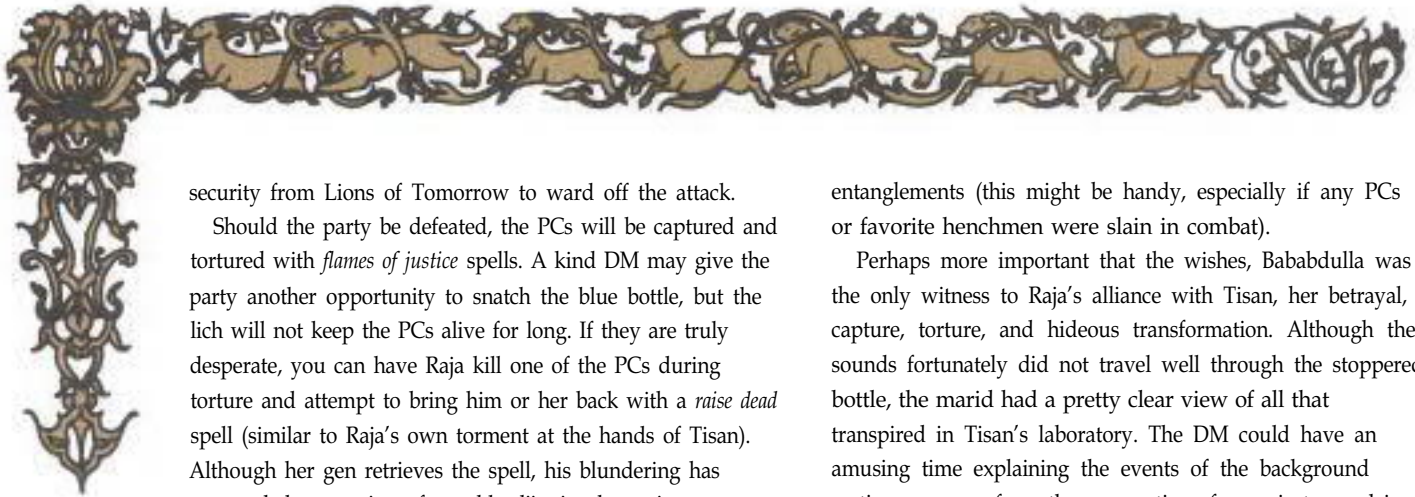
Before the nocturnal ambush, Raja casts *seeming* and *protection from normal missiles* on herself, the Hand, and Kiorimah. The lich makes herself appear human again, the Hand like a muscular ogre, and Kiorimah like a dusky gnome. Finally, Raja sends her gen for *powerword kill*, *maze*, or *reverse gravity* (in order of preference, depending upon her gen's success). Raja proceeds with the attack once the offensive spell arrives; during the combat, the lich remains on her magical carpet, safely above any melee. Right before the attack, the Hand cloaks himself in *imposed invisibility* (lasting a total of 12 rounds). The assault comes at night, and without warning; the party makes its surprise check with a -4 penalty. Note that Bababdulla is kept in his bottle unless things get desperate for the sha'ir.

During the surprise round, the Hand casts *silence*, 15' radius to muffle the targets of Raja's readied spell. After it has been cast, the Hand attacks prominent party members, while the lich sends Kiorimah for slow and blasts the party with her staff; Raja will send for *hold person* spells after the *slow* arrives. The Hand does not deal death blows to defeated PCs (Raja wants some of the party members taken alive for entertainment after the battle). The Hand has fanatical morale and will fight until slain.

Though this is a nasty encounter, probably with a high body count, try hard to have only NPCs die gruesome and horrible deaths—not the PCs, if at all possible. At some point in the battle—perhaps when a despairing PC calls upon Fate—point out the cobalt-blue bottle dangling from Raja's belt. If the party can get its hands on that bottle and release the marid, the battle will probably turn in the party's favor.

Even without the bottle, the party should not be entirely defenseless against this onslaught if the PCs completed the adventure "Secrets of the Seal." Don't forget the party has a powerful ally in the battle: Breaker of the Ninth Chain. When drawn in melee, the scimitar bursts into silvery-blue flames that deliver double damage to Raja and her evil allies, since they are servants of the Arch-Geomancer. The Hand will immediately seek out and attempt to destroy the wielder of the *holy avenger*. Remember that a *scarab of protection* will protect the wearer from a *powerword, kill* (at the cost of a charge). Priests in the party may also use the quest spell sphere of





security from Lions of Tomorrow to ward off the attack.

Should the party be defeated, the PCs will be captured and tortured with *flames of justice* spells. A kind DM may give the party another opportunity to snatch the blue bottle, but the lich will not keep the PCs alive for long. If they are truly desperate, you can have Raja kill one of the PCs during torture and attempt to bring him or her back with a *raise dead* spell (similar to Raja's own torment at the hands of Tisan). Although her gen retrieves the spell, his blundering has attracted the attention of a noble djinni, who arrives to punish the sha'ir for seeking out forbidden magic. In a puff of vapor the djinni reprimands Raja and restores the tortured character's equipment and hit points before vanishing back home. That fortunate PC had better not blow it now.

## The Cobalt-Blue Bottle

From up close, it should be painfully obvious that Raja's bottle contains a genie of some kind. The genie waves at PCs vigorously during the battle from inside the bottle, hoping to attract their attention. He points at Raja's belt and makes cutting motions. He falls on his knees in the bottle and makes pathetic, supplicating gestures. If all this fails, he throws up his hands in despair at the party's lack of awareness.

Once released by the PCs, Bababdulla quickly requests to be allowed to join the battle against Raja (unless the party didn't really need his help, of course, in which case he is the ever-so-suave and humble Servant of the Bottle). The marid goes after Raja's gen when Kiorimah arrives back with a spell for his mistress. No puny fire gen is going to stand his ground against an 18'-tall angry marid. After a short spat, Kiorimah flees to another plane, leaving Raja without spell-casting power. Bababdulla quickly turns to the Hand. Enlarging to twice his size, the marid deals double damage against the Hand. During all this confusion, the party should be able to regroup and defeat Raja herself.

After the battle, the party will find Bababdulla extremely grateful for his "rescue." In exchange for his freedom, he will give the party the option of completing the rest of Raja's contract (he will continue to serve the bearer of the bottle for 81 additional minor tasks), or he will grant the party three wishes, free from all the usual dangerous

entanglements (this might be handy, especially if any PCs or favorite henchmen were slain in combat).

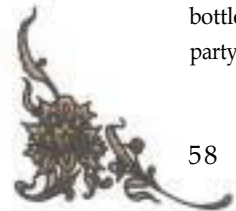
Perhaps more important that the wishes, Bababdulla was the only witness to Raja's alliance with Tisan, her betrayal, capture, torture, and hideous transformation. Although the sounds fortunately did not travel well through the stoppered bottle, the marid had a pretty clear view of all that transpired in Tisan's laboratory. The DM could have an amusing time explaining the events of the background sections, as seen from the perspective of a genie trapped in a dark-blue bottle on a laboratory shelf. While the marid has no idea about the details of Tisan's plan, he did hear the Geomancer refer to Raja's tortures as some kind of experiment. Let the party worry about the nature of Tisan's experimentation. It will become clear to them before long.

In exchange for granting one less wish, Bababdulla would be willing to guide the party to Tisan's laboratory in Tadabbur and help stamp out the Geomancer and her loathsome experiments. If no one else in the party can see any merit in striking at Tisan now that her defenses are weak and she is unprepared, either the genie or the vociferous holy avenger should point this out to the PCs. Once the party has recovered from the battle and made preparations for Tadabbur, the PCs can use Raja's magic carpet to travel there quickly (Bababdulla will gladly carry any PCs who can't fit on the carpet). Because of the genie's magical presence, the journey takes only a single day, with the party streaming over the Crowded Sea and the Salt Jungle with fantastic speed. By sundown, the party will have arrived in the jungles within sight of Tisan's last retreat.

## The Arch-Geomancer

For convenient reference during play, statistics for all the NPCs described below appear in the 8-page booklet (see page 7).

Tisan Balshareska—Ninth of Nine, Ruler of the Supreme Council, Arch-Geomancer, Sunderer of Dreams, She Who Turns the Wheel of Fate—can appear in many shapes and sizes. However, her natural form is that of a fair, heavily-muscled woman in her late thirties, with jet-black hair tied back in a single braid reaching almost to the floor. She typically wears short-sleeved robes which reveal the elaborate





golden tattoos covering her exposed hands, arms, legs, neck, and face. These geoglyphs protect Tisan with the effect of several permanent spell effects, including *lifeproof* (see statistics). The geoglyphs glow and flash with gold or red light when actively warding Tisan, but they are otherwise inert and ornamental. Tisan wears nine pieces of ornate golden jewelry (worth 5,000 gp each), several of which are potent magical items.

This powerful character was born nine centuries ago into one of the ruling families of the Geomancers. Her given name was Balshareska. Like all members of the nobility, she was trained as a priest of Grumbar in the service of the Empire. Her political adroitness and talent for intrigue eventually landed her in the Imperial College of Geomancy, where she completed her wizardly training. Within 50 years, she had maneuvered herself to the summit of imperial authority—the position of Tisan, Ruler of the Supreme Council—through a combination of intimidation, coercion, and treachery. Tisan carefully concealed her true name after reaching the Supreme Council.

Tisan's tragic flaw was underestimating the western barbarians, who invaded the eastern jungles proclaiming a new "enlightenment" in their alien religion. The most powerful of these barbarian priests, Imam Suhail min Zann, somehow managed to visit defeat after defeat on the Geomancers. Try as she might, Tisan could not harm Suhail; she settled for corrupting his younger brother Ashtarek, a paladin naive enough to believe she might be persuaded into changing her "evil" ways. Ashtarek was wrong. She slew him outside the gates of Tadabbur with a *powerword, kill* so he could not be resurrected by his brother. Although she tried to capture his *holy avenger*, it eluded her grasp as she was driven into the bowels of her stronghold and eventually imprisoned in her laboratory by Suhail's talisman.

Malakir was bound to Tisan's service many centuries ago to act as her chief lieutenant and "familiar." He appears in the short-sleeved robes common to the ancient Geomancer empire. This is only a carefully crafted *permanent illusion*, however, placed upon the greater baatezu by Tisan so he could make public appearances without inciting riots. His true form (a towering winged humanoid with massive horns and a diabolical sneer) is enough to strike fear in the hearts of the most battle-hardened of mercenaries. In battle, he

wields a *great scimitar of sharpness*.

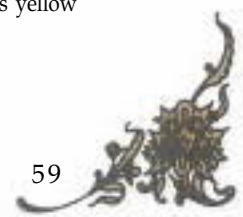
Trapped by Suhail in stasis with Tisan, Malakir has served his mistress for an uncommonly long term. Having recently learned of her plan to restore her Nine Council, the baatezu could hardly contain his excitement. He longs for the return of the ancient ways as much as Tisan. Possessing a wry sense of humor, uncommon among denizens of the Lower Planes, the cornugon talks with a sarcastic, almost condescending tone to mortals and delights in his ability to fool their perceptions with his disguise.

Tisan has but one pet, a large earth elemental named Keskeg. Big, stupid, and unconditionally affectionate, it is the only creature the Geomancer treats with any semblance of kindness. Keskeg is never far from his mistress's side in Tadabbur. After a few painful lessons, he quickly learned to sit quietly in a corner while Tisan works on her experiments.

## Tadabbur's Outer Defenses

Perched strategically on a ridge above the confluence of two rivers, Tadabbur's upper fortress is now only a featureless heap of rubble devoured by the jungle. The main entrance to the stronghold's underground halls and vaults was carefully excavated by Raja's expedition, and her mercenary company overcame countless traps and magical guardians, left behind by Suhail in an effort to discourage others from releasing Tisan. Unfortunately, these traps only served to convince Raja and her comrades that such heavy protection must shield some truly peerless treasure.

The DM can show players the front of **Card 5** after their characters have completed a reconnaissance of Tadabbur. The upper ruins appear to be guarded by a dozen jungle natives, wearing elaborate feathered headdresses and wielding flint spears (initially positioned at areas marked N on the map). This powerful illusion is meant to draw overconfident adversaries in close combat with the "natives," who are in reality a dozen fiends, *gated* in by Tisan from the Lower Planes. These twelve barbazu, armed with infernal *glaiives of wounding*, are charged with defending the upper stronghold. What these lesser baatezu lack in intelligence, they more than make up for in ferocity and cruelty in combat. When slain, the fiends evaporate into a cloud of sulfurous yellow smoke, leaving not even their weapons behind.



Currently, the only entrance to the dungeons beneath Tadabbur is a massive iron trapdoor built in the shelter of overgrown piles of rubble, earth, and debris. One of the vine-choked piles of earth is a resting earth monolith, summoned by Tisan (using her handglyph) to guard the trap door. An invisible magic circle prevents the monolith from moving more than 50' feet from the trap door; it cannot enter the dungeons. The monolith will not harm Tisan or any of Tadabbur's fiendish guardians.

Although the trap door is neither locked nor trapped, Tisan has erected an invisible *symbol of death* on the steps immediately beneath it, which discharges as the first person enters the dungeons. Note that a *scarab of protection* will ward against this trap. The barbazu know of the symbol's existence; when entering the dungeon, they merely *teleport* a short distance across the hazard.

While it might be possible to evade the dull-witted barbazu using simple tactics (like casting *invisibility* on the entire party), getting around the earth monolith is another matter entirely. As soon as the door is touched, the 30' tall elemental guardian rises from the pile of rubble, flailing about at intruders. The fiends will not hesitate to pursue the party into the dungeon. They will not warn Malakir telepathically of the PCs' incursion, fearing his wrath. The party is best advised to deal with the fiends now, for as soon as the PCs arrive at Tisan's doorstep, Malakir will call them from the surface if any survive.

## Beneath Tadabbur

The halls and vaults of Tadabbur are sparsely furnished chambers, decorated only by monolithic pillars and huge iron doors. The lower reaches of Tadabbur are sheathed in *khilms*, geoglyphs of deception. All attempts at divination on Tadabbur from without fail automatically. The geoglyphs also block all attempts at teleportation or dimensional travel into the dungeons. However, once PCs have entered Tadabbur's dungeons, divination and transport spells succeed, but only if their target or destination is within 10' per level of the caster. In all other cases the spell fails and is ruined, though the caster is not otherwise harmed.

The party has two possible guides to Tisan's laboratory:





both Bababdulla and Breaker of the Ninth Chain have traveled there in the past. Breaker was carried there by Imam Suhail, eight centuries ago, to help imprison Tisan (the *holy avenger* claims to have a flawless memory). The genie was there much more recently, but his perceptions were clouded by being imprisoned in a dark-blue bottle hanging from Raja's belt. Both personalities have strong opinions about the RIGHT way to the lab, making for an amusing role-playing opportunity in an otherwise doom-ridden scenario. If the party listens to Bababdulla, it takes them one hour longer to reach the lab than if they listen to the *holy avenger*.

As the party navigates through the seemingly endless maze of dark, dreary halls, the *holy avenger* recounts Imam Suhail's bloody last battle with Tisan. Try to build an atmosphere of impending doom with its accounts of Tisan's terrifying magic. Before the final confrontation, Breaker of the Ninth Chain has a few sobering words of advice for its wielder (read aloud or paraphrase the following):

Ashtarek, your brother's careful planning has prepared you well for this second battle. I failed you in the past, and for that I ask your forgiveness. Fate has granted us a new chance to destroy the hateful Tisan, and we must seize the moment and prevail. When you confront Tisan in her lair, touch me to *Lions of Tomorrow*. Only then can the ninth chain be broken.

The DM is free to spring all kinds of incidental encounters on the party during their descent to the laboratory, using the geoglyph descriptions in the Campaign Guide for inspiration. The truly nasty geoglyphs were removed long ago by Imam Suhail; Tisan has decided to wait until the restoration of her Nine Council to properly restore them.

## Tisan's Last Retreat

A map of Tisan's workroom appears on the front of **Card 6**, which also designates the positions of Tisan, Malakir, and Keskeg when the PCs first arrive. The chamber is entered through a *wizard-locked* iron door, and all traces of the talisman which Suhail used to seal Tisan inside have been carefully removed. Part of the door has

been altered by a variant of the *glasse* spell, which makes it appear semi-transparent when viewed from inside the workroom.

Although the party may not have time to explore this area until after Tisan has been defeated, a brief outline of this complex chamber's key features is provided, since some of them may have an impact on the outcome of the final battle.

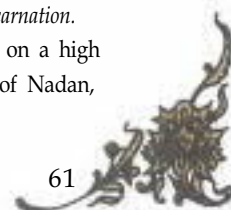
Inscribed on one of the obsidian tables on the lower level **(a)** are the details of how to turn another powerful spell-caster into a lich and bind him or her into the caster's service. The rite requires the most powerful priest and wizard spells to complete. If any of the PCs seem curious, the *holy avenger* will insist that the table be destroyed. PCs who participate in its destruction should share a story award of 50,000 XP.

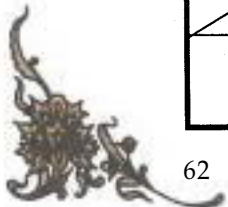
A second worktable **(b)**, also made of solid obsidian, is currently covered with the ancient remains of Thalath, a Geomancer over 800 years dead. Other tables are covered with alchemical equipment, vials containing repulsive spell components, and uncompleted research on new spells (DM's choice). Dark clouds of bitter incense fill the room from the two braziers.

The bookcases on the lower level **(c)** are filled with the completed research and recipes for potions of *ESP*, *flying*, *gaseous form*, *longevity*, *speed*, *sweet water*, *treasure finding*, and *undead control*, and any other elixirs or magical items the DM may care to place in the hands of the PCs. A wizard of 9th level or higher, searching among the components on the tables, can find enough material to make 1-4 of the listed potions at a 50% reduction in cost and labor.

The upper balconies of the laboratory are lined with bookshelves **(d)** filled with tomes needed to research up to 9th-level wizard spells and 7th-level priest spells. Tisan's nine spellbooks are kept here; they contain whatever new and unusual spells the DM may care to introduce into the campaign. Each is protected by an invisible *glyph of warding*, however, which explodes for 30 hp of electrical or fire damage (save for half damage). Interspersed among the other tomes, the PCs may discover a *scroll of protection from magic*, a *tome of leadership and influence*, a 20th-level wizard scroll inscribed with *gate*, and a 15th-level clerical scroll with the spells *resurrection*, *restoration*, *regeneration*, and *reincarnation*.

A large ceramic jar filled with aromatic oils sits on a high shelf **(e)**; it contains the perfectly preserved head of Nadan,







Raja's only surviving accomplice. The head is still alive, enchanted by Tisan with foul necromancy. The head will answer one question a day, as per a *contact other plane* spell, with the accuracy of a 20th-level wizard. This technique was developed by the Geomancers to gain the spell's powerful divinatorial powers without the danger of personally going insane (the head is the unfortunate surrogate). It was through questioning Nadan's head that Tisan learned how to locate Thalath's remains. If pulled out of the oil, Nadan will implore the PCs to put him out of his misery. PCs participating in the destruction of the head (simply setting fire to the oil will do) will gain another 50,000 XP award.

One corner of the balcony has been expanded into a shrine to Grumbar (f). The black opal statuette (worth 25,000 gp) is carved in the shape of an amorphous humanoid creature. Its ruby eyes seem to follow the PCs around the room, glinting with malevolence. Beside the sinister statue rests a *book of vile darkness*, titled Pit of Despair.

Another corner of the balcony (g) has been expanded into a last-ditch defense by Tisan, who has set up a permanent *prismatic sphere* at this location. Inside this safe haven, Tisan keeps a *wizard locked chest* containing a *scarab of insanity*, a short *sword of life stealing*, a *dagger of venom*, nine 10,000 gp diamonds in a velvet pouch, and nine fluid-filled vials, containing appropriately labeled *potions of flying, speed, and extra-healing* (x7).

## Breaking The Ninth Chain

The Geomancer's infernal lieutenant, Malakir, stands guard just inside the door. Unless the PCs are hidden by *invisibility*, he notices them immediately though the one-way transparent door. The fiend blasts them with lightning bolts (originating right in front of the door). Once the door is opened, he immediately creates a *wall of fire* behind himself, shielding the rest of the chamber from view and buying Tisan more time to complete a powerful spell. After one round, the slow but ever-faithful Keskeg joins Malakir by the door in an effort to keep the party from entering.

Once Malakir has been brought below 25 hp, he *teleports* to the upper balconies, keeping out of sight until he can regenerate his wounds, hampering the party with his magical abilities. He will *teleport* back into melee (behind the wielder

of the *holy avenger*) once he has sufficiently recovered. Keskeg fights the party obstinately until the bitter end.

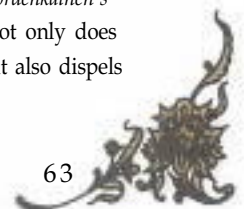
When wielded in battle in this chamber, the *holy avenger* twists and writhes with glee in its wielder's hands, inflicting double damage to Tisan and her allies. Naturally, this champion will be the focus of Tisan's and her allies' attacks.

Tisan stands next to an obsidian table, where she has assembled the vestiges of Thalath after months of research and searching. The fragmented, skeletal remains are faintly glowing with sickly mauve light, as Tisan has already completed the initial stages of recalling his spirit from the Lower Planes. All that remains is for Tisan to cast *gate*, and the party will have to face two Geomancers instead of one! Depending upon the PCs' timing, Tisan needs 2-8 rounds to finish her spell. If the party can fight past Malakir and Keskeg, it can disrupt the spell with any physical or magical attack that inflicts at least one point of damage. Otherwise, the party might opt to take Breaker's advice, and touch the *holy avenger* to the magical tome *Lions of Tomorrow*. When this occurs, read aloud or paraphrase the following to the PCs:

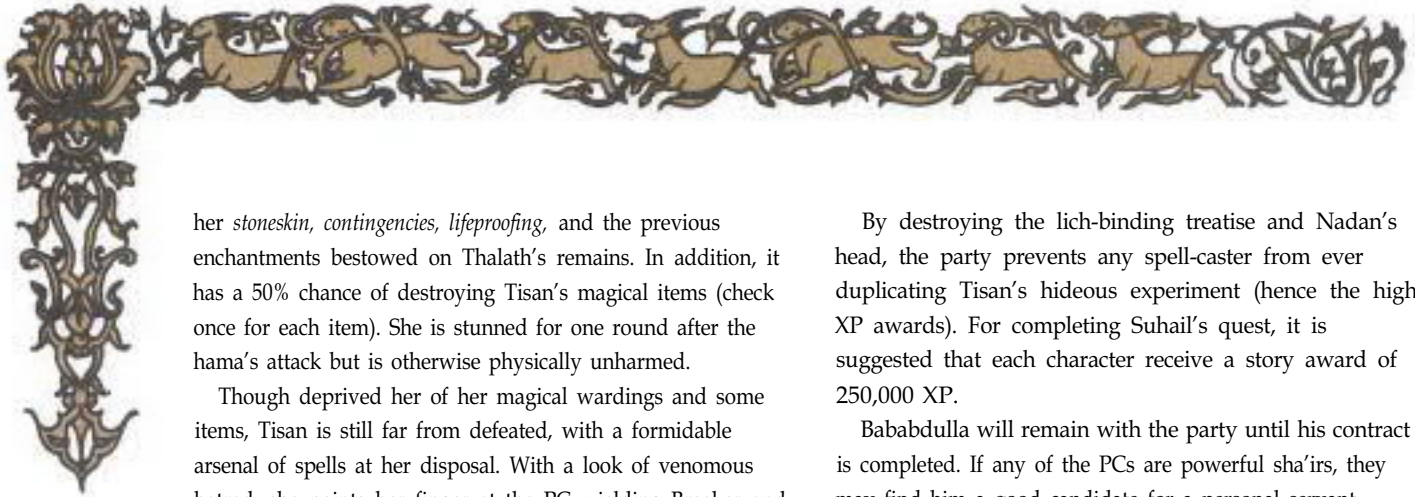
Your adversaries stop for a moment in fear and awe as the tome is consumed in an explosion of flame, which takes on the manifestation of a fiery hama, a winged creature of the spirit. As it rushes to Tisan, the hama speaks with Suhail's loud, clear voice: "BALSHARESKA, WE MEET AGAIN!"

Upon hearing her true name, Tisan loses concentration and her spell is ruined. In her mind's eye, she sees her ancient foe, Imam Suhail. Enraged, she turns to face him, and Suhail's spirit wraps her in his fiery radiance. Tisan's geoglyph tattoos writhe and flash, trying to repel the hama's fire, forming nine golden cords surrounding her, but one by one the nine magical chains dissolve into fire. When the last one is consumed, Tisan screams in pain as the fire touches her body. "BEHOLD, THE NINTH CHAIN IS BROKEN." And then the hama is gone, leaving Tisan's magical defenses shattered.

The hama's fiery embrace has the effect of *Mordenkainen's disjunction*, cast at the 20th level of experience; not only does it wipe away Tisan's permanent protections, but it also dispels







her *stoneskin*, *contingencies*, *lifeproofing*, and the previous enchantments bestowed on Thalath's remains. In addition, it has a 50% chance of destroying Tisan's magical items (check once for each item). She is stunned for one round after the hama's attack but is otherwise physically unharmed.

Though deprived her of her magical wardings and some items, Tisan is still far from defeated, with a formidable arsenal of spells at her disposal. With a look of venomous hatred, she points her finger at the PC wielding Breaker and speaks a *powerword, kill* (history repeating itself; the PC had better be a paladin or wearing a *scarab of protection*).

She next retreats to the *prismatic sphere* in **area g** (using a *teleport* or *dimension door* if necessary), which is too far from the hama's embrace to be dispelled. There she can rearm herself from her cache of deadly magical items and heal any damage inflicted by the party. Far too enraged to retreat any further, Tisan then directs her remaining lethal spells (starting with *Dalzim's horrid wilting*) at the party until the PCs are all destroyed or she is slain; she will only attempt flight if defeat is certain.

## Concluding The Adventure

**B**ecause of the hama's embrace, when Tisan is slain, she remains dead. Her spirit's connection with its *lifeproofing* receptacle in another location of the dungeons has been broken. Upon Tisan's death, Malakir smiles in triumph, and returns home to greet his newly arrived former mistress. Her other fiendish allies, liberated from their service, disperse at once into the jungle, where they can, and will, seek to spread as much evil as possible.

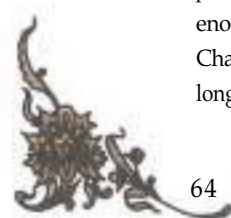
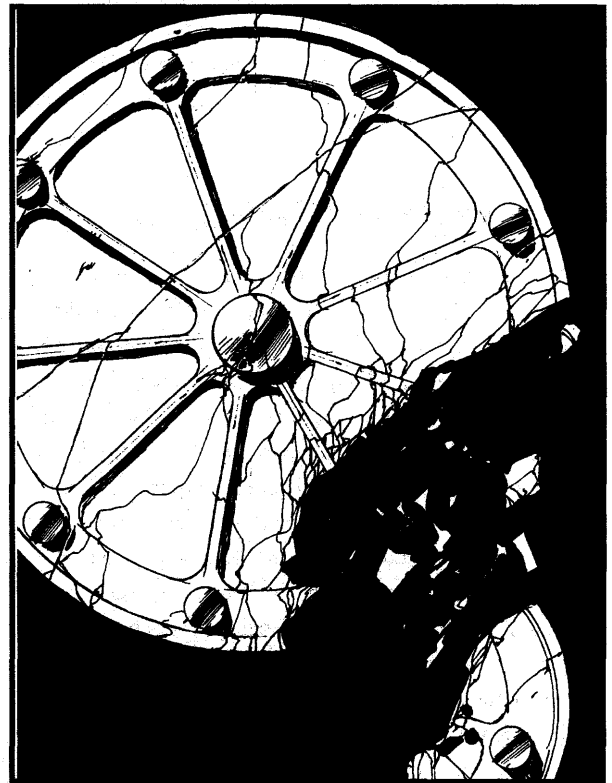
Finally, there is always the possibility that Tisan finishes summoning Thalath before the party interrupts her. If so, the spell-less lich attempts to sneak out of Tadabbur while Tisan and the party are distracting each other. The party might search the lab after the battle, only to discover the table with his remains is mysteriously empty. Thalath will attempt to regain his former power as a 13th-level priest/18th-level wizard. Once the lich has gathered enough allies, he may try to steal Breaker of the Ninth Chain. He will certainly not attempt to harm the PCs so long as the *holy avenger* remains in their possession!

