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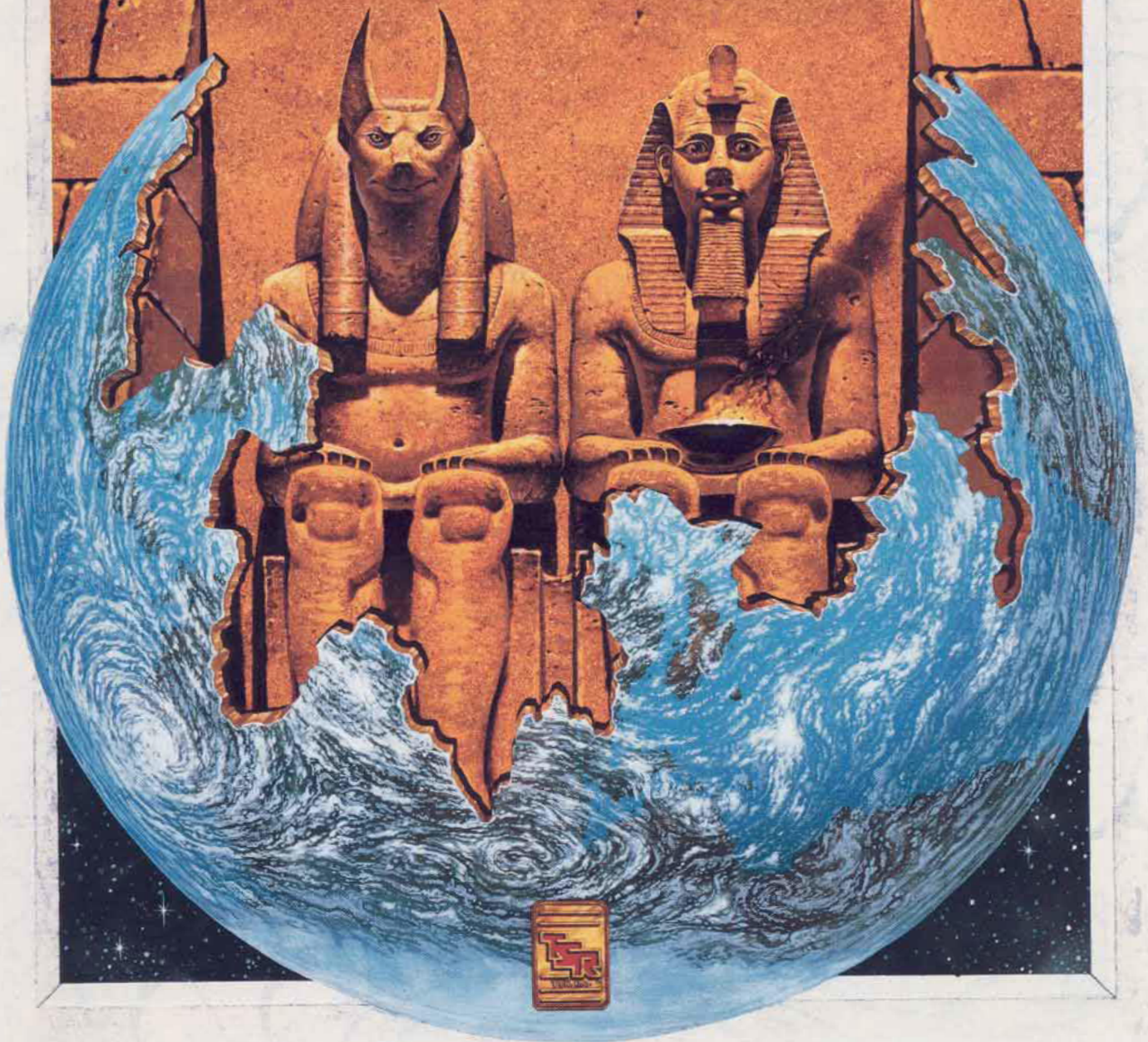
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# HOLLOW WORLD™

for all levels of play Official  
Game Accessory

## Kingdom of Nithia

by Blake Mobley with Newton Ewell



# HOLLOW WORLD™

## Kingdom of Nithia Player's Tome

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ISBN  
9339XXX1501

## Introduction

"Behold the land of a thousand tombs, where water is the staff of life and the rulers descend from the Immortals. Much has happened in this magical land. Divided and reunited as the Kingdoms of Nithia, it is now the greatest nation in Iciria."

For over one thousand five hundred circles, the people of the Nithian River valley have toiled under the hot desert sun. They mine the gold, till the soil, and fight great battles for the wealthiest and most powerful rulers in the Hollow World, the mighty Pharaohs. They labor for decades forming great monoliths that scrape the bottoms of the floating continents overhead. All this and more is the lot of the common Nithian folk.

Throughout history, Nithians have gone about their daily routines with the fecundity and patience that only a people assured of a place in the afterlife could maintain. Throughout the ages, parents have passed on their names and occupations to their children. This process has promoted such individualization that the bread from one baker can be easily distinguished from the bread of another and is identified by the bakers' family name.

Upon entering Nithia, time stops. Even the shifting sands of the desert work to mask all evidence of time and travel as footprints vanish in the wind. The clerical rituals of Rathanos and Pflarr are carried on in the same manner as they were centuries past. Nithia is a nation living to serve the dead of yesterday and tomorrow by keeping all aspects of life as they are this sleep.

Yet, it is a kingdom alive with secrets, intrigue, and conflict as the great cities of Menkara, Tarthis, and Ranak vie for power and control of the land. Trained assassins, sly diplomats, and powerful mages travel from one city to the other, playing a dangerous and sometimes deadly game. Always the goal is the same, to acquire the ultimate title, that of Pharaoh.

It is a magical land, where battle-barges float

above the desert sands, and great mages scheme to wrest supremacy from the hands of the Pharaohs. They command unnatural forces and tap into the power of their pyramids. Even the lowliest are capable of tapping into this pool of ambient power.

And still, secrets of power and wealth yet untapped lie in wait for those who are brave enough to explore the Kingdom of Nithia.

## About This Book

This product contains source material on the Kingdom of Nithia, located in southeastern Iciria of the D&D® game's HOLLOW WORLD™ campaign setting. The information contained within expands upon the information listed in the HOLLOW WORLD boxed set. Cultural weapons and armor are discussed, specialized characters within the four human classes are covered, and the Nithian land, history, and culture is examined.

Altogether, the product provides a sturdy framework upon which many fascinating adventures in Nithia can be created. After reading these books, you will understand how pyramid power works, what glyphs can do, and how to write any word you want in the Nithian hieroglyphic system.

An effort has been made to create many fun options for Nithian players. They can use special weapons and armor and may select a specialization to the character class. This adds a new dimension to the standard D&D campaign. Nithia is also a very magic intensive land. This is reflected by the *household magic* spells and items that are reviewed in the DM's book. Finally, a number of interesting secrets, societies, and powers have been included. The DM may slowly allow players to discover these, providing them with a true sense of mystery and danger.

If you don't use the HOLLOW WORLD setting or don't play the D&D game, the information within is easily adapted to your

own campaign world and may even be converted to the AD&D® 2nd Edition game system with minimal effort.

This product is divided into two books, a Player's Tome and a Dungeon Master's Tome. If your campaign includes non-Nithian PCs, let them see the "What Everyone Knows About. . ." and the "Rumors" sections of this book—nothing else. The rest of this book contains information for players of Nithian characters. The information in this book is available to Nithian PCs even during game play.

The Dungeon Master's Tome should be read in its entirety by the DM. Some of the information contained within it should be shared with players of Nithian PCs. This is left up to the DM to determine, but information found in the *Nithia* and *Society* sections is suggested. Much of the information in the military section may also be shared with any Nithian fighter PCs.

Also included is a two-sided map depicting Nithia in the standard 8 miles per hex scale used in the D&D® game. The inside cover contains a condensed view of the entire kingdom along with some helpful tables.

## A Word on Female Characters

In traditional Nithian society, the position of women is a "protected" one—they traditionally do not engage in pursuits that would involve possible physical injury. However, part of being a player character in this or any other DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® setting is having the power to break with tradition. Nithia is no exception in this regard. In the ancient days (when Ranak was transported to the Hollow World), there were a number of female wizards, warriors and other professions. There is no reason why female PCs cannot be created for any of the sub-classes offered in this book.

In terms of game play, the presence of

female clerics, warriors, and mages would generate interest (for good or ill) in NPCs, due to their scarcity. Situations arising from this can only serve to round out and spice up a campaign. Please feel free to play female characters in this setting with no fear of penalties.

## A Review of the Hollow World

For the convenience of those who are new to the Hollow World, and those who do not play in this specific setting but wish to enjoy the information contained in this source book, some Hollow World conventions are revisited in brief below.

### Time

In the Hollow World, time is usually measured in beats of a drum (one second per beat), the time span between sleeps (24 hours), and the time required for the floating continents to make a full circle about the Hollow World sun (one year, as engineered by the Immortals).

### Distance

The measurement of distance within the Hollow World usually uses labels peculiar to non-natives. Distance is measured in the length of a pace (or step) of a marching soldier, the long range of an arrow, and the distance traveled by an army during one sleep's standard march. These distances and their corresponding length in English measurements are as follows:

- Pace - 3 feet
- Flight - 210 feet (70 paces)
- March - 20 miles, (about 500 flights, or 35,000 paces)
- Long march - 24 miles

The Nithians and those around them also speak of the “long march” indicated above. This is the maximum distance an army can cover during a sleep without having adverse effects upon the troops. It is equal to 24 miles, roughly 600 flights, or 42,000 paces. It also corresponds to three hexes on an 8 mile per hex map such as the map of Nithia included in this product. Most player characters cover ground at this rate when traveling on foot. Thus, each sleep (1 day) of travel by the PCs will advance them 3 hexes. With this in mind, a feel for the vast size of Nithia becomes evident.

## Direction

Because the Hollow World is *within* the sphere of the Known World, east and west are reversed. When a person stands in the Hollow World facing north, east is at his left hand, and west is to his right. This provides the DM with a fun tool to confuse the first-time visitor. It is a good source of adventure, and is sure to get outlanders into interesting predicaments. “I’m sure she said to go east three marches, and we’d be at the Bay of Tlapac. Well, I don’t see any bay, but we’re up to our necks in Beastmen!”

## Common Language

The common language spoken in the Hollow World is the same tongue spoken by the hundreds of small Neathar tribes (Neanderthal men). It is appropriately called “Neathar.” Most non-isolated Hollow World societies will speak Neathar in addition to their native tongue. Thus, Neathar is the best language for outsiders to pick up and will likely be the first language they learn as it is easier to grasp (due to its fundamental nature) than most national tongues.



## What Everyone Knows About Nithia

*Nithia according to a Jennite trader:*

"Nithians are an odd, dark-skinned people to the east of us. My band often trades crafted golden items in return for raw gold, linen, and grain.

"Their entire society seems centered around the lesser Immortals they follow. In fact, Nithians actually believe their leader, the Pharaoh as they call him, to be an Immortal. Just goes to show how weak their Immortals must be if their king ranks among them.

"Nithians are also preoccupied with death. The people work all their lives to erect giant pyramid shaped tombs just so their kings can be locked away within them once they die. When a king does die, all his wives, close friends, and many of his servants are slain and buried with him. A brave man would fight heroically to prevent such a horrible fate, but the Nithians actually find it an honor to die and be entombed when their king passes from this world. A very strange folk indeed.

"I once asked a Nithian in Ranak what they find so honorable about being killed and buried with their king. The man looked at me in that queer Nithian manner and mumbled some nonsense about returning to a reborn world in the far off future. I guess they believe that all the dead will one day awaken and walk the land again. This explains why they bury so much gold and food with their dead. I suppose they want them to awaken with all the comforts of home about them.

"Nithians also go about change and improvements in a very strange manner. Once something is finished, it is never changed even if they could improve it. I heard that a farmer's wife nearly beat a slave to death for trying to refit the family's chariot with better wheels. She claimed that

if her great grandfather were to awaken and find his chariot altered, he would be very displeased. She said it as if she really expected to see the dead man walk out of the house behind her.

"The thing which most strikes me about Nithia (other than them baking bread without firewood, and the terrible floating boats) are the huge standing stones they build. Some take centuries to finish, so I'm told, but others *grow out of the ground*. Get that look off your face, I'm not lying! Everyone seems to have a different reason as to why they are made. One thing is for sure, the rumors about them possessing strange powers are true. Once I rode too close to one and all my horse's teeth turned to pure gold! Since then I've had to fight men off just to keep my horse alive. If they had their way they'd pull all his teeth and he'd die of starvation!

"As far as history goes, I hark to the words of my elders. They tell of a time in the ancient days when the Plains of Teuz ran all the way to the mountain range that the Nithians call Pflar's Wall. Then one circle, the very sun itself separated and part of it came down and rolled across the land, burning the grass and transforming it into a great desert. Not long after, a magical bolt of lightning shot through the newly formed valley and the river Nithia was formed.

"My people stopped traveling in that direction, for our horses died in the heat or from lack of drinking water. Then one sleep, circles later, a scout reported back to his elders that he had found an entire city larger than any he'd ever seen resting on the far banks of the distant river.

"The elders sent a band to investigate, but none returned. Assured that the great journey across the desert had claimed them, they refused to send more and decreed the desert to be no-man's land. Only those who were exiled from the Jennite Holdings traveled there. Thus it was that contact with

the Nithians wasn't made for many circles. But their lust for conquest eventually led them to lay claim upon the land that is sacred to my people. Upon hearing such an absurdity we sent a small band of messengers to negotiate with their king. However, the band was slaughtered by the Haptans, a city of black Nithians who look and fight like the Tanagoro. Ever since, my people have hated the Nithians and are awaiting the day of revenge."

*A Tanagoro warrior on the Nithian military:*

"The Nithian army is a mighty force, but they are soldiers, not warriors like the Tanagoro. On a one to one basis, a Tanagoro can best ten Nithians. However, though my people are strong, the Nithians are like the batubu-ants of the Dju-Dju Hills; they have an endless supply of soldiers. Even the greatest Tanagoro warrior cannot defeat enough of them to make a difference.

"They also use strange magic in battle, such as burning-glasses to set our camps alight, and other cowardly tactics. But we are not afraid, for their armies are slow and easily seen. They also pose no threat to us for they do not function well in rough ground. Our tactics are far superior to theirs.

"Occasionally we attack their smaller forts and raid their outlying villages in response to hostile actions on their part. In such cases, we can avoid their large armies and our fighting prowess overcomes them.

"I do not understand why the Elders gave a number of our people to the Nithians lo these many years ago. Now they use our own fighting skills against us. It makes it harder to fight them. 'Keep living,' the Elders tell us. 'You will understand in time.' All I understand is that the enemy hates us, and we hate the enemy."

*A Milenian Senator on Nithia and its government:*

"I have never been to Nithia, and have

only seen a few of their ambassadors, Seal Bearers, they call them. They are a secretive lot, most distasteful. However, I can give an accurate account of these people due to the many informative briefings I have had from field officers who have fought against their nation. Of course, I realize that these briefings are tainted with the hatred and respect due a worthy enemy, but I am wise enough to see through all that, and will now give you my objective viewpoint.

"I believe my people hate—well, hate is such a strong word—*pity* the Nithians so much because they have managed to build a nation nearly as great as ours. In fact, if it wasn't for their primitive fascination with erecting great stone monuments, they might even be on an equal footing with Milenia.

"It's the people and their style of government that really cause the problems. They have foolishly given their leader, the Pharaoh, total control over the entire nation. He leads the military, decrees all laws, and even assigns the next ruler (who is often one of his sons). These benighted people actually allow this injustice to take place. In fact, they promote it. Some sort of fol-de-rol about making the river rise, and making the crops grow. As if this weren't bad enough, their Pharaoh claims to be some form of Immortal and many of the people believe this lie.

"Because of their fanatical devotion to this numbskull Pharaoh, it is impossible to enlighten or liberate the Nithian people, either by diplomacy or more stringent means. Oh, and any rumors you may hear about Milenian forces being defeated by Nithian magic are purest drivel. We've simply had some bad luck with those primitives.

"It is obvious that Nithians are a rather simple-minded race in which the rare leader type can quickly rise through the ranks and take control. Why, I suspect that our slaves have more intelligence and confidence than their noblemen! Fools, fools, I tell you!"



## Rumors

Other rumors commonly overheard about Nithia while patronizing a tavern or setting around a campfire follow:

- Nithian soldiers wear magical bracers on their arms and legs that protect them in combat.
- Nithians make enchanted shields that are impervious to arrows.
- The dark skin of a Nithian reflects the heat, keeping him cool on the hottest of days.
- Nithians foolishly wear their shields upon their backs, even in combat.
- The Nithian Immortals bless all their missile weapons, making them the deadliest weapons imaginable.
- Nithian statues come alive at night and protect the kingdom from invasion.
- Nithians are such savages that they haven't learned how to make metal armor or shields.
- The statues of Nithia are used as playing pieces by the Immortals in a never-ending unfathomable game.
- The monoliths of Nithia are cursed offerings to the Immortals of Entropy.
- Nithian warriors use a strange magical sword called a khopesh. Its blade is curved like that of a scythe.
- Some Nithians worship the sun and can cause anything near them to burst into flames.
- Pyramids have vast mounds of treasure within them, but it is all cursed.
- Evil monsters of unstoppable power live in the broken lands of Nithia.
- Nithians believe that death is a higher state of existence than life.
- Never kill a Nithian, for his undead spirit will curse you and your family.
- The Pharaoh owns several magical items giving him the abilities of an Immortal.
- There are no magic-users in Nithia, and

even the clerics do not use many spells.

- There is a whole city of slaves in southern Nithia.
- Nithia has always existed in the Hollow World since time began.
- Nithia is actually two combined kingdoms who hate each other.
- The Old Pyramids are haunted by dog-men.
- The Towers of Soth and Sekhaba are linked by a magical *teleportal*.
- Passages beneath Mt. Khufiri lead to another dimension.



## Nithian Character Specializations

This section is an in-depth expansion on the information listed in the HOLLOW WORLD™ boxed set. Here, we look beyond the four classes allowed to humans and delve into specialized subclasses that are not evident to most foreigners. The rules below apply to all Nithian player characters. Of course, since almost all Nithians are human, the class of dwarf, elf, and halfling are not covered.

Nithia has a sophisticated society in which every person has a specific niche. The idea of a "jack-of-all-trades" is completely alien to them. For example, there is no such thing as a Nithian "cook." Instead there are bakers, pastry chefs, brewers, etc. Specialization in all walks of life is the norm. This is often overlooked by foreigners and considered unimportant, yet it has great ramifications in the Kingdom of Nithia. The success of the various branches of Nithian government can largely be attributed to specialization. This tendency is summed up by the Nithian proverb, "The body is more than the sum of its parts."

To bring this aspect of Nithian culture into the game, specializations are presented below under each character class. Characters that use these specializations have certain benefits and penalties that separate them from standard character classes, producing unique characters that improve the flavor of the game. These specializations are chosen during character generation, and are permanent unless steps are taken to renounce them. If this occurs, all powers that are part of the specialty class are lost.