By destroying the lich-binding treatise and Nadan's head, the party prevents any spell-caster from ever duplicating Tisan's hideous experiment (hence the high XP awards). For completing Suhail's quest, it is suggested that each character receive a story award of 250,000 XP.

Bababdulla will remain with the party until his contract is completed. If any of the PCs are powerful sha'irs, they may find him a good candidate for a personal servant.

As for Breaker of the Ninth Chain, the *holy avenger* loses its customary tense, urgent tone once its mission is completed; it becomes much more mellow and tolerant of other party members. Depending upon whether Thalath survives, its special purpose might not be complete.

With the completion of their kismet, or destiny, the PCs are now free to pursue their own agenda. Perhaps a pilgrimage to Huzuz is in order, to thank the Loregiver for their survival and have Ragarra's curse removed. Wherever their future lies, Fate is certain to bring them more adventures. Though one kismet has been fulfilled, another awaits, for we have no fate but that fate which we are given!



Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®  
3rd Edition

# Al-Qadim

RUINED KINGDOMS

CAMPAIGN

CAMPAIGN  
GUIDE



# Ruined Kingdoms

## Campaign Guide

### Credits

Written by Steve Kurtz  
Edited by Richard Pike-Brown with John D. Rateliff  
Typeset by Nancy J. Kerkstra  
Interior Art by Karl Waller  
Cover Art by Fred Fields  
Cartography by David C. Sutherland III

Playtesting and Review by "The Next Generation"  
(Karen Kurtz, Tamiko Toland, Marketa  
Aschenbrenner, Peter Schmidt, Jesse Sands,  
Manish Kothari, Mark Barrerra)  
and Wolfgang Baur

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Lake Geneva  
WI 53147  
U.S.A.



TSR Ltd.  
120 Church End  
Cherry Hinton  
Cambridge CB1 3LB  
United Kingdom

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# Introduction

Greetings, worthy Dungeon Master, and welcome to Ruined Kingdoms. Fate has brought you to the lush tropical jungles of Zakhara, and you have obtained this colored coffer to guide you on your journey through the treasure-laden ruins of forgotten empires. Inside this wondrous box you will find a booklet of adventures—nine plots of prophesy, intrigue, and wonder with which to challenge and entertain the players under your care. You will find six cards and a large colored mapsheet, each inscribed with carefully drawn maps. You will also discover a booklet detailing the new monsters and characters your players will encounter during their travels. This Campaign Guide, which lies open before you, contains all of the background information you will need to successfully run these adventures in the official Land of Fate setting. Feel free to adapt any of this to suit the needs of your own campaign in the Burning World. May the Loregiver cause the tides to hasten you on your journey, and may Fortune smile upon your path for all the days of your life!

## How To Use This Product

*Ruined Kingdoms* is an anthology of nine adventures, set primarily in the eastern wilderness of Zakhara. The plots for these scenarios appear in the 64-page Adventure Book. Although each adventure can be run independently, they will offer greater depth and interest to the players if run consecutively. The first adventure, “Nine Falling Stars,” introduces the party to an ancient and powerful enemy, the Arch-Geomancer called Tisan, recently released from her magical prison by a band of bounty hunters in the Ruined Kingdoms. The player characters (PCs) soon learn that they are participants in an ancient feud that was never decisively concluded. The second adventure provides the Dungeon Master (DM) with a fast way to transport the party to the Ruined Kingdoms. The next five adventures, which can be played in any order, take place entirely in the cities, jungles, and ruins of eastern Zakhara. The eighth adventure, “Retribution,” tidies up some unfinished business from an earlier adventure.



During the ninth and final adventure, “Kismet,” the party fulfills its fate and confronts Tisan in a magically fortified stronghold, hidden in the distant depths of the jungle.

## Maps, Cards, and Fact sheets

All the maps you will need for the adventures appear on the large colored mapsheet and the six page-sized cards.

The mapsheet exhibits a colored map of the Ruined Kingdoms, the general setting for most of the adventures in the boxed set.

The numbered cards have all the other maps you will need to run the adventures, including a city map of Dihliz, a major city of the Ruined Kingdoms and the starting point for many of the adventures. As a rule, the full-color card fronts are meant to be shown to the players, while the backs are for your eyes only. Note that those adventures requiring more than one map have drawings on more than one card.

The 8-page booklet contains game statistics for new monsters and important nonplayer characters (NPCs) encountered during the adventures “Birthright” and “Kismet.” Rather than embedding these statistics in the text, they have been extracted for quick reference during play. Artwork portraying NPCs should be shown to the players to help you bring the NPCs to life. Don’t hesitate to use artwork from the Adventure Book and Campaign Guide as visual aids as well.

## The Campaign Guide

Every good adventure, like every good play, has to have an interesting plot and an exotic setting; it also needs memorable characters and flashy props. This is what this book is all about.

In Chapter One, you will find a general overview of the region’s ancient history and forgotten religions, and a description of a few wilderness highlights. Chapter Two describes the ancient Geomancers, who once ruled the river valleys of the continent using a frightening combination of wizardly and priestly magic. This nemesis will be featured in “Nine Falling Stars,” “Secrets of the Seal,” and “Kismet.” Another future enemy for the party,

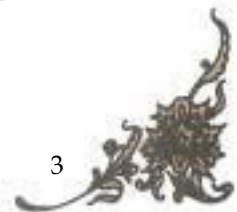
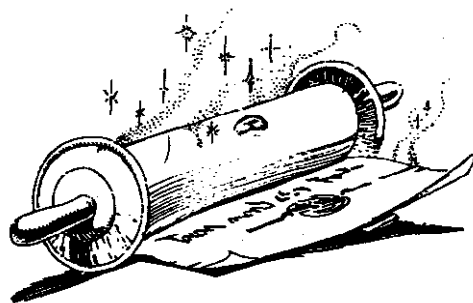
the cult of Ragarra, is described in Chapter Three. The modern worshippers of this ancient and vengeful deity appear in the adventures “Talisman” and “Retribution.” Chapter Four details the party’s most probable base of operations, the exciting city of Dihliz. Since the party may visit the other cities of the Ruined Kingdoms during the course of the adventures, Kadarasto, Rog’osto, and Medina al-Afyal are described in Chapter Five. Chapter Six provides the DM with a number of adventure hooks tailored for each of the four major cities. Finally, what would a trip to the Ruined Kingdoms be without ancient and dangerous magical items? Chapter Seven shows how to cast old magical items from the *DUNGEON MASTER™* Guide in a new light and describes all of the new magical items introduced during the adventures.

## What You Will Need

**R**uined Kingdoms assumes that the DM has access to the Second Edition *Player’s Handbook (PH)*, *DUNGEON MASTER™* Guide (*DMG*), the *Monstrous Manual*, the AL-QADIM® appendix to the *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM®* (MC 13), and the *Arabian Adventures* rulebook.

The *Land of Fate* boxed set is recommended, though it is not required to run any of the nine adventures. All relevant material from *Land of Fate* has been included in the Campaign Guide for the DM’s convenience.

Finally, this work makes use of some spells and items found in the *Tome of Magic (TOM)*. If the DM does not have access to that resource, he or she should feel free to substitute something else.





## Chapter One

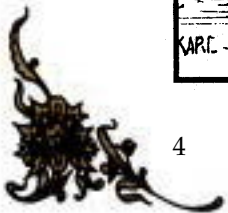
# The Ruined Kingdoms

The humid tropical lands of eastern Zakhara have been sheathed in mystery and superstition since they were first discovered by the enlightened west many centuries ago. Today, the eastern jungles are known by most Zakharans as the Ruined Kingdoms, for the rain forests conceal hundreds of crumbling buildings, temples, and fortifications.

Travel to the Ruined Kingdoms should appeal to all kinds of adventurers. Treasure hunters from all across the Land of Fate flock to Dihliz, Kadarasto, Rog'osto, and Medina al-Afyal—cities literally on the edge of Zakharan civilization—hoping to win their fortunes in the vast primeval wilderness scattered with the riches of former, more glorious empires. Some are called to explore the unknown; others desire to establish their own footholds in the frontier. Finally, some seek to unearth secrets and powerful artifacts of the past, hidden from modern eyes by the forbidding jungle and its undying guardians.

Although foreigners make up an important part of eastern society, they are but a small—albeit privileged—segment of the total population. Most of Zakhara's current inhabitants are recently enlightened natives, descended from the small scattered tribes that once dominated the jungles. Having been accustomed to civilization by past empires, these people are distinguished by their tall, muscular build, their fast and fluid gait, and their superstitious nature. Though some are friendly, they are in general a proud, xenophobic race, supposedly descended from the giants who once ruled the jungles, long before the rise of the first human kingdoms. Dwelling in deplorable poverty when compared with the enlightened travelers from the west, they have developed a rich cultural tradition of ancient songs, stories, and legends about the ancient times, which sometimes give insight into their mysterious heritage.

While Midani is the official language of city governments and trade, in the streets and bazaars of the mainland one still hears the ancient language of Noga, with its strange, alien cadences. The far more ancient tongue of Kadari, which once proliferated in the past empires of the lower Nogaro River valley, is almost lost today.





## Nog and Kadar

Practically everywhere one looks in the modern cities or jungle, one can see icons and ruins from the past. The Ruined Kingdoms of Nog and Kadar left behind writings, inscriptions, and magical artifacts which long outlived their doomed civilizations. Without a knowledge of the cultural context in which they were created, this historical legacy is often fragmented and meaningless. Most sages are sure that more than two ancient civilizations evolved along the Nogaro, a wide, crocodile-infested river twisting hundreds of miles through the jungle wilderness. Given the mainland's two prominent ancient languages, some think that Nog and Kadar were the only civilizations of note in the region. However, historians have found evidence of at least four other cultural traditions along the Nogaro River valley, starting with the giants before the arrival of humans. Since none of these other cultures developed a strong written tradition, however, the truth about them may never be known.

The history of Nog and Kadar is convoluted and confusing, as the two empires seem to have gone through several ruling dynasties, some of which may (or may not) have ruled different regions along the Nogaro at the same time. Kadar is by far the older of the two empires, founded over a thousand years ago by the despotic Geomancers, a race of terrible sorcerer-priests who at one time held sway throughout the entire river valley. The Geomancers were toppled by pioneering missionaries of the enlightenment and replaced by a dynasty of corrupt warrior-kings, or khedives, who seized power in the wake of the western explorers' departure. The Geomancers and their legacy are at the core of the adventures in this boxed set and so are further discussed in Chapter Two.

At the same time (or perhaps after) these warrior dynasties seized control of the lower Nogaro, a number of religions expanded and flourished in the upper river valley. Based upon a reverence and fear of nature, some of these religions developed into theocracies, unified by the common language called Noga. Most of these religions have faded into oblivion, leaving behind only strange artifacts and dangerous living idols that still crave to be worshipped.

## Forgotten Gods

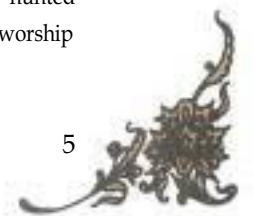
The fall of the ancient empires was caused by religion. The wicked khedives of Nog and Kadar vehemently resisted enlightenment, believing in the strength of their own savage gods. Some would have you believe that the enlightened deities created genies to punish the Ruined Kingdoms' sacrilege; a more plausible explanation for the empires' decay is a steady decline due to corruption, greed, and exclusion from the prospering, enlightened west.

Today, only the religions of Shajar, Ragarra, and Kiga have survived the difficult translation to modern times. Now fragmented into a number of small cults, these faiths no longer enjoy the political influence they had previously. The re-attainment of temporal power, or at least the right to worship in public, remains their followers' long-term goal.

The Nogaro River has been worshipped by natives of the mainland for centuries, manifesting itself in the male god Shajar, a hippopotamus-headed deity embracing life and death, growth and decay. Just as the river provided nourishing food, it also brought death each year when it flooded during the summer monsoons. The river brought transportation and commerce, but its waters could wash away a city overnight. The newborn were washed in its waters during their naming ceremony; the dead were carried downstream in small rafts, ultimately entrusted to Shajar's care in the watery underworld.

Although the forces of nature have always invited reverence, Ragarra was nature's unpredictable violence incarnate, violence which must be appeased through sacrifice to be kept at bay. Shajar's passionate mate, Ragarra was depicted as a woman with bat wings and a crocodile's head and tail. The most powerful of the ancient cults, Ragarra's worship has spread clandestinely through the cities on the mainland. The cult is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three.

Kiga, goddess of the hunt and of the kill, was depicted as a mysterious, sometimes sinister, panther-headed deity. A predatory goddess, Kiga was venerated by those who hunted for necessity or for personal amusement. Today, the worship of Kiga has been perverted into ritual murder by her





(thankfully) few lycanthropic followers, based in Kadarasto.

On Afyal, civilization seems to have evolved along a different path than that taken by the empires on the mainland. Their native peoples once worshipped an elephantine god, now known only as the Lost One, leaving behind a fascinating legacy of poetry, ruined temples, and towering statues. Poems in Affa, the ancient language of Afyal, are inscribed on many of the island's ancient monuments. Among Afyal's modern inhabitants, Affa remains a forgotten and obscure tongue.

## In The Wilderness

Besides the four cities described above and a smattering of villages, eastern Zakhara is noted for its stretches of seemingly endless wilderness, strewn with the wreckage of older civilizations.

Despite its proximity to Dihliz, the **Grey Jungle** remains a dense and inhospitable rain forest, avoided by most human explorers because of the inexplicable Grey Fever, a fatal disease which often claims adventurers before they can be brought back to a city for healing. As if the disease were not bad enough, the forest is home to many carnivorous jungle giants, some of whom have developed a taste for sentient flesh. The rain forests also contain an unusually large breed of snakes, called teak serpents, which are known to feed on creatures the size of elephants. Despite these dangers, the Grey Jungle conceals a great number of treasure-laden ruins, including temples, palaces, and princely tombs. The wreckage of a forgotten, ancient city is also said to lie somewhere in its verdant embrace.

**Serpent Bay**, to the south of the Grey Jungle, is a wide, shallow basin of turquoise water, ideal for mooring a ship for the night or for weathering a storm. Were it not for the sea serpents, sahaugin, and other nameless terrors which infest the bay, it would be a popular stop for mariners.

Although Rog'osto is noted for its collection of intact metal towers, similar ruined structures can be found dotting the coastline of Sahu and Dawihi. Dubbed the **Isle of Serenity** for the slow, tranquil pace of life enjoyed by its native inhabitants, Sahu is distinguished by its lofty

sandstone cliffs, which rise to a plateau over 500 feet above sea level. Curiously, none of the ruined metal towers can be found on this forested plateau, which has ruins architecturally similar to those found on the mainland, but dating from a later Nogaron empire. One of the ruins, built on the shores of a bottomless mountain lake, is said to come alive with spirits each year with the passing of the winter solstice. Sahu is guarded by two shark-infested reefs, the Rubban's Tears to the south and the Horn of Sahu to the North.

**Dawihi Isle**, north of Sahu, is a flat veldt, strangely devoid of predatory animal life. The island's fallen towers, scattered randomly about the grassy plains, now serve as nesting grounds to hundreds of sea birds and raptors ruled by a mysterious avian queen. A few tiny fortified villages have been established on the shores of the island as way stations for merchant houses, but occasionally one is swept into the ocean by the brutal monsoons that hammer the coasts each summer.

The eastern stretches of the **Crowded Sea** are yet another wilderness awaiting exploration. Despite the steady stream of ships traveling between Dihliz, Rog'osto, and Medina al-Afyal (and the occasional barbarian vessel sailing from distant Shou Lung), the Crowded Sea remains a treacherous place. Numerous reef and island giants, presumably descendants of the Ruined Kingdoms' ancient inhabitants, dwell in the azure shallows. While many of the reef giants are friendly and welcome strangers, the piratical island giants are any mariner's greatest nightmare. Almost a quarter of all vessels crossing the sea never reach their intended destinations. Some are captured by pirates, some sunk by the treacherous reefs and whirlpools, others destroyed by malevolent giants. The rest are blown off course by violent squalls which seem to strike without warning in these waters.

The ocean depths between Rog'osto and Afyal are home to an advanced underwater civilization. These deep-dwellers, known as locathah, have a history which predates even the giants' arrival to the mainland jungles. Their stoic tradition makes them very unwelcoming to outsiders, however, so they rarely rise to the surface to associate with mariners.







## Chapter Two

# The Geomancers

*It is similarly mentioned that when a human being is placed in a barrel of sesame oil and kept in it for forty days, is fed with jigs and nuts until his or her flesh is gone and only the arteries and sutures of the skull remain, and is then taken out of the oil and exposed to the drying action of the air, he or she will answer all special and general questions regarding the future that may be asked. This is detestable sorcery.*

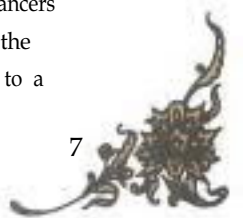
—Ibn Khaldun, from the *Muqaddimah*

No group of sorcerers has ever held as much sway over the Ruined Kingdoms as the ancient Geomancers. Through a frightening combination of wizardry and priestly magic, the Geomancers could predict the future, command towering monoliths, and cause the earth to heave in mighty earthquakes. Today they are (thankfully) gone and all but forgotten, but their geoglyphs and potent talismans live on, the last surviving legacy of their terrible power. This chapter contains source material about this wicked order, which surfaces in many of the adventures, including “Nine Fallen Stars,” “Talisman,” “Secrets of the Seal,” and “Kismet.”

### History of The Geomancers

There is little doubt that the Geomancers once held the entire Nogaro River valley in their firm control, as their geoglyphs can be found in many of the ruins on the continent. Curiously, their talismans or geoglyphs are not found on the islands of Afyal or Sahu.

The Geomancers’ ruling elite met in the Nine Council, each member taking a title according to rank and ability: Wihda, Ithnayn, Thalath, Arba’, Khlams, Sitta, Sab’, Thimaanya, and Tisan. Only one valiant group was able to stand up to the Geomancers—a young and fervent band of farisan remembered in legend as the Lions of Yesterday. Guided by Suhail min Zann, they confounded the Geomancers’ divinations and smashed the power of the Nine Council, destroying eight of the wizard-priests. During that last battle, the ninth Geomancer, Tisan, withdrew to a





secret stronghold called Tadabbur and vanished from sight, some say never to return. In Midani, the word *tadabbur* has come to mean foresight, or divination.

Now, Tisan's power was great, such that her strength equaled that of all the other Geomancers put together. After many years, the Lions discovered Tadabbur. Those who entered to confront Tisan met with a slow and horrible death, but the mighty Geomancer did not dare leave the safety of her last fortress.

Inspired by Zann, Imam Suhail enchanted a mighty talisman and used it to seal the entrance to Tisan's retreat. Calling upon Fate, the priest swore an oath that he would return from Paradise to council the Lions of Tomorrow, should Tadabbur's talisman ever be disturbed. Suhail gathered the few surviving Lions and labored the rest of his days to destroy all traces of the Geomancers' existence, breaking their talismans and burning all the records he could find of their foul sorcery to prevent others from duplicating their spells.

Ironically, Imam Suhail wrought his work so well that today the only remaining account about the Geomancers comes from his own sacred writings. Before his death, he transcribed all his knowledge about the Geomancers into a book called *Lions of Tomorrow*, so that a future generation of heroes would be forewarned of the perils they would face and how best to combat Geomancer magic, should Tisan ever return.

By slowly feeding the party lore about the Geomancers, the DM can heighten the sense of drama, wonder, and suspense in the campaign. During "Secrets of the Seal," the party will uncover the original copy of *Lions of Tomorrow*, enabling them to survive the confrontation with Tisan in the final adventure, "Kismet."

## Lions of Tomorrow

The PCs will discover the magical tome called *Lions of Tomorrow* if they successfully complete the adventure "Secrets of the Seal." As noted previously, this book is the key to destroying the last of the Geomancers in the final adventure, "Kismet."

*Lions of Tomorrow* is written in Kadari, on parchment

fashioned from seaweed dipped in iodine to foil Geomantic divination, which the author, Iman Suhail, feared might be used to predict the book's future location. The tome's cover and binding consist of thin silver tubes filled with mercury, skillfully soldered together by a master silversmith. These precautions effectively shield the book with a *cloaked wizardry* enchantment. A wish can be used to divine the book's hidden location, but even then the caster learns only the vague clue that the book lies "through the mists of ignorance." Lesser divinations about the tome fail completely.

The very first page contains an ancient and powerful summoning spell researched by Suhail. When touched by Breaker of the Ninth Chain (a *holy avenger* discovered in "Secrets of the Seal"), this spell summons the spirit of Suhail, with the effects described in the last adventure, "Kismet." Unless the book is held in the presence of the last Geomancer, Tisan, this page appears to be blank.

The book continues in Chapter One with a life history of Imam Suhail, describing his ascendancy to the priesthood and his first encounters with the Geomancers. Suhail devotes many pages to his epic battle with the Nine Council, at a stronghold called Majlis, somewhere east of the Nogaro River. Suhail describes Geomancer battle-magic in great detail, highlighting their ability to summon and direct earth monoliths in melee. After the battle, in which eight members of the Nine Council were slain, Suhail and his army razed the castle. After Suhail's victory, the castle was renamed *Yinhani Abraaja*, meaning "Leaning Towers." The imam reports having a vision and inscribing a short prophesy somewhere in the ruined castle. Suhail does not elaborate on his prophesy in the *Lions of Tomorrow*, but the PCs may discover it during the course of their adventures in "Talisman."

In Chapter Two of his tome, Suhail discusses how to make *scarabs of protection* (see the DMG). A priest of 9th level or higher, of any enlightened deity (including hakima but excluding kahin) may use Suhail's procedure, provided the priest has access to a mosque or holy site in which to pray and the right materials (a brooch carved out of a precious stone, like sapphire or ruby—at least 5,000 gp value—which has been sanctified in the Golden Mosque of Huzuz, City of Delights). Even with Suhail's completed research and the





right materials, it still takes 3+1d4 weeks to complete the task.

In Chapter Three, Suhail includes a description of the quest spell *sphere of security* (from the *Tome of Magic*), which the high priest used extensively in his battles against the Geomancers. The extent of the rite's description is left to the DM's discretion. *Lions of Tomorrow* may contain the complete spell, allowing a low-level priest to cast the spell (once) as though it were a priestly scroll or permitting a higher-level priest to request the spell from his or her deity. Otherwise, *Lions of Tomorrow* may only contain a vague reference to the spell, requiring the PCs to search for the exact rite elsewhere, now that they know the spell exists. The quest spell will only be granted to a priest of 9th level or higher when directly combating the Geomancers or their allies (such as during the adventure "Kismet"). If the DM does not wish to introduce quest spells into the campaign, or does not have access to the *Tome of Magic*, the third chapter contains instead instructions for making a *protection from magic* scroll.

Finally, Chapter Four includes a general description of geoglyphs and how each of these could be foiled by a prepared and cautious individual. In particular, Suhail mentions that the presence of salt water, or proximity to the sea, will disrupt the effects of most geoglyphs (geoglyphs are detailed later in this chapter).

## Geomancy

Geomancy is the study of the element of earth. Its practitioners, the Geomancers, sought to understand Fate through magic and thus command the entire world. What made Geomantic wizards and clerics different from common mages and clerics was their holistic philosophy, which combined the two forms of magic to make powerful runes, called geoglyphs.

### Priest Geomancers

Although many Geomancers only practiced wizardry, the society was directed by Grumbar's priests. All members of the Nine Council were dual-classed priests/wizards of incredible power, but many did not begin their instruction in wizardry until they had mastered the most powerful of priestly spells.

Geomancer priests worshipped Grumbar, Cold God of the Earth. Most were single-classed, generic priests of Grumbar (similar to the moralists outlined in *Arabian Adventures*), unless they possessed the requisite 16 Wisdom and 17 Intelligence to become dual-classed wizard-priests. In this case they received additional training. Thus, only the most intellectually gifted clerics could become specialty priests, with added powers and restrictions as outlined below:

**Special Benefits and Powers:** Because of their devotion to Grumbar, specialty priests received a +4 bonus on saving throws against sand or earth magic. They could turn and command undead. At higher levels, they gained the following additional powers:

- At 5th level, the ability to turn or command creatures native to the Elemental Plane of Earth, as if they were undead with half their usual Hit Dice (thus an 8 HD elemental could be turned as a 4 HD undead). This included such powerful creatures as elementals, monoliths, and even dao.
- At 9th level, the ability to summon and command an 8 HD earth elemental. It took but one round for the elemental to arrive, and it would obey any simple task without the priest's continual mental commands. This power could be used once/week.

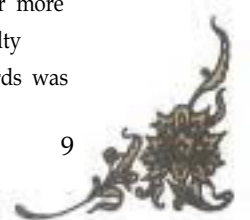
**Magical Abilities:** Grumbar's specialty priests received spells from the following nine spheres:

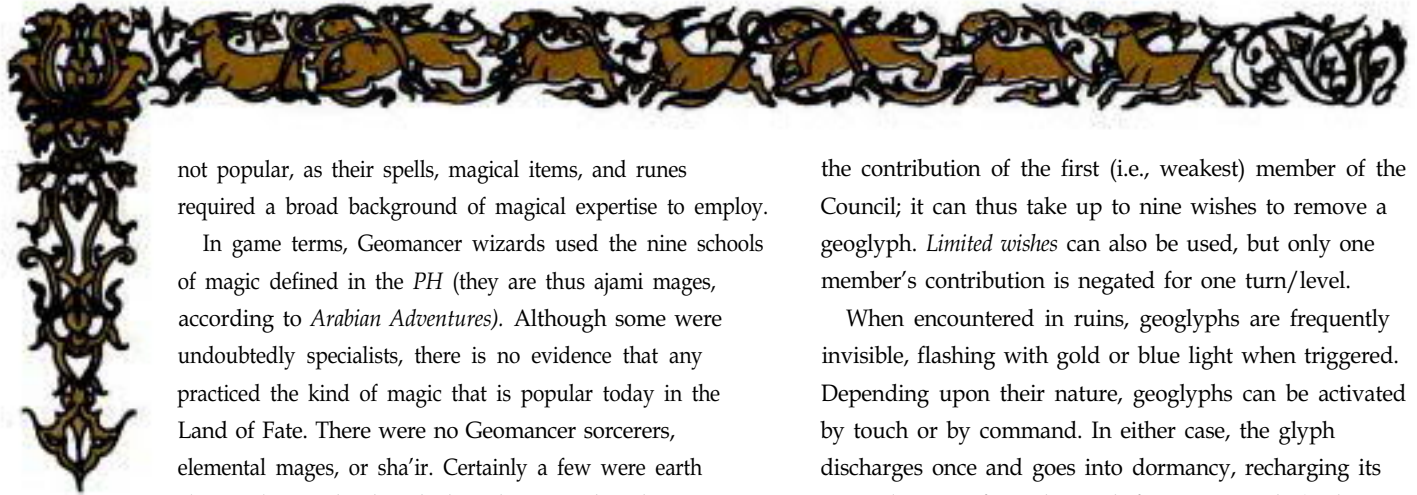
- *Major Access:* Astral, Divination, Necromantic, Summoning, Elemental (Earth).
- *Minor Access:* Healing, Guardian, Protection, and Weather.