Throughout this section, references to new skills, armor, and weapons will be made. These new terms are fully discussed in the sections following specializations. Whenever a new skill, weapon, or unit of armor is mentioned, simply refer to the following sections for a complete definition.

## Clerics

The most influential and powerful specializations in the kingdom of Nithia are the clerics of Pflarr and Rathanos. Almost every Pharaoh follows one of these two Immortals, as does a majority of the population. Other Immortals followed by Nithians include Ixion, Kagyar, Ranivorus, Thanatos, and Valerias. However, those who follow Ranivorus and Thanatos are hunted down and eliminated wherever they are found.

Clerics may wear any cultural armor, and use the following weapons: normal daggers (not throwing daggers), staves, slings, maces, clubs, all swords (except the khopesh), and throwing sticks. NOTE: Few clerics use slings, preferring the dagger and throwing stick for missile weapons. Nithian clerics consider it improper to fight with a weapon that isn't held in or directly released from the hand.

The bonuses and penalties listed under each specialization only apply to those clerics who have elected to take the specialization. There are Nithian clerics who are not specialists, but these clerics do not gain the benefits listed under their Immortals' specialization. Of course, they are also not subject to the special penalties inflicted upon specialists. In the final analysis, however, non-specialized clerics are considered to be less devout, responsible, and generally less important than those who have "truly devoted themselves" to a particular Immortal. Also, note that a specialization does not take the place of the *Honor (Specific Immortal)* general skill.

## The Immortals

Before the actual clerical specializations are discussed, the seven most followed Nithian Immortals are discussed. As is often said, "The Immortals wear many masks." Because of this, some of them have names and appearances unique to Nithia. To keep the

distinctive flavor of Nithia, the local names of the Immortals are used in this product. However, their "generic" Hollow World names appear next to their Nithian appellations. For in-depth explanations of the Immortals' areas of influence and power, see "The Immortals" section of the *HOLLOW WORLD™ Dungeon Master's Sourcebook*.

### *Horon (Ixion)*



**Sphere:** Energy.

**Appearance:** Horon appears as either a golden hawk with eyes like stars, or a beautiful human male with radiant golden skin and eyes of flame. His traditional Nithian head-dress is emblazoned with the signs of both the sun and the hawk. He wears brightly glowing linen seemingly made from spun gold and wields a magical throwing-disc in the shape of a flaming wheel, which is Horon's symbol of power. He travels about Nithia in a giant *float-chariot* borne aloft by golden pegasi with hooves, nostrils, and eyes of flame.

### *Ptahr (Kagyar)*

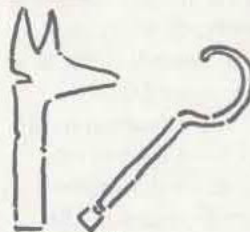


**Sphere:** Matter.

**Appearance:** Ptahr walks the deserts and badlands of Nithia, but is rarely seen and almost never recognized. He appears as a tall (6') figure, covered in a gray linen robe and turban. He often walks hunched over, lean-

ing on a gnarled staff, with his turban wrapped around his face to conceal his features. Most who see him hobbling across the desert consider him to be a madman or perhaps a ghost, for most would die of heat exhaustion in such dress. However, those few who have looked him in the face found narrow eyes containing the deep fire of creativity and patience. He wears the tight and stiff beard associated with Pharaohs and nobility, and suspended on a chain around his neck Ptahr wears a crystal pendant in the shape of his symbol, a crossed hammer and chisel.

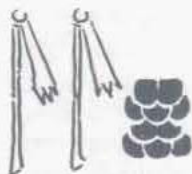
### *Pflarr*



**Sphere:** Energy.

**Appearance:** Pflarr has no Nithian alias due to the fact that he is a survivor of the ancient Nithian Empire of the surface world. The statue on the front of this product is in Pflarr's honor and is an idealized version of his appearance. There is also a good picture of Pflarr in the *HOLLOW WORLD Dungeon Master's Sourcebook*. Pflarr appears as a seven-foot tall humanoid jackal. He is covered in fine brown fur and wears the typical white linen robes of Nithia. Pflarr is also fond of jewelry and other magical adornments including *Pflarr's Puissant Pyramid*, an artifact of immense power. Pflarr's symbol is a jackal head with human eyes.

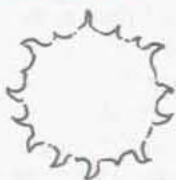
### Ranivorus



**Sphere:** Entropy.

**Appearance:** Ranivorus also goes by his given name. Ranivorus is Pflarr's Immortal enemy, and does everything he can to thwart and torment his rival. In his true form, Ranivorus appears as a giant (12 to 18 feet tall) gnoll. Gnolls are known as dog-men due to their appearance, and Ranivorus exploits this physical similarity to mislead and corrupt Pflarr's followers. Often Ranivorus will don white linen robes and jewelry to mimic the appearance of his adversary, but when he is being himself, he wears spiked black plate mail and wields twin flails in combat. His emblem is a human head with five snakes coming from the mouth.

### Rathanos

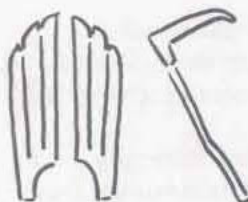


**Sphere:** Energy

**Appearance:** Although most Nithians call Rathanos by his given name, some refer to him simply as Ra. Though he is originally of Oltec origin, Rathanos' affinity for the magic-rich Nithian Empire caused him to manifest as a Nithian noble. He, along with his ally Pflarr, is portrayed on the cover of this product. Together, they rescued what they could of the fallen Nithian Empire, and transported Ranak to the Hollow World. Rathanos always appears in the form of fire. He may occupy a campfire, bonfire, or even the flames of a torch, animating it with his magical essence. If he must appear by him-

self, he will take the form of either a manlike fire elemental, or a whirling vortex of light. Ra's symbol is a burning brand.

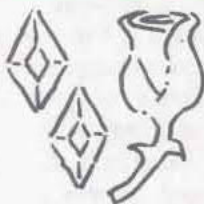
### Thanatos



**Sphere:** Entropy.

**Appearance:** Thanatos has no other name among Nithians. When he appears, he takes the form of either a mummy or a withered, blackened corpse. In either guise, he is clad in the voluminous black robes he typically wears, and the diseased and rotten black wings that are his trademark can sprout from his back at will. He typically carries a rusty, pitted sword-staff or scythe that is stained with blood and dark filth. He, along with Ranivorus, seeks the destruction of Nithia. His symbol is the scythe.

### Isiris (Valerias)



**Sphere:** Matter.

**Appearance:** Isiris appears as the most beautiful Nithian woman imaginable. Her white linen gown is as clear and supple as flowing water, further accenting her flawless beauty. She adorns herself with the most exquisite jewels and golden accessories. Most noticeable of these are the pair of golden earrings given to her by Horon, her main lover. Isiris' symbol is the rose, and she has been known to appear to her followers by stepping from the petals of a giant rose. She is also known for her most

powerful weapon, the *Heart-thorn*, which causes victims to fall madly in love with the first living thing they encounter.

## Clerical Specializations

Although any cleric may take the *Honor (Specific Immortal)* general skill, Nithian clerics may actually specialize in serving their patron Immortal.

Although there are a few scattered groups who follow other Immortals in Nithia, they are so small that they have not amassed the knowledge and wisdom necessary to create a specialization. Thus, only those Immortals previously mentioned have specializations available to clerics at this time.

### Horon



Horon specialist clerics, or Horonii, gain several benefits. They gain a +1 bonus to heat exhaustion checks (discussed in the DM's Tome) for every three levels of experience; i.e., at first level they have a +1 bonus, at fourth a +2, and so on. Eventually, this bonus becomes so great that checks always succeed except on a natural 20 (which always fails). However, this bonus only applies when the heat exhaustion is due to sudden exertion, such as combat. Running or walking endlessly still makes one very tired and Horonii must eventually rest just as all people do.

All Horonii gain the ability to use *infra-vision* at will. When this is done anyone staring into their eyes notices that they appear to be aflame. At fifth level, a Horon specialist cleric can automatically cast a *light* spell once per day, in addition to his normal daily spell

list. At 10th level they can cause their swords to burst into flame at will, causing an additional 1d4 points of damage upon a successful hit.

Of course, there are penalties as well. Like their patron, Horonii are quite hot-tempered (pardon the pun). If they are insulted, treated rudely, or demeaned in any way, they must make a Wisdom check (at -4) or go berserk for a number of rounds equal to their level. However, they are just as quick to forgive and forget and do not hold grudges.

Horon demands a lot of time spent in honoring him. If at least one hour each sleep is not devoted this endeavor, all benefits are lost until a full sleep is spent repenting. All standard clerical spells are lost as well. Furthermore, Horonii must combat the forces of entropy wherever they are found, even if it places them at great personal risk. However, they will avoid obvious suicidal situations in hopes of returning to fight another sleep.

All of Horon's clerics are particularly fond of the sun, light, and the life that it provides to plants. As such, they spend a lot of time growing elaborate gardens around their temples and helping the local farmers. Their passion for life extends to relationships as well. When not involved in life's trials, Horon's clerics can usually be found poring over scholarly works in an attempt to gain the knowledge from which wisdom is derived.

The Horonii wear as much gold as possible, as it is Horon's favorite color and it pleases him. It is also considered highly honorable for these clerics to acquire the *charioteer* driving skill.

## Ptahr



Specialist clerics of Ptahr, referred to as Artificers, are master craftsmen and artisans. If a great statue is being built in the desert, you can rest assured that Ptahr's priests are nearby. However, these priests do not work on the great pyramids, for they are the domain of the Templar mages.

At first level, Artificers can *detect magic* at will. When using this power, the Artificer's hands (palms and fingertips) glow with a cool, blue light. They also gain the ability to intuit the nature of complex devices (55% chance). This ability does not, however, allow the Artificer to deactivate traps, or operate the devices he has solved.

Ptahr Artificers produce more magical items than any other class in Nithia. Each new level, these clerics learn how to make magical *charms of resource*. These have the same effects as *standards* and even look like them, but convey their power only onto the one wearing them. These devices take a sleep to fabricate. (Both of these magical items are explained in the DM's Tome.)

Never will a Ptahr cleric make more than one *charm* of the same type. Furthermore, he can only make one *charm* at each new level. The priest may give a *charm of resource* away, but this is seldom done. Only if the recipient truly deserves a blessing from Ptahr will a *charm* be passed on to him. *Charms* are not given away frivolously, and are never sold for profit. Even when giving one away, the cleric does not inform the recipient of the *charm's* magical property.

At tenth level, the Artificer gains the power to create magical *automata* that act as companions, servants, and defenders. These

devices, once activated, mimic the movement rates, attacks, etc. of whatever creature they are crafted to resemble. However, due to their metallic construction, *automata* do damage by size: S (6"-1') 1d4, M (1-4') 1d8, L (4-8') 1d12. They are immune to *dispel magic* and *heat metal* spells, and obey only their creator, or whomever they are "assigned" to. Once an *automaton* is assigned to the recipient, they perform their duties tirelessly until ordered to stop. Needless to say, they never check morale in combat. Their construction takes ten sleeps per foot of the creature's length, making it a lengthy and complicated process that would keep an adventuring Artificer away from heroic quests for long periods of time.

At twenty-fifth level, the Artificer must begin to sculpt an *egg of wonder*. This process requires a precious or semi-precious gem of at least 2,000 gp size. The arcane process by which this is done is unknown, but according to legend, the process takes a full cycle (year) to complete. Once the *egg* is finished, the Artificer can once again go adventuring.

To properly honor Ptahr, an Artificer must complete a drawing, painting, sculpture, or other work of art every 10 sleeps. To protect their work, Artificers are issued a papyrus *art wallet*. This pouch is similar to a *bag of holding*, but will only take the cleric's artwork. Any other item placed in the *art wallet* will cause the papyrus to tear, destroying the *wallet* and its contents utterly. He must work diligently on the piece for at least two hours per sleep. If this is not done, all creativity and abilities are lost until two full consecutive sleeps (per level of the cleric) are spent in repentance. The paintings and statuary of the Ptahr priests are fantastic works (worth 100 gp per level of the cleric).

If any cleric of Ptahr knowingly destroys a work of art, he must spend a full ten sleeps in atonement for his crime. For Artificers, the penalty is more severe. If this is not

done, a full five Intelligence points are permanently stripped from the Artificer, making him the cretin his actions indicate him to be. At an Intelligence of 2 or less, the cleric himself becomes a puppet under the full control of the Immortal.

Ptahr clerics spend their spare time creating artistic items of all sorts. When they are not involved in art, they are thinking about artistic expression and such. Thus, some are quite eccentric and lead rather reclusive lives. Even their common dress of gray hooded robes indicates this. They are the epitome of the philosophic artist.

## Pflarr



Pflarr's specialist clerics, referred to as the "Children of Pflarr," are extremely interested in magic of all types. They revel in their ability to cast spells, use magical items (even



those reserved for wizards), and in the special abilities that they have. They are encouraged to use magic whenever possible to further Pflarr's causes, and increase his following. However, they generally refrain from making large public displays of their powers. Also, though they appreciate the extensive network of *pyramid energy collectors*, and the mighty powers that run them, the Children of Pflarr disdain their use in the casting of spells. For a Child of Pflarr to use a *collector* in spell casting is believed to impair one's magical development, and is therefore an insult to the philosophy of Pflarr.

The Children of Pflarr automatically gain the ability to speak Hutaakan and are treated as near equals by them. At first level, the Children of Pflarr can *read magic* at will. At the 5th level, a Child of Pflarr receives the spell-like ability known as the *Javelin of Pflarr*. The *Javelin* is an energy-bolt akin to the *magic missile*, but is more powerful, and also can affect non-living matter. Like the *magic missile*, the target has to be in the cleric's line of sight, but the bolt does not miss once fired. This can be done once per sleep. At the outset, the *Javelin of Pflarr* does 1d6 + 1 damage. The damage increases to 1d10 + 1 at 10th level, 1d12 + 2 at 15th, 2d8 + 2 at 20th, and 1d20 + 3 at 25th level and above. The *Javelin's* range is the same as that of a *magic missile*.

The most significant ability of Pflarr's Children is their ability to cast magic-user spells. Each time spells are memorized, the cleric may request that Pflarr bestow upon them one magic-user spell in place of one clerical spell of the same level. They must have first acquired that spell in a book or scroll elsewhere before petitioning their Immortal for the exchange.

Clerics of Pflarr must protect magic whenever they find it and help it to grow throughout the land. In an adventuring party, such a cleric often attempts to befriend the group's magic-user, to learn and to obtain spells.

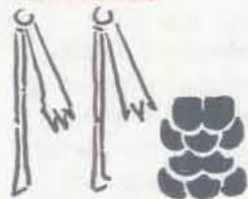
When it comes to magical treasure, however, the Children of Pflarr can be quite contentious, doing nearly anything to obtain such items for the service of Pflarr. If a Child of Pflarr mistreats magic-users without reason, he gains no spells until the infraction has been repented.

The downside to all this ability is that Pflarr's Children inherit their Immortal's incomplete mastery of magic. This is reflected by their being "magic magnets"—i.e., the specialty cleric's saving throws vs. spells, breath weapons, and wands do not improve with experience.

Finally, Pflarr's clerics must destroy any and all gnolls they come into contact with if possible (barring situations where such combat would obviously cause the cleric's demise). If this is not done, they are stripped of their clerical powers for one sleep.

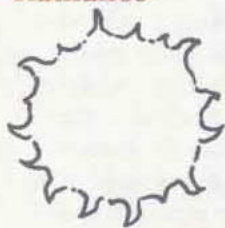
The common dress for a cleric of Pflarr is a simple white linen robe. Their favored armor is either white textile or, more preferably, *bracers of defense*. In all circumstances, the ultimate goal of the Children of Pflarr is to develop fully magical defenses. To this end, non-magical defenses are continually replaced by magical spells and items. In their spare time, they research magic, hunt down old legends about lost artifacts, and improve their libraries. Temples of Pflarr often contain hidden rooms of magical items including magic-user spell books.

### Ranivorus



Ranivorus' clerics are a deceptive and foul lot. The specific information for these specialty clerics is provided in the DM's tome as they will likely be encountered as NPC opponents.

### Rathanos



The many Nithian clerics of Rathanos are obsessed with energy, especially that of flame. Fire always burns in the braziers of their temples, and they constantly research spells and magical items that produce flame.

Rathanos' specialty clerics, hereafter known as Flame-Bearers, exemplify Rathanos' ideal. They live their lives devoted to the principles of Energy. In return, Rathanos provides these people with special benefits.

Although Flame-Bearers are subject to heat exhaustion like most Nithians, they are extremely tolerant to fire. At first level these priests are able to walk across a bed of hot coals without damage, and gain +1 to all saving throws vs. heat-or fire-based spells, breath weapons, wands, and other magic. At fifth level they automatically take half damage from all energy-based attacks (if their saving throw is failed). At 10th level they are not only immune to flame or fire damage, but can regenerate lost hit points with fire, be it magical or normal.

Anytime one of these specialty clerics casts a fire based spell, he rolls a percentage die. If the result is equal to or less than his level, one aspect of the spell is doubled. The player may choose whether it is double damage, double duration, double area of effect, etc.

Clerics of Rathanos do not harm beings that have a fiery nature unless they have no choice. At 20th level, Flame-Bearers gain an effect similar to a *charm* spell when dealing with flame-or energy-based elemental beings.

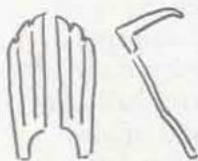
In return for these abilities, Flame-Bearers must continually honor Rathanos by contemplating and researching magic related to energy and fire. Their beliefs also place them at



direct odds to any followers of Entropy, and to defeat such beings in combat is to further honor Rathanos. At least one flame must burn in their chambers at all times, and the Flame-Bearer's entire life is devoted to the quest for a means to transform the human body into a vortex of intelligent energy. (Unfortunately, any successful means to this end generally results in the Flame-Bearer proceeding along the Immortal path of Energy, never to divulge the secret to other mortals.)

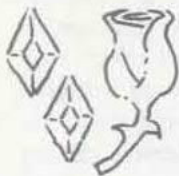
If Rathanos is not properly honored on a daily basis, he has been known to remove his gifts—at the worst possible time for the luckless Flame-Bearer. In addition, the permanent price tag for these abilities is rather high: Flame-Bearers have no saving throw against, and always take double damage from, water-based and cold-based magic.

## Thanatos



Like Ranivorus, this fell Immortal is not generally followed by PCs as he is a dark and vile being. The information for this NPC specialty is provided in the DM's tome.

## Isiris



Although not persecuted like the clerics of Ranivorus and Thanatos, the specialty clerics of Isiris are not popular among the ruling class or military. This stems from their belief that the Kingdom of Nithia should be con-

tent with its current borders and cease all attacks on its neighbors. Instead, the population should be sending envoys of peace and love to enemy states. (It is rumored that the Tanagoro enclave of Hapta is part of a move by Isiris to unite Nithia and the Tanagoro lands). Apparently in reaction to this dislike, Isiris' specialists are known as Thorns. However, these priests have the grudging respect of the powers that be, for they have negotiated the Kingdom of Nithia out of some very dangerous confrontations. The maxim of the Thorns is, "Conquer with peace."

Thorns of Isiris have a certain charm and inner beauty unlike any other people (minimum Charisma score of 16). Their passion for love and romance is so great that anyone they make advances toward may fall madly in love with them. They may attempt such advances once per sleep and the effects are identical to a *charm* spell. If this attempt is made while handing the person a rose, the subject saves at a -2 penalty.

Isiris clerics are almost irresistible to normal folk, and are usually in the company of one to four followers. The aura of appeal that radiates from the specialty cleric assures them the company of handsome people. If the person is of the opposite gender to the cleric, treat the situation as if the cleric just cast a *charm* spell on the person.

At fifth level of ability, the Thorns of Isiris can cast a spell known as *lovesong*. When the *lovesong* is cast, all combatants within a 10-foot radius per level of the cleric must save at -4, or lay down their weapons and join together in peace and brotherhood, talking out their differences and generally becoming fast friends. This, of course, does nothing to endear the Thorns of Isiris to warrior-parties!

At 10th level, Thorns of Isiris gain the ability of *girding*. They may call upon Isiris to give them a weapon and armor if they or a lover is in a life-threatening situation that might be avoided with these items. A d20 is rolled, and if the result is equal to or less



than the cleric's level (20 always fails), armor and weapons (of a random culture) appear. At 15th level this request is usually answered with magical or extra-planar weapons and armor, as required by the situation (+1 if the foe can only be hit by +1 or better weapons, etc.). At times, one or more warriors of first to sixth level may appear to fight for the cleric. However, as soon as the items or warriors are no longer needed, they return to their home culture or plane in a shower of rose petals.

Clerics of Isiris are particularly fond of those who follow Horon and often fall in love with them. However, Isiris' clerics always spread their charm around among all whom they meet. They are also particularly attracted to the ebony skinned Tanagoro and find these people fascinating.

The Thorns of Isiris must always be concerned with their appearance, and must look their best at all times. They are particularly fond of costly clothing and jewelry, with

which their wealthier followers continually supply them. Horticulture, especially the growing of roses, is also important to the Thorns. Temples of Isiris are outfitted with sumptuous gardens, and apiaries are usually kept to not only provide bees to pollinate the roses and other flowers, but to provide a continual supply of honey. Honey, of course, is a rare commodity in Nithia. In this way is Isiris honored.

Isiris is also honored by offerings of food, and to take in strangers or homeless children and feed them is to honor this loving Immortal. If Isiris is not properly honored, she has been known to blast 2d6 points of Charisma from a character, reasoning that ugliness within should be reflected on the outside. If the victim's Charisma is reduced to two or less, he becomes an ugly, mindless brute, completely beneath the Immortal's contempt. In addition, Thorns must spend at least 1,000 gold pieces per level before being able to reach the next level of experience.

This money must be spent improving either oneself or others, not on frivolous things. If this is not done, not only will the next level not be reached, but there is a 55% chance that the awful Charisma loss occurs as well.

## Fighters

The most prevalent class in all Nithia is the soldier. The Nithian military is one of the most organized societies in the Hollow World. In their wisdom, the military leaders throughout the ages have realized that specialization is the secret to military greatness.

The player who chooses a Nithian soldier need not be just a fighter. The player may choose from subclasses such as: archer, charioteer, heavyman, runner, or spearman. When a Nithian fighter is first rolled up, a field of specialization may be selected. A particular character may have at most one specialization. Of course, there are generic Nithian fighters as well, but they are greatly outnumbered by specialists.

Specializing requires a lot of extra time and devotion to a narrow band of studies. This results in both benefits and restrictions as explained in the sections below. To reflect this extra time spent in practice and training, a specialist only starts with two, instead of four, general skill slots.

Fighters may use any armor or weapon accepted to their culture. However, some of the specializations place specific restrictions on this aspect.

### Archer

Nithian archers are arguably the most competent bowmen for countless marches in all directions. Their function is paramount to the military's formations, strategies, and success.

Archers generally dress in harness armor with the elite employing a breast plate as well. They wear their hair short and do not use helmets. Both of these aspects improve

their vision, assuring a clean shot nearly every time. They never wear full armor as it is too restrictive and bulky. In game terms, full armor cancels all bonuses that accrue to the archer character. Archers may, however wear *bracers of defense* (see DM's Tome) or other magical protection in combat.

The benefits of these restrictions are that Nithian archers gain a +2 attack and damage bonus with the bow. Helmets of any type reduce this bonus by 1. Armor completely negates the bonus, and shields (excepting the buckler) cannot be used at all—it is impossible to fire a bow one-handed! The only exception to this rule is archers who have the *bow shield* skill. In this case, a buckler or light shield can be used.

Commonly selected general skills include *bow shield*, *shield back*, *Nithian Armor*, and *Nithian Weapons*.

### Charioteer

The charioteer is a very special type of fighter that fills the Nithian niche of cavalryman. Charioteers are skilled in both driving and fighting from a chariot. Besides their combat skills, they are knowledgeable about horses and chariots. However, this doesn't extend to the degree of riding horses (a skill few Nithians have) or making chariots, only that they understand both fully enough to maintain them and use them as only a charioteer can.

Charioteers dress in heavier armor than most as they do not always have to walk. Typical armor includes full scale/textile armor with a light shield and helmet being optional. Highly skilled charioteers equip themselves with scale mail, helmet, and a common shield, but this is a great hindrance to novices. Only those of 5th level or higher can use scale mail without losing the ability to both fight and drive (see below), and only those of 8th level or higher can use a common shield.

The benefits of being a charioteer include



the ability to use weapons from a chariot without attack or damage penalties, and a knowledge and mastery of chariot-mounted weaponry. Anyone else attempting this delicate procedure suffers a -2 penalty to attack dice, and only inflicts half damage.

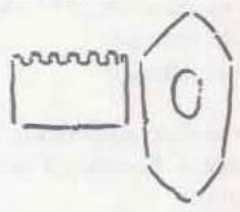


The main disadvantage of being a charioteer is that general skill slots must be spent on chariot driving and chariot combat. Furthermore, there are a lot of places in which the special charioteer benefits do not apply, such as inside dungeons, caves, or tombs. Besides this, chariots are not cheap.

Those who are lucky or wealthy enough to purchase a *float-chariot* enjoy a +1 bonus to their attacks and defenses when riding. This reflects the increased speed and maneuverability of the *float-chariot*. Skills commonly selected by charioteers include *shield back* and *chariot weaponry*.

**Heavyman**

Nithians consider heavymen to be the strangest specialization although most foreigners can identify with them more than the others. Heavymen train in hand to hand combat, with the only ranged weapons being a few light hurled types. However, their combat prowess greatly makes up for their lack of ranged attack forms.



Heavymen wear all forms of armor. Though the most common form of armor is

scale mail, heavymen's training builds the endurance necessary to wear their distinctive plate mail and battle-helms. They often carry a common shield, although half of them never take their shields off their backs. This reflects the fact that all heavymen have the *shield back* general skill.

Heavymen gain a +2 attack and damage bonus when using any cultural melee weapon. They enjoy a +1 bonus when using cultural hurled weapons in melee (such as daggers, spears, axes, etc.). However, they suffer a -1 penalty when hurling a spear, light spear, or javelin and a -2 penalty for using any type of bow or sling. No penalty is applied for hurling a dagger, throwing dagger, throwing stick, light eye-axe, or hand axe.

Heavymen must spend a skill slot to gain *shield back*. Other commonly selected skills include *bracers*, *khopesh*, *Nithian Armor*, *Nithian Shields*, and *Nithian Weapons* (see the "Nithian Starting Skills" section). A heavyman *khopesh* warrior is one of the deadliest people in Nithia as the combat bonuses of the two are cumulative!

**Spearman**

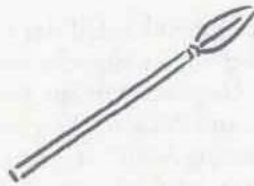
There is no real difference between a spearman or a javelin thrower. The specialization of spearman includes both. In other words, all spearmen study the art of both the javelin and spear.

Spearmen wear different armor depending upon their current role. When armed with a spear, they typically wear partial armor or textile armor and carry a great shield. When armed with javelins, they wear only partial armor and almost always carry a common shield. They rarely wear helmets in either role.

A spearman is highly trained at the use of spears, short spears, javelins, and shields. The biggest weakness of a spearman is his limited ammunition. Though spears can be used in melee, once a javelin is thrown, it is

gone, often irretrievably lost due to distance, danger, or breakage. In addition, only a limited number of javelins (1d6) can be carried at any time. Thus, spearmen work hard on making every throw count. When a spearman hurls a spear or javelin at an opponent, two attacks are rolled and the more favorable of the two is selected. Furthermore, spearmen roll their damage dice twice and again take the most favorable when using a spear or javelin.

It should be noted that carrying more than one spear, two short spears, or a quiver of six javelins is very awkward and causes a spearman to lose all of the above combat bonuses. The same is true if they are wearing armor other than those types listed above.



Spearmen practice with spears enough to gain a +1 bonus to hit and damage when using them in melee (the bonuses of the above paragraph only apply when hurled). The common practice is to throw spears and javelins, and then fight in hand to hand combat with a light melee weapon. However, since lugging a shield and spear around is awkward, spearmen primarily train with very light weapons. Thus, any weapon weighing more than 30 cn causes them to suffer a -1 penalty on attack and damage die. But, when hurling weapons of 30 cn or less (besides spears, short spears, and javelins), they gain a +1 bonus to hit (not to damage).

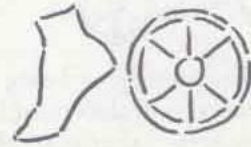
Spearmen commonly become proficient in all three *bracer* skills, as well as *Nithian Armor*, *Nithian Weapons*, and *Nithian Shields*.

### Runner

Only the hardest people are able to be runners. To reflect this, only characters with

Constitution scores of 12 or higher may select this specialization. During great military campaigns, a runner is assigned to each chariot as its personal ground infantryman. These individuals must have the stamina to keep up with a chariot and still be able to fight.

Runners typically wear very light, non-restricting armor. Commonly this includes a harness, bracers, and possibly a light shield.



A runner's benefits are many. They never check for heat exhaustion during combat. All other heat exhaustion checks are made after twice the normal amount of time has elapsed. They also gain twice the normal Constitution bonus to these checks. However, these benefits do not apply if the runner is wearing metal armor, a common or great shield.

Runners also spend a lot of time training in fast kills and wounding to debilitate as they typically attack an opponent once, and must then move on to the next. As such, runners gain a +3 bonus to hit an opponent the first time they attack. If this attack hits, a d20 is rolled against the number of the character's level, and special effects result.

#### 1d20

Roll	Special Effect
13-20	Normal damage
6-12	Save vs. paralysis or be stunned for 1d6 rounds*
1-5	Double damage

\* Regardless of the save, opponents still suffer normal damage. Of course, if they die, this is a moot point.

If a runner is encumbered in any way, or wearing full armor of any type he loses the

+3 initial strike bonus and the resulting special effects, in addition to a -2 "to-hit" penalty.

Runners, like other fighters, have a number of additional skills. Commonly selected skills include *bracers*, *bow shield*, *charioteer combat*, *khopesh*, *shield back*, *Nithian armor*, *Nithian weapons*, and *Nithian shields*.

### Khopesh

Among the Nithians are those who have studied the use of this sword so intensely that they have developed an entire philosophy around it. These are the great Khopesh Warriors. They are not a type of soldier, nor a specialty of fighter. Instead, they are a small organization bordering on the edge of a spiritual order. It is impossible to become a Khopesh Warrior without first knowing the Nithian Weapons skill. Even then membership is restricted to those who have fought with a khopesh sword in many battles (any character who uses a khopesh as their primary weapon for the duration of one level qualifies). Petitioning to become a Khopesh Warrior succeeds on a d20 roll equal to or less than the character's level (20 always fails). Of course, a skill point must still be expended. Petitioning to join the order can only occur once per experience level.

A Khopesh Warrior gains a +1 bonus to attack and damage dice with a khopesh sword. Furthermore, he gains a +1 armor class bonus while wielding the sword. If a round is spent entirely defending oneself (no attacks), the armor class bonus increases to +3.



Khopesh warriors also gain the ability to "hurl." This is the act of throwing the sword

like a hand axe. The range is only 10/20/30, but it then becomes the most damaging missile weapon known.

### War-Cleric

War-Clerics are a popular type of Nithian cleric. They generally patrol pyramid complexes and guard tombs from robbery. Only clerics who follow the current Pharaoh's Immortal may select this skill as only the Pharaoh's clerics may receive this special training.

War-Clerics are allowed by Nithian law to use the mace-axe. Furthermore, they gain a bonus of +1 to hit and damage with this weapon.

### Magic-Users

Nithian magic-users lead an unusual life as compared to those of other nations. Nithians do not like sudden powerful displays of magic unless they are associated with the Pharaoh or the Immortal he follows. Thus, magic-



users often lead a life just under the surface of public awareness. Their primary work is often in a field other than pure magical research. These are indicated in the specializations below. However, these specializations often allow the magic-user to tap into ancient arts and lost powers known to only a few.

Magic users may not use full armor and the only partial armor allowed to them are bracers.

Similar restrictions are placed on the weapons they may use. These include the dagger, throwing dagger, short sword, staff, and throwing stick.

### Mage-Scribe

A character must have an Intelligence score of 13 or greater to be a mage-scribe. Mage-scribes understand hieroglyphics better than any other group of people in Nithia. As such, they gain the ancient hieroglyphics skill without expending skill slots. Many foreigners, and even natives, wonder why the Nithian writing system has to be so complex and hard to learn. Mage-scribes know the answer; the ancients who created hieroglyphics must have been magical beings, for within this system of writing lies vast magical potential. If the ideograms are drawn properly by a mage-scribe, they are able to convey magical properties. Many mage-scribes theorize that all modern day magical symbols, runes, sigils, and glyphs originated from the ancient Nithian hieroglyphics.

Information on how glyphs are penned and what they can do is listed in the *Dungeon Master's Tome*. All that the player needs to know is that at each level, a mage-scribe learns how to make one new type of glyph.

Without using *detection* spells, a glyph is indiscernible from a typical hieroglyphic symbol. To the trained eyes of a mage-scribe, the glyphs reveal volumes of information. They can always identify their own glyphs and can identify others if they roll equal to or

less than their level on a 20-sided die (20s always fail). If a mage-scribe identifies a glyph, he may cancel its effects by making an Intelligence check.

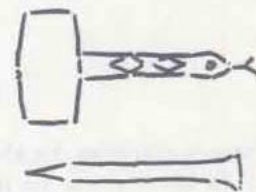
Mage-scribes spend a lot of time poring over old volumes in an attempt to unlock more of the ancient secrets contained within their covers. They normally carry a roll of papyrus, quill and ink with them.

### Montoth

The Montoth is one of the oldest and most secretive societies in Nithia. Its origins pre-date Nithian history and actually go back to the time when Nithians lived on the outer world. In the Hollow World, survivors of what was known as the Lithomancers' Guild hid out among the stonemasons of the Kingdom of Nithia. As time went on, these stone-mages split from the stonecutters and resurrected their arcane order under the name Montoth, which means "masters of mystic stones."

Montoths also know a lot of secrets about the Nithian monoliths, and can identify them by sight. If a montoth rolls equal to or below his level on a d20, he is able to identify a monolith's powers before they affect him and his companions. If the roll is a 20 it always fails, but on a 1, the montoth knows some special secret about the monolith (this, of course, depends on your DM).

At 5th level, montoths may make a saving throw versus spells to negate the effects of any monolith if so desired. At 10th level a montoth may gain the powers of a monolith by touching it and making a saving throw vs. spells. The duration of this cancellation or absorption is one hour per level of the montoth.



Montoths learn all spells that affect stone, sand, or earth as if these spells were a level lower. For example, as soon as a montoth can cast 5th level spells (9th level of experience), he may learn the 6th level spell *stone to flesh* as if it were 5th level.

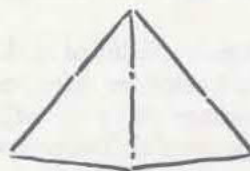
The real power of montoths is the secret information they gain as a society member. This is an aspect of this specialization that your DM will adjudicate. The price for all this power is rather high: Montoths have the complete enmity of aerial beings due to their intense alignment with earth. In short, creatures of air attack the montoth on sight, and will likely fight to the death. Furthermore, if a montoth is ever foolish enough to leave the sect, he must make an oath to the Immortals not to reveal any of his knowledge else he will be hunted down and slain if caught.

### Templar

Templars are the most popular specialist magic-users in Nithia as they are the engineering masterminds behind the great pyramids. Their superior intellects are filled with engineering secrets passed up from the ancients. They understand what rock to use, how to cut it, and how to lay it to form a pyramid capable of containing the special powers associated with these tombs. Because of the enormous amount of knowledge necessary, the minimum Intelligence score for the templar character is 16.

There are many beneficial side effects to being a templar. At 1st level, a templar is able to make an Intelligence check in order to identify any type of rock. At 5th level, Intelligence checks are used to find secret doors set into stone walls, ceilings, or floors. At 10th level, they can engineer the complete construction of a pyramid and a successful Intelligence check indicates that the structure is able to contain pyramid power. At 10th level they are also able to discover traps if they are of a stone nature such as concealed pits in the floor, dropping blocks of stone, etc. by mak-

ing an Intelligence check. Finally, at 15th level, a successful Intelligence check allows the Templar to disarm such traps.



Templars spend a lot of time with the strange instruments of engineering and design. They are the adepts who plan temples, royal buildings, and other grand stone structures. It is rumored that the legendary *rod of building* (see DM's Tome) resides in the hidden chambers of the Templars.

### Thieves

Thieves are not a highly visible class in Nithia. Punishment for thievery, as with all crimes, is meted out swiftly and harshly. Again, most thief specializations allow them to use their skills in more subtle manners. However, many thieves work directly for the Pharaoh and are given governmental positions in order to properly apply their special skills.

Thieves may wear partial armor as well as textile or leather full armor, and are the only societal group that uses leather to any degree. In fact, it has come to pass that anyone wearing leather armor in Nithia is instantly suspect as a thief. Thieves can use daggers, throwing daggers, short and long swords, staves, all types of bows, slings, throwing sticks, and javelins.

### Royal Seal Bearers

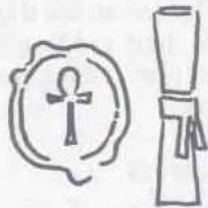
These specialists are royal officials used for a number of seemingly insignificant purposes including messenger of important documents containing the royal seal (thus their name). At higher levels they may advance to the posts of ambassador, envoy, consultant, es-



cort, and crown bearer. Their positions keep them close to very important people and events. Always, their duties are such that they have a lot of "free time" on their hands.