**Restrictions and Hindrances:** Grumbar's priests were of evil alignment (preferably neutral evil). His specialty priests could not wear any kind of armor, nor could they use a shield (though they could use protective magical items). They were also restricted to wielding weapons made from unrefined metal or stone.

### Wizard Geomancers

Wizards were common in the Geomancer Empire, far more numerous than either the generalist clerics or specialty priests. Unlike the priests, specialization among wizards was





not popular, as their spells, magical items, and runes required a broad background of magical expertise to employ.

In game terms, Geomancer wizards used the nine schools of magic defined in the *PH* (they are thus ajami mages, according to *Arabian Adventures*). Although some were undoubtedly specialists, there is no evidence that any practiced the kind of magic that is popular today in the Land of Fate. There were no Geomancer sorcerers, elemental mages, or sha'ir. Certainly a few were earth elemental wizards, described in the TOM, but these were a minority.

Undoubtedly, Geomancers used many different spells from those employed by modern wizards. Today's common flame, sand, and wind spells were probably developed by the Geomancers. The sole exception is sea magic, which has its origin in the Corsair Domains. Geomancers also employed many spells that are currently rare or extinct in the Land of Fate. Feel free to invent your own exotic spells and use favorites from the TOM and the *FORGOTTEN REALMS® Adventures* hardcover.

### Emblems and Geoglyphs

The Geomancers' emblem was the *asfr*, a nine-spoked wheel with a dark central hub. The *asfr* symbolized a relationship between Fate (the outer wheel), Magic (the nine spokes of the wheel), and the world (the hub). This nonmagical symbol can be found on almost all their buildings or magical items, signifying ownership.

Nine was a sacred number to the Geomancers, who devised an elaborate system of magical runes and symbols called geoglyphs. Their symbols were organized into nine categories: *whd*, *thmn*, *thlth*, *rba'*, *klhms*, *stt*, *sb'a*, *thmn*, and *tsn*, each with a different purpose or power. While geoglyphs could theoretically be inscribed by a single individual, they were almost always made by a group of nine wizards or priests, called a Council.

Given the cooperative effort that went into creating them, geoglyphs are almost impossible to erase. For *dispel magic* to be successful, it must overcome the contribution of each member of the Council that created it. Otherwise it fails and the geoglyph remains. A *wish* only eliminates

the contribution of the first (i.e., weakest) member of the Council; it can thus take up to nine wishes to remove a geoglyph. *Limited wishes* can also be used, but only one member's contribution is negated for one turn/level.

When encountered in ruins, geoglyphs are frequently invisible, flashing with gold or blue light when triggered. Depending upon their nature, geoglyphs can be activated by touch or by command. In either case, the glyph discharges once and goes into dormancy, recharging its magical energy from the earth for nine rounds (or hours, or days—the more potent the effect, the longer the recharge time). Thus, no geoglyph can discharge more than once per turn.

### Geoglyphs by Priests

Councils of single-classed priests made the first three types of geoglyphs (*whd*, *thmn*, *thlth*) by scratching with a metal implement in earth or stone.

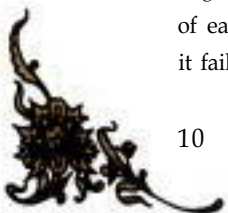
***Whd: Dream glyphs.*** These glyphs are typically found in private chambers, where they work their power on sleeping minds. They were used to obtain minor divinatory revelations and to influence the dreams of enemies.

***Thmn: Sight glyphs.*** These glyphs were inscribed on a wall, enabling it to serve as a permanent scrying device, similar to a crystal ball. More complicated configurations enabled the detection of sound and (in the most powerful) thoughts as well.

***Thlth: Sending glyphs.*** If combined with sight runes, sending runes could enable two-way communication of sight, sound, and thought. When inscribed on the walls, floor, and ceiling of a chamber, the room became a one-way gate with a fixed destination. Sending runes enabled the Geomancers to establish an extensive communication and transport network in their empire. Their operation is unhindered by deception runes (see below).

### Geoglyphs by Wizards

Single-classed Geomancer wizards made the next three types of geoglyphs (*rba'*, *klhms*, *stt*) by scratching on copper with a diamond-tipped stylus.





**Rba': Ward glyphs.** This broad family of geoglyphs includes all rune configurations meant to harm or destroy those who inadvertently activate them. They were used to protect the entrances of strongholds, secret chambers, and the treasuries of the Geomancers. See the spell symbol (both the wizard and priest versions) for samples of what these runes can do. Ward runes can be disarmed by a secret command word, muttered while touching them.

**Khlms: Deception glyphs.** These glyphs were inscribed on the surfaces of most Geomancer strongholds. In their most primitive configuration, they merely blocked divinatory magics, but in their more advanced forms they could misdirect divinations, giving a false reading to their caster. Deception runes can be modified to prevent teleportation and block dimensional travel both into and out of an area.

**Stt: Calling glyphs.** The most powerful group of wizardly geoglyphs, calling runes were used to *gate* in creatures from the Outer Planes. Few contain binding or protective clauses, leading to the conclusion that the summoned creatures were usually the Geomancers' allies or counselors. When encountered near treasure vaults, they summon deadly fiends (usually baatezu or yugoloth) charged with protecting the Geomancer's property. Such creatures are rarely amenable to negotiation.

### Geoglyphs by The Dual-Classed

Dual-classed Geomancer priest-wizards could fashion the three most powerful groups of geoglyphs (*sb'a*, *thmn*, *tsn*) by sprinkling the powder of precious stones on surfaces of gold or platinum.

**Sb'a: Time glyphs.** These potent glyphs alter the subjective flow of time for all caught within their area of effect, which is usually small (no more than a few hundred square feet). They were sometimes used to hold advancing enemies in thrall (similar to *timestop*) while preparations were made to decimate them. They could also be used to speed up the passage of time in their area of effect, aging the victims to senility before they could escape.

**Thmn: Past glyphs.** A combination of sight and time runes, this family of glyphs allowed the user to scry upon known individuals or events in Zakhara's recent or distant past (similar to the *Tome of Magic* quest spell *imago interrogation*). These runes transmit an audio-visual image of the past, automatically translating foreign languages into Kadari.

**Tsn: Future glyphs.** A much more powerful (and elaborate) combination of sight and time runes, this family of glyphs allows the user to survey the tangled skeins of Fate and understand the probable course of the future if certain events are allowed to transpire. The runes do not show what WILL be, only what MAY be, under known preconditions. The far future is thus very difficult to predict, but very specific short-term visions are quite accurate.

### Geoglyphs and The Campaign

Geoglyphs are introduced to give the DM suggestions for instilling a sense of wonder and fear into the exploration of ruins. The PCs will be much more wary if they know a *rba'* glyph might be invisibly inscribed on a tomb entrance.

At the same time, geoglyphs should not be used with such frequency that they become common and lose their aura of mystique. In particular, PCs should never learn how to make them, unless these characters are very powerful (i.e., ready for retirement anyway).

Finally, geoglyphs should not be all-powerful party-slayers. There should be a way for an intelligent, well-prepared party to evade their often deadly effects. For instance, though geoglyphs work effectively near fresh water, for some reason their intensity diminishes close to any large amount of water-based solution (such as salt water, vinegar, wine, acid, even goat's milk). In addition, iodine and mercury can diminish the power of *sb'a*, *thmn*, and *tsn* geoglyphs. These precautions, and any others the DM may care to devise, should be revealed to the PCs once they discover *Lions of Tomorrow*.





## Chapter Three

# The Cult of Ragarra

*We have also observed how people who practice sorcery point at a garment or a piece of leather and inwardly speak magic words over it, and behold! the object is torn into shreds. . . .*

—Ibn Khaldun, from the *Muqaddimah*

**A**lthough Ragarra has been long forgotten throughout much of Zakhara, she is still worshipped, or at least feared, by most prudent inhabitants of the vast, primeval jungle that envelops the Ruined Kingdoms. This chapter outlines the background and history of this cult, so the DM can expand them in the campaign, outside the context of the adventures “Talisman” and “Retribution.” (Note: Some scholars call the featured goddess Raggara.)

## CULT BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

**R**agarra is an ancient deity whose worship peaked in the centuries after the fall of the Geomancers. Depicted in temple idols as a woman with bat wings and a crocodile’s head, Ragarra—the Black Tempest, the Render, the Winged Beast—was the incarnation of the jungle and all its violent denizens. She embodied passion, chaos, and revenge. Her symbols included the cyclone or waterspout, the green three-fingered claw, and the baby crocodile biting its own tail.

The declining Empire of Kadar, recognizing the cult as subversive to imperial civilization, made public worship of Ragarra a capital offense and laid waste to her temples, littering the jungle wilderness with new ruins. After centuries of clandestine operation, the cult is once again resurfacing in the modern cities of the Ruined Kingdoms. Tiny shrines to Ragarra adorn the entrances to Dihliz’s canals, erected to protect the city’s waterways from the crocodiles that infest the Nogaro. A larger shrine has been erected in one of Rog’osto’s famous towers, but the cult’s secret base of operations lies in the ruined undercity of Kadarasto.

Today, Ragarra’s cult hopes to reestablish open worship of its deity in the Ruined Kingdoms through a combination of coercion and intimidation. The number of crocodiles in the Nogaro has swollen to record numbers, threatening





river traffic and infiltrating the vast irrigation systems and rice paddies that circle the major cities.

The superstitious natives of the Ruined Kingdoms, who demonized Ragarra in their tribal songs and legends, have taken this as a sign of her return and have quickly erected shrines to appease the goddess and prevent their loved ones from being devoured by her reptilian minions. Those who have openly opposed Ragarra have met unfortunate boating accidents involving crocodiles, further inflating the cult's mystique and reputation.

Ragarra's priestesses have started making rounds of jungle villages, demanding tribute for their deity to fund future temple construction. Demonstrating Ragarra's power, her priestesses display their legendary ability (remembered in native lore) to rend or destroy the animals, slaves, and personal property of those who do not contribute to Ragarra's cause.

Recently, as her power and worship have grown, the legendary servants of Ragarra, called segarrans, have been occasionally spotted in small bands at night. These crocodile-headed minions of the jungle goddess are described in the 8-page booklet; they are created by the new priest spells *conjure jungle minions* and *create jungle minions* (for lesser segarrans), and *jungle avatar* (for greater segarrans). The priest's ability to destroy or vandalize personal property, livestock, or slaves is also the result of a new priest spell, called *rending*. All new priest spells mentioned in this section are detailed at the end of this chapter.

## Requirements of The Priesthood

Ragarra's priesthood is dominated by specialty clerics, classified as outland priests in *Arabian Adventures*. A matriarchal society, the priesthood is made up primarily of female humans, with a minority of male humans and members of other races. The priesthood retains its focus on the jungle and nature as the source for all its power, but the necessity for attracting new followers has driven Ragarra's priests to operate almost exclusively in or near large cities. Ironically, Ragarra's priests are inherently opposed to the civilization they hope to convert. They seek to damage or

destroy the foundations of civilized rule whenever possible, damaging or defacing public architecture, disrupting trade, and hindering communication between cities. Because public opposition can be dangerous, most city governments secretly plot to eliminate Ragarra's priesthood.

**Nonweapon Proficiencies:** Since Ragarra's cult remains largely a covert organization, all priests are required to learn the art of disguise. They may also learn rogue nonweapon proficiencies without expending the extra proficiency slot.

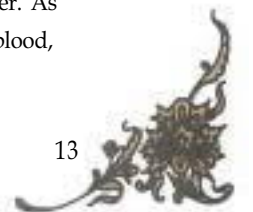
**Special Benefits and Powers:** Because of their devotion to Ragarra, her priests can *pass without truce* when in natural surroundings, starting at 1st level. Her priests can also turn and command undead. At higher levels, they gain the following additional powers:

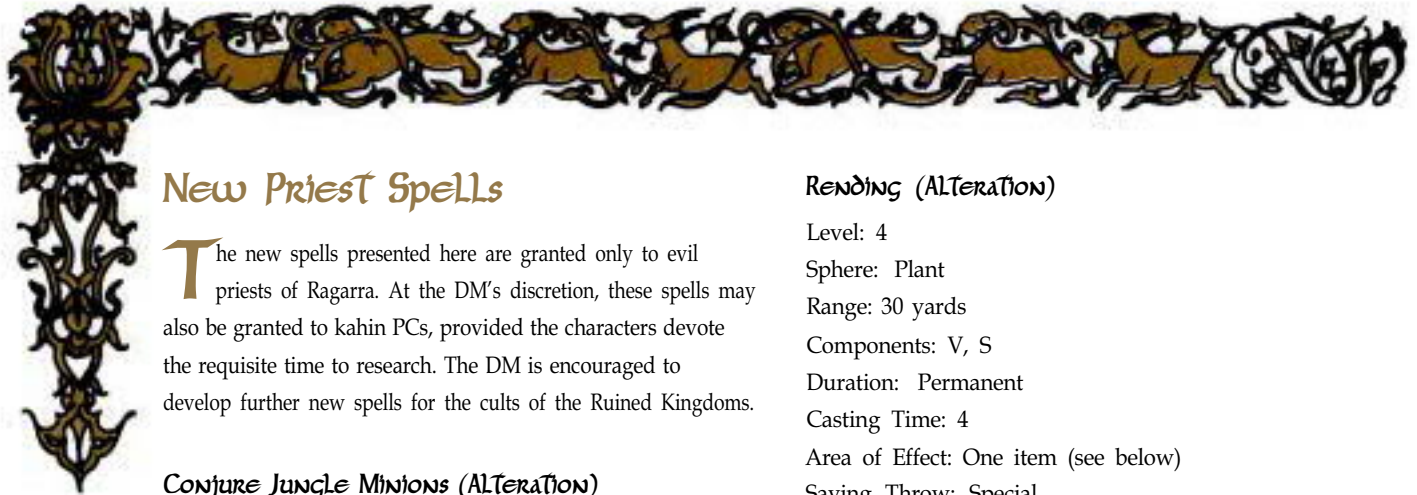
- At 3rd level, the ability to *speak with animals* in natural surroundings for up to one turn/level, once/day.
- At 5th level, the ability to summon and command common crocodiles or bats, in jungle or lightly forested terrain, once/week. One crocodile or 1-6 common bats answer the summons for every two experience levels of the priest. The creatures arrive in 2-5 rounds and remain to obey the priest's commands for a day.
- At 9th level, the ability to summon and command giant crocodiles or mobats. One giant crocodile or two mobats answer the summons for every six experience levels of the priest. Arriving in 4-7 rounds, the creatures obey the priest's commands for one hour per experience level. The power can be used once/day.

**Magical Abilities:** Ragarra's specialty priests receive spells from the following spheres:

- **Major Access:** All, Plant, Animal, Weather, and Chaos (from the *Tome of Magic*; if not available, substitute Summoning)
- **Minor Access:** Healing, Guardian, Protection, Necromantic, Elemental, and Divination.

**Restrictions and Hindrances:** Ragarra only accepts priests of evil alignment (preferably chaotic evil). Her priests are restricted to light armor (no heavier than leather, AC 8) and may use a small shield or buckler. As Ragarra makes no restrictions on the shedding of blood, her priests are not limited to blunt weapons.





## New Priest Spells

The new spells presented here are granted only to evil priests of Ragarra. At the DM's discretion, these spells may also be granted to kahin PCs, provided the characters devote the requisite time to research. The DM is encouraged to develop further new spells for the cults of the Ruined Kingdoms.

### Conjure Jungle Minions (Alteration)

Level: 4

Sphere: Animal

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M

Duration: 2 rounds/level

Casting Time: 8

Area of Effect: One minion/3 levels

Saving Throw: None

By means of this spell, the caster can change baby common crocodiles or alligators (one for every three experience levels of the priest) into a lesser segarran (see the 8-page booklet). Thus, a 9th-level priest can change three crocodiles into lesser segarrans. Lesser segarrans have an AC 1, 5+5 HD, THAC0 16, and 10% magic resistance; they attack by biting for 2d8 points of damage or by wielding any weapon provided (+2 bonus on damage from Strength bonus). Of course, the crocodiles must be at hand for this spell to function. Further, they must be touched by the priest during the casting. These minions attack as commanded by the priest for the duration of the spell (two rounds per level of experience of the caster).

Lesser segarrans are compelled by the spell to devour the flesh of enemies who fall in combat, a process taking 1-3 rounds depending upon the victim's size. During this time, the creature cannot attack or follow the caster's commands. If the conjured segarrans do not kill and devour at least one victim before the spell expires, then the caster must make a saving throw vs. spell or be affected by a *bestow curse* as a sign of Ragarra's displeasure.

The material component is fresh water, specially blessed for use in this spell. The water is poured on the crocodiles at the time of casting. This spell has no effect if cast on a giant crocodile.

### Rending (Alteration)

Level: 4

Sphere: Plant

Range: 30 yards

Components: V, S

Duration: Permanent

Casting Time: 4

Area of Effect: One item (see below)

Saving Throw: Special

This spell rends or destroys personal property, including livestock, pets, mounts, clothing, weapons, armor, jewelry, doors, chests, tapestries, and slaves (including mamluks). In short, anything that has been purchased or manufactured can be affected by this spell; it has no effect if cast on a free citizen or wild creature. Thus, a mount can be slain out from under its rider, but the same creature encountered running free in the wilderness is immune to the spell's effects. The caster can affect a single creature or item (one cubic foot per level of the caster) with this spell.

If the target is an object, the target is completely shredded, as if rended by invisible claws; if the target is a purchased creature or a slave, the being suffers 3-24 (3d8) points of damage. Magical items are allowed a saving throw vs. disintegration with a +4 bonus to resist the spell's effects; creatures of greater than animal Intelligence or more than 4 Hit Dice are entitled to a saving throw vs. death magic. In those cases, a successful saving throw negates the spell.

### Create Jungle Minions (Alteration)

Level: 5

Sphere: Animal

Range: 5 yards/level

Components: V, S, M

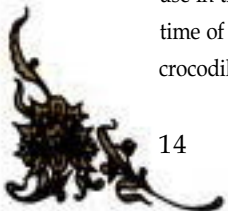
Duration: Permanent

Casting Time: 1 round

Area of Effect: One creature/3 levels

Saving Throw: Neg.

This spell permanently changes common crocodiles or alligators (one for every three experience levels of the







caster) into lesser segarrans. Unlike *conjure jungle minions*, this spell can also transform human, humanoid, or demi-human recipients into lesser segarrans. Targets of this spell need only be within sight and range of the caster. The spell's duration is permanent, unless reversed by a successful *dispel magic*. All recipients must make a successful system shock roll to survive the transformation.

If cast on an unwilling target, the victim is allowed a saving throw vs. magic to avoid the spell's effects. Anyone failing his or her save is transformed into a lesser segarran, who attacks as commanded by the priest. Willing recipients are assumed to automatically fail their saving throw.

The material components are the powdered claws of an alligator or crocodile, which are scattered in the direction of the recipients at the time of casting. In all other respects, this spell conforms to the new 4th-level priest spell *conjure jungle minions*.

### **Jungle Avatar (ALTERATION)**

Level: 6

Sphere: Animal

Range: Personal

Components: V, S, M

Duration: 1 turn/level

Casting Time: 6

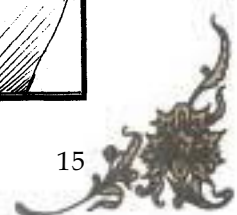
Area of Effect: Caster

Saving Throw: None

This spell transforms the caster into a towering reptilian monster, with the head and tail of a giant crocodile (a greater segarran, see the 8-page booklet for details). In his or her (usually her) new form, the priestess retains the use of her intellect, magical items, and 1st-5th level spells. She retains her customary hit points and THAC0 but gains AC -2, 20% magic resistance, great physical strength, and dangerous physical attacks. The greater segarran can strike once per round with a weapon (+6 bonus on damage from Strength bonus) or attack with a bite and tail slap for 3-18 (3d6) and 2-20 (2d10) points of damage, respectively; the tail attack can affect up to three people simultaneously.

This spell is physically demanding; the caster must make a successful system shock roll to survive the transformation. Although a greater segarran can be devastating in combat, the caster is compelled by the spell to devour fallen enemies in combat, a process taking 1-3 rounds depending upon the size of the slain foe. During this time, the priest cannot attack or cast spells. The caster can return to her normal form at will, but this also requires a system shock roll. If the caster has not slain and devoured at least one victim, the chances of surviving the transformation back to normal form are decreased by 50% as a sign of Ragarra's displeasure.

The material components are the powdered scales of a giant crocodile, mixed with a potion of sanctified water, blood, and bitter herbs. The caster imbibes the foul brew upon completing the spell.





## Chapter Four

# The Gateway City

**M**any of the scenarios in *Ruined Kingdoms* either start or take place in Dihliz. Since the DM might not have access to the *Land of Fate* boxed set, an expanded description of the city from that source is provided below. This chapter concludes with a detailed description of a few of the city's highlights.

### Dihliz, The Gateway City

**L**ocated about 50 miles up the Nogaro River, Dihliz is the only major city in the Ruined Kingdoms not built on the wreckage of an older metropolis. Dubbed the Gateway City, it is a popular debarkation point for those seeking fortune and high adventure in the Ruined Kingdoms of the continent. It also serves as a major trading center between the inland towns and the civilized world.

The Gateway City was established less than a century ago by the padishah of Afyal to regulate the flow of magical antiquities out of the Ruined Kingdoms and to provide a base for trade with the Pantheon cities. Since the city's founding, the Grand Caliph has appointed new rulers with ever-increasing frequency, whenever the level of corruption in the government becomes obvious. This trend is likely to continue in the foreseeable future, since new emirs are appointed by the Grand Caliph based upon a recommendation from the padishah of Afyal. The past two generations of rulers from that island nation have been too busy catering to Afyal's interests and profiting from their own positions to exert the force of civilization.

**The Ruler:** Until recently, Emira Hassana Alim al-Gaib (hfT/sl/18) was a merchant from Afyal. Upon the recommendation of the padishah of Afyal, she was appointed emira by the Grand Caliph for a provisional period of five years. It is now year four and Hassana is busy hiding away her riches for her inevitable retirement. The emira operates a wide-open town, the sort favored by adventurers (especially foreigners). Interpretation of the Loregiver's law is loose, and usually to the advantage of the emira and her cronies.



**The Court:** There are three public figures of note in Dihliz, all of them devoted to the emira. Amin Nur (hmF/mb/12) directs the Ministry of Secrets. The emira appointed him to his current post as a reward for years of loyalty, and because of his intellect and talent for intrigue.

Jel al-Galiz (hfW/sh/13), another trusted associate of the emira, holds the title “Minister of Riches.” Conscientious and dependable, her chief responsibility is applying a minor tax to all treasure extracted from the ruins. She realizes that most of the riches discovered in the ruins of the river valley disappear overland or are smuggled out of the city by boat. She focuses her attentions on ancient magics, striving to control (or at least regulate) their flow. In particular, she watches out for magical items created by the Geomancers. Those who comply with her ministry often receive grants to explore newly discovered ruins.

Although the emira has four husbands, only Ebu min Hassana (hmF/dr/10) is granted a position in city government. A former desert rider from the Haunted Lands, Ebu commands the cavalry forces of Dihliz. His primary duties include protecting the city and seeking out those who clandestinely rob the ruins. About three times a year, he takes a large band of riders into the jungles beyond Kadarasto for several weeks of patrolling.

**Population:** 80,000.

**Distinguishing Features:** The buildings of Dihliz are a collection of baked brick and distinctive stone. The stone was hauled from a distant temple, or so it is claimed, for the city radiates a low-level magic, sufficient to scramble most *detect magic* spells (other divination spells are unaffected). The palace and ministries, made of stone from Afyal, are exempt from this effect.

The Gateway City is a melting pot, home to natives of the Ruined Kingdoms, people who have emigrated from Afyal, and treasure seekers from around the Land of Fate. They are energetic, curious, progressive, and, above all, acquisitive. Those who visit Dihliz should heed the following recommendations: keep your eye on your equipment, your hands on your valuables, and a short leash on members of your household.

**Major Products:** Trade, antiques, rice.

**Armed Forces:** 1,000 city guards; 1,000 cavalymen under the command of Ebu min Hassana; navy (term used loosely) of 8 river barges with rowers.

**Major Mosques:** Kor, Pantheon, Selan, Zann.

**Rumors and Lore:** Dihliz is said to be built on some sort of holy or taboo site of the lost civilizations of the Ruined Kingdoms. The site is unusual because it lacks the ruins found elsewhere throughout the region. All cut stone in the city was imported.

## Whirlwind Tour of Dihliz

**D**ihliz is a relatively young frontier city, scarcely civilized when compared with Zakhara’s other major settlements. However, it is by no means devoid of interesting commercial, public, and religious attractions. In the following descriptions, numbers in parentheses can be located on the city map, which can be found on the front of Card 4.

### Where to stay

Unless they have friends or relatives in Dihliz, visitors will most likely stay at one of the many inns located on the stone wharves overlooking the Nogaro River. Only two are particularly noteworthy:

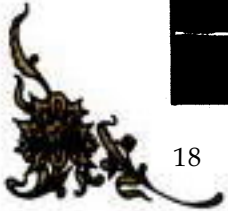
**The Jasmine Dream (1)** is a poshly decorated inn managed by a pathologically clean gnome named Ahmad (gmF/a/8). Ahmad has a reputation for providing safe, immaculate rooms, many with a quiet view overlooking an adjacent canal. Despite its exorbitant rates, the inn is quite popular among merchants from the Pantheon cities.

**The Steel Serpent (2)** is a favorite among low-budget adventurers, owned by a retired treasure-hunter named Tahani (hfT/sl/10), who can sometimes be bribed to divulge the location of lucrative ruins. Visitors share a common sleeping area, but thefts are common during the night.

### Goods and Services

The **stone wharves (3)** along the Nogaro River are usually packed with small teak canoes from nearby farms,







barges from Kadarasto, and sailing ships from Afyal and the Pantheon Cities. Many business transactions take place on this busy street before goods are even unloaded.

Dihliz is famous for its **floating bazaar (4)**, a covered market with canals rather than streets. For a small fee, one can hire a boat to explore this curious suq. A host of small shops and stalls open onto the indoor canals of the floating market, selling most equipment listed in *Arabian Adventures*, except that weapons and armor cost nearly twice the normal amount, because of scarcity and demand. A few quaint coffee shops can be found here, where visitors pause for a relaxing break while shopping. In the dead-ends of less frequented canals, all manner of illicit wares can be obtained for the right price: tobacco, narcotics, poison, liquid star, slaves, sometimes even goods looted from the ruins of Nog and Kadar. This market closes abruptly after dark, when crocodiles from the Nogaró are rumored to make brash incursions.