Their true function is fulfilled in this "free time"—royal seal bearers are spies, thieves, and sometime assassins that work for the very wealthy and very powerful. The rewards are tremendous, but then, so is the danger. Their missions are those of espionage and intrigue.

At 1st level, a seal bearer is able to physically disguise himself with makeup and appliances. The success of a disguise is determined by making a Dexterity check. Seal bearers also gain the *eidetic memory* ability. This allows them to fully memorize any conversation they can hear. This ability begins at a 10% chance, and increases by 10% per two levels of the seal bearer's experience. At 5th level, they are able to create magical disguises that can change their height within 6" either taller or shorter, and alter their apparent weight. Also, full disguise of the voice is possible at this level. The success of such ruses is again determined by a roll versus the Dexterity score. At 10th level, a seal bearer masters the disciplines necessary to fully *polymorph* himself and his gear for one hour per level after the 10th. With this skill, the seal bearer can take on the form of any small animal or person of either sex to perform their nefarious deeds in secrecy.



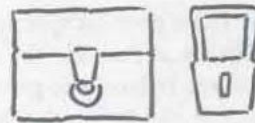
When seal bearers are in a domestic setting (i.e., inside a man-made structure) they perform all thieving abilities as if they were a level higher. They have learned how to hide in hallways, the secrets to ascending squeaky

stairways, etc. This ability does not extend to ruins, caverns, or when outside of a man-made structure.

The downside to all this is the many enemies that may be made by all this sneaking around. A royal seal bearer must also spend 100gp per level per circle in order to maintain the trappings of their high social standing. Otherwise, they may be targeted by others of their order for assassination, being a risk to the organization's integrity.

### Lockmasters

Lockmasters are, obviously, workers of locks. They make locks for doors, chests, diaries, and any other purpose desired. This is a lucrative business all of its own, but on top of this, a lockmaster "thief" has many special advantages.



Of course, a lockmaster may always pick his own locks (those made by him). Moreover, if the lock isn't of the thief's own make, he may roll a d20 and on a roll equal to or below his level, the thief receives a +10 bonus to pick the lock, due to knowledge of that particular lock maker's style. Even when a lockmaster fails at opening a lock, he makes a Dexterity check and if it succeeds, he may try once more with an equal chance for success. he may *not* reattempt the attempt if the second try fails.

Lockmasters are also extremely knowledgeable about all forms of treasure as they are master burglars. On a successful Intelligence check, they can estimate the value of gems, jewelry, statues, paintings, etc. to within a fraction of the actual value (off no more than 1 gp per 100).

Their final skill is the arcane ability of

manipulating what is known as a *flowkey*. This device is only usable at 5th level or higher. At this level, the Lockmaster uses ambient pyramid energy to make the *flowkey* defeat magical locks, including barrier spells such as *wizardlock* and *magic door*. Unlike a *knock* or other wizard spell, a *flowkey* moves past the barrier rather than destroying it. If the *flowkey* is used successfully, the magical barrier is de-activated temporarily, allowing the Lockmaster to pilfer to his heart's content. When the *flowkey* is removed, the barrier is restored without a trace of tampering. The Lockmaster's chance to successfully operate a *flowkey* begins at 15% and increases by five percent every level. Failure of a *flowkey* may result in the magical guard going off, with full consequences for the luckless Lockmaster.

The cost of these abilities is that the Lockmaster suffers an automatic -1 to hit in combat, due to the time spent in intense scrutiny of locking mechanisms.

### Guardian

Foreigners often go to the Guardian's guild in hopes of hiring a mercenary guard or soldier. This is a common mistake based upon the name. Guardians are actually thieves who use their special talents for designing the complex traps found in most pyramids.

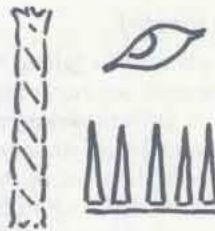
Like the Lockmaster, the guardian suffers a -1 attack penalty, due to his intense study of things small and complex. However, this fault is made up for by a number of wonderful things. A guardian's find and remove traps skill are always made at a +10 bonus. Furthermore, if a guardian accidentally sets off a trap, he may roll a d20 and if it is less than his level, he manages to avoid any harmful effects (a 20 result always fails).

Guardians also gain a third thieving ability known as *set traps*. To set a trap, the thief player must draw up the trap on paper, ex-

plain how it works, purchase the materials needed, and spends the time required to make it. During this last phase, the thief checks his ability to set traps (which is identical to his ability to remove them). If the check succeeds, the trap is set, otherwise, the trap malfunctions.

If the trap fails, the guardian makes a Dexterity check. If the roll succeeds, the trap simply doesn't work. If it fails, the trap accidentally springs upon the thief; the thief is subject to all effects of the trap.

Besides traps, guardians also know tricks such as noisy trip wires, shadow illusions, etc. These are often much quicker to make than a trap, but the process of determining their success is the same. Guardians often set trip wires around their camps at night to protect against unwanted visitors.



## Nithian Starting Skills

The following section explains the aforementioned skills and abilities peculiar to Nithia. As a note, it is suggested that Nithians with an Intelligence Score of 13 or more spend a slot on the *Modern Hieroglyphics* skill. Literacy is important in Nithia.

### *Bow Shield (Dexterity)*

A person trained in the art of firing a bow while having a light shield strapped onto his arm has the *bow shield* skill. Normally, shooting a bow with a light shield negates the defensive bonuses of the shield and causes the bow shot to suffer a -1 to hit penalty. This skill negates that attack penalty. Furthermore, a successful skill check allows the shield's AC bonuses to apply on the same round in which the bow is being shot (vs. missile weapons only).

### *Bracers (Dexterity)*

This skill allows a person to gain a +1 bonus to armor class for wearing any non-magical armband, bracelet, or anklet. However, only one of these three is gained (and must be specified). To gain the benefits of the other two, this skill must be taken again for each. Thus, if 3 general skill slots are used, a character can put on armbands, bracelets, and anklets for a net +3 armor class bonus. Of course, *bracer* skill can only be used in conjunction with partial armor (see chart under "Combat Gear") and has no benefit if worn with any type of full armor. In the case of *bracers of defense*, this skill enhances the *bracers'* magical protection.

The *bracers* skill is a form of martial arts. The wearer quickly maneuvers the armored section of his arm or leg to deflect missile weapons or physical blows. Thus, if the victim is attacked by surprise, no armor class benefits apply. Due to this active defense form, *bracers* can't be used during any round in which the wearer is firing a bow.

### *Chariot Combat (Dexterity)*

This skill is paramount to anyone desiring to fight from a chariot or *float-chariot*. Without

this skill, all attack rolls are made at a -2 and damage is cut in half. Those who have this skill attack without penalty.

It should be noted that a person with this skill cannot fight and drive a chariot by themselves. This skill is useless without another person acting as a chariot driver. This is true even if the person also knows charioteer driving. Only those fighters who have taken the charioteer specialization can both drive and fight from a chariot at the same time.

As a cultural note, Nithians rarely use melee weapons while riding a chariot. Chariots are used as a highly mobile platform from which to fire bows and hurl javelins. This is one reason that there is no damage bonus for attacking with a melee weapon from a chariot.

### *Chariot Driving (Dexterity)*

Those skilled in *chariot driving* understand how to properly hook up and unhook a chariot and horse. They can also drive the horse in order to maneuver the chariot as desired, and are skilled in falling to avoid damage in case of a crash.

If an enemy is close enough, a skill check can be made to maneuver into him and knock him down. Success allows an attack roll to be made to cause actual damage. A one-person chariot and horse causes 2d6 damage while a two-person chariot causes 3d6. If something bad happens such as flipping the chariot, breaking a wheel, or being tossed out, the driver must make another skill check to avoid injury. The *chariot driving* skill is also necessary when driving a *float-chariot*.

### *Hieroglyphics, Ancient (Intelligence)*

Because of the complexity of this writing system, only characters with an Intelligence Score of 13 or better may learn this skill. Each time an ancient text is encountered, a skill check must be rolled in order to understand it. The DM modifies this check based on the text's age and contents. Very old texts employing strange ideograms can have up to a -5 penalty. Familiar texts using current day ideograms in the ancient style can have up to a +10 bonus.

No matter what skill level a character is at, he can always read his own writing. This can

also be said of family and friends with whom he often shares written works.

### **Hieroglyphics, Modern (Intelligence)**

This system of hieroglyphics is much simpler than the ancient method. Any character may gain this skill by expending one skill slot. If a player character has this skill, he should be able to read any modern hieroglyphic writing without making a skill check.

Instead of simply telling players what a specific writing says, the DM may add a level of realism to the game by giving players a copy of the phonemic to hieroglyphic table found in the *Dungeon Master's Tome*, and allowing them to translate documents by themselves. Players may find this mysterious, new, and exciting.

### **Nithian Shield (Dexterity)**

Nithians can use shields to perform amazing feats of defense against missile weapons (not melee). Those possessing the *Nithian Shield* skill gain an improved armor class bonus versus missile weapons based on the shield's size. These bonuses are cumulative with the standard +1 associated with shields.

- Great— +4 vs. missile weapons
- Common— +3 vs. missile weapons
- Light— +2 vs. missile weapons

Again, as with the *bracers* and *Nithian armor* skills, the use of shields in this manner is a near

form of martial art and does not apply unless the shield bearer is actively defending himself (i.e., not attacking someone else). Otherwise only the standard +1 bonus to AC applies.

### **Nithian Weapons (Intelligence)**

Like the *bracers* skill, *Nithian weapons* can be selected multiple times. Each time a skill slot is expended, the character is able to use the enhanced attributes of one more Nithian weapon (the specific weapon must be selected). These enhanced attributes are listed on the weapons tables below.

### **Resist Heat Exhaustion (Constitution)**

A person skilled in *resisting heat exhaustion* can "take the heat" longer than most. This skill doubles the time limits on heat exhaustion triggers. Thus, a skilled person can perform an 8-hour forced march through the desert before checking for heat exhaustion.

Melee Weapon	Normal Dmg	Skilled Dmg
Axe, Eye—heavy	1d6	1d8
Mace-axe	1d4	1d6/1d8
Sword-staff	1d8	1d10
Sword, Short	1d4	1d6
Sword, Khopesh	1d4	2d4
Two-Handed Sword, Khopesh	1d6	1d10
Sword, Long	1d6	1d8

Missile Weapons	Normal Dmg	Range	Skilled Dmg	Range
Axe, Eye—light	1d4	10/20/30	1d6	15/30/45
Short Spear	1d4	20/40/60	1d6	25/50/75
Staff-bow	1d4	40/80/120	1d6	60/120/180
Throwing stick	1d2	10/20/30	1d4	20/40/60
Throwing Dagger	1d4	10/20/30	1d6	15/30/45

## Combat Gear

### Armor

Although Nithians have a mastery of iron technology, they do not employ iron in the making of most armor. This is primarily due to the environment. Walking across the desert in plate mail armor is an act of veritable suicide. (The plate mail of the heavymen is an exception to this rule, and is discussed later.)

Thus, many strange and unique forms of armor have been developed. These special Nithian forms of armor are listed in the inside cover along with armor class, costs, encumbrance, and heat exhaustion penalties of all forms of armor.

### Nithian Shields Defined

Most Nithian shields are made of thick hard leather stretched over a wooden frame. The hide is specially treated and cured to assume the properties of metal: very tough, very hard, yet without the weight of metal. Many Nithians haven't gone to metallic shields due to their weight and the fact that holding a metallic shield against one's arm is very uncomfortable in the 110+ degree climates of northern Nithia. Unlike metal shields, however, treated leather does not turn sharp edges and stabbing points very easily.

Nithian common shields are rectangular and can be slightly curved. Light shields, or "small shields" as they are also called, are either round or rectangular and can be strapped onto the forearm like a buckler shield. They are generally no wider than the length of a man's forearm.

The most famous Nithian shield is the great shield employed by the ranks of spearmen. This shield is rectangular with a slight curve in it. The top may be flat or slightly rounded. They are slightly wider than the wielder's body and just tall enough

that he can see over it if the base is set upon the ground.

In combat, great shields are often set on the ground or stuck into the sand. The spearmen behind them can then wait in relative security until a foe approaches within hurling range. Another option is to form a shield wall with great shields, with spears protruding through the cracks, providing a formidable obstacle to opponents. (For shield statistics, see the Weapons Chart on the inside cover of this product.)

### Nithian Armor Defined

*From a combat briefing given by the Milenian Navy:*

"There are two general classifications of Nithian armor. *Partial armor* is composed of various odd pieces that can be used in any combination, while *full armor* is a complete suit of armor. Partial armor cannot be mixed with full armor as the two protect the same areas, and partial armor relies on the defender being able to move very dexterously, which is not the case in full armor due to its bulk.

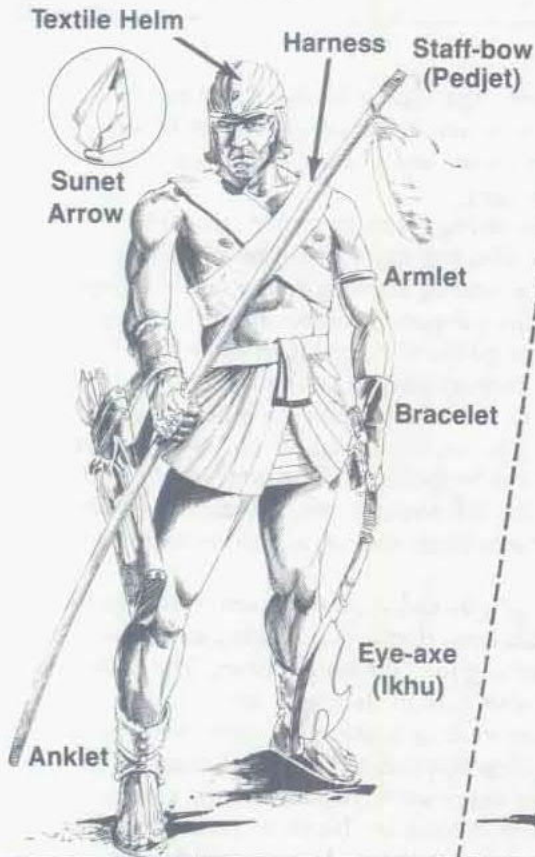
"*Armllets, anklets, and bracelets* are not merely forms of jewelry in Nithia. Rather, they are stiff bands of textile, leather, or metal that cover four to eight inches of an appendage. It is very difficult to master their use and they provide no protection to anyone who has not specifically trained with them (see the *bracers* general skill). These defensive adornments may at times be magical in nature as well.

"A *harness* is a simple crossing strap in the front and back that provides minimal protection but is quite useful to attach quivers, shields, packs, and other gear to.

"A great improvement on the harness is to attach a *breast plate* to it. A breast plate can also be hung about the neck, but wearing it in conjunction with a harness is much more

# Nithian Weapons and Armor

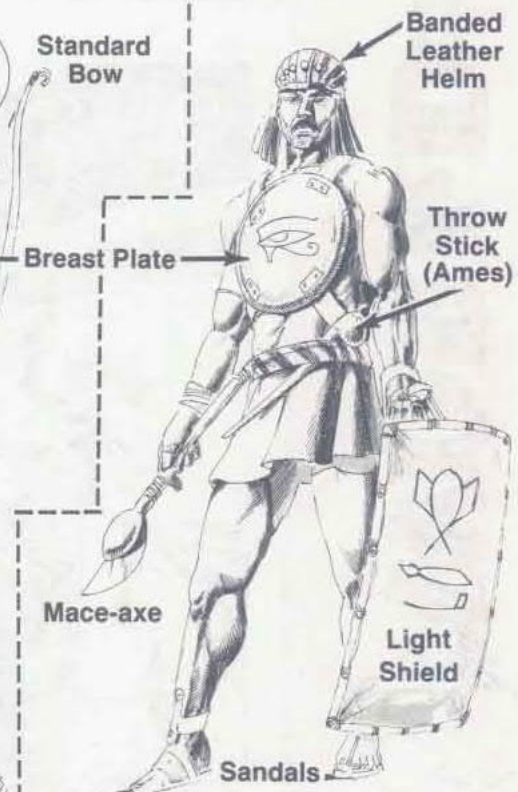
Warrior 1



Warrior 2



Warrior 3



Warrior 4



Warrior 5



Warrior 6





comfortable. This is not the large form-fitting breast plate of plate mail, but a small perfectly round disk only 12 to 18 inches in diameter. Anything larger would be completely impractical in this climate.

“Textile armor is quite popular among Nithians as it is easy to make, cheap, light weight, and relatively cool to wear. It is a two-piece garment composed of a linen-type fabric that is hardened by various plant juices to form a light weight, resilient material. The armor garment is left flexible in places so joints have mobility while other areas are protected by the added durability of the stiffened textile.

“Nithian *plate mail* armor is comparable to the plate mail we are most used to. It is composed of worked metal sections that are bound with finely meshed chain mail. These worked metal parts may have individual magical enhancements. The one difference is that it can be worn only in conjunction with a Nithian *battle helm*. The *battle helm*, in

addition to providing full head and facial protection, acts as a magical cooling device, protecting the wearer from the effects of the hot weather.”

“The strange Nithian armor can tell a trained observer much about his opponent. Anyone wearing armllets, anklets, or bracelets is usually a seasoned combatant as their use requires special skill, and if all three are worn, they are likely a master fighter (PC quality). A Nithian wearing a helmet is never seeking peace, as helmets are only worn when combat is forthcoming. The same can be said of all the full armor forms. Helmets and full armor are simply too hot to wear as everyday gear.”

Although sandals do not provide for armor class benefits, they are considered to be armor among the Nithian populace. The reason has to do with the harsh desert sands. Anyone walking in the open desert without foot protection suffers burning damage from the hot desert sand. In game terms, a bare-foot person loses one hit point for every eight hours of desert travel. As with shields, full statistics for Nithian armor are listed in the “Nithian Armor” chart on the inside cover of this product.

## Weapons

Nithians use a variety of weapons, but unlike most other cultures, nearly half of them are missile or hurled weapons. The damages and ranges of Nithian weapons are increased in conjunction with the *Nithian weapons* skill previously mentioned in this book. Full statistics for Nithian weapons are listed in the “Nithian Weapons” chart on the inside cover of this product.

*Eye-axes* are a less bulky axe intended to make desert campaigns an easier affair. Their blades are mounted on the inside curve of an S shaped stick. When the axe is viewed from the side, the shape suggests the Nithian hieroglyphic for the human eye, hence the

name. The axe head has a large base with a narrow tip for great penetration. The overall design allows a skilled individual to produce a lot of penetrating force that offsets the loss of greater weight and cutting surface. Because of this design, light eye-axes do 1d4 points of damage and heavy models do 1d6.

The most prestigious weapon in all Nithia is the *mace-axe*. This official weapon of the Pharaoh and his war-clerics does 1d6 points of damage. One may only acquire a mace-axe by direct gift of the Pharaoh or his representative. If a common peasant were ever seen carrying a mace-axe, he would be heavily interrogated by the medjay (police). The Pharaoh is generally quite liberal in passing on mace-axes to those of high honor or rank. Thus, it is not uncommon to see officers of any rank as well as small squadrons of elite fighters carrying them. In general, if an opponent is carrying a mace-axe, he is either a very prestigious person, or an amazingly skilled combatant. Knowledgeable opponents have been known to run in fear from a Nithian soldier wielding such a weapon.

A *sword-staff* is a sword-like blade mounted on the end of a staff which deals 1d8 points of damage. It wields much like a common two-handed sword with the center of balance extended farther toward the tip.

The Nithian short and long swords have curved blades and are referred to as *scimitars* by the locals. Those not skilled in their use find them to be a poor substitute for a straight-bladed sword, but a trained Nithian can quickly change this opinion, and put it to rest permanently.

The most famous type of Nithian sword is the *khopesh*. Although there are both one- and two-handed versions of this weapon, most are long-handled to serve as either type. A *khopesh* is a strange-looking weapon with a blade that looks much like a question mark. It is nearly non-functional in the hands of foreigners. A trained Nithian, however, can do 1d4 points of damage with a

short *khopesh*, and 1d6 with a large model. Many fighters train for circles (years) to perfect all the strange stances and swings associated with the mighty *khopesh*. If they are especially skilled, they enter the society of the *Khopesh Warriors*.

*Sunet* are common arrows that all adventurers are used to. However, a *setu* is a heavier shafted war arrow boasting a wicked barbed shaft with a special head for greater penetration through armor and flesh. The *setu* causes 1d8 points of damage when fired instead of the standard 1d6. However, it suffers range penalties due to its weight and air friction.

Nithians rarely use standard spears as they have perfected the art of spear crafting and hurling to the degree that their short spear serves them better. It causes the same damage as a standard spear, but is lighter, cheaper, and can be thrown farther than the spears adventurers may be used to. Of





course, they are not quite as long, ranging from one to two paces (3-6 feet), but this is not seen as a hindrance since Nithians throw their spears as often as they use them in melee combat.

The *staff-bow* is an innovative weapon first designed by the peasant class ages ago, but is now used by the populace at large. When unstrung, a staff-bow is a straight heavy staff that deals 1d4 points of damage in melee combat. The string is either detached altogether or tightly coiled around one end. When strung, it functions as a rather stiff, hard pulling bow. Due to its shape, it has severe range penalties, but tales have been told of magical staff-bows that are as good as or better than the outer world longbows, and may perform as *staves of striking*. It should be noted that not just any old staff can be strung up and made into a staff-bow. Only wood with the special properties of resilience and flexibility will suffice and most simple staves do not qualify.

The *throwing stick* is another weapon long ago introduced by the peasant class and adopted by the populace at large. Throwing sticks are a very practical weapon as they provide relatively good range, fair (1-2 points) damage, are light to carry, and are easily reproduced. Most Nithian combatants can whittle a functional throwing stick in an hour. They have a curved knot at one end with a narrowing handle attached to it. This provides for good balance and a unique rotation that delivers maximum force upon impact. More than one foreigner has found himself lying on his back after having laughed at some Nithian child for shaking a throwing stick at him.

Since Nithians have an affinity for missile and hurled weapons, it should not be a surprise that they have developed the throwing dagger. This is a precision instrument designed specifically for throwing. In fact, it only causes half damage when used as a melee weapon. Thus foreigners can only cause

1d2 damage in melee and 1d4 if they throw it while skilled Nithians cause 1d4 in melee and 1d6 if it is thrown. The entire dagger is very narrow and does not have a usable hilt for grasping in melee. It does have an enlarged disk as a pommel, giving it a distinctive and odd look.



## Nithia

Now that we have discussed the societies and weaponry of Nithia, let us turn our attention to the land itself. The true mystery and wonder of Nithia rests in the land as much as in its people.

## Climate

The climate in Nithia varies from continuous heat in the north, to more moderate temperatures in the south. In the northern regions, endless sleeps go by without a single drop of precipitation. The continuous noon day sun of the Hollow World seems to beat down upon the Nithian River Valley with magnified intensity. Only the waters of the great River Nithia keep this nation from being one vast desert.

In the desert regions, rain falls only once or twice a circle (barring weather-affecting magic). There are even places in the deep desert where rain never falls. Even along the central valley where the river flows, rain only falls a dozen times in a circle. Snow is a term not understood by most Nithians unless they have traveled into distant lands, climbed among the Pflarr's Wall Mountains, or traveled south of Hapra.

The most talked-about aspect of the weather is the wind. It can be both life saving and life threatening. A light breeze is a welcome thing for it cools people and animals. However, in the sandy desert, strong winds can kill. The overall lack of obstacles in the desert allows storm winds to reach terrific speeds, picking up sand grains to form sandstorms of immense size and power. Nearly every family has a tragic story about how a family member was injured or killed by the ripping sands blown by "deathwinds", as they are referred to in Nithia. Such storms can cause from 1d6 to 3d6 points of damage per turn depending upon their severity.

## Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion is also a very real threat that all natives are familiar with and know how to safeguard against using either by bringing their own water, or by using *household magic*. However, unwise foreigners generally learn of this environmental hazard through experience. Unfortunately, this lesson can be fatal.

### Heat Exhaustion Triggers

The following conditions require a heat exhaustion check. The DM may also decree that a check is required if warranted for some other reason.

Condition	Check Every
Combat	10 rounds
Running	10 rounds
Forced march	4 hours
Heavy manual labor	4 hours
Activity without water	4 hours
Walking in armor	4 hours
Walking while encumbered	4 hours

### Making a Heat Exhaustion Check

A heat exhaustion check involves making a saving throw vs. death ray. A d20 is rolled applying all bonuses and penalties. The total must be equal to or greater than a character's death ray saving throw or he become exhausted.

There are several adjustments that may apply. Characters with very high or low Constitutions adjust the die roll by their Constitution bonus or penalty.

Finally, for every additional heat exhaustion trigger currently in effect a -1 cumulative penalty is applied. For example if the fighter Hotep is checking heat exhaustion due to 10 rounds of combat after having been force-marched for the last five hours without water, he has a -2 penalty (forced march & no water). Of course, he must have



# THE KINGDOM OF NITHIA

One hex = 40 miles (2 marches)

Fire Gate

Lake Thufu



previously succeeded at a heat exhaustion check after the first four hours of forced march ended (at which time he had a -1 penalty due to going 4 hours without water).

### Heat Exhaustion Effects

The effects of a failed heat exhaustion check are determined by rolling a d20 and applying the same adjustments as were applied to the save. The resulting number is then looked up on the following table.

Result	Effect	Results
1 or less	Heat Stroke	Fatal
2-3	Delirious	Attack wildly until collapse*
4-5	Heat Stroke	3d12 points of damage
6-7	Delirious	Run wildly until drop*
8-9	Heat Stroke	2d12 points of damage

10-11	Delirious	Continue current activity until collapse*
12-15	Heat Stroke	1d6 points of damage
16-17	Collapse	Die in 1d4 hours unless water is drunk
18-19	Pass out	Awake in 1d6 turns
20+	No effect	

\* Every turn (or round if during combat) a Constitution check is made. Failure means the person collapses as per the result above.

Once a heat exhaustion check has failed, all future checks automatically fail until all heat exhaustion triggers are eliminated for a length of time equal to that of the exhausting activity. For example, if Ahmed the Barbarian has failed his Heat Exhaustion Check after running for four hours, then he must rest for at least four hours before leaping to his feet to run again.

## Terrain

Most foreigners who have heard about Nithia, but never been there, believe that it is a great valley split up the middle by the River Nithia. To either side of the river is a narrow vegetation strip that suddenly ends. From here, a vast sandy desert stretches out on either side to cover the rest of the valley floor.

Although this is a good working model, anyone who has visited Nithia knows that the terrain is much more varied and unique. Indeed, it is a valley stretching over 42 marches (840 miles) between the southern shore of Lake Menkor in the north to Lake Thufu in the south. The valley is bordered on the east by the foothills of the jutting mountain range known as Pflarr's Wall. The western border is defined by the Hutaatep Highlands, a region of rugged dry cliffs and hardpan (packed clay). The valley floor is about 18 marches wide (360 miles).

The exact borders of the Kingdom of Nithia are a thing of constant dispute. The Pharaoh claims the right to all lands that he or any of his representatives view. However, a more realistic border of the Kingdom cuts across the middle of Lake Menkor to the north, runs down the spine of Pflarr's Wall and across the Plateau of Anhur, and circles below Lake Thufu to the edge of the Great Southern Shield, running along it until just west of Fort Amonsur. From here it runs across the Hutaatep Highlands until it meets the southern arm of the World Spine on the south side of the Valley of the Hutaaka, then back to the western shore of lake Menkor.

The only border that is truly undefined is Nithia's western line across the Hutaatep Highlands separating Nithia from the Jennite Holdings. This point is a source of constant war between the Jennites and Nithians. Most Nithians claim the Hutaatep Highlands for themselves, clear to the western border of this region, while the Jennites have set the

border so that it runs right through the old Hutaatep ruins. It is unlikely that this particular point will ever be settled as it is a cultural cornerstone that the Nithians must always work to expand their empire.

## Desert Lands

The lands of Nithia are quite varied. Indeed, the River Nithia does run up the middle of the valley floor almost for its entire length, and a region of vegetation lines either side of it extending as much as a march away from the river's banks. However, the rest of the valley is far from being a windswept sandy desert, as most foreigners believe. It is hot and dry with practically no vegetation, but it is far from being just a desert of sand. In fact, over ten percent of the terrain is composed of great rock walls, canyons, and other rocky formations. These are not the sharp-edged rocks of newly born mountains, but rocks that have been etched and sculpted by millennia of winds into weird, wonderful shapes.



If the map of Nithia is examined, it becomes evident that as much of it is made of badlands and barren broken lands as is covered in desert. Even the sandy regions of Nithia are not all composed of the dunes and plains one would expect. Only a third of the desert country is covered in true sand dunes.

These regions are created where the wind seems to blow constantly or the land's geography always funnels the sand in the same direction.

Another third of the desert is made up of relatively flat ground composed of both sand and hard, sun baked dirt. On the map, this region is labeled "sandy desert." It is flat and easily traveled across even by chariots. It is here that the mysterious region known as the Frozen Sands lies. This area, whether by natural causes or residual magic, has the peculiar quality of solidifying periodically in fantastic free-form shapes. With certain secret magics, it is rumored, adepts can manipulate this freezing effect to sculpt beings and creatures of great size and power. Whether these creations will do their master's bidding is another story.

The last third comprises of nothing but packed dirt with occasional seams of rock sliding through it. This last desert region generally borders badlands or barren country and exist in exposed regions where the wind blows all the sand away.

### ***The Badlands of Nithia***

Nithian badlands are a thing of legend. Some foreigners believe that the Nithian obsession with monuments and pyramids is an attempt to recreate the sense of vast creation that these lands emanate. These regions are honeycombed with large, sheer canyons with walls of rock and packed clay. Many of the canyons are box-ended (dead ends), while others suddenly open up into natural bowls often filled with great natural pyramids. These are caused by horizontal layers of rock protecting the clay beneath it from the ravages of time. In other areas, great rock monoliths jut upwards into the sky like some ancient race of titans, now weathered beyond recognition. Some of these standing stones are carved by wind and sand into grotesque, fantastic shapes. Other canyons are sand-filled traps that hold danger

for explorers. A few canyons conceal lush oases that are actually miniature forests.

The Nithian word for badlands directly translates to mean "land of the ancient silence." Most modern day scribes inform the inquisitive foreigner that this refers to the strange way in which sound seems to echo off the cliff faces and canyons, reverberate around the speaker, and then fall silent in such an ominous way that most think twice before creating another such sound. Others explain the effect as the residue of a magical battle fought in this region many centuries ago. The acoustics of the area cause some sounds to travel along the canyon walls to be heard nearly a quarter march away. Other times, the loudest shout is captured by the walls, reverberated around the speaker, and a person around a bend just a flight away will hear nothing. This explanation does not, however, account for tales of adventurers who suddenly find themselves unable to hear their own voices or footsteps, as if seized by a magical *silence*.

Adventuring through the badlands can be a deadly, but potentially rewarding, experience. Many of the ancient Nithian Pharaohs, regional Kings, and other important officials were entombed in chambers built into the canyon walls and naturally occurring pyramids. They are guarded by the labyrinthine structures of the region. High narrow paths must be traversed along sheer drops of death in order to get to them, and secret entrances are protected by the most clever and deadly traps ever designed.

Every circle, there are a few would-be tomb robbers who enter the badlands. Most are never seen again, but a very few return with great wealth in gold, jewels, statuettes, and antiques of great value. A field laborer who "strikes it lucky" can gain enough wealth to break through the caste system and rise into the ranks of nobility. Conversely, that same laborer may trigger one or a series of magical traps that will plague him and his

family for centuries to come. Because of this, very few people are brave or foolish enough to risk "harvesting" the Nithian badlands.

### ***The Broken Lands***

The barren Nithian broken lands are perhaps the most awe-inspiring terrain in all Nithia. When Nithians speak of the "underworld", they refer to one of two things: either the lands of the dead, or the broken lands. It is said that ancient powers lie dormant in the broken lands. Most Nithians do not venture far into such places alone and even feel uncomfortable here with a large amount of people, such as a military company.

The broken lands are much like the badlands (explained above), however, they are even more harsh and inhospitable than the badlands. It almost appears as if they were once badlands, but some great force smashed and twisted them beyond recognition. Rocks lie at odd angles, usually in great sheets or splinters that jut upwards at unnatural angles. The canyon walls have been shattered in places causing house sized clods of aged clay to litter their floors. Even foreigners unexposed to Nithian legends feel uneasy walking in the broken lands. Vegetation is (apparently) non-existent here, and wildlife is scarce, mostly made up of desert rats and the occasional bird of prey that feeds upon them.

### ***The Nithian Hills***

The rolling hills of Nithia appear very much like static dunes. Those near the river are composed of silty dirt and are covered in light vegetation. The soil composition becomes finer and eventually turns to clay as the hills roll towards badlands or underworld regions. If the hills border open desert or mountains, the hills are more sandy or rocky appropriately.

Most of Nithia's mineral wealth lies in the hills, perhaps a result of all the different soil

types and rock formations that seem to meet in their midst. The minerals most mined are gold, silver, iron, and copper. Of course, Nithia is famous for its great wealth in gold. Some of the largest deposits found in the Hollow World lie beneath this baked land.

### ***Some Notes on Building Materials***

Stone of all types is found throughout Nithia—from the sandstone of the desert, to the obsidian of the underworld and badlands, to the limestone of the hills. Besides these, marble, serpentine, and granite can be found in abundance in various regions. The most precious building stones are those that can best weather time. Of these, alabaster, porphyry, and schist can all be found, but none are harder than the iron-like quartzite rocks. Quarries are a common sight as these "noble stones" are in constant demand for monuments, obelisks, or tombs.

All the great buildings throughout the kingdom are made of rock. The material and workmanship of a building is a symbol of its occupants status in society as well as the building's inherent worth as a structure. Stone buildings are the most elite, with the quality of the stone improving its level even more. Greatest of all are those structures comprised of great blocks of stone carved and placed so their seams vanish due to precise craftsmanship. The construction of important buildings falls to the order of the Templars, since the most perfect constructions are created with the *rod of building*.

Next come buildings made of cut blocks of lesser stones, and stacked rocks in which gaps and seams are evident. Then come structures made of earthen walls, which are considered to be the domain of common folk. Reinforcing these walls with wood or reeds makes them stronger, but is very unorthodox in the eyes of locals. Stone reinforcement is infinitely preferable to vegetable matter as structural support, and there are better

things to make with wood and reeds than wall supports.

## Ecology

### *Farming in Nithia*

As noted above, all is not hot and dry, but perhaps now it is evident why Nithians practically honor their river as an Immortal. It brings life to an otherwise lifeless land. Over the centuries, Nithians have perfected the use of water to an art form unequalled by any other culture in the Hollow World. The great River Nithia is the life blood of the kingdom and is the heart or main artery of an immense but delicate circulation system surrounding it on both sides.

Farmers mostly grow corn, barley, and wheat with rice and papyrus being their primary crops. Because the majority of farms are near the river, the typical Nithian farm is a two-stage affair that is quite surprising to foreigners. Since standing water is essential to the growth of rice and papyrus, the crop water is stocked with fish, which breed and provide both fertilizer and additional food yield from a single area of land.

Nithians do not approach the use of water in the way that foreigners may expect. There are no large dams upon the river, and the canal system that exists near the river Nithia is for irrigation rather than transport. This is augmented by a delicate net of temporary dikes, partial dams, and numerous small ditches. Their system is both very functional and practical. The practical side comes from the annual floods of the river. During this time, the waters of the Nithia are channelled into the fields by the canals. All dams, dikes, ditches, etc. near the river are washed away or filled with silt. Crop areas are re-plotted yearly, based on *auguries* cast by clerics. These changes keep particular regions from being over-farmed, and result in an ever-abundant crop yield.

### *Vegetation*

The Pharaoh's people are particularly fond of plants. Most estates of the wealthy include a large courtyard filled with plant life of all kinds including tamarisks, palms, sedges, poppies, and many other exotic plants.

Flax is grown for the production of the finest linen in all the Hollow World. Another commonly grown plant, papyrus, is used to produce papyrus paper, baskets, mats, sandals, boats, etc. Even armor can be made from this flexible plant.

Many other plants grow naturally including a variety of flowers: lotus (famous for its blossoms and a common Nithian symbol), yellow daisies, poppies, irises, asphodels, and ranunculuses. Native trees range from the tall doum and date palm to the stunted tamarisk including such species as sycamore, carob, fig, and acacia (especially sweet acacia). Near the river, vetches, sesban shrub, fennel, and endive grow with patches of goosefoot extending out into the lagoons. Even the desert sports a selection of plant life ranging from the coarse alfa grass to the dwarf mimosas, stunted tamarisks, and an occasional date palm. Also, in the deserts, badlands, and broken lands one finds the bizarre plants like the crystalrose, sand-star and the warrior cactus.

### *Animal Life*

*From the records of Narab, an Antalian explorer:*

"More than just plants live in this grand and ancient country. Animals of many species fly in the sky, walk the land, burrow in the ground, and swim in the river's water. They fill niches in areas from the river deltas to the broken lands.

"There are more varieties of birds in Nithia than any other type of wildlife. Perhaps this is why the Nithians love birds. Feathers and bird symbols are rooted deep into the culture. Some of the more prominent varieties include raptors such as



the vulture, kite, hawk, eagle, and the Nithian barn owl. Land birds like the sand grouse, red partridge, bustard, quail, and snipe abound, and water birds such as the flamingo, crane, heron, spoonbill, and kingfisher inhabit the shores of the Great River. Even everyday birds like swift, martin, lark, finch, bulbul, and many species of ducks and geese are evident. Of course, one of the most revered species is the ibis with its legendary ties to the Immortals.