The city's **open bazaar (5)** is a market for food and livestock: colorful jungle birds, caged chickens, wicker backpacks, delicate orchids, trained jaguars, spicy eel kabobs (a local delicacy), coconut candy, and fragrant stalks of cinnamon. Even elephants can be discovered here in the chaotic jumble of sights and smells. Exotic goods from distant cities can be purchased here as well, including gold jewelry from Afyal; exquisite porcelain from Fahhas; rare books, lenses, and telescopes from Hudid; fine crystal from I'tiraf; and rich fabrics from Talab.

A common cause for complaint by tourists is the city's scarcity of public baths. In all of Dihliz, there are but three **bathhouses (6)**, all of which charge exorbitant rates. They are owned by an anonymous foreign merchant from Muluk, who has a virtual monopoly on the bathing industry in the city. Given the curiously high mortality rate among entrepreneurs starting new bathhouses these days, perhaps their scarcity is not so surprising.

### Public Buildings and Monuments

The **Ministry of Secrets (7)** is located in the northern part of the city. This office registers and catalogs all ruins and treasure sites between the borders of the Pantheon

cities and the Salt Jungle. By insisting upon continual reorganization and review, Amin guarantees that the Ministry is always in a shambles. Scrolls and reports are frequently misfiled, stolen, or lost, but a suitable amount of gold always seems to bring the needed document or information to light. Individuals who visit the ministry in hopes of obtaining a map or a license to plunder often bring dinars rather than scribes.

The **Ministry of Riches (8)** can be found on the open bazaar, near the stone wharves where smuggling abounds. This ministry is responsible for levying a minor tax on all treasure discovered in the ruins. The bureau imposes a 1% tax on monetary treasure, and pays full price (5 times XP value) for magical items brought to it.

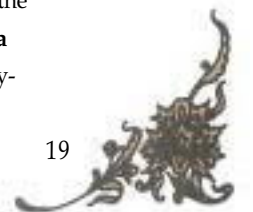
Dihliz has never been attacked by an army in the century since it was built. The low, relatively thin **outer walls (9)** facing the jungle are more for show than any useful purpose. The wide canals surrounding the city are a better defense from siege than the stone fortifications.

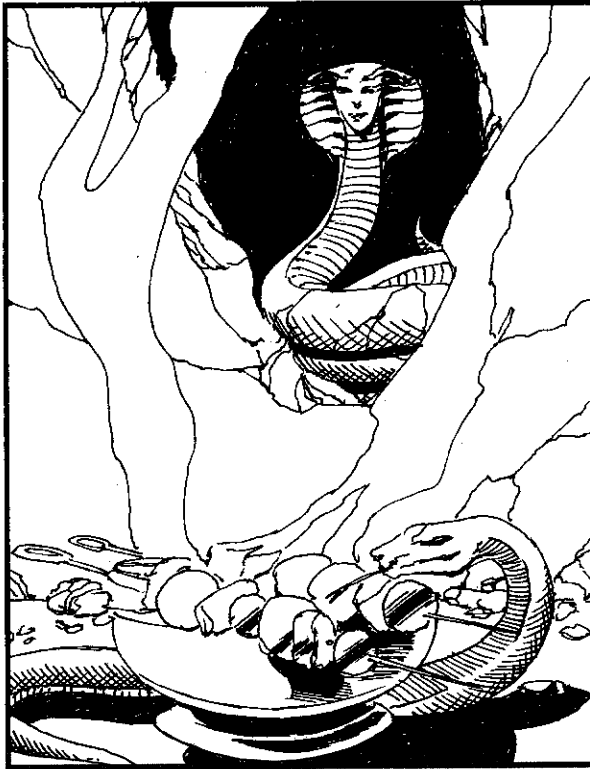
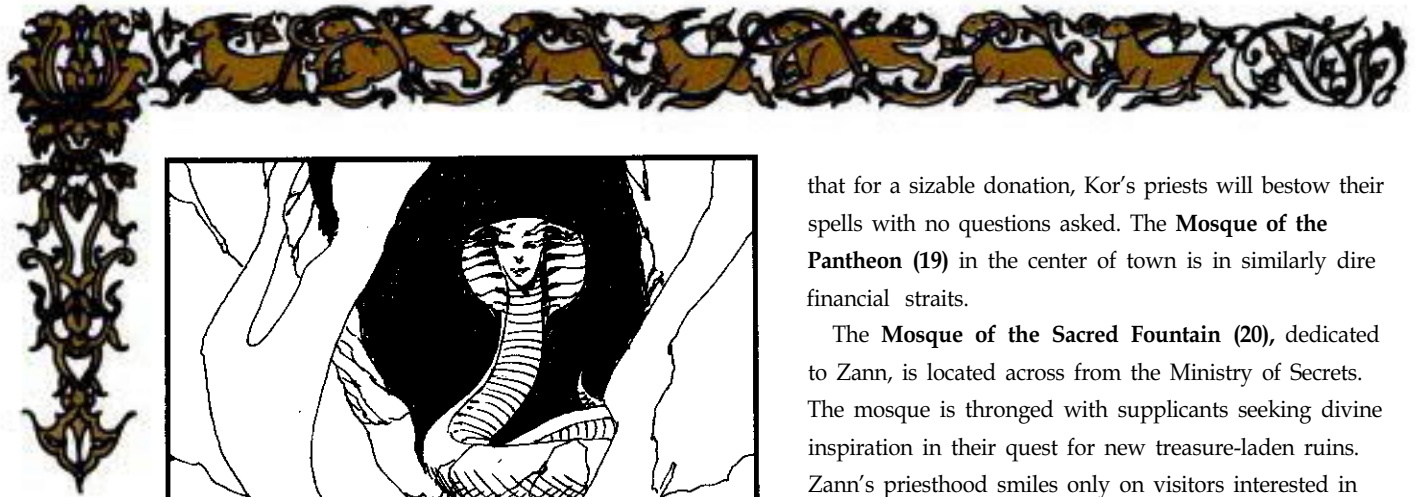
The city has three gates, beautifully decorated with bas-reliefs and sculpture: the **Gate of Serpents (10)** leads upriver to Kadarasto; the **Gate of Hornets (11)** leads to the outlying rice plantations and eventually the jungle; the **Gate of the Peacock (12)** leads to the **Citadel and Barge Sheds (13)**, where a large prison and the city's modest navy is located.

In the northeastern part of town, one can find the emira's small but opulent **Ivory Palace (14)**, so named because it is built entirely from white limestone, imported from Afyal. The palace overlooks the **Plaza of the Sacred Elephants (15)**, where a life-sized pair of elephant statues rear up on their hind legs, facing each other. The plaza is typically thronged with courtiers, viziers, accountants, sycophants, and merchants with business for the emira. A small but beautiful **public garden (16)** overgrown with orchids lies adjacent to the plaza.

### Religious Buildings

There are four large mosques in Dihliz, catering to the city's largely transient population. The **Mosque of a Thousand Hummingbirds (17)** is a beautiful, many-





tiered tower mosque dedicated to Selan. Balconies and ledges—choked with orchids, hyacinths, and pomegranate trees—extend from the mosque’s upper levels and overlook the plaza below. The fantastic gardens are always attended by a host of hummingbirds and winged serpents. The mosque is officially supported by the court of Afyal (and hence Dihliz as well). Selan’s priestesses have positions of authority in the city’s loose judicial system.

The **Mosque of the Revered (18)** is a more traditional house of prayer dedicated to Kor and supported almost entirely by generous visitors from the Pantheon cities. Despite its size and prestigious position on the plaza near the emira’s palace, Kor does not have nearly as large a following as Selan in the city, and this is reflected in the mosque’s slightly worn facade. Most people in town know

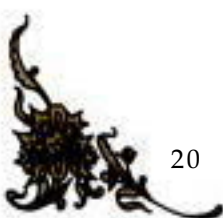
that for a sizable donation, Kor’s priests will bestow their spells with no questions asked. The **Mosque of the Pantheon (19)** in the center of town is in similarly dire financial straits.

The **Mosque of the Sacred Fountain (20)**, dedicated to Zann, is located across from the Ministry of Secrets. The mosque is thronged with supplicants seeking divine inspiration in their quest for new treasure-laden ruins. Zann’s priesthood smiles only on visitors interested in exploring the ruins for the sake of knowledge—not profit. Its libraries are filled with journals, swiftly decaying in the jungle humidity, written by three generations of the city’s treasure hunters. Although the priests are more than happy to allow visitors to read these diaries, the ruins they describe were plundered long ago. A tall, majestic fountain bubbles at the center of the mosque, crawling with black hornets and wasps. The mosque also supports a colony of intelligent, giant mason wasps, many of whom have been taught Midani by the priests.

At the entrances of the city canals, visitors will no doubt notice small shrines. A small idol of Ragarra, a crocodile-headed woman with bat wings, stands in the sheltered alcoves, surrounded by small meat offerings. These shrines are widely believed to help prevent crocodiles from the Nogaro from entering the city. The city’s enlightened clergy find the pagan shrines insulting, but their last attempt to remove them incited a fearful riot before the idols were restored to their customary positions.

In some of the back streets, visitors might discover small, hidden shrines, containing white cobra idols with a smiling woman’s face. Superstitious people consider the snake queen—and snakes in general—to be a sign of good fortune. Many citizens can recount tales of miraculous recovery from fatal illness after a family member left a broiled meat kebab at one of the snake shrines.

These two cults are featured in the adventures “*Talisman*” and “*Retribution*.”





## Chapter Five

# Other Cities of The Ancients

**D**uring the course of the campaign, the party may decide to visit or explore the exotic and dangerous cities of Kadarasto, Medina al-Afyal, and Rog'osto. This chapter provides expanded city descriptions based upon the material presented in the *Land of Fate* boxed set.

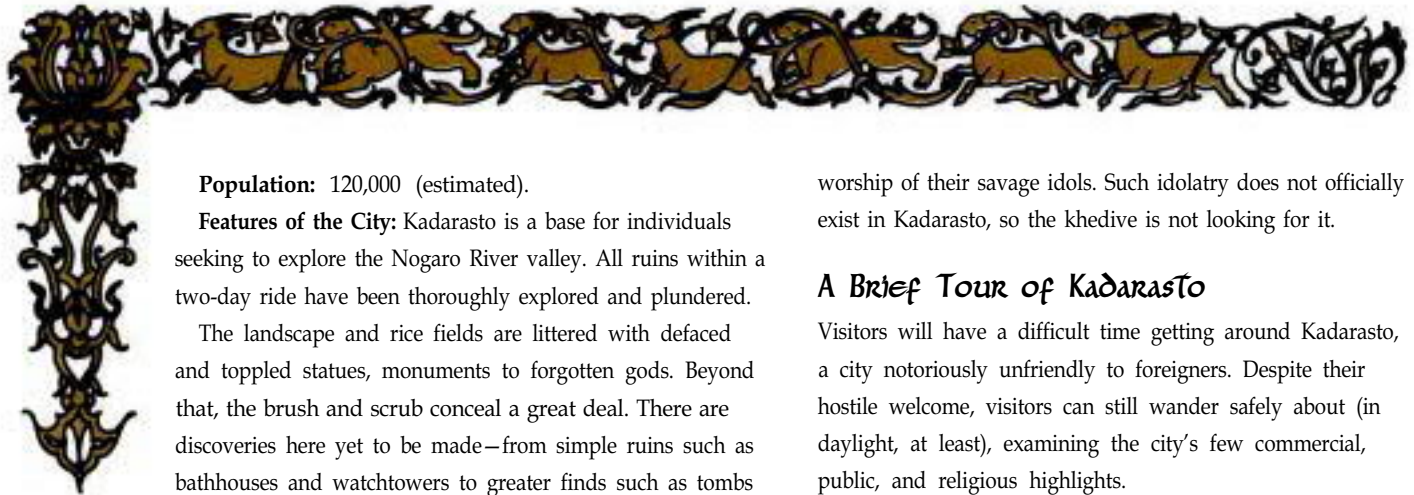
## Kadarasto, City Most Sinister

**B**y following the Nogaro about 100 miles upstream from Dihliz, the traveler reaches the sinister city of Kadarasto. It is an ancient, alien-looking place, perched upon a bluff overlooking the river. The city's architecture—heavy, angular, and depressing—is unique in the Land of Fate. Some sages believe Kadarasto was once the capital of ancient Kadar, which may or may not have existed at the same time as Nog, and may or may not have been its enemy.

**The Ruler:** Khedive Aman al-Qasi abu Nari (hmF/a/15) is a sly and snakelike man. Outwardly pious, his heart is dark as ebony. His father was one of the Grand Caliph's lesser viziers, his mother a native woman of noble descent. The khedive gained only the worst traits of his parents: his father's taste for manipulation and his mother's savage nature. It has been said that his father was a member of the Brotherhood of the True Flame, and that his mother was secretly a priestess of Shajar.

**The Court:** Nari ibn Aman (hmF/a/10) is the leading supporter of his father, the khedive. Hot-tempered and intense, Nari commands the city's armed forces. His popularity among the poorer members of the city far surpasses that of the khedive himself. In fact, Nari is viewed as a local hero—a champion who cuts down illegal tomb-robbers, strikes out against the unsanctioned thieves of the emira of Dihliz, and strives to exterminate all those who plunder the heritage of the Ruined Kingdoms. Nari applauds the aid the Dihliz military provides with its raids, but he secretly wishes that the emira and all foreigners would leave his country in peace. The prince is featured in the brief adventure, "Retribution."





**Population:** 120,000 (estimated).

**Features of the City:** Kadarasto is a base for individuals seeking to explore the Nogaro River valley. All ruins within a two-day ride have been thoroughly explored and plundered.

The landscape and rice fields are littered with defaced and toppled statues, monuments to forgotten gods. Beyond that, the brush and scrub conceal a great deal. There are discoveries here yet to be made—from simple ruins such as bathhouses and watchtowers to greater finds such as tombs and temples.

The city's people, mainly natives from the surrounding wilderness, have only recently been enlightened. Kadarasto's lord still takes the ancient title "khedive" (unique to the Ruined Kingdoms), though he professes his allegiance to Huzuz and the superiority of the enlightened gods.

Most of the city's money is held by a rich, privileged elite, consisting mainly of a few lucky adventurers, a handful of merchants who operate smuggling routes through the wilderness to Talab, and expatriated emigrants of Afyal. The poorer native classes live in squalid hovels outside the city walls along the Nogaro and harbor a deep resentment toward the prosperous outsiders. Were it not for the mercenaries and mamluks guarding the city, a rebellion would soon occur and blood would flow in the streets.

The most recent version of Kadarasto proper is built upon the ruins of at least 12 other cities, all situated upon the bluffs above the Nogaro. Kadarasto is overrun with its heritage. The ruins of many buildings remain. Most of the graven icons of the ancient ways have been destroyed, their statues crushed to rubble. Nonetheless, the city has a savage, idolatrous atmosphere, for a number of these icons survive in the back alleys.

**Major Products:** Trade, antiquities, rice.

**Armed Forces:** 2,000 city guards; 1,000 cavalry; 3 mamluk companies of the Devout, totaling 900 men, all under the command of young Nari.

**Major Mosques:** Hajama, Pantheon, Najm, Selan; also secret cults of Ragarra, Shajar, and Kiga.

**Rumors and Lore:** Legends persist that the ancient passages and catacombs of the city's past have survived. Followers of the old cult-gods are said to use these places in the secret

worship of their savage idols. Such idolatry does not officially exist in Kadarasto, so the khedive is not looking for it.

## A Brief Tour of Kadarasto

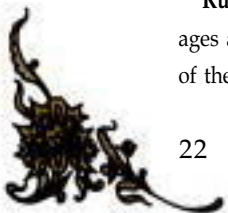
Visitors will have a difficult time getting around Kadarasto, a city notoriously unfriendly to foreigners. Despite their hostile welcome, visitors can still wander safely about (in daylight, at least), examining the city's few commercial, public, and religious highlights.

**Goods and Services:** There is a very narrow choice of accommodations in Kadarasto. Besides the small, squalid caravanserai located outside the city walls, the only other option for a decent night's sleep is the Broken Wheel, an opulent inn in the southern part of town, named for a cracked, nine-spoked wheel carved in the stone floor of the common room (actually a Geomancer *asfr*). The inn is operated by Mauza Dalidasis (hfT/mr/11), a charming and surprisingly friendly inhabitant of Kadarasto. Mauza can be a valuable source of information for visitors to the city, but at the rate she charges for her rooms (50 gp/night!) she can afford to be gracious.

Mauza is related by marriage to one of the most prosperous merchants in the city, Cholk min Kado (hmT/mr/18). Cholk owns the Shop of Faded Carpets, an unassuming store filled with ancient rugs and tapestries. In reality, it hides the secret headquarters of a spy network operated by Cholk himself. The unassuming merchant has contacts with over 200 beggars of various levels and can reach anyone, anywhere in the city. The Shop of Faded Carpets also serves as a front for the sale and purchase of magical items and treasure looted from the ruins. For a small fee, Cholk can smuggle anything out of the Ruined Kingdoms to Talab.

Chalk's shop and the Broken Wheel are located near the city's otherwise lackluster open bazaar, which is strewn with canvas-covered stalls and tents, where most goods and services can be obtained at slightly elevated prices. There is no suq, or covered market, in Kadarasto.

**Public Buildings and Monuments:** The public architecture of Kadarasto is heavy and depressing. The massive city walls, cracked and decayed by the humidity, are curious in their lack of towers, minarets, and arrow loops. The wall is







interrupted only by the Gates of Dawn, a pair of massive copper portals decorated with abstract starlike patterns and tarnished green with age.

The khedive's royal palace sits brooding on the highest expanse of the bluff overlooking the Nogaro. This windowless monstrosity is said to be built on the bones of the thousand laborers who perished during its construction. All governmental offices operate out of the palace's cavernous, echoing halls.

Although there are no public parks or gardens in Kadarasto, the inner city is strewn with the ruins of ancient buildings and towering monuments disfigured by time. The remnants of strange star-shaped towers lean precariously over busy streets, and disturbing sculptures of forgotten gods adorn the facades of many buildings.

**Religious Buildings:** While Kadarasto is outwardly an enlightened city, the city's modern mosques—dedicated to Najm, Hajama, Selan, and to the Pantheon as a whole—are small, austere, and poorly attended, more appropriate for a village or town than a major city.

Although the majority of the city's native inhabitants show up for prayer at the required times, many also worship the ancient Forgotten Gods. The largest and most active of these savage cults is that of Ragarra (described in Chapter Three). Ragarra's idols and small shrines can be found sheltered in Kadarasto's back streets and alleys. Unlike the small shrines in Dihliz, these sites are considered holy and are secretly venerated by an increasing number of Kadarasto's native citizens. Like the city's other unenlightened sects, the cult of Ragarra maintains a major temple in the catacombs beneath the city proper.

## Medina al-Afyal

**A**fyal, the island kingdom dominated by this city, is one of the enlightened Throne's most distant outposts. It is also among the most prosperous. Located north of Sahu Island, the Isle of the Elephant is a convenient stop for traders from the distant East. This island is also blessed with great natural resources—including precious metals and exotic hardwoods. As a result, its capital, the City of the

Elephant, enjoys a richness that rivals Huzuz itself.

**The Ruler:** The island of Afyal has been blessed by fate with its riches, so perhaps it is only fair that it suffers from a dearth of rulers. The House of Alon founded the kingdom and its capital city soon after the Law of the Loregiver spread throughout the continent of Zakhara. That house took great pride in the fact that the blood of the first Grand Caliph also flowed in Afyal's first padishah.

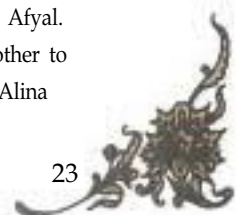
Afyal's leaders have always been erratic, perhaps because it takes the will of a madman to create a new city in the wilderness. The present ruler, however, exceeds even his predecessors in the depth of his madness.

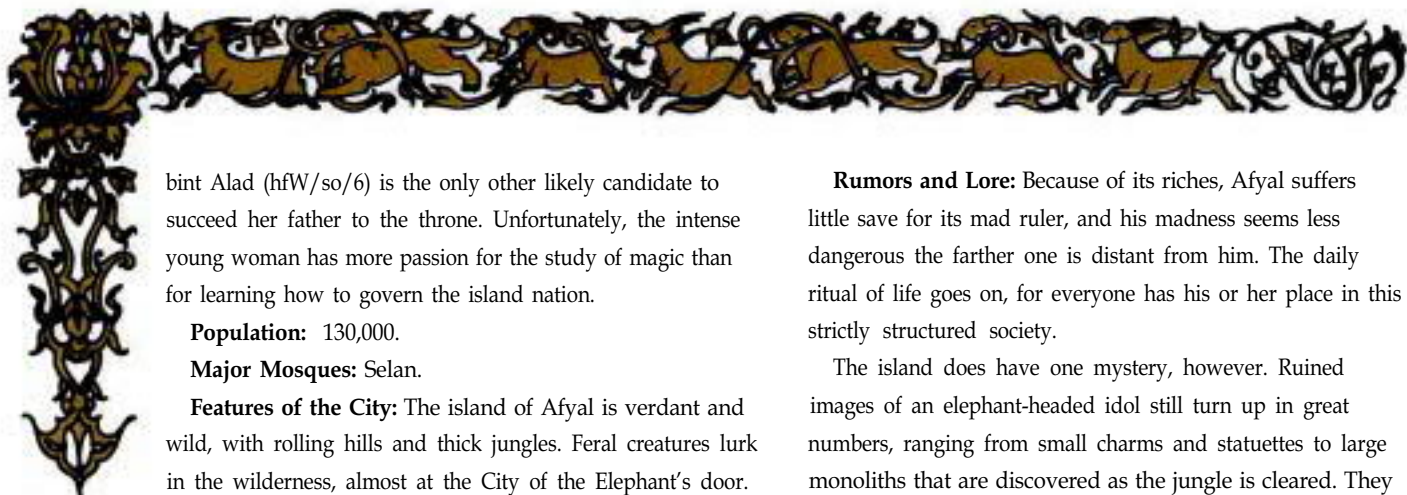
**Alad bin Alaq bin Alonka of Alon** (hmF/f/13) is a demented and wildly unpredictable ruler. Some say it is the blood of the ruling class running thin after 500 years. Others say that the Mad Padishah was born sane but encountered a great horror in the Ruined Kingdoms as a youth. His father (perhaps lacking in faculties himself) failed to recognize the extent of the damage and named Alad his heir.

The padishah's first born son, Alakbar bin Alad bin Alaq, disappeared on a voyage south into the Crowded Sea four years ago. No word has come from (or about) him since. Given the tendencies of his father, this may be for the best.

**The Court:** The Mad Padishah has a relatively stable and contented court and bureaucracy. Many of these personages—especially the outspoken arch-vizier, Anwar al-Makruh (hemW/sh/13)—pass into and out of the padishah's favor, like the waxing and waning of the moon. One of the few sane and reasonable figures at court, Najiba al-Aqil (hff/mr/15) is the spokewoman for the varied merchant houses in the city which provide the lifeblood for the kingdom by bringing in supplies and civilization from western Zakhara. Al-Aqil's calm, conciliatory nature makes her one of the padishah's favorite (i.e., rarely banished) advisors.

The court is currently buzzing with intrigue over the choice of a successor to the Elephant Throne. The Empress Alia Jamal (hfp/m/12), the padisha's arch-conservative aunt, is a lean, predatory woman who wants her own son, Jamal bin Alia (hmT/sl/4), to become the next padishah of Afyal. Jamal is much too intimidated by his overbearing mother to dare disagree. In the meantime, the crown princess, Alina





bint Alad (hfW/so/6) is the only other likely candidate to succeed her father to the throne. Unfortunately, the intense young woman has more passion for the study of magic than for learning how to govern the island nation.

**Population:** 130,000.

**Major Mosques:** Selan.

**Features of the City:** The island of Afyal is verdant and wild, with rolling hills and thick jungles. Feral creatures lurk in the wilderness, almost at the City of the Elephant's door.

The capital is the only settlement of significant size on the island. Because the jungles yield the rich woods that are the island's chief export, a few small villages dot the wilderness, all of them stockaded. A few craftsmen dwell in these villages, but most of the inhabitants are harvesters who bring the wood to the City of the Elephant.

The people of Afyal range from wealthiest merchants to the poorest beggars. The concept of station—that each person has one chosen place in the universe, which is decreed by Fate—is extremely strong on this island. A caste system reigns. A person may never rise above his or her original station, regardless of action. In Afyal, even the most successful adventurer from a beggarly background is expected to defer to a less talented or worthy individual of higher station. Marriage outside one's station is strongly (often violently) discouraged.

**Major Products:** Trade, wood., gold, precious metals, jewelry, elephants.

**Armed Forces:** 2,000 city guard; 500 cavalry; 500 elephant cavalry; 4 mamluk companies of the Wondrous, totaling 1,200 fighters, who serve as the palace guard.



**Rumors and Lore:** Because of its riches, Afyal suffers little save for its mad ruler, and his madness seems less dangerous the farther one is distant from him. The daily ritual of life goes on, for everyone has his or her place in this strictly structured society.

The island does have one mystery, however. Ruined images of an elephant-headed idol still turn up in great numbers, ranging from small charms and statuettes to large monoliths that are discovered as the jungle is cleared. They are all that remain of the Lost One, a forgotten god who ruled Afyal before the enlightenment.

### *A Brief Tour of Medina al-Afyal*

No other city in Zakhara is quite like Afyal's capital. Though lacking the blue tilework of many cities of the west, Medina al-Afyal is no less impressive, for the local craftsmen made liberal use of polished marble, ivory-colored limestone, and gleaming hardwoods in the city's architecture. Visitors may desire to wander about this exotic city, examining its commercial, public, and religious attractions.

**Goods and Services:** Although Medina al-Afyal does not contain a caravanserai, the city has no shortage of fine accommodations for the weary traveler. In particular, the Teak Palace is a recommended favorite among rich merchants. Prices are inversely proportional to station, for the inn's snobbish owners prefer high-born (or at least affluent) clientele. Low-station adventurers should expect to pay around 100 gp per night, but the price includes lavish feasts and a royal treatment. For travelers on a budget, the Brass Monkey is a popular choice; located on the outskirts of the city, it offers clean rooms at low to moderate prices.

The suq, or covered bazaar, is a confusing labyrinth of limestone buildings interconnecting the riverfront commercial districts. The city docks along the riverfront are always packed with the sea-going vessels of distant traveling merchants and sturdy river barges of local islanders, laden with exotic hardwoods and metal ores, which are harvested and mined in Afyal's secluded villages.

After the hardwoods are milled into manageable sizes on the outskirts of the city, they are carried by elephant to the





Ebony Way, the renowned center for wood craftsmanship on the island. In this wide, sheltered street, the exotic fragrances of cut ebony, sandalwood, mahogany, and teak fill the air, wafting out of the open workshops. Inside labor Afyal's finest woodcrafters, creating ornate furniture and objects of art in which the wood appears to be almost liquid, flowing in elegant, graceful curves.

The Golden Way is Afyal's famous jewelry district, lined with dozens of shops selling priceless objects of art fashioned from gold. Although the area is heavily patrolled by the town watch, each of the stores maintains its own potent security force, headed by at least one powerful wizard.

Finally, perhaps the most interesting commercial district is the Plaza of the Elephant, where elephants of all sizes can be purchased, in colors ranging from albino white and ebony black to the more common grey. The elephants of Afyal are particularly intelligent and docile, able to learn and perform tasks willingly and with ease. By decree of the island's first padishah, Alon, no one may kill an elephant of Afyal without sacrificing his or her own life in turn. Because of their superior attributes, elephants are sold for 400 to 2,000 gp (for labor) and 3,000 to 12,000 gp (for war), depending upon the creature's intelligence, size, color, and disposition. If the purchaser does not know how to haggle, these prices will be much, much higher.