"The many birds of Nithia are no doubt attracted to the warm moist waterways and fields along the great river as well as the numerous types of insects that always accompany moisture and heat. Among these are mosquitoes, grasshoppers, praying mantis, and a wide variety of moths (yet no butterflies have ever been seen in Nithia). The desert and badlands are also perfect habitat for both common and huge specimens of scorpions, tarantulas, and centipedes. The more "domestic" pests are the houseflies, fleas, and cockroaches found in the cities (particularly in wooden buildings). Wasps are common, but bees are scarce, making honey a luxury and form of currency in certain Nithian circles.

"Insects are also devoured by buolti, carp, and Nithian perch found in most of the accessible waters. Fish constitute the main source of protein among these people.

"Typical land herbivores include the dorcas gazelle, ibex, and oryx as well as the giraffe, ostrich, and wild cattle. These are preyed upon by hyena, jackals, jungle cats, caracals, and panthers. Cleaning up after these or chasing smaller game (like desert hare) are the desert fox and fennec. The waters of Nithia support also non-piscine wildlife such as crocodiles and hippopotami. Rats are fed upon by mongooses, desert monitors (a 1-2 pace long lizard), and snakes including the viper (both horned and normal), echis, and the deadly Nithian cobra. Finally, bats, barbary, and jerboa are sometimes seen.

"Nithians have domesticated a wide variety of animals for transportation, labor, and occasionally to adorn the dinner platter. Horses, oxen, camel, and ostriches are all owned and used for transportation or labor (usually by the upper class and wealthy). Of these, all but the horse are native and can be gathered in the deserts or badlands for profit. Sheep and goats are raised for meat, milk, cheese, butter, and wool, while pigs and cattle augment the herds.

"Stalking the fringes of the Nithian ecology are the truly exotic creatures such as dinosaurs. Luckily for the populace, their ranges are limited to the northern regions of Nithia, where the heavily-forested land is more hospitable to lifestyles. However, smaller, hardier breeds are known to the south. In some cases, it is rumored that there are Nithian outlaws who have even domesticated these beasts for riding purposes. Also inhabiting the outlying regions are the downright weird creatures, things that may be escaped magical experiments that bred true, or caprices of the Immortals. In this category fall beasts like the refractor, man-scorpion, and the chimer."

## Society

It would seem that all Nithians live for one purpose, to serve their Pharaoh and their Immortals. These two edicts are indistinguishable, as the Pharaoh is considered to be a lesser Immortal serving either Pflarr or Rathanos. Indeed, all Pharaohs are clerics of Pflarr or Rathanos. All life in Nithia centers around the Pharaoh and his policies. The Pharaoh is head of the temple, leader of the military, and king of the lands. To disobey the Pharaoh is to disobey the Immortals.

However, to dismiss Nithian society as a static, mindless gaggle of servitors to a supreme central authority would be worse than wrong. Nithian society is a living system

that, though strange, performs all the functions that make life worth living for its people.

### **The Caste System**

Nithian society is made up of *castes*. One's caste determines one's position not only in society, but where one will be placed in the afterlife.

For the most part, a child is born into the caste of its parents. This even extends to occupation. This is why there are hereditary soldiers, hereditary slaves, etc. A baker's son is expected to become a baker in his own time. Thus, most professions are learned via family apprenticeship.



### **The Pharaoh**

Of course, the Pharaoh is unquestionably above all others. There is only one Pharaoh, whose word is law. It should be noted however, that Nithia also has two kings who rule the two main regions of Nithia. These kings are referred to as the Upper (Delta) and Lower (Southern) King. However, in recent times the Pharaoh line of Ramose has adopted the title of King onto themselves as well as Pharaoh. This has greatly irritated the current Delta King, Senkha.

Nithia is also divided into *nomes*, regions analogous to counties which are governed by

*Nomarchs*. Each city and its surrounding area makes up a nome. The three major cities are also nomes. The rest of the nation is divided up into nomes as decreed by that kingdom's King. These nomarchs are accountable to the Upper or Lower Kings, but are relatively autonomous.

### **Nobles**

Nobles, which make up the top five percent of Nithian society, are broken down into sub-levels. For the sake of convenience, these sub-levels have been separated into the three categories of *Clerical Nobles*, *Gubernatorial Nobles*, and *Military Nobles*. Furthermore, those on the same line have a similar rank among the noble caste system.

### **Commoners**

Commoners include all private landholders and business owners. Commoners make up 40% of the Nithian population, a greater percentage than any other caste. As such, they tend to have the greatest range of social conditions and mobility. A great merchant magnate who controls all imports into Menkara on Lake Menkor is a commoner just as is a lowly baker who lives, sleeps, and works in a one room mud-brick hovel. In addition, the baker has the opportunity, through hard work or successful investment, to rise to the level of the merchant magnate. The wealthiest and most influential commoners can call upon nobles for favors and have even been known to dislodge nobles from their place in society.

### **Peasants**

Peasants are just one step above slaves. They are not owned by any one individual and cannot be individually sold, but they are considered to be owned by the land or business that they serve. Thus, when a

wealthy farmer acquires a large tract of land, he also acquires the undisputed services of all peasants who serve it. He can order the peasants around as much as desired as long as the orders concern work upon the farm. He does not have the right to order a peasant to perform menial labor such as cooking, cleaning, or fetching household supplies from the village. Peasants are even allowed to leave their place of work and enter villages in order to acquire personal effects.

In general, peasants are compensated for their services by shelter and food. Rewards include small luxury items that the wise peasant saves up in hope of one day trading these for his complete freedom, allowing him to enter the commoner rank.

### Slaves

The last two castes are those of *hereditary* and *captured slaves*. Captured slaves are prisoners of war. They are barely considered to be human. They are not allowed to own property, and thus cannot buy their way out of their situation. This keeps foreigners from infiltrating and altering Nithian society.

Hereditary slaves were born into their caste. All newly born children of either captured or hereditary slaves are considered hereditary. Thus, all children of a captured slave are automatically of a higher caste than their parents. This practice is partly humane treatment, and partly a result of convenience, since captured slaves are not considered fit to serve in a household or any other position of moderate comfort.

All slaves can be sold and are considered personal property. It is not uncommon, though, for hereditary slaves to be treated as "one of the family" in their role of household servant. Some even have better living conditions than most peasants. There are also instances of masters awarding slaves with peasant status in return for acts of outstanding service.

## People

Nithians are a dark skinned people whose facial structures and complexions vary from an aquiline, light olive colored construction, to the full Negroid characteristics of the Haptans, with every variation in between. They tend to be long lived, a result of careful attention to their diet. An obese Nithian is a rare sight. Various *household magics* (detailed in the DM's Tome) keep the Nithians well-groomed and looking their best.

### Names

Here are a few names to provide an idea of Nithian name construction.

#### Men's Names

Arkhenotep  
 Atenalam  
 Auridaman  
 El-Daman Yat  
 Inherkhan  
 Kha  
 Komnut  
 Meketre  
 Nebub  
 Nefrura  
 Ramamasra  
 Rasalam  
 Sebek-Khu  
 Senmut  
 Sura-Astra

#### Women's Names

Atenyat  
 Ala-Asratiti  
 Cleymnestra  
 El-fara Sein  
 El-alam Tanta  
 Fanta-yat-Dalla  
 Farapatri  
 Isisalam  
 Masrapatra  
 Qat-masra  
 Rasara  
 Ruma  
 Sarasa  
 Seinasri  
 Tana

### Common Terms

Many of these terms are much like our Earth's Egyptian words except that T and F are often switched as are v and t.

*Canopic jars* - Vessels to hold viscera of the dead

*Haty-aa* - Hereditary noble or nomarch

*Haw-nebu* - "new foreigners"

*Hequ* - crook scepter

*Iter* - a forced march

*Ba* - spirit  
*Ma* - foreigner's army  
*Meshwesh* - foreigner  
*Nesu* - King  
*Ostrica* - stone writing slab

*Shaduf* - used to draw water from an open well or the river

*Swipe* - beam with two buckets at either end to transport water.

*Ushebtis* - servants for dead in the underworld

## Clothing

*From the journal of Steban, a Jennite trader:*

"The typical Nithian clothing is sparse.

Slaves often wear a simple loin cloth or one-piece linen garment cinched at the waist with a belt. Children usually run around naked until age 5 or 6. Both sexes dress and make themselves up similarly.

"At age 12-14, Nithians are allowed to have their hair braided into the traditional Nithian locks. Wearing this hairstyle is a sort of rite of passage, marking entrance into adulthood. Alternately, other Nithians opt to have their heads shaved. Being clean-shaven is a must in Nithia, since facial hair is considered a mark of barbarism. Because of this, baldness is considered a mark of good grooming. In addition to being easy to take care of, baldness allows people to try the variety of wigs that are a part of Nithian fashion. Both sexes wear wigs of human hair. The wig's quality is a symbol of status and rank.

"Adults typically wear sheer white linen clothing, but pastel-type colors are not unknown in Nithian dress. These linens take the form of garments from simple wraps to elaborately folded robes and body-sheaths. They often wear wide pleated collars around their necks. Nithian footwear tends toward light sandals. Gentry and nobles are known to wear more elaborate garments. Sometimes this

clothing is made of thicker fabrics, and festooned with gold and gems sewn directly into the garments. The extra covering is only possible in the heat of Nithia because these people have servants to work for them or fan them. Also, the upper classes and nobility have access to *household magic* spells and items that shelter them from the Nithian heat.

"Cosmetics are an essential part of the wardrobe of the well-dressed Nithian. They put black powder in their eyes that floats to the edge, giving them that distinctive penetrating stare indicative of Nithians. The powder is quite healthy for the eye and is used to wash away sand and other irritants. Their eyebrows are often plucked out and replaced with dark eyebrow paint. Colored powders are also applied to the face and neck, and are also used as eye-shadow. Various oil-based colorations are also applied to the lips. Perfumes and scented ointments are also used on a daily basis. Some are rumored to have magical Charisma-enhancing properties, but this has yet to be substantiated."

## Servants/Pets

*Again, from Narab's journal:*

"Ranking Nithians enjoy the luxury of servants drawn from hereditary slaves or commoners. Servants often play such roles as butler, wet-nurse, gardener, aide-de-camp or follower, cook, messenger, etc. Depending on the alignment of the individual Nithian, servants and slaves are treated with cruelty, or may well be considered important and trusted (if second-class) family members.

"Nithians also keep pets. Among the more popular are the *saluki* or greyhound, geese, cats, and monkeys. Nithians believe that cats have a number of secret powers and are tied to the ways of the dead. Because of this, pet cats are venerated as family members, and treated with respect and kindness. Cats have even been known to be mummified and buried with the same ceremony as humans.

Geese are used as 'watch dogs,' as they honk with a great clamor whenever strange things occur."

## Entertainment and the Arts =

Although Nithians are a militant nation, they also enjoy their spare time. Perhaps due to the hot climate in which they live, Nithians love gardens and gardening. In some cases, such as the priesthood of Isiris, these gardens are both symbolic and economical in nature. The general rule, however, is that any Nithian worth his salt has a garden that is assiduously taken care of. Most nicer estates have a large walled garden as an entrance courtyard. Noblemen are known to pay handsomely for exotic or rare species of plants to add to their collections.

According to Narab, "Nithians' love for life extends to animals as well. Some of the more common pets are listed above. Besides these, personal menageries, and aviaries full of all varieties of beautiful and strange birds are very popular. Respect for all forms of plant and animal life is taught at an early age. The Nithian curiosity for new forms of plants and animals is often a source of income for those who dare both the deep deserts and faraway lands in search of exotic birds and animals. Because of this, animals and plants from all over the Hollow World can be found in the menageries of Nithian nobility.

"Some claim that Nithians love birds for the elegant songs they sing. Indeed, their love of music would back this up. Great outdoor choirs are formed during festivals of all sorts. Master musicians bring forth their flutes (both normal and double), harps, trumpets, and drums to produce the strange, haunting music so loved by the natives."

Other arts are also patronized. Among the most popular are sculpting, carving, and painting. The great Nithian cities, filled with enormous monoliths, statues, and pyramids

are testament to this fact. Like the stonemasons, mages, and other tradespeople, Nithian artists are a well-trained caste, and have created schools and universities to educate the populace at large. This education has allowed the Nithians to produce some of the most striking art in the Hollow World.

Another unique aspect of Nithian artists is their ability to think and act as a group. A large statue may be worked on by several dozen master craftsmen all at once. Yet, when their various surfaces meet, they join with such precision that the finished product looks as if it was made by one person.

Besides the quality, an art connoisseur can also identify Nithian art by the colors used. They believe in only using basic colors: red, yellow, green, blue, white, and black. These are felt to be more pure allowing their magical properties to function unhindered.

Palace entertainments are even more exotic. Seductive dances are performed in sheer white linens, and captured slaves are forced to perform their native dances and rituals for the nobles' entertainment. Foreign mages are also requested to perform their art (under the strict supervision of the Nithian mages, of course).

Nithians even enjoy games of various sorts. Among the most popular are *senet* (a game similar to backgammon) and nine pin. These are sometimes played for very high stakes such as slaves, or even a person's life.

## Food

The great open air markets lining the bazaars of Tarthis and other Nithian cities carry the following food and related items:

**Meats:** Cattle, pig, goat, sheep, fish, waterfowl, duck eggs (no chickens)

**Preservatives:** Natron (a soda-like substance), Salt

**Sweeteners:** cane sugar, cinnamon, honey (a luxury)

**Grains:** wheat (primary), barley, rice, and some corn

**Fruits:** citrus fruit, figs, dates, doum palm fruit, zizyphus, apples, olives, pomegranates, pumpkins, and grapes

**Oils:** fish oil, moring, orbak, olive oil, castor oil

**Viticulture:** grapes for wine, various plants for dyes, flax, papyrus

**Vegetables:** cucumbers, beans, lentils, lettuce, onions

The staple meal in Nithia (the common, every-sleep meal) is generally composed of a wheel of sweet bread, vegetables, and beer. In fact, over 50 varieties of beer are brewed in Tarthis alone.

The primary commodity in all Nithia is water. Unfortunately for the people, the river's water is often not potable due to the fine silt that flows in it. Anyone drinking from it has a 1 in 20 chance of contracting a minor sickness that has a 1 in 10 chance of becoming a serious illness. The household magic of *purify water* is a limited thing, not capable of cleansing large volumes of water. Because of this, clerical magic items such as *potions* and *purify food and water* scrolls are important commodities.

Families along the great river gather their water from wells that extend down into the high water table. Most of these wells are only a couple paces deep. When a bucket of water is drawn out, the well's level quickly replenishes as water seeps through the surrounding soil until the well's level matches that of the water table. This water is generally safe to drink as the seepage through the soil acts as like a natural filter. Farther away from the river, condensation techniques are used. Condensation has the advantage of providing absolutely safe water with the one disadvantage being the slow rate accumulation. The household spell *call moisture* accelerates the process.

## Shelter

Most buildings are single-story structures made of adobe or rough stone coated in hardened mud. They are designed to catch the wind and funnel it through the house. This provides for a cool breeze, but also tends to blow dust into the building. These structures are also flat roofed as rain falls seldom and snow is an unknown. On top of the roof is kept a grain bin, bread oven, and usually a sun shade.

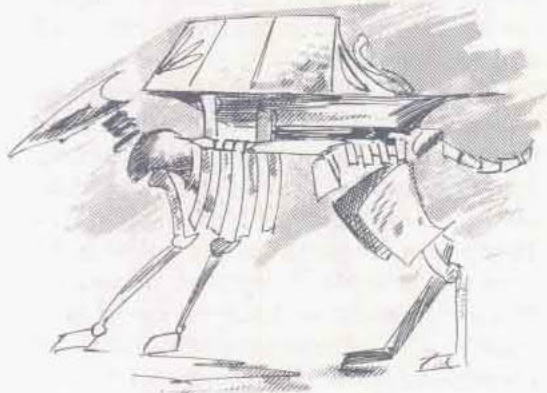
During the windy seasons, Nithians sleep on top of their houses on mats located under the sun shade. This location is often cooler than sleeping within the building. Another odd aspect of sleep is the Nithian pillow. They do not use goose feathers stuffed in a linen sack as would be expected. Instead, they use a wooden neck support carved in the shape of a "Y." Foreigners find this device so uncomfortable that they usually don't use it. Yet, it does elevate the head and allows for body heat to be dissipated in all directions. Those foolish enough to use down pillows will awake in an uncomfortable sweat after a few hours.

Nithian furnishings are considered spartan by most. Only the wealthy own tables, and even then, they are used to hold valuables, not to eat from. Chairs are rare and couches are almost never seen. Instead, they use reed mats and permanent mud or rock benches extending out of the walls. Chests, on the other hand, are common. In Nithia, a chest is not always a hardened container designed to store gold. Usually it is a box shaped container made of reed, more of a square basket than a true chest. Such chests of all sizes can be found, for Nithians are very tidy people who like to keep their homes simple, clean, and organized.

Of course, the wealthy do use some of the luxuries found in other nations such as stools, chairs, and even beds.

## Transport

Although most common Nithians often walk to their destinations, there are a number of other forms of transport available to the populace. Though horses are rare, mules, donkeys, camels, and even the ostrich-like Tanagoto riding lizards are used throughout Nithia for getting from place to place.



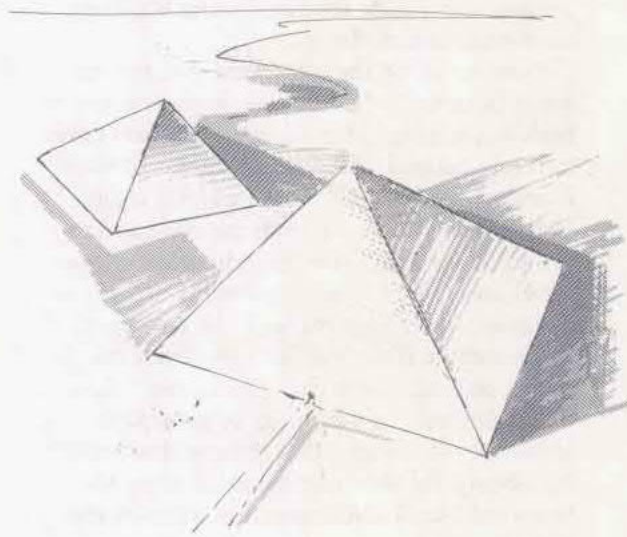
Nithians use horses for pulling chariots. The combination of speed and cooperation make the horse the perfect beast for the job. In the case of the Nithian *float-chariot* (also called a *hover-chariot*), however, the entire device is self-propelled, making horses unnecessary.

Although the people do not like to travel out on large bodies of water such as Lake Menkor, they have no problem traveling *over* them. Using the *pyramid energy collectors*, Nithian mages have created the means to *levitate* galleys, barges, and yachts. These *hover-boats* travel not only the River Nithia, but the length and breadth of the land as well. Not only are the rich carried in this way, but shipments from the mining cities and other important goods are transported in this fashion. (Full details on both *pyramid energy collectors*, *hover-vehicles* and all their applications are in the DM's Tome.) These craft are the most common means of transportation when speed is required. For

aquatic shipping purposes, Nithia is actually blessed with a river that flows slowly northwards while the winds continuously blow in a southerly direction. Thus, sails can be used to move upstream while current is ready for the return trip.