**Public Buildings and Monuments:** The city is surrounded by white limestone walls, pierced by three impressive gates, which are adorned by marble sculptures of elephants. These are referred to locally as the Gate of the Infant, the Gate of the Warrior, and the Gate of the Laborer.

The padishah's palace is a sprawling collection of small buildings, many of them linked by causeways, dotted with a half-dozen spires and domes. It is one of the architectural wonders of the Land of Fate, combining magical and conventional methods of construction. It is said that five dao, enslaved by the padishah's arch-vizier, work continually to maintain the walls and bridges of the palace.

Lush botanical gardens surround the palace. Since many of the rich citizenry have plenty of free time for leisure, the gardens are a popular spot for families and lovers to stroll about and play. The garden's proximity to the palace

ensures a high level of security. A white marble monument to Alon, honoring the city's founder, can be found at the center of the gardens.

**Religious Buildings:** Although there are a number of small, private shrines dedicated to most enlightened Gods, only Selan is widely worshipped by the island's inhabitants. The Great Mosque of Selan rises along the eastern side of the botanical gardens, opposite the padisha's palace. Eight golden spires—one for each of the moon's eight monthly phases—adorn the mosque's outer walls and can be seen from every vantage point of the city. The center of worship for Selan's followers, the mosque contains both the largest temple devoted to Selan and the most prestigious astronomical observatory in the Land of Fate. The priests operating the mosque and observatory are strict moralists, but pragmatists and ethoists are welcome here as well.

A large public university adjoins to the mosque. For a modest donation, students can learn any one of the following nonweapon proficiencies after studying in the university for a period of 1-4 months: Ancient or Local History, Ancient Languages (Kadari, Noga, or Affa), Astrology, Navigation, Religion, and Spellcraft. Because of the excellent instruction, these require half the usual number of proficiency slots, with a minimum of at least one slot per proficiency.

## Rog'osto, City of Spires

From the mouth of the Nogaro River, a 300-mile trip north along the shores of the Crowded Sea leads travelers to Rog'osto, the City of Spires. The reason for its name is immediately evident: the city's unique metal towers soar towards the sky, gleaming in the sun, sole surviving legacy of the city's unknown previous inhabitants. These ancient, bizarre towers are found nowhere else in the Land of Fate.

**The Ruler:** The elven khedive **Samia al-Sa'id** (efW/sh/15) has ruled for the past 100 years in an enlightened, progressive manner that has endeared her to both the city's common people and those who dwell in the towers. A powerful wizard, Khedive Samia has gained wisdom over the years and acquired many mighty magical





items. The khedive helps settle the squabbling between the tower-lords (*amir al-burj*). She also helps fend off the acquisitive tendencies of both the Pantheon and Afyal.

**The Court:** The large court teems with 'intrigue, fomented by the various tower-lords, traders, and foreigners. Major influences include the following:

- Sherif Akyar al-Awasif, a female noble djinni. The fanatically loyal friend and confidante to the khedive, Akyar represents the genie peoples at court.
- Bojo al-Ami (hmT/mr/10), a cunning, middle-aged man, representing the craftsmen.
- Bahija min Selan (hfP/p/14), a vain and hedonistic cleric, representing all priests.
- Fayiz al-Wazir (hmW/so/19), an infirm tower-lord, representing the sorcerers.
- Kharj al-Talqa (hmW/fm/13), a polite if whimsical fire mage, and an admitted member of the Brotherhood of the True Flame.
- Revered Mother Farida bint Thuriya (hfP/m/10), a crusading firebrand of a woman, representing the interests of the Pantheist League.
- Othmar bin Kaloth (hmW/sh/12), the khedive's principal rival, representing the sha'irs with his efreeti servant, Xamus.
- Olla al-Funun (hfW/so/17), an open, cheery woman and the ambassador from Afyal, who actively serves the khedive by reconciling various factions.

**Population:** 80,000.

**Features of the City:** Rog'osto is actually two cities—one built ages ago by unknown, seemingly inhuman hands, the other having grown up around its base during the modern enlightened age. Rog'osto is considered by many to be the most magical city in the Land of Fate. The city's strange towers attract sha'irs, sorcerers, and elemental mages, as well as pragmatists, kahins, mystics, scholars, and researchers. The khedive has set down rules governing the behavior of the tower-lords (e.g., no inter-spire warfare, no experiments that may damage the towers or the city), and violating those rules may be cause for expulsion. Rog'osto has already lost three towers to such activities.

The New City is clustered at the base of the towers, a col-

lection of white-washed, mud-brick houses, much like those found elsewhere in Zakhara. This is the home of the poor and the middle class, consisting of traders and artisans. Rog'osto has a thriving business of arts and crafts, catering to the wizards, who often require the finest materials for their research.

**Major Products:** Information, sages, art, crystal, fine metal craftsmanship.

**Armed Forces:** 1,000 city guards. Each tower may have a personal guard of up to 200 sentient beings. The khedive's palace has a personal guard of 400 2nd-level fighters, plus 200 jann who answer to Sherif Akyar. The army is weak, but no one has ever dared attack an entire city of wizards.

**Major Mosques:** Kor, Selan, Zann.

**Rumors and Lore:** Rog'osto's great mystery is its towers. It is assumed that they were created by some magical, possibly divine race from the heavens. A few surviving inscriptions from this race are in an archaic tongue seen nowhere else in the Land of Fate. They speak of war, say the sages, between the city dwellers and "those above." The natives evidently lost and abandoned their city. The nature of these original inhabitants is unknown, except that they were humanoid. All races have been suggested, but common thinking leans toward the burnt elves (i.e., the drow).

## A Guided Tour of Rog'osto

Rog'osto is a unique combination of alien and human architecture. The numerous spires rise over the city's modern buildings, lending Rog'osto a feeling of verticality unusual in the Land of Fate.

**Goods and Services:** Almost all goods and services in Rog'osto can be found in the New City, erected around the bases of the city's strange metal towers. The expansive caravanserai provides the best food and lodging for visitors. Furnished with its own small religious shrines, restaurants, and public baths, the caravanserai caters to all of the traveler's needs.

Rog'osto's suq connects to three important commercial districts, crucial to the city's development. The Alley of the Booksellers, a small but vitally important street to many of the city's researchers, is crowded with small shops packed with books and scrolls imported from all regions of Zakhara.





Here, the visitor can easily find the texts required to conduct magical research. Several distinguished sages live on this street, selling books to fund their own research. The sages are eager to work on scholarly projects unrelated to book selling.

The Street of the Glassblowers can also be found in the suq, lined with shops displaying priceless glass and crystal vials, glasses, bowls, decanters, small sculptures, ornamental window panes, lamps, and precise laboratory equipment. A few small shops on the street, specializing in grinding glass lenses, also sell magnifying lenses, reading glasses, and telescopes. The furnaces where the glass is melted and blown are located just behind the shops, discreetly kept out of sight behind a thick leather curtain. If a researcher desires custom-made glassware, he or she usually enters the furnace area to discuss his or her needs with the master craftsmen, for the outer shops are maintained only by merchants.

Finally, also connected to the suq is the Street of the Metalsmiths, who specialize in steel armor, weapons, and research equipment forged from steel scrap harvested from the city's fallen metal towers. This steel is an unusual alloy found nowhere else in the Land of Fate. It tarnishes instead of rusts, melts at a lower temperature than normal steel, and can be drawn into pliable steel cords. Otherwise, it is as strong and light as common steel. Weapons and armor of this steel function normally, though they do not need the constant cleaning and attention of items made from normal steel. Rog'osto's metalsmiths pay 2 gp a pound for this material. A single fallen tower produces many tons; however, the existing stock has already been claimed by the city's metalsmithing houses.

Although no magical weapons or armor can be found for sale on this street, many of the smiths have enough skill to forge weapons or armor of quality (+1 to hit and/or damage because of their workmanship). They are typically only made to order and cost up to 100 times the normal cost (after haggling). Such items are naturally suitable for enchantment by many of the local wizards living in the towers.

**Public Buildings and Monuments:** The only public buildings of note in Rog'osto are the city's strange metal spires. About 50 of these towers are in evidence, though fully half of them are shattered or toppled. The surviving

towers stand almost 100 feet tall. The tops and bottoms are slightly flared, with a long stem in between. The interior of each is an open stairway, spiraling up the inside without a rail, to a great single floor perched at the tower's summit.

In the name of the Grand Caliph, the khedive provides temporary grants for the use of the remaining intact towers. Powerful wizards and priests inhabit them, using the towers as research laboratories, libraries, or sanctuaries. A number of wizards have removed the tower stairs and remodeled the interiors to their liking through powerful magic. There are only 22 towers (not including the palace), and they are always full, though turnover is regular.

Three of the intact towers, arranged like the points of a triangle, have been claimed by the khedive for her royal palace. All three towers have been joined by a tall, fortified wall linking their fluted bases. With the help of her genie allies, the khedive has extensively remodeled her palace towers to include lavish living quarters and spectacular, serpentine stairways.

**Religious Buildings:** Because of the city's large population of priests and excellent craftsmen, Rog'osto houses some of the finest mosques in the Ruined Kingdoms. The Mosque of the Venerable Kor, fashioned from white-washed limestone, is covered with intricate, mind-bending mosaics of colored glass that catch and reflect the morning sun like a shower of precious gems. Kor's priesthood in Rog'osto is unusually pragmatic and open-minded.

The Mosque of the New Moon, dedicated to Selan, has a trio of graceful minarets which echo the royal palace's design. Funded entirely by donations from Afyalese merchants, this mosque is extremely popular among travelers from that island kingdom.

Zann's Mosque of the Visionary Spring is built over a natural well or spring, the waters of which are said to inspire profound, revelatory trances. The largest and best-attended temple in the city, this mosque also contains a vast public library. The priesthood is usually open and helpful to those in search of information about the city or the Ruined Kingdoms in general, provided the supplicant's desire for knowledge is driven by genuine curiosity, not selfish desire or greed.





## Chapter Six Secrets of The Ruined Kingdom

This chapter is filled with ideas which can be expanded into encounters or even full-length adventures, if desired. Each section is specific to the area's major cities: Dihliz, Kadarasto, Medina al-Afyal, and Rog'osto.

### Secrets of Dihliz

The chaos of misfiled documents in Amin Nur's Ministry of Secrets is a hoax. A large, secret library, located somewhere beneath the adjacent mosque, contains the Ministry's real archives, diligently maintained by Zannite priests. The Ministry's main job is to keep secrets, not distribute them. It is no coincidence that the Mosque of the Sacred Fountain is built right across the street from the Ministry of Secrets. The priests of Zann have been allied with the Ministry of Secrets since the city's founding, as both organizations are interested in the pursuit of knowledge.

The city's great mystery is the subtle, pervasive magical aura, which permeates all of its buildings (except the Ivory Palace). The site's original name, the Plateau of the Gate, was used by the Geomancers to designate the entrance to their empire. Here, the Geomancers once raised a massive earth monolith to guard the river valley against invaders. The monolith was destroyed by Imam Suhail and his followers. When the guardian fell, her body mixed with the dust of the region, until all the surrounding lands had a portion of her nature.

Amin Nur, the Minister of Secrets, is greatly disturbed by the recent outbreak of Ragarran cult activity in and around the outskirts of the city. Reports of the cult's activities have spread to Dihliz proper, where the number of kidnappings and murders in the city have almost doubled. The cult has been arrogant in their pursuit of crime, leaving behind small ebony claws to highlight their actions. The emira has decided that these crimes must cease, as they reflect poorly on her rule and might prompt the Grand Caliph to prematurely dismiss the emira from her lucrative post. She has made it clear to Amin that the cult's activities must halt immediately.

Amin's agents have made some headway tracking this cult activity to the center of its organization: Kadarasto. Amin is astute enough to realize that cult activity in



Dihliz can be eliminated by crippling the cult's central command, but he lacks specific information about the cult's layout and organization in Kadarasto's notorious undercity.

The khedive of Kadarasto has been emphatic in his denial of cult activity in his proud city, so Amin must resort to more covert methods to investigate the cult's home base. Since his more ambitious agents have mysteriously disappeared on their missions to the undercity, Amin is inclined to hire independent, trained mercenaries to get the information gathering job done quickly, quietly, and efficiently. In short, Amin is looking to recruit a party of spies.

### Secrets of Kadarasto

The khedive's dark reputation is justly deserved, for he has an evil, utterly self-serving personality. Knowing that his reign is largely dependent upon the rich elite who despise him, he assigns his own agents to foment anger and hatred among the impoverished natives, who vent their rage upon the privileged nobles. Fearful of an uprising that they feel only the khedive can control, the nobles remain his reluctant allies.

Unlike his father, Prince Nari is much loved by the people. However, Nari's charming public persona conceals a heart as black as his father's. The opportunistic prince has courted alliances with the Storm Which Destroys holy slayer fellowship and the Brotherhood of the True Flame, both of which have now established small bases of operations in the city's catacombs. Recently, the prince has been courting the cult of Ragarra, the most powerful sect of the Forgotten Gods in the Ruined Kingdoms. As a result of his frightening contacts, Prince Nari can be a extremely dangerous man to cross.

The catacombs of Kadarasto's undercity are throbbing with clandestine activity during all hours of the day or night. In addition to the secret societies which have built small bases in their twisted depths, various inhospitable monsters, genies, and undead make the catacombs their home. Visitors are not welcome. At least ten levels of the catacombs are thought to exist. The upper levels merely serve as a dangerous but secret way for moving about the city; the lower levels are said to be infested with ancient traps and treasures, left over from the

days of the Geomancers. Few people dare to venture into these lower levels; fewer still emerge alive.

### Secrets of Afyal

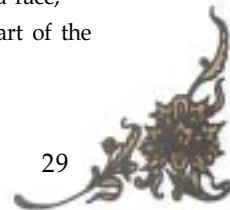
Besides the padishah's madness, the city is distinguished by its caste-conscious merchant houses, who observe rigid customs dictated by social station. Visitors are notoriously uneducated in these elaborate rituals (unless they have the Etiquette non-weapon proficiency), and embarrassing conflicts are a common sight on the city streets. Groveling, especially at court, is a common survival trait in the City of Elephants.

One mystery of the Isle of the Elephant revolves around the Lost One, who merged his life force into the elephants of the island. For this reason the elephants of Afyal seem more intelligent and capable than their brethren on the mainland. An encounter with the Lost One is described in "Secrets of the Seal."

### Secrets of Rog'osto

Although the infighting between the various tower-lords is kept to a minimum thanks to the khedive's adroit political skills, conflicts between the amir al-burj have lately taken on a covert, secretive nature that in no way diminishes their violence or destructive intensity. Seeking the khedive's assistance is seen as a sign of weakness, earning the disdain of the other tower-lords. Instead of resorting to cowardice, the powerful tower residents favor protective alliances, assuring that any incursion or insult will be met with swift retribution. Of course, this low-grade conflict is kept strictly out of the public's sight. To her credit, the khedive is completely aware of the frequent "spats" between the various tower-lords. She only steps in when conflicts escalate to the point that they become noticeable (or damaging) to the average citizen.

Rog'osto's great secret involves the nature of its mysterious towers. The current inhabitants of the City of Spires assume that their city was always on the surface. In reality, the great towers were built by an undersea race, the locathah, long before humans came to this part of the world, when the land was underwater.



## Chapter Seven

# New Magical Items

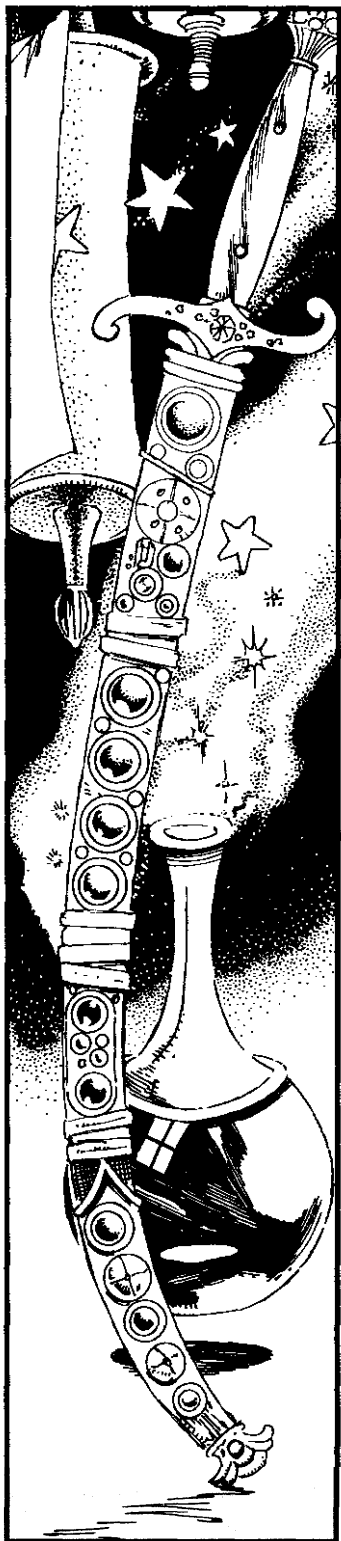
*The influence of a talisman actually comes from the spiritual powers derived from the substance of force. These powers exercise a powerful and forceful activity upon the things for which the talisman is composed, with the help of spherical secrets, numerical Proportions, and vapors that attract the spirituality of the talisman and are mentally enclosed in it.*

—Ibn Khaldun, from the *Muqaddimah*

The Ruined Kingdoms are renowned for their strange and dangerous magical items, found nowhere else in the Land of Fate. Many of these ancient devices were fashioned by the Geomancers, who were adept at creating magical tools and weapons. Still more were made to combat the Geomancers. Later generations sought to imitate these powerful devices; many such experiments resulted in the creation of cursed magical items, such as *scarabs of death*, *stones of weight*, and *amulets of inescapable location*. Finally, a few bizarre magical items were created by the cults of forgotten gods that once thrived in the Ruined Kingdoms.

## Passive Talismans

Most ancient magical items from the Ruined Kingdoms—loosely and interchangeably termed talismans, amulets, seals, and scarabs—fall into two general categories. The first group, termed passive or defensive talismans, had a constantly functioning enchantment. They were worn as ornamental jewelry, literally or abstractly modeled after lucky animals or insects, such as the mason wasp, winged serpent, or scarab beetle. Passive talismans could be incorporated into brooches, signet rings, earrings, anklets, bracelets, necklaces, even crowns and headdresses. Many of the magical items from the *DMG* can be “dressed up” in this fashion to make them seem new and unique to the players. For instance, consider an *amulet of life protection* worked into a signet ring, a pair of earrings set with *pearls of power*, or a *jewel of attacks* adorning a cursed crown; all of these suggestions use







standard magical items in a way that will seem exotic to even experienced players familiar with the *DMG*.

*Talismans of Feather Falling, Fire Resistance, Free Action, Jumping, Protection, Regeneration:* These devices were popular in the Ruined Kingdoms before they became adapted to the magical rings common today in the Land of Fate (see the appropriate ring descriptions in the *DMG*). As with magical rings, no more than two talismans will simultaneously operate on a person.

*Amulet of Mental Fortitude:* This potent device, a more powerful and ancient cousin of the *amulet of proof against location and detection* described in the *DMG*, protects its wearer from all devices and spells that detect, influence, or read emotions or thoughts, similar to the 8th-level wizard spell, *mind blank*. This protection also extends to prevent discovery or information-gathering by divination spells, scrying devices, and even *wishes*. Finally, this device also blocks all psionic or telepathic attacks, although the wearer is prevented from using his or her own psionic talents, if any, while the talisman is worn (7,000 XP).

## Active Talismans

Active or offensive talismans only operate if displayed while a command word or phrase is spoken (the *scarab of insanity* from the *DMG* is a good example of such a device). Also called handglyphs, they were the favorite weapons of the Geomancers, who developed them to a deadly art. These devices typically took the form of small, circular medallions, perhaps three to four inches in diameter. In the case of Geomancer handglyphs, the medallion would be inscribed with *rba'* runes on the front side, the wheel-shaped *asfr* symbol adorning the back surface. A small chain was sometimes attached to a handglyph, so it could be worn as a necklace or wrapped around the wrist in combat. In some cases, these devices were incorporated into magical armor, helmets, shields, and the pommels of weapons. In these instances the handglyph was known as a ward-stone.

*Amulet of Terror:* When activated, this talisman cloaks the wielder in a purple aura of malevolence, terrible to behold. Everyone within 30' of the wielder must make a

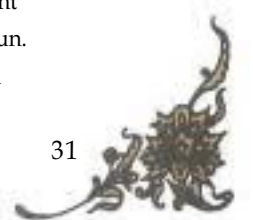
saving throw vs. spells with a -2 penalty or stand rooted to the spot, frozen in terror, for 2-5 rounds. These devices have 20-50 charges when discovered (3,000 XP).

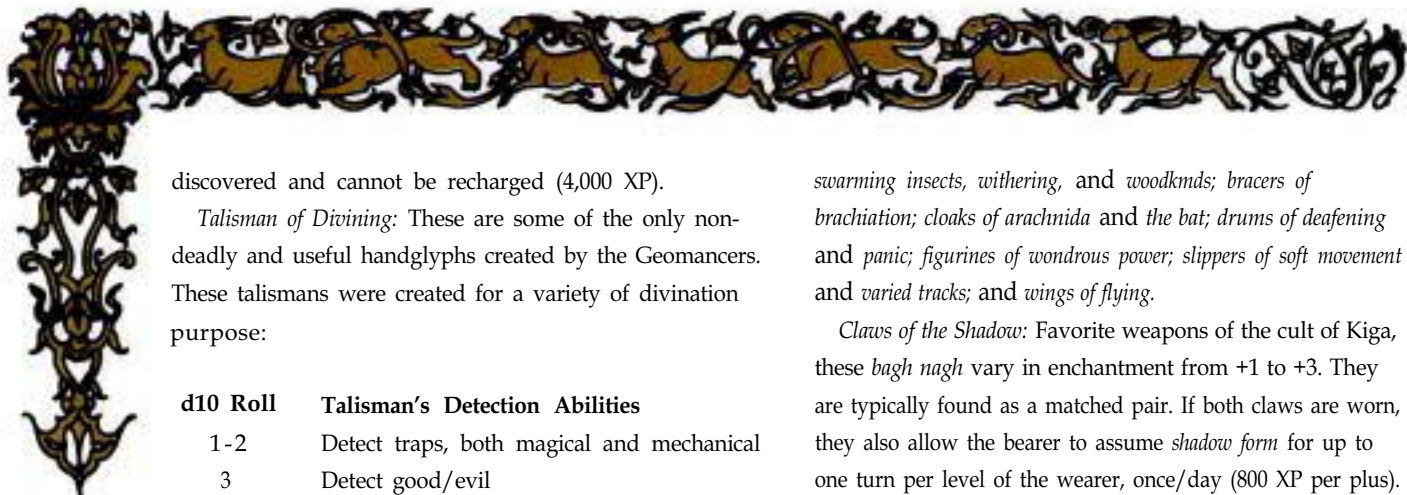
*Handglyphs of Fire, Lightning, Cold, or Disintegration:* These were the Geomancers' primary weapons, each enchanted with one type of offensive magic cast at 12th-level of ability—usually *fireball*, *lightning bolt*, *cone of cold*, or *disintegrate* spells. When discovered in ruins, they will usually have 1-4 charges remaining. They typically have a maximum range of 30 yards. The secret to recharging these deadly devices is lost to all but a handful of mages currently living in Rog'osto, who charge dearly for their services (1,800 XP).

*Handglyph of the Monolith:* The wielder of this fearsome device can summon an earth monolith in 1d4 rounds by uttering a single command word. If earth, mud, or clay is available, a 30 HD creature will appear; if only sand or raw, unworked stone is available, a 20 HD creature will be summoned. A monolith summoned from earth, mud, or clay is capable of inflicting 8d8 points of damage; one summoned from sand or unworked stone does 6d8 points. An earth monolith cannot be summoned from worked stone. The area of summoning for an earth monolith must be at least 20' square and have a volume of 20 cubic yards.

Unlike the modern spell *unleash monolith*, this ancient device allows the summoner to control and direct the monster without fear of reprisal. The summoner must concentrate on the monolith for it to obey his or her instructions, but the summoner can otherwise talk and move about, though he or she cannot enter melee or cast spells so long as the monolith remains (up to nine hours). These devices have 1-3 charges when discovered and can only be used once per week. They cannot be recharged (6,000 XP).

*Stunglyph:* These handglyphs are common in Geomancer ruins. Sages believe that they result from a more powerful and ancient precursor to the modern *create soundstaff* spell. Although their means of creation are unknown, they can discharge a sonic blast in the shape of a cone 60 feet long, with its origin at the hand-held glyph, spreading to a width of 20 feet. Those caught within the blast suffer the effects of power word, stun. These handglyphs contain from 2-8 charges when





discovered and cannot be recharged (4,000 XP).

*Talisman of Divining:* These are some of the only non-deadly and useful handglyphs created by the Geomancers. These talismans were created for a variety of divination purpose:

d10 Roll	Talisman's Detection Abilities
1-2	Detect traps, both magical and mechanical
3	Detect good/evil
4	Detect gems (kind and number)
5	Detect precious metals (kind and amount)
6	Detect undead
7	Detect poison
8	Detect magic
9	Detect invisibility
10	Detect secret doors

These divinations operate within a 30' radius of the talisman and are unaffected by the presence of stone, metal, or wood, though they are completely blocked by any quantity of salt water, alcohol, iodine, or quicksilver. These rechargeable devices contain 1-100 charges when discovered (5,000 XP).

*Talisman of Force:* These devices, crafted by the Geomancers, could erect a spherical *wall of force* 20' in diameter, centered on the wielder. The wall of force lasts 24 rounds and draws one charge. One of these talismans typically carries 2-8 charges when discovered, and only a select group of wizards from Rog'osto know how to recharge them (4,000 XP).

## Cult Magical Items

The Forgotten Gods of the Ruined Kingdoms have inspired the creation of a many potent magical items. For instance, *stones of good luck*, carved in the shape of an elephant or a white human-headed serpent, are common in the ruins of Afyal and west of Dihliz. Members of the modern cults do not hesitate to use magical items when they become available. Their favorites include *rings of avian control*, *animal friendship*, *chameleon power*, and *mammal control*; *staves of*

*swarming insects*, *withering*, and *woodkmds*; *bracers of brachiation*; *cloaks of arachnida* and *the bat*; *drums of deafening* and *panic*; *figurines of wondrous power*; *slippers of soft movement* and *varied tracks*; and *wings of flying*.

*Claws of the Shadow:* Favorite weapons of the cult of Kiga, these *bagh nagh* vary in enchantment from +1 to +3. They are typically found as a matched pair. If both claws are worn, they also allow the bearer to assume *shadow form* for up to one turn per level of the wearer, once/day (800 XP per plus).

*Rod of Rending:* This ebony rod, fashioned by servants of Ragarra, ends in a carved crocodile's claw. Like the new clerical spell *rending* (described in Chapter Three), this magical item rends or destroys personal property, including livestock and slaves; it has no effect if cast on a free citizen or wild creature. The wielder can affect a single creature or item of up to 8 cubic feet in size with this weapon.