As noted on the map, there are several rough areas in along the river's length. However, all of these cataracts and rapids can be maneuvered through if the craft is not too bulky or overloaded. Fortunately, there is a town near each of these that hires out river guides as well as boats with a more shallow draft.

It should be stressed that there is little wheeled transport in Nithia. Chariots are reserved for the military and wealthy as owning a horse is uncommon. Wheeled wagons are almost never seen, and even hand carts aren't popular. Instead, items are carried by hand or by hovering palettes pulled by slaves or draft animals.



## Crimes/Punishment

The crimes in Nithia are not unlike those found in most nations. A few exceptions are noted below.

### *Major Crimes (in ascending order of severity)*

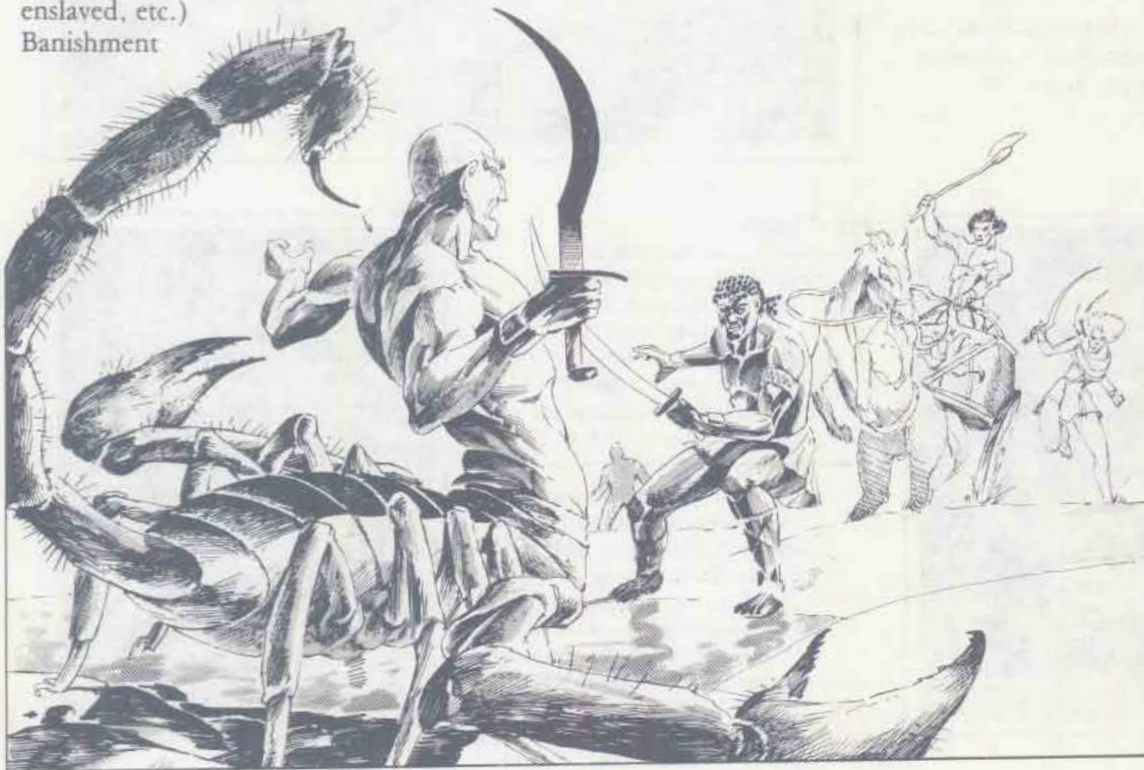
- Stealing water
- Wasting water
- Following Ranivorus or Thanatos
- Speaking out against the Pharaoh
- Harming a cat
- Harming an ibis
- Unsealing a Pyramid
- Tomb robbery

### *Punishments (in order of severity)*

- Working in the mines
- Reduction in social rank (commoner is enslaved, etc.)
- Banishment

The "death penalty" does not exist in Nithia, since the afterlife is a revered state of existence. Many believe that any criminal, even one not properly entombed, who enters the afterworld by the hands of the law will only run amok both in the afterworld and this plane of existence as well. If a criminal dies from exposure, thirst, or overwork, however, he enters the afterworld in a properly humble posture.

Almost all miners in Nithia are captured slaves or criminals. Such a fate often leads to death due to heat exhaustion, mining disasters, or enemy attacks. When a miner dies, it is considered to mark the end of his punishment and the beginning of a new and happier existence. Of course, a sentence to the mines is often only for a duration. In such a case, the criminal may survive the "sentence" to return home in good health.





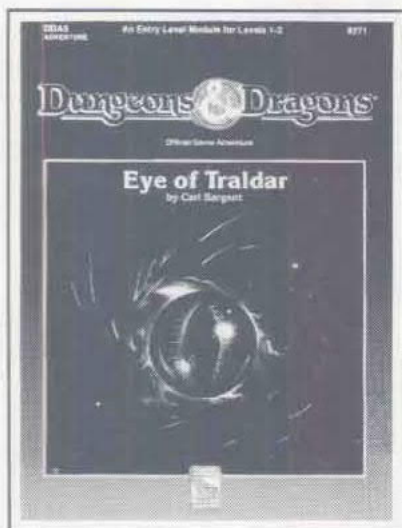
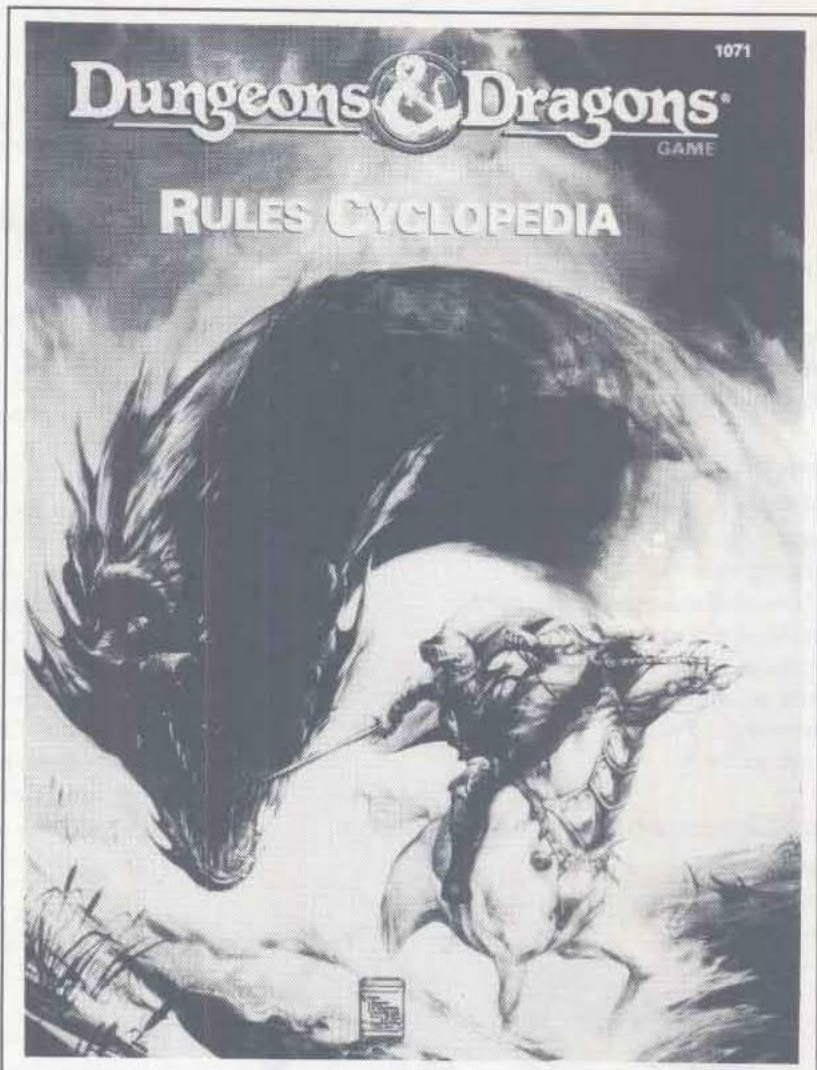
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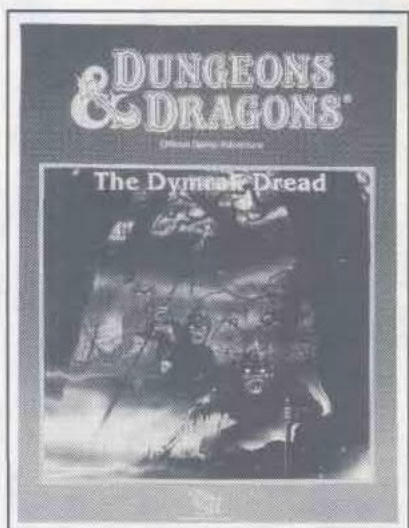


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## Introduction

This book provides a look at the layout of the Kingdom of Nithia. In addition to history, it deals with the cities, towns, and other major constructions of the land.

The information herein is presented to provide an in-depth look at how Nithia has come to be the nation it is today. Such a vast and accurate grasp of history is something that no player character will likely possess. As DM, you must decide how much of this information should be passed on to the players and how much must be kept hidden for them to discover as their characters adventure throughout the nation.

It should be noted that the Nithians are a proud nation whose projects tend toward the grandiose. Strange, enormous fortresses, flying ships, and powerful magic abound in this fabulous land of sorcerer-kings.

Alongside all the splendor, there are also regular folk who live in regular sized forts, towers, and villages. These groupings make up the majority of Nithian holdings. However, even among the common folk, the Nithian magical heritage is evident in household and common magic.

A few settlements are indicated on the map. However, the DM should feel free to place additional forts, villages, or other points of interest to suit the individual campaign. This personalizes the campaign and avoids "cookie cutter" scenarios that bore the players.

Remember, each hex is a third of a long-march (8 miles). Simply put, one hex covers an awful lot of surface area! There can easily be a tower, fort, village, pyramid, and several trails leading from one to the other. A cluster of villages (or an extensive labyrinth of death) could easily fit in one map hex.

## Who Should Read this Book :

This Tome contains background information, setting details, and special game mechanics for campaigns in Nithia. It should only be read by those who will be dungeon mastering games in Nithia. If you are not a dungeon master, **READ NO FURTHER!** The thrill of knowing what happens next will only spoil play for yourself and others. Instead, please direct your attentions to the Player's Tome. If you are a dungeon master, it is still advisable to read the Player's Tome first.



## The Kingdom of Nithia

To know a nation, one must know its history, its people, its towns and places of interest. Let's see what we shall see, eh?

### History

In the years following the Blackmoor explosions, the Known World was a place of chaos. Dark, death-filled clouds poisoned the air, and the land was laid waste. Only the hardest or luckiest peoples rose from the ashes to replant the seeds of civilization. One such group arose along the banks of the river Nithia. Over the next thousand years, the self-proclaimed Nithians rediscovered the technologies necessary to build a nation, and later an empire. Nithian adventurers began to explore the world—including the fell lands of Blackmoor—and return with the spoils and artifacts of their exploration.

During this period, Nithia discovered the insular Tangor civilization, which apparently survived the Blackmoor and Glantri disasters intact.

Magic also flowered in the Nithian empire. In this way not only was the material world explored, but other planes and planets were opened to the incursions of the Nithian mages and priests. (Some of the most ancient Nithian scrolls hint that the Alphatians were invited to colonize the Known World by the Nithians. Others refer to the Nithians aiding the Followers of Air in the struggle that destroyed Old Alphatia.)

The use of unearthly powers eventually created a class separate from the ranks of lesser Nithians. In time, these powerful mages declared themselves as feudal lords, and began to divide the Nithian empire into a series of baronies. These baronies ran the spectrum from benign dictatorships to the despotic Southern duchies. The resultant discord paved the way for the ascendance of

Thanatos and Ranivorus. The flower of civilization began, slowly but surely, to fade and wither.

Faced with a disintegrating empire, the Pharaoh of Nithia was forced to fight fire with fire. Magic had given the priests and mages their present status; magic could take it away. Using the most powerful and destructive disciplines in the combined archives of Nithia and Alphatia, Taphose devised a spell so devastating that it would bring the upstart lords to their knees. There was but one cost: dedication to the Powers of Entropy. Unbeknownst to all the combatants, the true objective—the corruption of the Nithian empire—had been achieved.

Thousands died in the ensuing conflicts. Magic spells of horrific power, whose knowledge is mercifully lost today, were cast with wild abandon. Monstrous beasts were unleashed to spew fire and death over miles of countryside. Whole cities burned as the battles to re-unite Nithia raged. Horror mounted upon horror, atrocity upon atrocity, spurred on by the powers of Entropy and the now-insane rulers of Nithia. Although the Immortals could not directly oppose Thanatos and Ranivorus, their evil could be contained. To that end, Ranak, the surviving Nithian city, was almost completely purged and transported to the Hollow World. Outside, the shattered land was scoured and renewed by the *Spell of Oblivion*, which wiped away all trace of the Nithian empire. Inside the Hollow World, Nithia was left to begin the slow climb back to civilization, guided by Rathanos and Pflarr.

#### *Ranak and Tur-Ah*

Kepher, the first Pharaoh of Nithia in the Hollow World, was a powerful, secretive man who did not deal much with the living. His rule was fraught with many problems as Ranak adjusted to its new environment after being plunged into the Hollow World by the Immortals. In addition to the endless day,

altered geography, and strange beasts that they encountered, the Pharaoh had to quell the unrest caused by rival sects of clerics who followed Pflarr and Rathanos. Though the two Immortals were allies, their clerics felt it necessary to vie for dominance between the Spheres of Energy, symbolized by Pflarr, and Life, championed by Rathanos. Fighting among their overzealous followers broke into warfare, threatening a replay of the carnage that put Nithia in the Hollow World.

Though it cost his life, Kepher uncovered the entropic artifact responsible for the conflict and was rewarded with Immortality. Time went by, and Ranak grew and prospered.

The second Pharaoh was Tur-Ah. Upon ascending to the throne, Tur-Ah immediately set several great projects in motion. Plans were drawn up and construction began on a great Pharaoh's palace several marches south of Ranak. It was to be located on the western shores of the river that had come to be known as the River Nithia. Although the palace was not completed until after Tur-Ah's death, it was later named Turak in his honor.

A major side effect of the construction of Turak was the creation of a sizeable town upstream near the hills from which the rock was quarried. Clerics (of both Pflarr and Rathanos), mages, artisans, and laborers created a colony whose sole task was the creation of Turak. Today that long ago workers' town has grown into the largest city in southern Nithia and is known as Dashur.

Tur-Ah also had gargantuan statues of Pflarr and Rathanos erected in the jungle where the east and west forks of the River Nithia met (about 700 years later the west fork was renamed "The River Hapta"). The statues faced northwards toward Ranak, and a picture of them can be found on the cover of this product.

The third project was the construction of the first major fort. Fort Natotep was placed on the same side of the river as Ranak, and

across from the Palace project. However, it was several marches away from either and located near the badlands. Its main purpose was to attack the dinosaurs and strange beings that occasionally advanced northwards across the open terrain along the west bank of the West Nithia River.

### *Nithian Expansion*

During the reign of Aten-Ah, Tur-Ah's son, Nithia went through a major expansionist movement northwards.

Dashur quickly evolved into Nithia's second city just as vast mineral wealth was discovered in the Tothy Hills. Overnight, a village sprang up near the mines and took the name Tothys after the hills that surrounded it. Only a year later, a prospecting expedition discovered another large deposit of valuable minerals and the village of Nithys (named after the nation) was created. Eventually, both villages evolved into the towns of today.

The crowning glory of the expansion movement was the establishment of a third Nithian village that quickly grew into a town and eventually became the city of Bisur (site of today's Fortress of Bisur).

Eventually, Aten-Ah was called to the path of the Dynast, and turned over rulership of the nation to his daughter Kifara. Kifara despised Hathep, the over-ambitious ruler of Dashur. She eventually decreed that a new City was to be formed to expand the nation into the far north. To accomplish the monumental task of forming a city so far from civilization where not even a village now stood, great numbers of people were required. Kifara sent her foot soldiers and hover-barges into Dashur, and the inhabitants of the entire city were uprooted and boated down stream to the site of current day Tarthis. The few knowledgeable historians of ancient Nithia realize that this was the first blood in a conflict that would eventually erupt into a civil war.

## War Erupts

Burned by the Pharaoh's capricious maneuver, Hathep was suddenly forced to provide for thousands of people, and use them to build a city besides. Hathep was well-versed in the magical arts, and used these abilities to carve a city from the wasteland of the Nithian river delta. He called on other mages in the colonial grouping to help in this project, and eventually formed the Inner Circle, a secret organization that exists to the present day. Unfortunately for Hathep, his efforts and those of the Inner Circle had one prime motive—revenge against Kifara for the uprooting of his people, and the thousands lost in the Delta wilderness. This left both Hathep and his followers open to the seductive wiles of Thanatos and Ranivorus. Both Immortals and initiates welcomed this unholy union.

Within forty circles, Tarthis grew from a group of crude huts to a full-size city. The Inner Circle had also grown—from a benevolent grouping of mages and clerics to a despotic cabal of overlords who drove the entire populace along the path of revenge. The towers of Tarthis soared high into the sky, the pyramids and minarets gleamed—but its people lived in fear, both of Kifara's anger, and of the Inner Circle. Within another ten circles, Tarthis had developed an army and navy of size and power comparable to that of Kifara's. Armed with this might, and aided by the re-discovered war-magic of pre-Hollow World Nithia, Hathep descended upon Ranak and wrought his vengeance. Kafiri retaliated, and once again the demons of war danced in Nithia. When the smoke cleared, Tarthis was severely damaged, and Ranak lay in ruins. Kifara's rule was crushed, but only at great price.

Saddened by this return to old barbarism, Pflarr and Rathanos once again began the process of healing and purging the evil from

the surviving people and lands. In time, the cities were rebuilt. This time, however, the Immortals placed a block in the minds of the Nithians. Though the magic which gave Nithia its splendor would return, never again would the Nithians be able to wield the awful energies that could erase whole cities from the face of the Hollow World. Nithian society would live—in spite of itself.

## The Entwinning

After the battle, the kings of both sides met in the now-ruined city of Bisur to make peace between their regions and reunite Nithia. A great document known as the *Entwinning* was drawn up. Many provisions and laws were laid out in it settling scores of age old disputes.

One of the more significant results of the *Entwinning* was the agreement that Nithia would remain two kingdoms joined as one nation. A mighty fortress was built atop the ruins of Bisur and marked the north/south boundary between the two kingdoms. At all times, it was to have a joint garrison of military personnel to signify the peace between the reunited factions.

It was also agreed in the *Entwinning* that the nation would be renamed "The Kingdoms of Nithia." That name is used to this sleep although the "s" on Kingdoms is only used in documents and interactions between the two kingdoms.