Magical items are allowed a saving throw vs. disintegration with a +4 bonus to resist the rod's effects; creatures of greater than animal Intelligence or more than 4 Hit Dice are also entitled a saving throw vs. death magic. Unless the save is successful, the target is completely shredded, resulting in its complete destruction if the target is an object, or 3-24 (3d8) points of damage if the target is an owned animal or slave. Each use of the rod draws one charge. It can be recharged (4,000 XP).

*Staff of the Teak Serpent:* This unusually powerful variant of the *staff of the serpent* is native to the Ruined Kingdoms. The staff strikes as a +3 magical weapon and inflicts 4-9 (1d6+3) points of damage when it hits. If a priest throws the staff to the ground, it grows from its 6' length to become a teak serpent 35' long (AC 0, HD 8+8, hp 74, MVT 9, THAC0 11; see 8-page booklet of monsters and villains). The snake will entwine if it scores a hit, the opponent being constricted for 5-15 (2d6+3) points of damage. Up to three human-sized creatures can be held and squeezed in the serpent's coiled grip simultaneously. The victims remain trapped by the serpent until they die, the creature is destroyed, or the python's owner commands it to release them. If killed while in snake form, the staff is destroyed. The staff requires no charges (8,000 XP).





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	<b>Lesser</b>	<b>Greater</b>
<b>CLIMATE/TERRAIN:</b>	Any	Tropical/forests
<b>FREQUENCY:</b>	Rare	Very rare
<b>ORGANIZATION:</b>	Cadres	Solitary
<b>ACTIVITY CYCLE:</b>	Any	Any
<b>DIET:</b>	Carnivore	Carnivore
<b>INTELLIGENCE:</b>	Average (8-10)	Very to genius (11-18)
<b>TREASURE:</b>	Nil	A
<b>ALIGNMENT:</b>	Chaotic evil	Chaotic evil
<b>NO. APPEARING:</b>	1-20 (or more)	1
<b>ARMOR CLASS:</b>	1	-2
<b>MOVEMENT:</b>	9	12 (as human) or 9, Sw 12 (Fl 18, D)
<b>HIT DICE:</b>	5+5	9+18
<b>THACO:</b>	16	As priest
<b>NO. OF ATTACKS:</b>	1	1 (as human) or 2
<b>DAMAGE/ATTACK:</b>	By weapon type +2 or 2d8 (bite)	By weapon type +6 or 3d6 (bite) /2d10 (tail)
<b>SPECIAL ATTACKS:</b>	Fight and save as 5th-level warriors	See below
<b>SPECIAL DEFENSES:</b>	Nil	See below
<b>MAGIC RESISTANCE:</b>	10%	20%
<b>SIZE:</b>	M (6' tall)	M (6' tall) or H (30' long)
<b>MORALE:</b>	Fearless (20)	Champion (16)
<b>LEVEL/XP VALUE:</b>	1,400	8,000+1,000 per level above 12

**S**egarrans are special minions of Ragarra, an ancient, evil goddess of the jungle, typhoons, and revenge, once openly worshipped in the Ruined Kingdoms.

A lesser segarran has the head and tail of a crocodile but the stocky, heavily muscled body of a human or humanoid. Lesser segarrans are usually created from devoted followers, but they also can be created from infant crocodiles using a spell granted only to Ragarra's priestesses. These lesser servants have average human intelligence and can communicate in Midani or any of the dead tongues of the Ruined Kingdoms.

**Combat:** Lesser segarrans fight using the tactics and weapons of 5th-level human warriors, though their supernatural strength lends them a +2 bonus on damage. If unarmed, they attack by biting for 2-16 (2d8) points of damage. All lesser segarrans have 10% magic resistance.

**Habitat/Society:** Once, when the powers of Ragarra were great, even her lesser servants could assume human form and walk the city streets unnoticed; now they are limited to their half-reptile form. They are found primarily in the Ruined Kingdoms and Zakhara's eastern jungles, but they sometimes can be encountered mingling with human society at night, when they can hide their monstrosity through careful disguise. More often they are used as defenders for Ragarra's few shrines or as protectors for her chosen few.

**Ecology:** All segarrans are voracious carnivores. Though they usually subsist on animal meat, they ritually devour their enemies' remains at the end of every battle. When slain, they return to their original (human or baby crocodile) form.

### Greater Segarran

Only Ragarra's most favored high-level priestesses become greater segarrans as a result of powerful magic. Once transformed, they retain their original human form. Furthermore, they can also assume a towering reptilian shape at will, with the transformation taking but a single round. This reptilian form depends on the personality or whim of the priestess, but usually includes at least the



head and tail of a giant crocodile. At 16th level, a greater segarran's reptile form can also include a pair of giant bat wings, permitting her to fly at a rate of 18.

**Combat:** While in human form, Ragarra's chosen fight using the tactics, magical items, and weapons of priests, though their supernatural strength lends them a +6 bonus on damage. They never wear armor, though they may use magical items (such as a *ring of protection*) to enhance their Armor Class. All greater segarrans have 20% magic resistance.

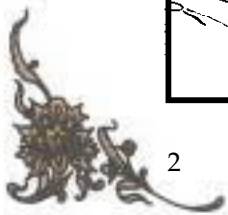
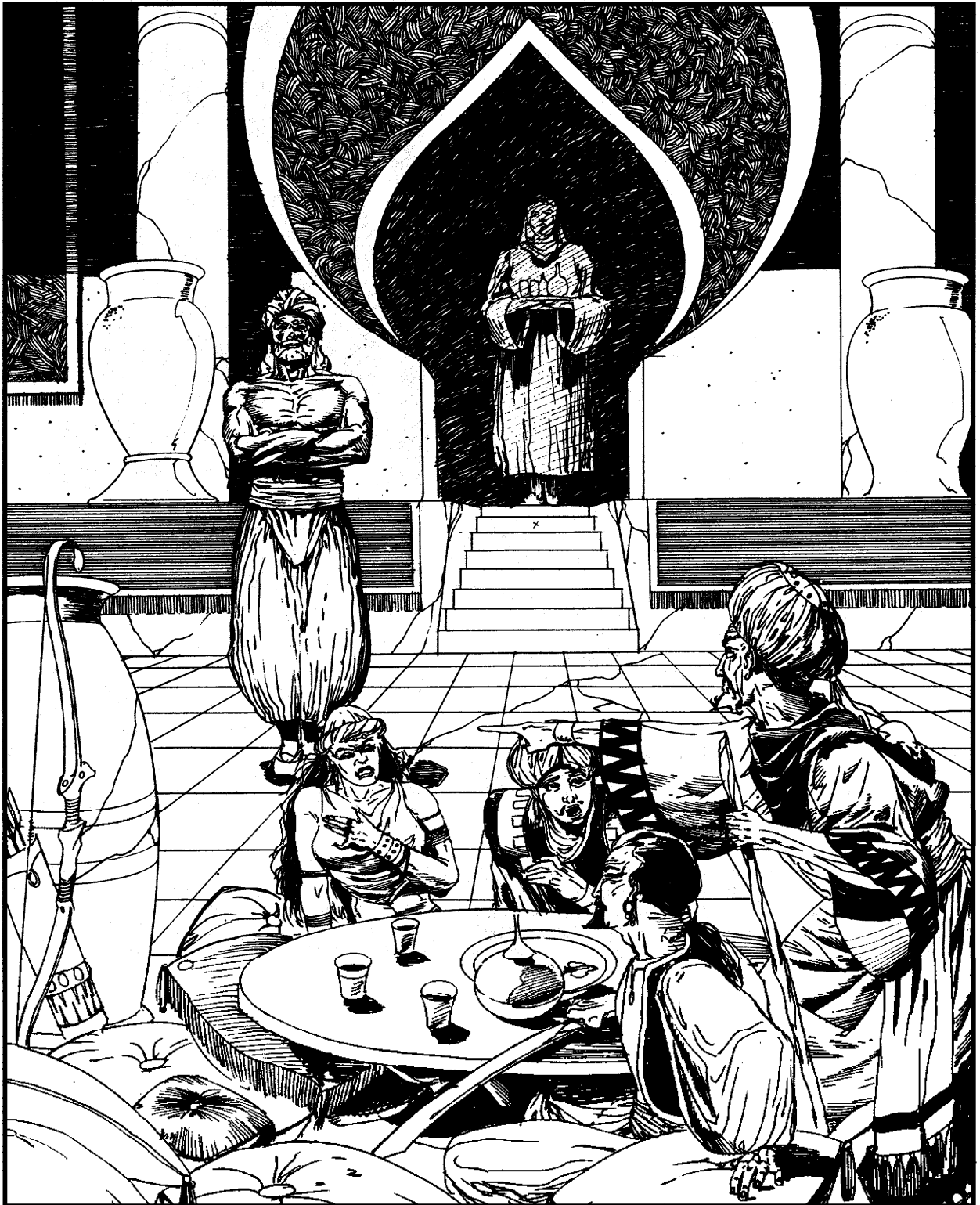
Although they retain most of their priest spells from before the transformation, greater segarrans cannot memorize the highest level spells to which they are normally allowed (for instance, a 13th-level priestess, while a greater segarran, cannot memorize or cast her 6th-level spells).

In her reptilian form, a greater segarran can attack with her massive jaws (3d6 points of damage) and swipe up to 3 opponents standing beside or behind her with her powerful tail (2d10 points of damage). At 16th level, a segarran's bat wings can also be used for two wing buffets instead of flight, each inflicting 2d6 points of damage. All victims of a tail swipe or wing buffet must save vs. paralyzation or be stunned for 1-4 rounds.

**Habitat/Society:** In addition to the loss of her most powerful spells, a priestess of Ragarra must have a Wisdom of 17 and be at least 12th level to complete the exhausting ceremony that transforms her into a greater segarran.

In return for such power, the priestess must swear to undertake a difficult quest or perform a dangerous service for her goddess. Those few who disappoint Ragarra are punished with a painful demise and suffer an eternity of undeath. More details about the cult of Ragarra can be found in Chapter Three of the Campaign Guide.

**Ecology:** Greater segarrans can easily infiltrate human society. The only clue to their monstrous nature is their craving for raw meat. They must eat the flesh of their fallen enemies as a tribute to Ragarra.





## The House of Reehan

**Batul al-Reehan al-Dihlizi** (hmT/mr/12): AC 2; MV 12; hp 27; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon (jambiya: 1d4+3); Str 10, Dex 17, Con 4, Int 15, Wis 11, Cha 16; SA: quadruple damage backstab, PP 95%, OL 77%, F/RT 85%, MS 94%, HS 87%, HN 49%, CW 95%, RL 85%; AL NG; THAC0 15. Magical items: *bracers of defense* AC 5, *jambiya of speed* +3 (concealed in stout walking stick), *potion of flying*.

**Mabruk al-Hanash** (hfW/so/11): AC 2 (*armor spell* withstands 19 hp) or 6; MV 12; hp 46; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (staff: 1d6) or spell; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 18, Wis 12, Cha 16; AL NE; THAC0 16, XP 11,000. Mabruk is a sorceress of wind and fire. Magical items: *ring of genie summoning* (Saleh, see below), *talisman of protection* +3\*, *amulet of mental fortitude*\*, *magical staff*\*\* containing *magic missile*, *fire truth*, and *charm person* spells; *scroll of protection from elementals*; *potions of extra-healing*, *fire resistance*, and *polymorph self*. Spells: *audible glamer*, *avert evil eye*, *burning hunds*, *friends*; *alter self*, *mirror image*, *sundazzle*, *wall against noise*; *blink*, *dispel magic*, *sunscorch*, *wizard sight*\*\*; *fumble*, *improved invisibility*, *thunderstaff*\*\*; *death smoke*, *domination*, *shield of winds*.

**Saleh**, an efreeti: Int Very (12); AL LN; AC 2; MV 9, Fl 24 (B); HD 10; hp 68; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 3d8+3; SA spells; SD fire resistance; SZ L (12'); ML 16; XP 8,000. Magical abilities (at 15th level of ability): *produce flame* and *cause pyrotechnics* at will; *detect magic*, *gaseous form*, *invisibility*, *polymorph self*, *wall of fire*, and *create an illusion*, each once/day. He can also *enlarge* himself once/day at 10th level of ability.

**Omar bin Mabruk** (hmF/a/5): AC 7; MV 12; hp 34; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon (scimitar: 1d8+1); Str 15, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 13; AL NG; THAC0 16; studded leather armor, dagger, *scimitar* +1, *potion of healing*.

**Noora** (hfP/h/3): AC 10; MV 12; hp 13; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (jambiya: 1d4); Str 11, Dex 7, Con 9, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 15; AL LG; THAC0 20. Spells: *bless*, *command*, *cure light wounds* (x2), *light*; *hold person*, *silence 15' radius*, *slow poison*.

**Wali, Abu, Mahmud, Hatim, Bashi, and Nadan**, mamluks (hmF/mk/5): AC 5 (lamellar armor & shield); MV 9; hp 31, 35, 40, 42, 43, 48; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon (scimitar, >: 1d8+3); Str 18, Dex 15, Con 16; SA: specialized in scimitar; AL LN; THAC0 16.

**War dogs** (6): Int Semi- (4); AL N; AC 4 (leather barding); MV 12; HD 2+2; hp 10, 11, 13, 14, 16, 18; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg: 2d4; ML 10; SZ M (6' long); XP 65.

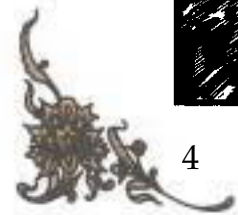
**Nurudin al-Kalaab** (hmT/sl/9): AC 4; MV 12; hp 40; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (scimitar: 1d8); Str 9, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 11, Cha 16; SA: quadruple damage backstab, poison, PP 77%, OL 95%, F/RT 45%, MS 82%, HS 69%, HN 55%, CW 95%, RL 10%; AL LE; THAC0 16; XP 5,000; leather armor, poisoned scimitar (Type E: save vs. poison or die; take 20 points of damage on a successful save); Magical items: *rope of entanglement*, *potions of speed* and *invisibility*.

\*New spell or item (described in the Campaign Guide).

\*\*Spell or item found in the *Tome of Magic*.

(Unmarked spells appear in the *Player's Handbook* or *Arabian Adventures*).







## The Undead Sha'ir

### **Raja al-Sadiq Abdul-Tisan, the Audacious Thunderer, Breaker of the Forbidden Seal, the First to be**

**Summoned.** Female lich, formerly a 15th-level human wizard (sha'ir):

Int Genius (17); AL NE; AC -2 (*stoneskin* blocks 10 attacks); MV 6, FI 15 (magic carpet); HD 11; hp 54; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10 (touch) or by spell; SA paralytic touch; SD magical weapons to hit, standard undead immunities; SZ M (5'); ML 18; XP 8,000.

Magical items: *talisman of protection +2\**, *robe of repetition\*\**, *stunglyph\** (2 charges), *staff of thunder and lightning* (12 charges), *genie prison* (Bababdulla, see below), *carpet of flying*.

Spells—1st: *affect normal fires*, *alarm*, *burning hands*, *charm person*, *fire truth*, *magic missile*, *sand slumber*, *sleep* (89% chance, 1d6+1 rounds); *chill touch*, *cure light wounds* (85% chance, 1d6+1 hours)

2nd: *bind*, *invisibility*, *knock*, *locate object*, *pillar of sand*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *rope trick*, *strength*, *sundazzle*, *web*, *wizard lock* (89% chance, 1d6+2 rounds)

3rd: *clairaudience*, *clairvoyance*, *dispel magic*, *hold person*, *lightning bolt*, *protection from normal missiles*, *slow*, *sunscorch*, (89% chance, 1d6+3 rounds)

4th: *confusion*, *dimension door*, *ice storm*, *stoneskin*, *wall of fire*, *wind blade* (85% chance, 1d6+4 rounds); *ennervation* (55% chance, 1d6+4 hours)

5th: *animate dead*, *cloudkill*, *fabricate*, *seeming*, *shield of winds*, *teleport*, *wind carpet* (75% chance, takes 1d6+5 rounds); *slay living* (45% chance, 1d6+5 hours)

6th: *death fog*, *disintegrate*, *flames of justice*, *invisible stalker*, *legend lore* (65% chance, 1d6+6 rounds)

7th: *limited wish*, *prismatic spray*, *reverse gravity* (55% chance, 1d6+7 turns); *suffocate\*\** (25% chance, 1d6+7 hours);

8th: *glassteel maze*, *polymorph any object* (45% chance, 1d6+8 turns)

9th: *powerword, kill* (35% chance, 1d6+9 turns)

**Kiorimah**, a fire gen: Int Low (6); AL NE; AC 5; MV FI 18; HD 7; hp 41; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SA produce flame, SD save as 30th-level wizard; SZ S (1' tall); ML 16; XP 4,000; MC13: AQ. Any attacks directed against the gen that involve fire are at -2 to hit, inflict -2 hp of damage per die, and entitle him to a +2 bonus on his saving throw.

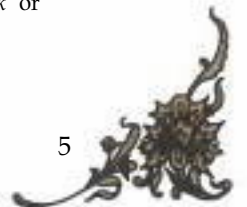
**Ten-Fingered Hand**, a tasked slayer genie: Int High (14); AL NE; AC -2; MV 24, FI 30 (B); HD 12; hp 90; THAC0 9; #AT 2; Dmg: 2d8/2d8 or by weapon type +9; MR 15% SZ L (10' tall); ML 20; XP 12,000; MC13: AQ. Can cast the following spells once/day: *assume gaseous form*, *blindness*, *darkness*, *dimension door*, *improved invisibility*, *misdirection*, *polymorph self*, *silence 15' radius*, and *ventriloquism*.

**Bababdulla**, Marid and Slave of the Blue Bottle: Int High (14); AL CG; AC 0; MV 9, FI 15 (B), Sw 24; HD 13; hp 76; THAC0 7; #AT 1; Dmg 4d8; SA can *create water* at will and send it jetting up to 60 yards away (automatically strikes for 1d6 damage; victim is blinded 1d6 rounds unless he or she makes a saving throw vs. breath weapon); SD immune to water-based attacks; +2 bonus to saving throws, attacks, and damage from cold-based attacks; SZ H (18'); ML 16; XP 16,000. Can cast the following spells as 26th-level wizards: *water walk* (at will); *assume liquid form*, *detect evil/good*, *detect invisible*, *detect magic*, *invisibility*, *polymorph self*, *purify water* (twice/day); *assume gaseous form*, *bestow water breathing*, *lower water*, *part water*, *wall of fog* (7/day); *alter reality* (once/year). Marids are vulnerable to fire; attacks against them employing open flames inflict +1 damage per die and impose a -1 penalty on the marid's saving throw.

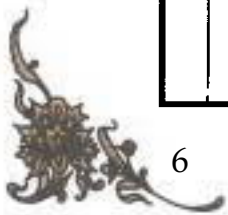
\*New spell or item (described in the Campaign Guide).

\*\*Spell or item found in the *Tome of Magic*.

(Unmarked spells appear in the *Player's Handbook* or *Arabian Adventures*.)









## The Arch-Geomancer

**Tisan Balshareska, Ninth of Nine, Ruler of the Supreme Council, Arch-Geomancer, Sunderer of Dreams, She Who Turns the Wheel of Fate.** Dual-Classed, 15th-level human female priest (outland), 20th-level wizard (ajami). AL LE; AC -7 (*stoneskin* blocks 15 attacks); MV 12; hp 100; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon +1 (Strength bonus), magical item, or spell; SD: see magical items below; *lifeproof* (tattoos); *personal permanency spells combined with alacrity\*\**, *comprehend languages*, *detect invisibility*, *protection from normal missiles*, *read magic*, *tongues*, *wizard sight\*\**; Str 17, Dex 17, Con 16, Int 20, Wis 19, Cha 18; AL LE; THAC0 11, XP 50,000 (for physical form; additional 50,000 for destroying *lifeproofing* receptacle). Magical items: *phylactery of long years*, *talisman of protection +5\**, *bracers of defense AC2 talisman of force\** (5 ch.), three *ioun stones* (regenerates 1 hp/turn; +1 protection; absorbs up to 60 levels of spells, up to 8th level), *ring of human influence*, *rod of smiting* (38 ch.), *scarab of terror\** (22 ch.), *handglyph of the monolith\** (2 ch). Priest Spells: *cure light wounds* (×9); *aid*, *draw upon unholy might\*\**, *know alignment*, *silence 15' radius* (×3), *slow poison*, *withdraw*; *animate dead*, *cause blindness*, *cause disease*, *dispel magic* (×2), *meld into stone*, *negative plane protection*, *speak with dead*; *abjure* (×2) *detect lie*, *divination* (×2), *undetectable lie* (×2); *raise dead*, *slay living*, *spike stones*, *true seeing*; *wall of thorns*, *word of recall*; *animate rock*. Wizard Spells: *charm person*, *chill touch*, *fist of stone\*\**, *magic missile*, *spider climb*; *insatiable thirst\*\**, *mirror image*, *sundazzle*, *wall against noise*, *web*; *fly*, *lightning bolt*, *Maximilian's stony grasp\*\**, *slow*, *sunscorch*; *dimension door*, *enervation*, *improved invisibility*, *sunfire*, *wall of ice*; *cone of cold*, *domination*, *feblemind*, *teleport*, *wall of force*; *death spell*, *disintegrate*, *flames of justice*, *Lorloveim's shadowy transformation\*\**; *acid storm\*\**, *banishment*, *suffocate\*\**; *Abi-Dalzim's horrid wilting\*\**, *polymorph any object*, *sink*; *gate*, *powerword kill*.

**Malakir**, a greater baatezu, Cornugon: Int Exceptional (16); AL LE; AC -2; MV 9, FI 18 (C); HD 10; hp 72; THAC0 11; #AT 4 or 1 + weapon; Dmg: 1d4/1d4/

1d4+1/1d3 or 2d8+7 (scimitar)/1d3 (tail); SA: fear aura (5' radius), tail attack (1d3, continues to bleed for 1 hp/round until treated); SD: regenerate 2 hp/round, +2 or better weapon to hit, half damage from cold or gas, immune to fire and poison; MR 50%; disguised by Tisan with *permanent illusion*; SZ L (9' tall); ML 14; XP 36,500; MC8: Outer Planes. Can use the following spell-like abilities at will: *advanced illusion*, *animate dead*, *charm person*, *detect magic*, *ESP*, *infravision*, *know alignment* (always active), *produce flame*, *pyrotechnics*, *suggestion*, *teleport without error* (once/round); *lightning bolt* (3/day); *gate* (2-12 barbazu, 50% chance), *wall of fire* (once/day). Magical Item: *great scimitar of sharpness*.

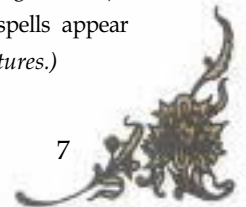
**Barbazu**, lesser baatezu (12); Int Low (5); AL LE; AC 3; MV 15; HD 6+6; hp 36 each; THAC0 13; #AT 3 or 1; Dmg: 1d2/1d2/1d8 or 2d6 (glaive); SA: *glaive of wounding disease*; *battle frenzy* (10% cumulative chance per round: +2 to hit and damage, doubles attacks, but AC raises to 6); SD: hit only by magical weapons, half damage from cold or gas, immune to fire and poison; MR 30%; SZ M (6' tall); ML 12; XP 23,500; MC 8: Outer Planes. Can use the following spell-like abilities once/round: *advanced illusion*, *affect normal fires*, *animate dead*, *charm person*, *command*, *fear* (by touch), *infravision*, *know alignment* (always active), *produce flame*, *suggestion*, *teleport without error*; can also *gate* in 1-6 additional barbazu (once/day, 35% chance).

**Earth Monolith**: Int Low (7); AL N; AC 2; MV 6; HD 30; hp 200; THAC0 1; #AT 1; Dmg: 8d8; SD: +2 or better weapon to hit; SZ G (30' tall); ML 17; XP 25,000,

**Keskeg**, Tisan's earth elemental: Int Low (7); AL N; AC 2; MV 6; HD 16; hp 112; THAC0 5; #AT 1; Dmg: 4d8; SD: +2 or better weapon to hit; SZ H (16' tall); ML 17; XP 10,000.

\*New spell or item (described in the Campaign Guide).

\*\*Spell from the *Tome of Magic*. (Unmarked spells appear in the *Player's Handbook* or *Arabian Adventures*.)



	Herald	Teak
<b>CLIMATE/TERRAIN:</b>	Tropical/forests	Tropical/forests
<b>FREQUENCY:</b>	Rare	Rare
<b>ORGANIZATION:</b>	Solitary	Solitary
<b>ACTIVITY CYCLE:</b>	Any	Any
<b>DIET:</b>	Carnivore	Carnivore
<b>INTELLIGENCE:</b>	Very (11-12)	Animal (1)
<b>TREASURE:</b>	Nil	B, Q (x10), S, T
<b>ALIGNMENT:</b>	Neutral good	Neutral
<b>NO. APPEARING:</b>	1	1-2
<b>ARMOR CLASS:</b>	5	3
<b>MOVEMENT:</b>	24, Cl 18	9, Cl 6
<b>HIT DICE:</b>	4+4	8+8
<b>THACO:</b>	15	11
<b>NO. OF ATTACKS:</b>	2	2
<b>DAMAGE/ATTACK:</b>	1d4/1d4	1d6/2d6
<b>SPECIAL ATTACKS:</b>	Poison	Constriction, surprise
<b>SPECIAL DEFENSES:</b>	See Below	Camouflage
<b>MAGIC RESISTANCE:</b>	Nil	Nil
<b>SIZE:</b>	M (7' long)	H (30' long)
<b>MORALE:</b>	Average (8)	Average (10)
<b>LEVEL/XP VALUE:</b>	1,400	3,000

Two rare varieties of serpents can be found in the teeming eastern jungles of Zakhara, often in the company of other intelligent reptilian creatures.

## Herald Serpent

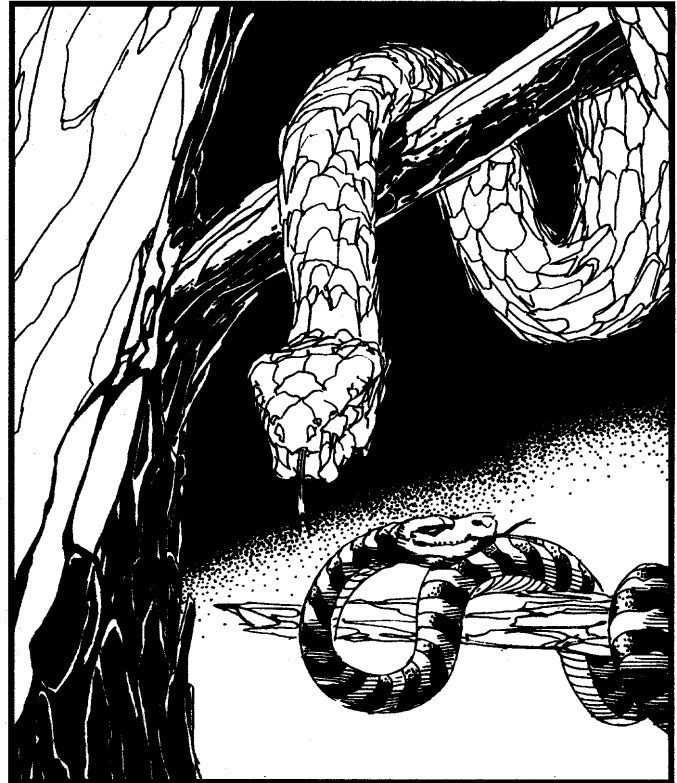
The herald is a lightning-swift reptile with sapphire or emerald colored eyes, and a body marked with black and gold bands. Heralds are the enchanted messengers of serpent lords. Like their masters, heralds are adept linguists and conversationalists, able to speak at least six languages fluently, including Midani.

**Combat:** Herald serpents are more likely to talk their way out of a confrontation than attack, using their silver tongues to flatter an opponent while planning an escape route. A herald can cast the following spells, once/day, at the 4th level of ability: *friends*, *hypnotism*, *comprehend languages*, *hypnotic pattern*, and *invisibility*.

If negotiation fails and escape is impossible, the herald can physically attack with its lightning-swift bite, striking twice per round for 1d4 points of damage. The bite automatically delivers a potent toxin, with an onset time of only 1-3 rounds (saving throw vs. poison negates). Victims of the poison suffer complete amnesia, forgetting their own identities, abilities, even memorized spells for 2-8 hours.

**Habitat/Society:** Herald serpents are the enchanted messengers of serpent lords, who imbue their servants with magical gifts so they can deliver important notices or act as envoys on their lord's behalf. Before their enchantment, heralds are a colorful variety of poisonous jungle snake. Heralds serve their lord willingly and are usually returned to their normal state after completing the mission for which they were enchanted. A *dispel magic*, successful against 16th-level magic, will transform a herald back into a giant poisonous snake with lethal poison.

**Ecology:** As an enchanted creature, herald serpents have no niche in the ecology of the world, though like any snake, they must eat live prey (birds and small animals, mostly) to survive.



## Teak Serpent

Teak serpents are a variety of huge constrictor snakes inhabiting the teak and ironwood forests of Zakhara. Adults often reach lengths exceeding 30'.

**Combat:** These reptiles resemble branches of the hardwood trees they inhabit, lending them a -2 bonus on surprise and a superior Armor Class (AC 3).

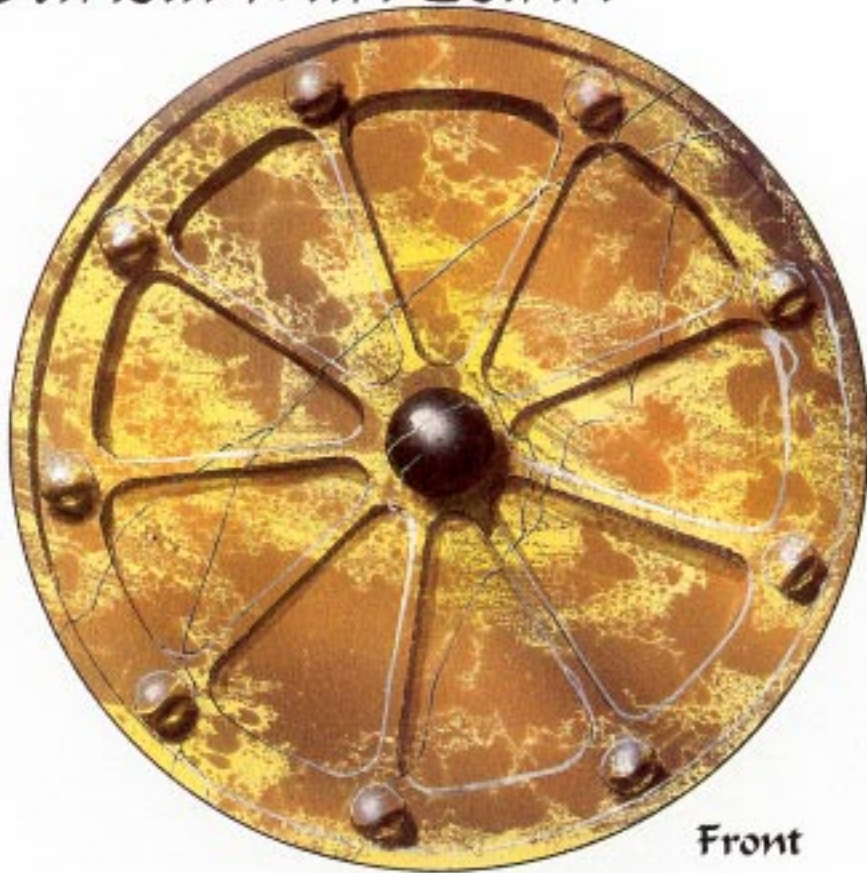
Teak serpents wait patiently in the upper canopy of trees for an unsuspecting victim to pass underneath, attacking from above with a combination bite (1d6 points of damage) and constriction attack. If a constriction attack is successful, the serpent will have wound part of its massive length around the victim, squeezing for 2d6 points of damage. The coils of a teak serpent are stronger than ironwood, requiring the combined efforts of 80 points of Strength to release a trapped victim. With their prodigious length, one of these serpents can constrict up to three human-sized victims simultaneously!

**Habitat/Society:** Because of their ferocity and immense size, teak serpents are feared in the jungles they inhabit. Teak serpents usually subsist on a diet of large animals (preferring baby elephants, when they are available), but they will attack a small group of human-sized creatures without hesitation. They often sleep for up to a week after feeding.

**Ecology:** The scales of a teak serpent, if used while casting *barkskin*, provide a +2 bonus to Armor Class for the duration of the spell. In the eastern jungles, teak serpents are sometimes captured by powerful kahins and bound into magic staves (see *staff of the teak serpent* in Chapter Seven of the Campaign Guide).

Card 1

# Seal of Suhail min Zann



Front



Back



## Breaker of The Ninth Chain

Scimitar, sentient holy avenger

**Alignment:** Lawful Good

**Intelligence:** 16

**Ego:** 21

**Languages:** Midani, Kadari, and Noga.

**Primary Abilities (10' radius):** Detect traps of large size, detect invisibility, detect geoglyphs.

**Special Purpose:** Destroy all Geomancers and their evil allies.

**Special Purpose Power:** Breaker inflicts double damage (including magical and Strength bonuses) when wielded against Geomancers or their allies.

**B**reaker was enchanted centuries ago by Imam Suhail for his younger brother, a young paladin named Ashtarek. In Suhail's final assault on Tadabbur, the warrior was slain in combat by Tisan and could not be raised. Breaker has never forgiven itself for failing Ashtarek.

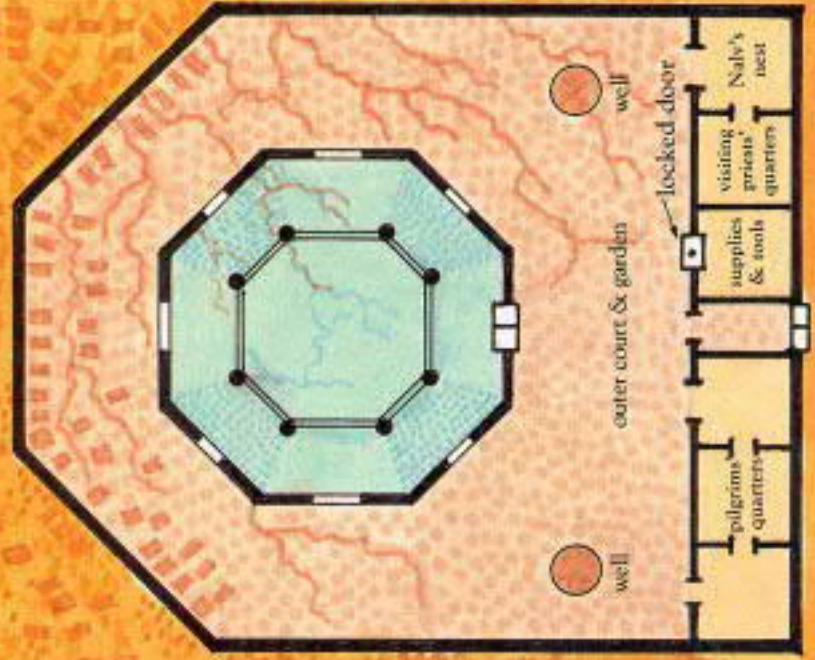
Although it would prefer to be wielded by a paladin, Breaker can still perform as a sentient *scimitar* +2 for any other lawful character. In the hands of a paladin, however, Breaker is a *scimitar* +5 and projects a golden sphere of power in a 5' radius. This sphere has a magic resistance of 50% and can *dispel magic* at the level of magic use equal to the level of the paladin. Against opponents of lawful evil alignment, Breaker inflicts +10 points of bonus damage.

Breaker will be discovered by the PCs if they successfully complete "Secrets of the Seal." In combination with the sacred book *Lions of Tomorrow* (described in the Campaign Guide), Breaker has the potential to destroy the last of the Geomancers in the final adventure, "Kismet."

While extremely intelligent, Breaker's special purpose makes it rather impatient with faint-hearted wielders. Extremely strong-willed and opinionated, Breaker is moralistic, self-righteous, and preachy. Characters had better stick to the letter of the Loregiver's Law while the scimitar is unsheathed, or they will hear a long sermon, for the scimitar will not stand to be used in any unrighteous cause.

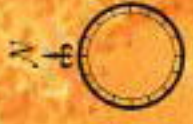
# Shrine of Suhail min Zann

cemetery



source of the tramans

*Handwritten notes:*  
source of the tramans  
source of the tramans



Scale: 1 inch equals 40 feet



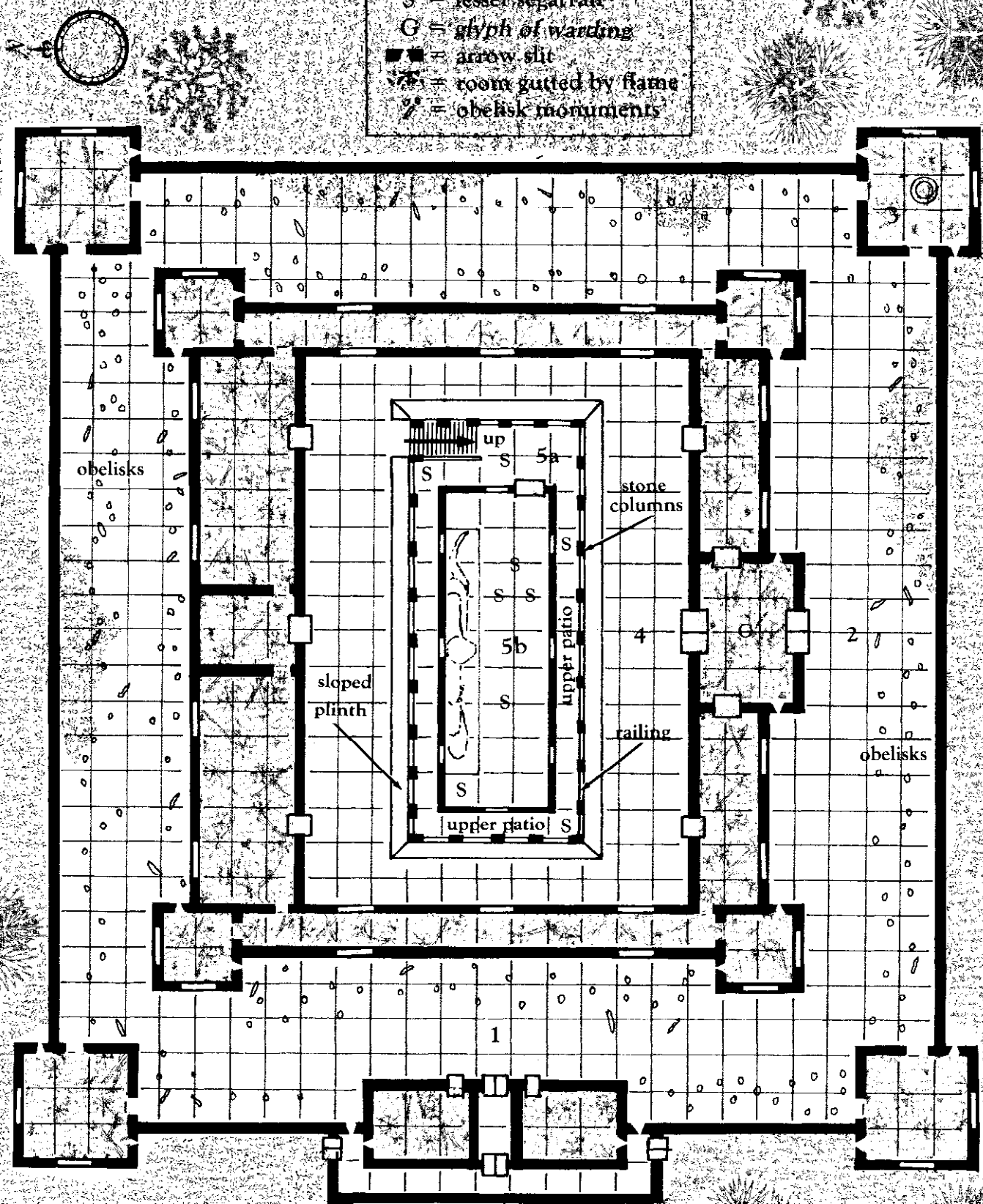
well

# Card 2 Temple of the Serpentine Empress

Scale: 1 square equals 10 feet

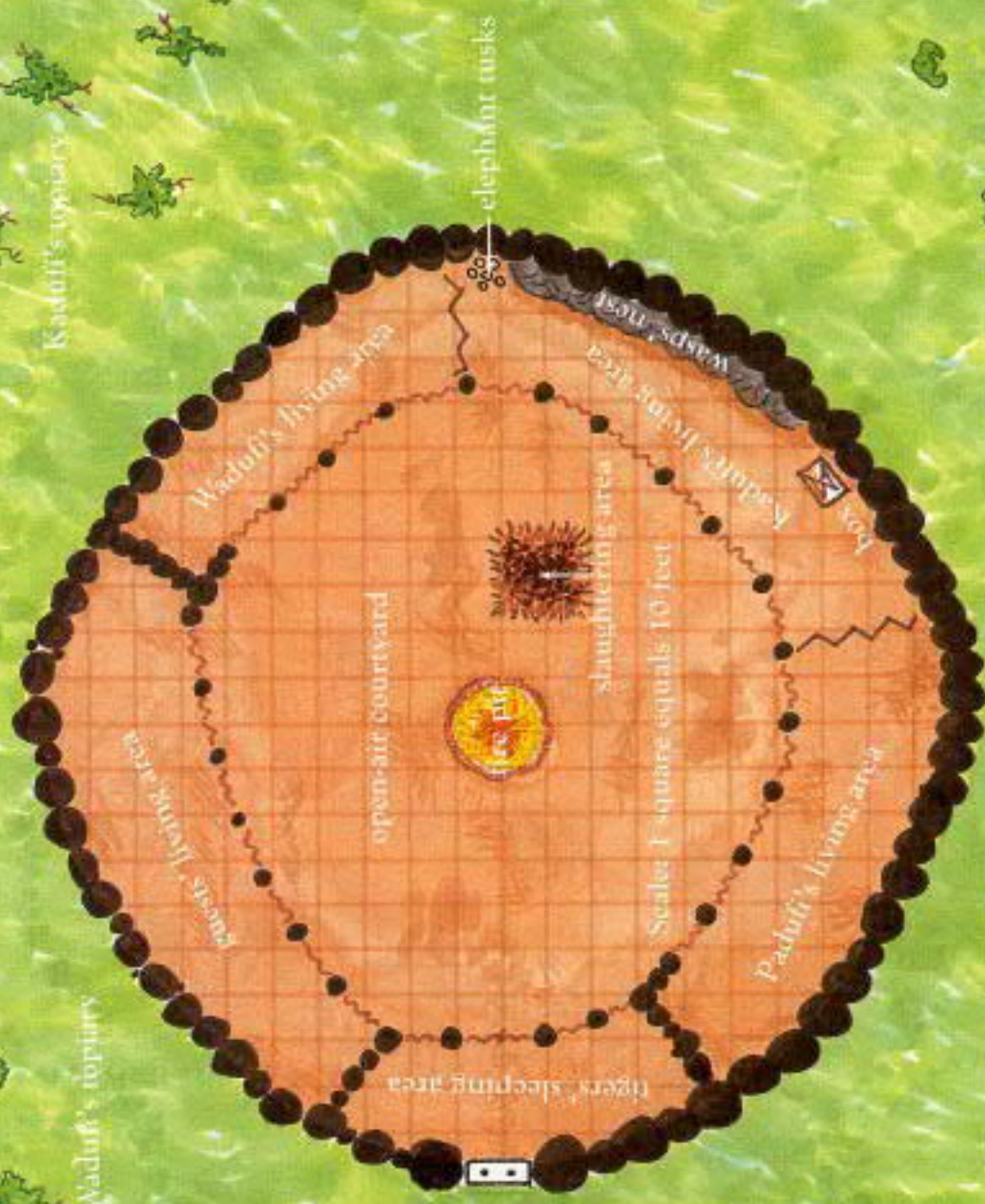
**KEY**

- S = lesser sarran
- G = glyph of warding
- = arrow slit
- ☼ = room gutted by flame
- ⚡ = obelisk monuments



Card 3

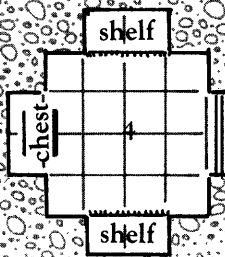
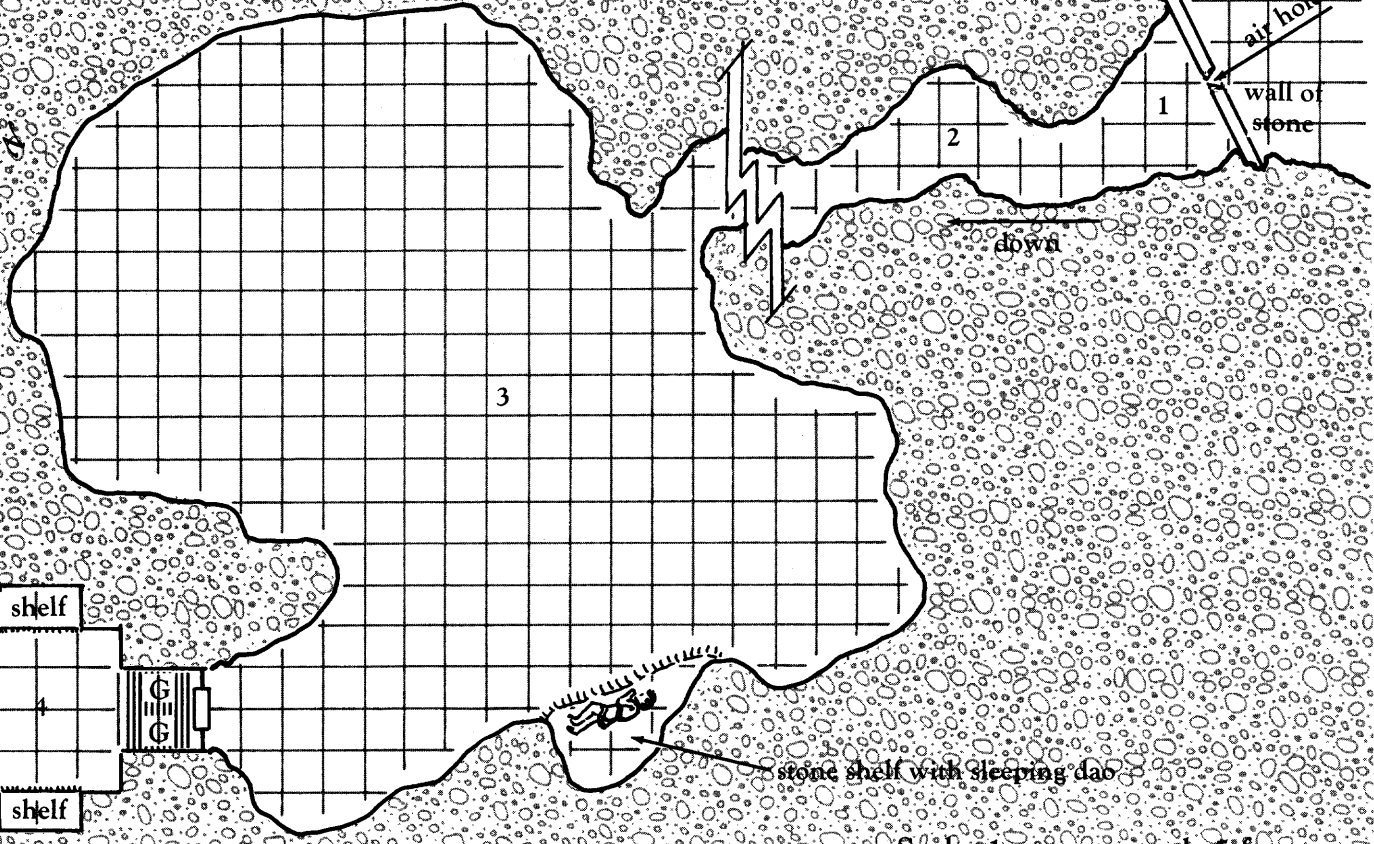
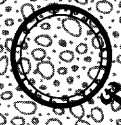
# The Sisters' Stockade



Paul C. Sutcliffe



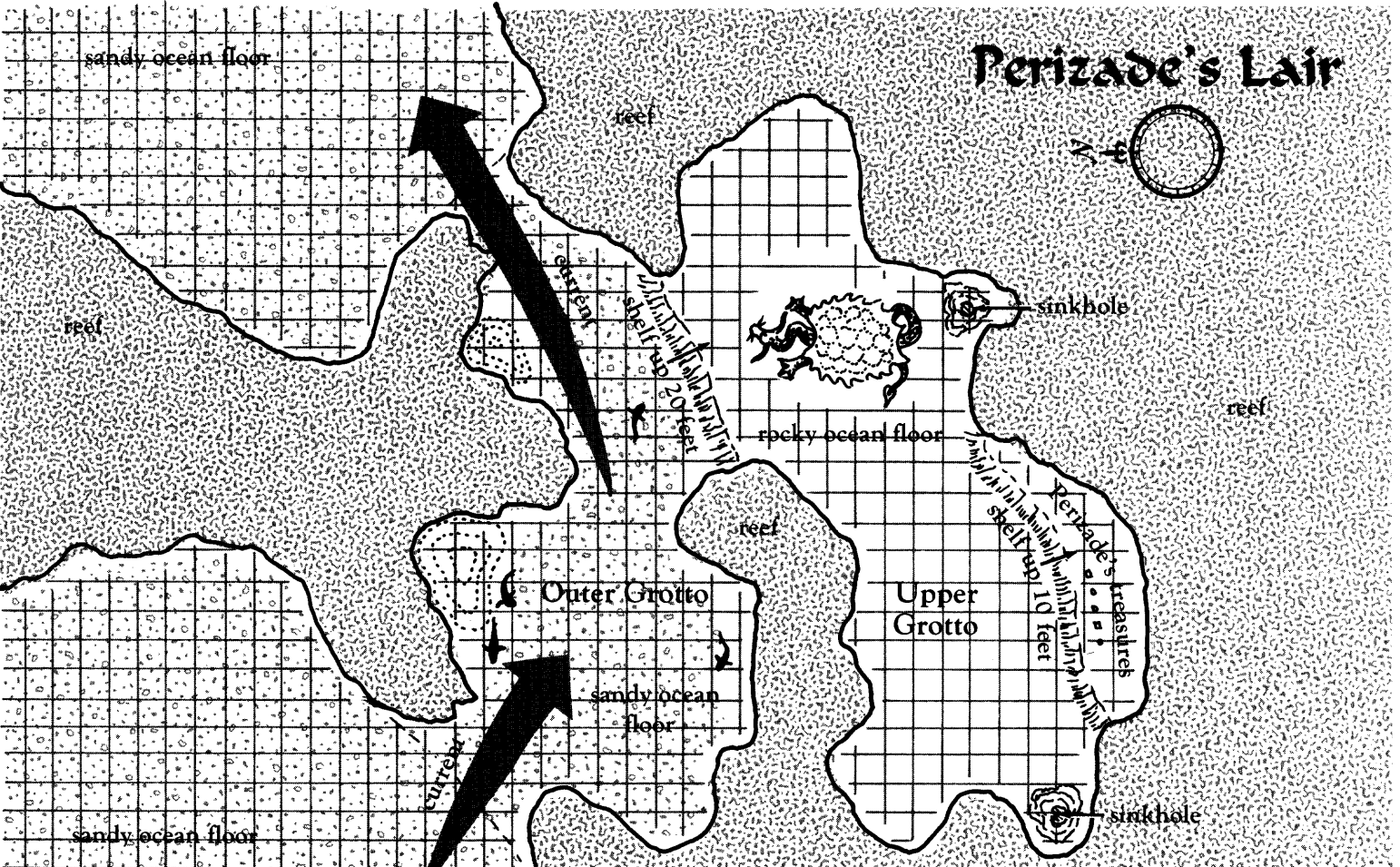
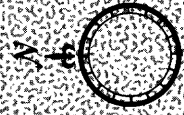
# Card 3 Tomb of Suhail min Zann



⊕ = glyph of warding

Scale: 1 square equals 5 feet

# Perizade's Lair



Scale: 1 square equals 10 feet

## Dihliz, the Gateway City



## KEY

1. Jasmine Decan
2. Steel Serpent
3. Stone wharves
4. Floating bazaar
5. Open bazaar
6. Bathhouse
7. Ministry of Sacrens

8. Ministry of Riches
9. City walls
10. Gate of Serpents
11. Gate of Hornets
12. Gate of the Peacock
13. Citadel and barge sheds
14. Ivory Palace

15. Plaza of the Sacred Elephants
16. Public garden
17. Mosque of a Thousand Hummingbirds
18. Mosque of the Revered
19. Mosque of the Puntivon
20. Mosque of the Sacred Fountain
21. House of Batal al-Reethan

Nogaro River

# Ruins of Al-Asirr

shaded area has roof

statue

stairs lead to Level 1, Catacombs of Al-Asirr (see back of Card 5)

Scale: 1 square equals 10 feet

# Vaults of Al-Asirr (Level 2)

arrival point for platform from area 7

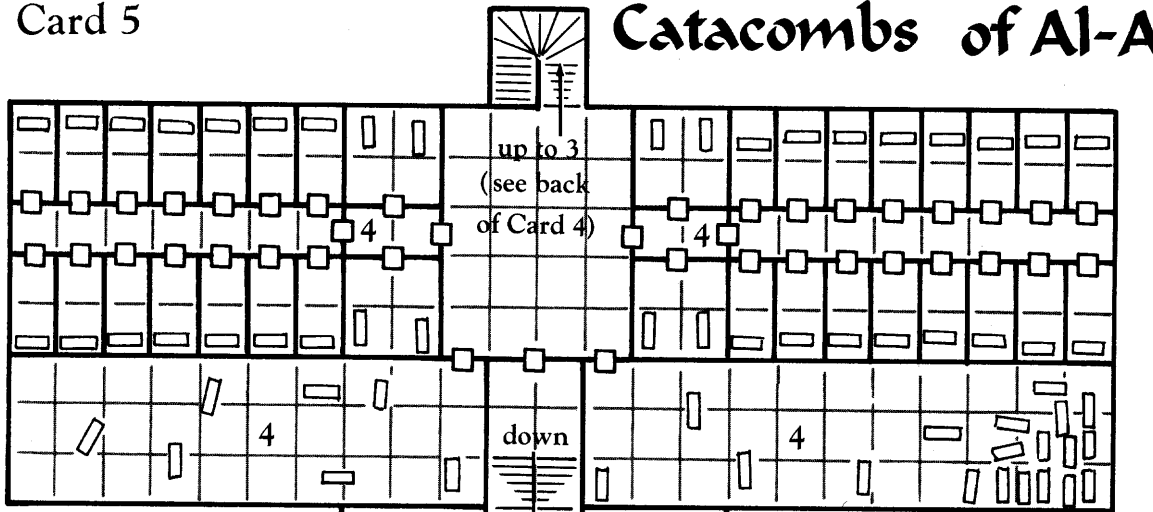
to area 10 mists

Mists (Ethereal Plane)

Scale: 1 square equals 10 feet

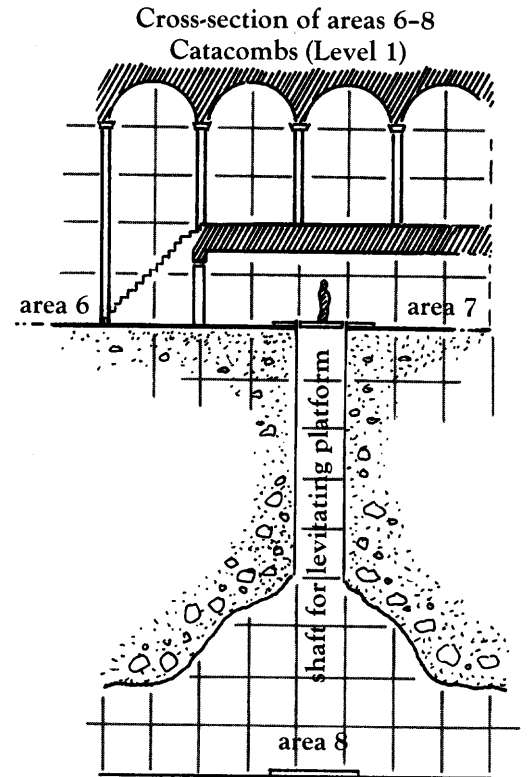
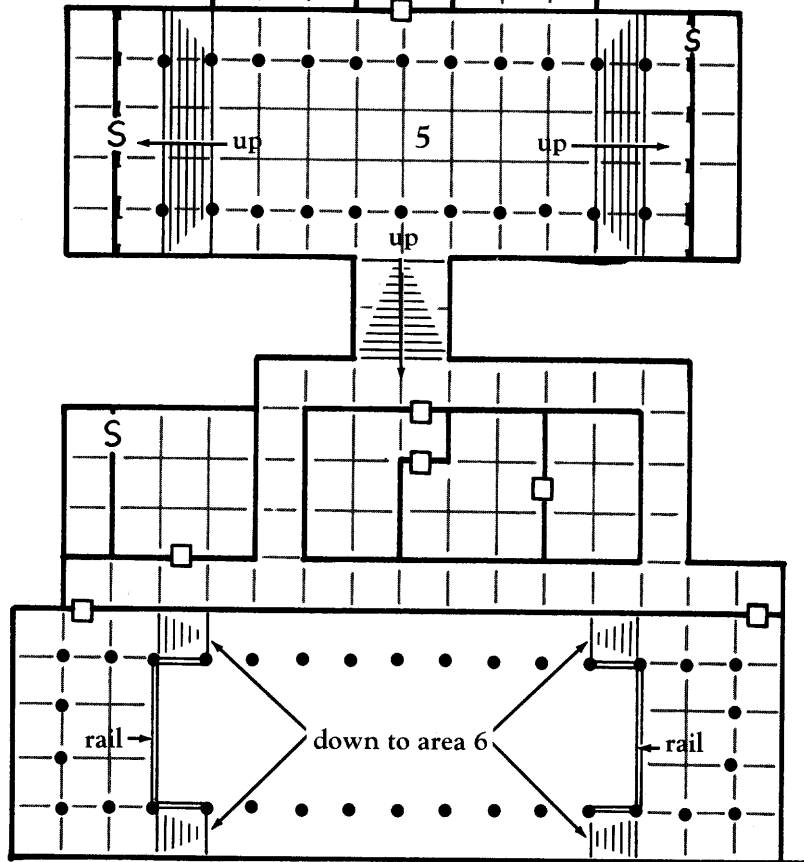


# Catacombs of Al-Asirr (Level 1)

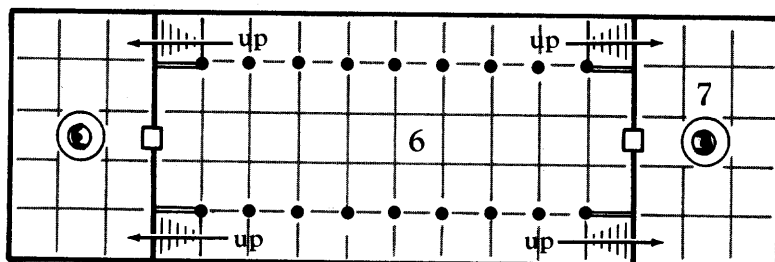


**KEY**  
 = sarcophagi or tombs  
 = secret door

Scale: 1 square equals 10 feet



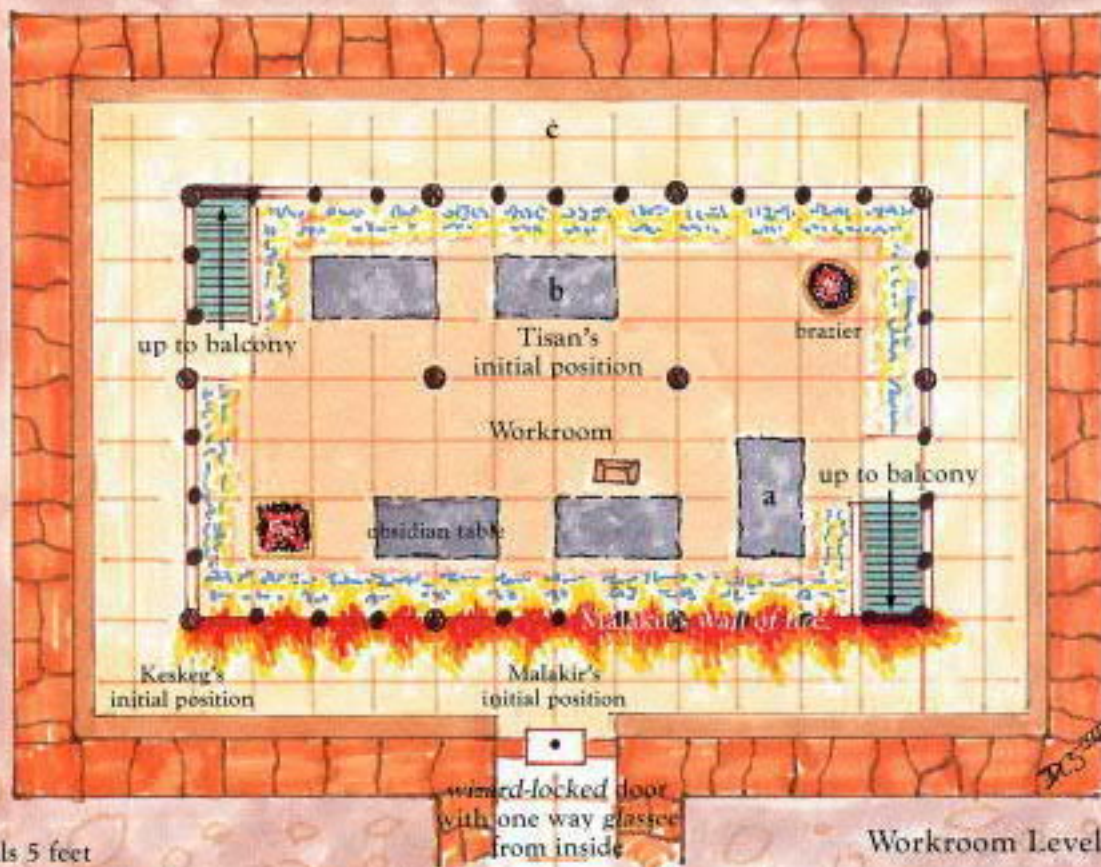
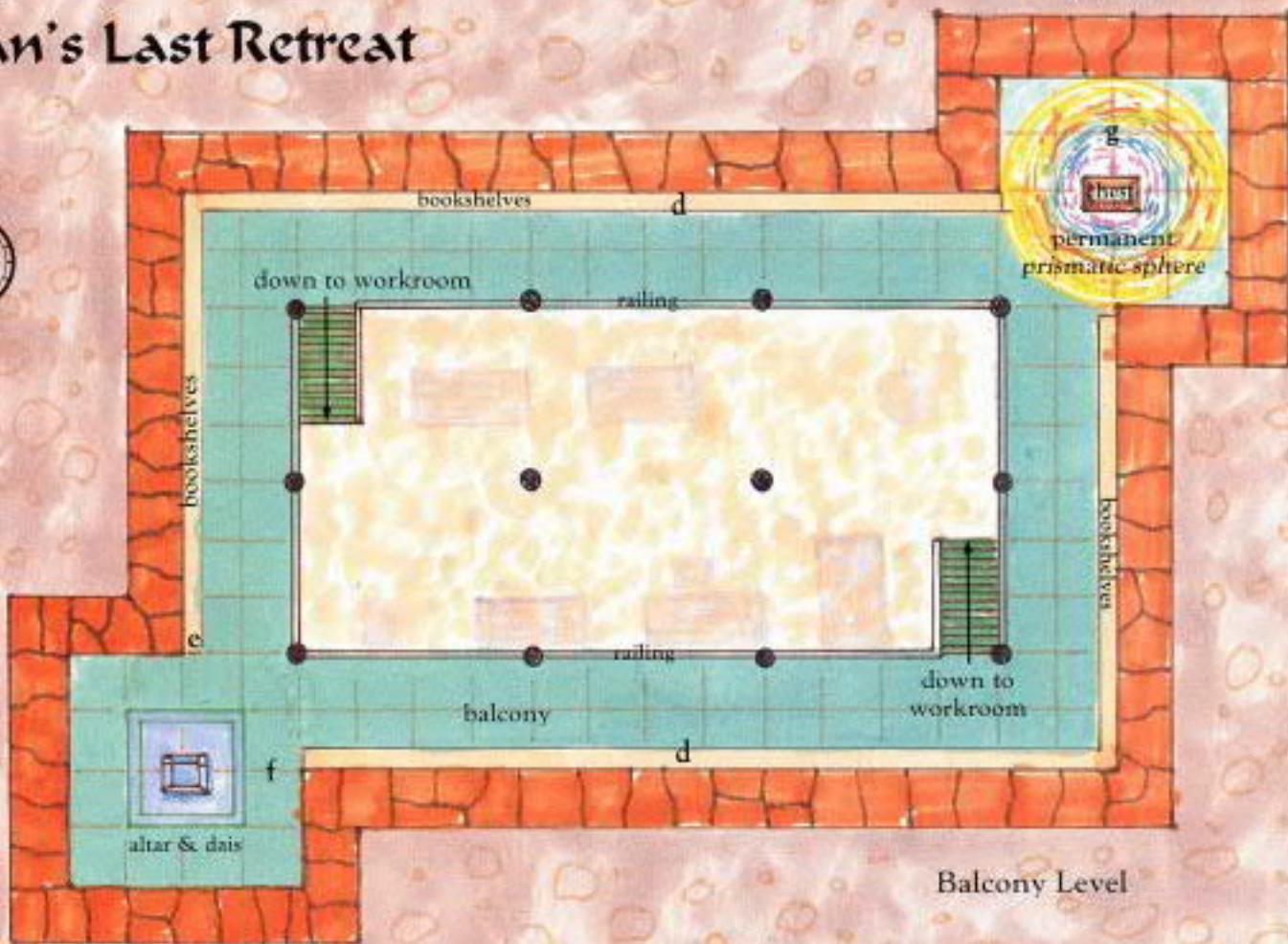
Vaults (Level 2; see back of Card 4)  
 Scale: 1 square equals 5 feet



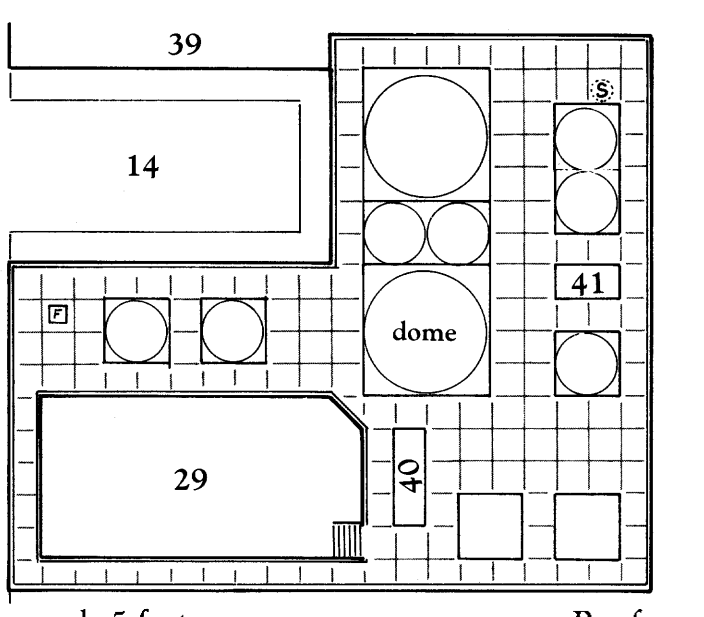
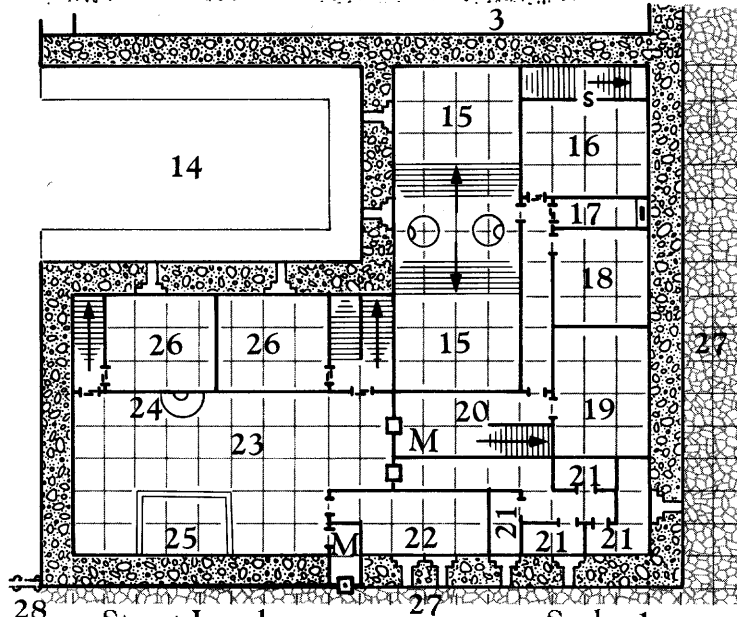
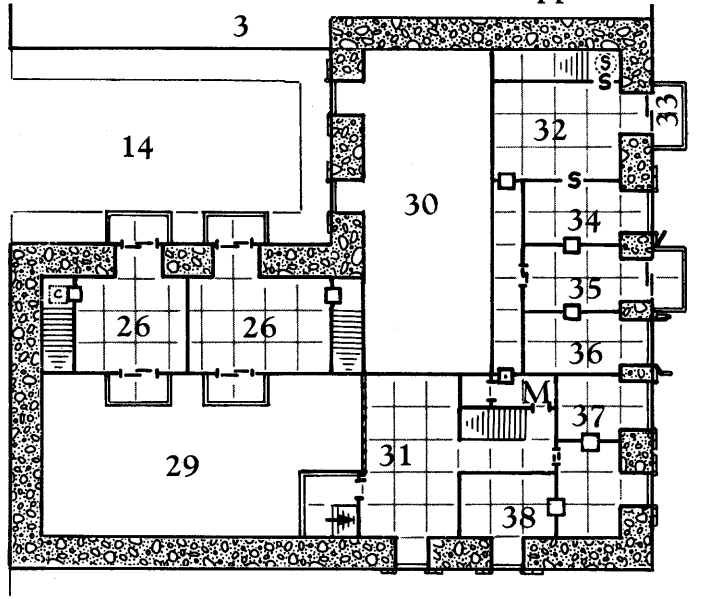
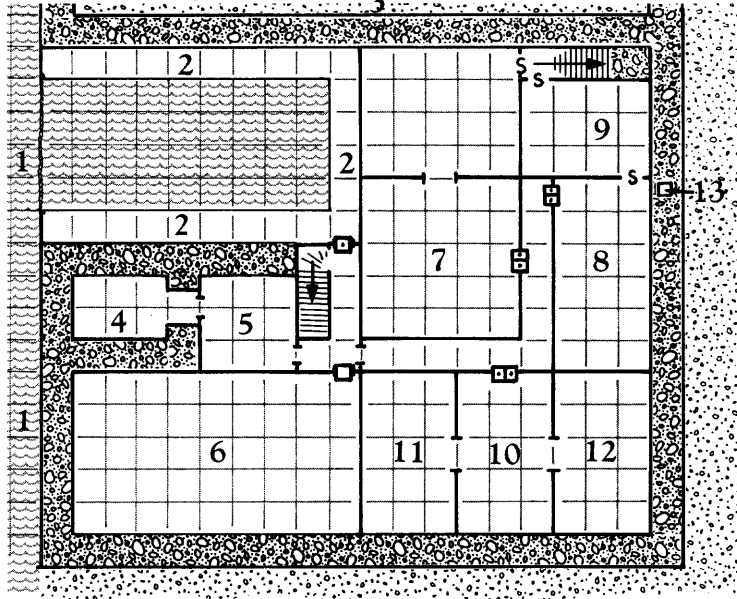
# Tisan's Last Retreat



sanctuary



Scale: 1 square equals 5 feet



28 Street Level

Scale: 1 square equals 5 feet

Roof

# Townhouse of Batul al-Reehan

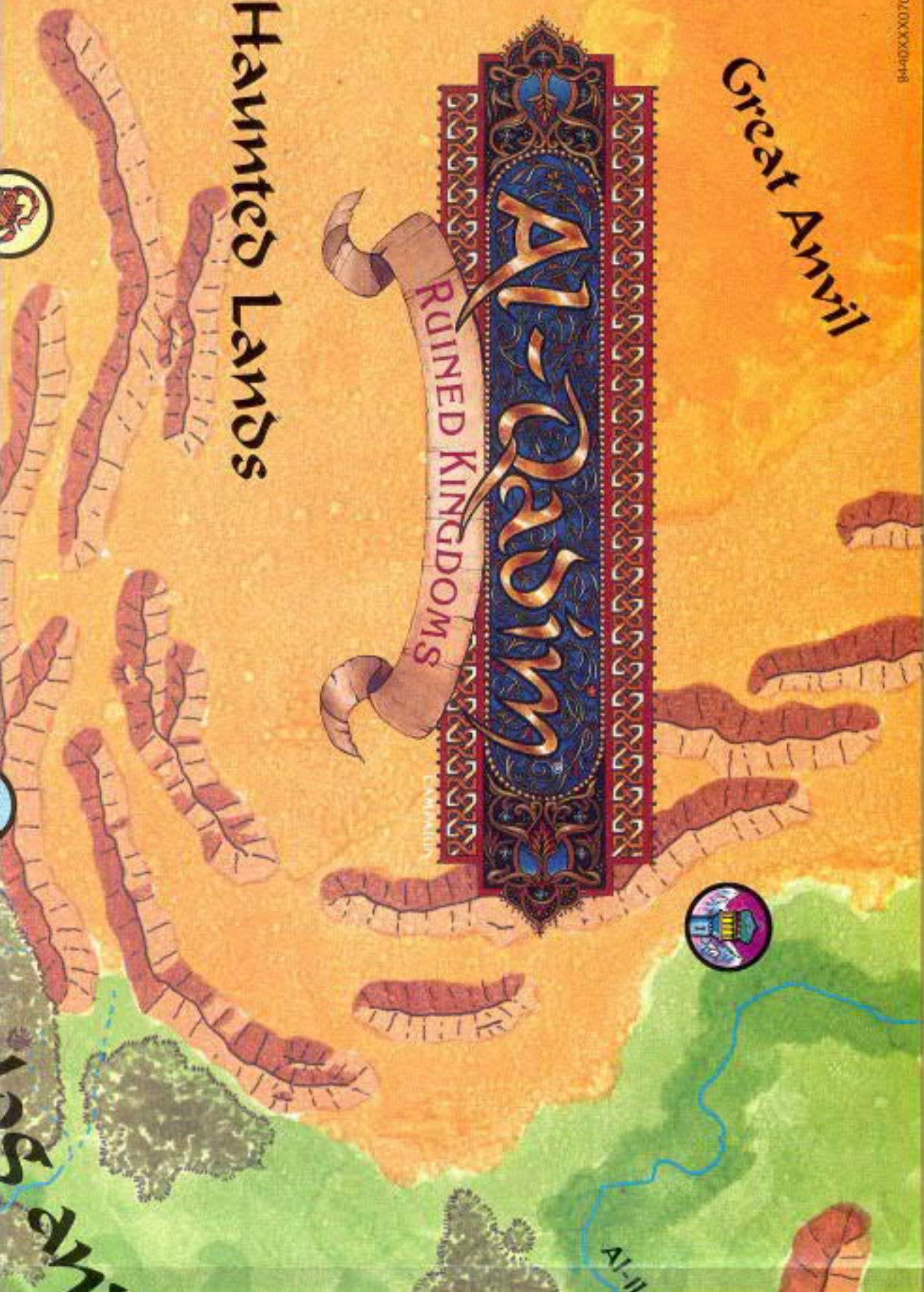
KEY				
1. Canal	18. Library	35. Common room		door
2. Private dock	19. Kitchen	36. Mabruk's chamber		locked door
3. Neighbor's house	20. Foyer	37. Heir's chamber		secret door
4. Hot bathroom	21. Servants' quarters	38. Omar's chamber		archway
5. Cold bathroom	22. Stables	39. Neighbor's roof		stairs up
6. Boiler room & fuel stores	23. Garden	40. Skylight		stairs down
7. Storage (long term)	24. Fountain	41. Pigeon coop		dome
8. Mabruk's laboratory	25. Gazebo	M Mamluks		trap door in roof
9. Lab supplies	26. Guest room			trap door in floor
10. Household stores	27. Street			secret trap door
11. Wines	28. Bridge over canal			
12. Pantry	29. Down to garden			
13. Privy chute	30. Down to banquet room			
14. Down to private docks	31. Hall			
15. Banquet room	32. Batul's chamber			
16. Private meeting room	33. Enclosed balcony			
17. Privy	34. Liana's chamber			

Great Anvil

AL-CADIM  
RUINED KINGDOMS

Campaign

Haunted Lands



105  
The





Mountains  
of Desolation

Kirak al-Urui

Ruined  
Kingdoms

Nosaro River

Mafrad

Kaban River

Ros'osto

Sagat

Tayara

of No...



1 inch equals 10 miles



**Crowned Sea**  
Bay al-Tashiyah



Serpent Bay



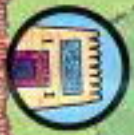
Temple of the  
Serpentine Empress

Jungle

The Gateway



Misbah



The Rubban's

T



10

Kadar

Al-Jiffat River

Al-Jiffat River

Tadabbur

Al-Zilla River



Salt Jungle

Foreigners' Sea  
(Bahr al-Ajami)

AFRICA



# Medina al-Afyal

City of the Elephant

## Dawilhi Islands



## Afyal Isle of the Elephant



Kasal



## The Horn of Sahu



Sarkha Isle



Al-Asir

Jimutt



# Tears of Serenity

## Isle of Sahm

### Lake of the Winter Spirits



#### Desert Features

- Stony Field
- Barren
- Open Desert
- Aravil
- Baraban
- Soft Dune
- Star Dune
- Whaleback Dune
- Lake
- Seasonal Lake
- Wasi
- (Dry Stream Bed)
- Intermittent River
- River
- Salt Flat
- Alkaline Lake
- Kavar (Salt/Mud Flat)
- Quicksand
- Caravan Trail
- Oasis
- Well
- Artesian Well

#### Rock Formations

- Elevation 2,500 Feet (Approx.)
- Elevation in Feet
- Basaltides
- Hogback
- Harrat (Volcanic Debris)
- Cliff/Plateau
- Low Mountains
- Melchium Mountain
- High Mountains
- Active Volcano
- Extinct Volcano

#### Plant Features

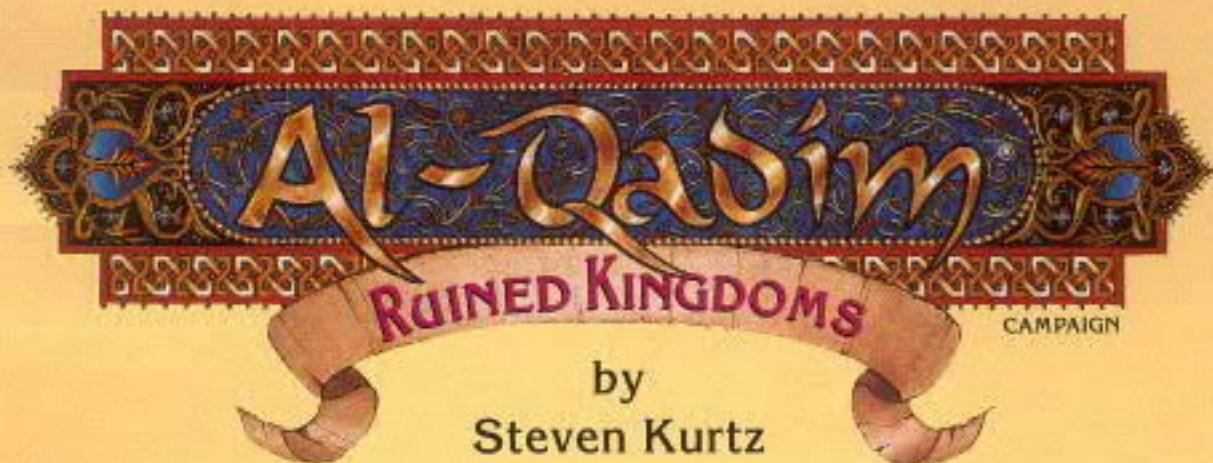
- Seasonal Grassland
- Grassland
- Cultivated Land
- Seaweed
- Marsh
- Swamp
- Mangrove Swamp
- Brushland
- Outlying Forest
- Deep Forest
- Deep Jungle
- Outlying Jungle

#### Sites

- Great City
- City
- Town
- Occupied Qal'at (Fort)
- Unoccupied Qal'at
- Sorcerer's Tower
- Haram (Holy Site)
- Ruins
- Battle Site
- Village
- Rocky Coast
- Sandy Coast
- Coastal Cliff
- Sand Bank
- Coral Reef
- Rocky Shoal
- Lagoon
- Shallow Ocean
- Deep Sea

#### Coastal and Water Features

- Rocky Coast
- Sandy Coast
- Coastal Cliff
- Sand Bank
- Coral Reef
- Rocky Shoal
- Lagoon
- Shallow Ocean
- Deep Sea



# Al-Qadim

## RUINED KINGDOMS

CAMPAIGN

by  
Steven Kurtz

Unveil the forbidden secrets of Nog and Kadar!



The Nogaro River has seen the rise and fall of countless empires, unequaled in their evil and terror. Buried but not destroyed, their legacy lives on, shrouded by the tangled jungle and by time itself.

With *Ruined Kingdoms*, bold explorers can at last lift the veil of oblivion and unravel the mysteries of a dark and sinister past. Inside you'll discover:

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- An 8-page booklet filled with villainous women and deadly reptilian monsters.
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- A stunning poster map of eastern Zakhara, depicting the twisting valleys and ancient capitals of the Ruined Kingdoms.

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*Arabian Adventures* rulebook.

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