Both Southern Nithia and the Delta were to be ruled by a "king." A Pharaoh would still wield absolute power over all Nithia. He would be selected by a joint group of high priests from the two regions. The priests selected Rasiris of Tarthis as the first new Pharaoh, due to his impartiality in his previous dealings with both kingdoms.

The vast influx of wealth that Rasiris enjoyed as Pharaoh prompted him to construct the largest and most elegant pyramid in all Nithia. It was located a hundred flights south of Tarthis. The complex has expanded immensely as of today

and is known as the Necropolis of Tarthis.

The reign of Rasiris was short, and he was followed to power by his son Ramose (later known as Ramose I). Likewise, Ramose's reign as Pharaoh was passed on to his son and so on up to and including the present Pharaoh, Ramose IV. Thus, since the *Entwining* all Pharaohs have been patrons of Rathanos, the Delta region has been in control of Nithia, and the capital has been Tarthis.

Ramose I enjoyed a flourishing reign during which Tarthis' population increased beyond Menkara, and his treasury swelled so much that he built a palace on the way toward the mine that was responsible for his and his father's reign as Pharaoh. He named it after himself, and all Pharaohs since then have taken their fathers name.

### *After Effects*

All this has lead to several conditions that the DM should be aware of as they set the current political stage. The Ramose Pharaohs have all been strong leaders, causing the Delta Kings to be nothing more than puppet rulers. In fact, Ramose IV is often referred to as both Pharaoh and King. This has caused a lot of dissention between the current Delta King, Senkha, and Ramose IV. In fact, Senkha has taken a bold step and moved herself and her political power to Menkara.

Unrest in the Southern region has also been growing as the Delta is growing rich off the grain, gold, linen, and other goods, that they must constantly pay in taxes to the Pharaoh. Every city, town, and even village has temples or at least a shrine to both.

## The Cities

### *The History of Tarthis*

Tarthis might not stand today if not for a mysterious ship bearing supplies that appeared on the River Nithia at a most fortuitous time. Attempting to rebuild after

the ruinous Tarthis-Ranak War, the surviving Nithians were hard-pressed. The desperate, hungry workers were amazed to see an iridescent, flame-red-and-black vessel which was loaded with greatly needed food and building materials sail out of the sky and settle onto dry land. Legends claim the ship was of gargantuan size, far larger than a conventional hover-barge, and seemed to have bottomless cargo storage. The ship had no crew, but was easily unloaded. Even today, although clerics of Rathanos remind the populace that it was sent by their patron Immortal to save them, there are persistent whisperings that it was actually sent by Ranivorus. Indeed, it is not clear who was responsible for both the magical boat, and the now-legendary *rod of building* which was also aboard.

In any event, it is written that those few who watched as the ship departed claim to have seen the ship lift off and sail toward the sun. Other forbidden writings say that the ship burrowed into the ground, leaving no hole to mark its passage.

With renewed strength and supplies, and aided by the mysterious artifact, the people completed the outer walls of the city. This was fortunate, for 30 days later a Tanagoro raiding party crossed the desert into Nithia, killing all those caught outside the walls.

This event prodded Tarthis into building up a sizeable army. Even then the Tanagoro continued to raid the area, killing the outlying villagers, farmers, and plundering the much needed crops. Finally, it was decided that a fort should be constructed on the edge of the desert the Tanagoro came from in hopes of stopping their advances before they could cause more harm. Thus, Fort Ruma (now The Fortress of Kufneh) was built and heavily manned. This was a great risk, but fortunately, for the Nithians, it worked.

From that point on Tarthis thrived. First it grew crops in the lush delta area, expanding

into food crops not available in the south. These were traded with Ranak and Bisur. Not long after this, a boatload of Hutaakan explorers sailed into Tarthis. Limited trade was set up between Tarthis and Xyqata (the Hutaakan capital). Soon other traders heard of Tarthis through Xyqata and Tarthis started to boom. The influx of commerce began to shift the balance of power from Ranak far upstream to Tarthis.

### *Tarthis Today*

This metropolis of over 350,000 has been the capital of Nithia for over 1,000 years. Located on the east bank of the Nithia River delta, Tarthis is home of the pharaohs—living, dead, and otherwise. From Tarthis comes the rule of the present Pharaoh, and the Ascension ceremonies of those whose rule has ended are always held here. The Necropolis of Tarthis awaits those pharaohs who die in office.

Tarthis is also a center of culture. The Library of Mysteries, repository of texts on nearly any subject, is located here. Books, both mundane and arcane, fill the shelves and vaults of the Library. Some date back to before the transport of Ranak to the Hollow World. (It is rumored that some of these texts were hidden from Rathanos and Pflarr during the purging of Ranak, and have great power.)

Theater, dance, and other arts are encouraged and flourish in Tarthis. This lively atmosphere extends to the sciences and philosophy. New ideas are constantly nurtured and challenged in these communities, resulting in a constant flood of new theories, concepts, and inventions. The system of lenses that lights the fires of the Ascension ceremony came about as a result of Tarthisian science.

The Grand Marketplace of Tarthis is unequaled among Nithian cities both in its size and the variety of goods sold there. From tent-pegs to slaves, from river-turnips to magic spells, the Marketplace is a place where

anything can be found—for a price. The hucksters here can be very friendly, and oh-so-helpful, but remember this old Nithian proverb: "The perfect deal satisfies both buyer and seller; value is relative."

As was stated before, Tarthis is home to the nation's leadership. Decrees affecting all parts of Nithia issue from here, bearing the royal seal of the Pharaoh. The issuance of various decrees is so swift, subjects are left to speculate about the Pharaoh's precognitive powers. Indeed, "the All-Seeing Eye" has become another name for the Pharaoh. This fact is instrumental in keeping the Northern and Southern kings in line.

Thousands flock to Tarthis annually for the Nithian flooding ceremony. This ceremony, which marks the beginning of the Nithian year, is presided over by the Pharaoh, whose power, it is said, causes the Nithia to flood, bringing fertile river silt to the delta crops. The entire ceremony is preceded and followed by festivals, feasts, and games such as the Tarthisian floatchariot races.

More infrequent is the Ceremony of Ascension, which takes place when the Pharaoh's time is done. According to legend, when the Pharaoh has seen and done all that he is destined to do on earth, he is called by the Immortals to join them in the higher planes. The special fire is lit at the base of the Royal Obelisk with a spark from the sun. Both the old Pharaoh and his successor climb the stairs to the obelisk's base, and perform the Ritual of Farewell. After this is done, the old Pharaoh turns and walks into the flames, never to be seen again. As this is done, the flames grow brighter, becoming a fireball that leaps into the sky, streaking out into the void to become one with the Sun. Though this ceremony is more somber than that of the Flooding, it, too is celebrated with feasts and festivals.

## **Dashur**

From its humble beginnings as the artisans' encampment for the building of Turak, Dashur has become the home of the premier schools for the training of artists, architects and engineers. It is also the principal stronghold of the mages known as Templars.

Art is king in Dashur. It seems that every city enterprise and public works project reflects this statement. Rather than the haphazard urban sprawl of most cities, Dashur was from the beginning laid out in a geometric pattern calculated to please the eye. As Mur-ah, the city's founder, put it, "Dashur will not be a mere worker's camp! She will be a splendid setting for the jewel of Turak!"

The quest for artistic perfection is evident in everything from the exquisitely carved jars and pottery of the Ceramists' Guild to the geometrically accurate, mortarless work of the Stonemasons' Brotherhood. Other groups control other arts such as painting, calligraphy, and theater. This distinction of the arts is so complete that one cannot practice an art without proof of belonging to the appropriate guild. The guild insignia take the form of brightly colored and intricately patterned cords worn as pectoral ornaments. The most powerful and influential Dashurii sport elaborate rainbow-hued collars composed of their guild insignia.

The administration of Dashur is handled by a council composed of the heads of the artists' Guilds. Together, they wield enough political clout to ensure that art and architecture nationwide remain the bailiwick of the citizens of Dashur. In matters of state, they answer only to the pharaoh. All aspirants must be approved by the Council before they are allowed to join any of the guilds; this gives the Council the power of immigration authority as well.

## **Ranak**

What is now a partially ruined city was once the seat of not only the present Nithia, but the ancient surface Nithian Empire. Living within its broken walls are the descendants of the survivors of the ancient Tarthis-Ranak conflict.

Time has healed the political and physical wounds of the old war. The citizens of Ranak are Nithians, and have no interest in the conflicts of their ancient forbears. Over the intervening millennium, the walls and towers of ancient Ranak have been rebuilt, to the point where they nearly surpass the splendor of the pre-war city. The ancient ruins of Ranak have in most cases been literally built over.

Unfortunately, the magical residue of the conflict still remains. Ranak was the only city of the ancient Nithian Empire to be brought from the surface to the Hollow World, and was the stronghold of the Pharaoh Taphose. In the wars on the surface world, Taphose had converted Ranak into an immense fortress from within which he conducted his battles. Many of Taphose's creations survived both the old surface wars and transport to the Hollow World. During the Tarthis-Ranak conflict, some of these relics were "awakened" for use against the people of Tarthis. After the war, Ranak's ruins were sealed off, and the new Ranak built over them. Consequently, deep below the foundations of Ranak now lay a series of catacombs reaching deep into the ground. Stories warn of horrors that wander these tunnels, shambling things born of Taphose's magical experiments.

Even on the surface, Ranak's war-torn legacy occasionally makes itself apparent. Rumors of hauntings and strange occurrences are common. Events of temporal displacement also occur from time to time in the surface city. There are also legends of objects, animals, and people mysteriously turning to stone or even solid gold.



Overall, Ranak's population have adapted to the chronic strangeness that is a part of their lives, and have gone on to turn the city into a great center for magical research.

### Tothys

The mining town of Tothys arose when iron was discovered in this region many years ago. Like Dashur, it began as a small work-camp and grew into a town as equipment and workers were permanently placed here. Today, it is home to over 12,000 people, most of whom toil in the mines, or labor in the foundries producing steel items. Because of its strategic value, Tothys has been placed under military rule by the pharaoh.

Azar, the governor of Tothys, administers this mandate with a vengeance. Instead of simply seeing to the defense and day-to-day running of the mining town, he has created a situation where no aspect of the townspeople's lives is free of scrutiny or supervision. Every sleep, the workers are roused out of bed, and herded aboard *hover-barges* for the sixty-mile trip overland to the mines. By the end of the return commute following the grueling work of removing iron ore, there is no time left for friends or family. Simply put, the workers have no life other than that of the mines.

Special passes have been issued to the populace corresponding to their assigned work area. Citizens who do not carry these passes, or who are in an area they are not "cleared" to be in, are subject to swift and summary punishment. Public gatherings of any kind are strictly regulated. Stringent curfews preclude any carousing—on the citizens' part. The soldiery, on the other hand, have free reign. Supplies, food, and entertainment are theirs for the asking—at the citizens' expense.

Tothys is also home to the Enchanters, a group of mages whose task it is to create the various magical items and fittings for the

Nithian army and royalty. *Hover-barges* and *float chariots* are two of the Enchanters' major products.

### Nithys

Like its southern neighbor, Nithys is also a mining town. Unlike Tothys, however, squalor and mistreatment are not in evidence here. The copper miners of Nithys are a privileged group—in light of the fact that those same miners are also the clerics who create *pyramid energy collectors*.

The entire town of 8,000 people is geared for the production and export of these expensive magical devices. Steel rods are transported north from Tothys, where they are prepared and wound with the thin wire made from the extracted copper. Copper sheeting is also exported to Tothys to make the hulls of *hover-barges*.

Nithyii miners are forbidden to wear jewelry or clothing ornaments made of any metal other than copper. To do otherwise would be to "silence the voice of the pyramids", according to the town's high priest. Pyramid energy resonates in copper, and harmonics from the jewelry are said to indicate the location of new veins.

The town's population is fixed at 8,000 people. Foreigners are not allowed to settle here, and no child is born until there is a corresponding death in the community. This is controlled by the Master Scribe, the high priest of the town, who keeps constant tally of birth and death rates. The Master Scribe also handles the affairs of inter-city commerce, along with two administrators.

In addition to copper mining, Nithys is home to the Society of Glaziers, whose task it is to create not only the glass spheres for *pyramid energy collectors*, but many other items of glass both mundane and magical. Exports of both glass and copper keep the Nithyii coffers ever-full.

## Louknor

Roughly 108 miles north of Nithys lies the town of Louknor. Far from being a "town" in the traditional sense of the word, Louknor could actually be described as a fortified vault with buildings attached. The fortress-town guards not only the mines of the D'ba Goldfields to the north and south, but is also the site of the royal coffers. Daily, *hover-barges* deliver their cargoes of gold dust and nuggets to Louknor to be melted into ingots and placed in the mile-deep catacombs of the Royal Vault.

Spaced around the walls of Louknor, and at the entrances to both the mineshafts, are enormous statues. These stone giants, according to local legend, were placed there as guardians by Rathanos and Pflarr. If the town or the mines were ever attacked, says the legend, the stone giants would come to life, smiting the attackers and sealing the mines. The statues do radiate magic, and their golden eyes shine like mirrors. Luckily, no attacker has ever put the legend to the test.

Louknor houses over 14,000 people, 1,000 of whom are soldiers in the pharaoh's garrison. These crack troops are hand-picked for skill and loyalty. The remainder are goldsmiths, miners, artisans, and their dependents.

Why a mere thousand soldiers for such a precious area? Because they have been given only the best weapons with which to defend the Pharaoh's treasure. The roads to the Per-Louk and Sej-D'ba mines are patrolled by soldiers in *floatchariots*, and the surrounding land is continually prowled for intruders by the magical automata called *sunhawks* and *golden lions*.

The city is controlled by the garrison commander, a scarred veteran named Pa-Thon. He has a reputation for being a tough but fair ruler, treating artisans, soldiers, and slaves justly.

## Menkara

Menkara is a great trading city on the shores of lake Menkor. Lumber, fish, and other goods are harvested from both the lake and the surrounding forests. The town itself straddles two islands near the eastern bank of the river Nithia. The islands are joined by a series of immense bridges. The two largest spans are known as the Bridge of Commerce, and the Bridge of Shadows.

The Bridge of Commerce is covered on either side of its span by shops dealing in nearly any object, animal, or preparation available in Nithia. Colorful flags, glowing magical signs, and noisemaking kites give the Bridge of Commerce a continual carnival atmosphere. As new establishments crowd onto the bridge, more mass is added to the span, making the entire bridge an enormous creaking construct continually on the verge of collapse.

The Bridge of Shadows is the domain of priests and mages. At either end of the span are huge temples to Pflarr and Rathanos. Their stonework makes up the foundations of the bridge. Along the span are towers and apartments devoted to clerical and magical study. Even the bridge's stone supports contain catacombs devoted to some aspect of clerical or magical activity. Occasionally explosions, fires, or other flamboyant mishaps signal that some mage or cleric has made a serious "mistake."

## Hapta

At a little over 1,000 years of age, Hapta is the youngest Nithian city. Its origin, during the reign of the Pharaoh Karnak, is quite unique. To appreciate this fact, we must shift our gaze to the west, to the lands of the Tanagoro. Backward in time we go, to the small holding of a groundnut farmer named Mtuko. On one particularly sweltering day, as Mtuko and his family labored to bring in their crop, a runner wearing the armband of the Tanagoro Elders crashed through the

fence-thicket, charged through twenty freshly turned furrows, and stopped a respectful ten feet from the stunned family.

"What is the meaning of this?" Mtuko asked after regaining his composure. "My groundnut plants are ruined! I have a mind to—" Just then he noticed both the runner's armband, and the war-leader's cloak draped over his now outstretched arms.

"The Elders have seen your destiny," the runner said between breaths. "You and your family must leave the farm and lead a party east into Nithia."

The runner's words were a massive understatement. In fact, what Mtuko found himself leading was an army of over 50,000 people, half of which were warriors and battle-druids, with weapons, riding-lizards, and siege engines. The remainder were settlers, armed with seeds, livestock, and provisions. How was he to lead this ragtag bunch into battle? What was the point of this invasion? There was no love between the Tanagoro and Nithia, but why was he, a groundnut farmer, on this fool's errand? "Keep living," was the Elders' only reply. "And take these—" he was given a javelin and a groundnut plant—"with you. You will know their uses when the time comes. Now go."

It soon came to pass that an army of several thousand Tanagoro tribesmen appeared apparently from nowhere and surrounded Fort Ruma (now the Fortress of Kufneh). Their leader stood in full view of the city gates, looking from the javelin in his left hand to the still-fresh groundnut plant in his right. Hours passed, and his bewilderment grew. Eventually, an emissary from Ruma came to him bearing a papyrus scroll. "Given the choice you have offered, we of Ruma choose peace. You are hereby allowed to enter the city gates. The Immortals, through our glorious Pharaoh Karnak, have spoken." With that proclamation, several thousand Tanagoro tribesmen, and one bewildered ex-farmer holding a flowering groundnut plant,

were absorbed into the Kingdom.

Karnak found these black skinned people to possess remarkable talents. They were great warriors possessing skills in the sword, spear, and javelin that surpassed his own men's. The Tanagoro druidic abilities were equally unheard of. He decided to locate them in a city near Lake Thufu. Today, troops from all over the kingdom go to Hapta for training in the khopesh, spear, and javelin, and the Tanagoro agricultural knowledge has not only brought new crops and know-how to Nithia, but the magic of the Tanagoro druids as well. Because of this, Hapta and the fields surrounding it are the southern breadbasket of Nithia.

In the Nithian tongue, Hapta means "groundnut". Thus, it was that this city came to be called Hapta. As stated in the boxed set, the Tanagoro were in no danger of extinction, and both Pflarr and Rathanos was so interested in the results, that they allowed the city of Hapta to develop. And develop it did.

It was soon decided that all Haptans were to be given full citizenship in Nithia. A monarch of Hapta was even elected from the populace to rule his city. Today, the descendants of the Tanagoro expatriates can be found all over Nithia. Even the present Pharaoh is half Tanagoro.

## The Towers of Evil ---

The "Two Towers" of Nithia are seldom discussed by the natives. Few people know if they really exist or not, and those who do know rarely speak of them as doing so is rumored to bring a curse down upon the speaker and his family. Most Nithians say that the Towers are merely tales to frighten naughty children.

In truth, their existence is all too real. The Tower of Sekhaba is the primary temple to Thanatos in Nithia. Here, protected by the broken lands of Nithia, these fell clerics

secretly concentrate their evil powers in a never-ending attempt to bring about the ruin of all Nithia. The tower of Soth is home to the secretive order of death-wizards who follow the ways of Ranivorus, Thanatos' ally in evil. Both "Towers" are actually paralyzed Burrowers, positioned by the Entropic Immortals as the *Spell of Preservation* took effect. They were also *polymorphed* by the Immortals to more closely resemble towers, but their twisted, organic forms betray their fell natures. Travelers who stumble across the Towers are immediately subject to the awful telepathic whispers that entreat them to enter the structures. Tales are told of mad travelers that come from the wilderness, ranting about the "silent screaming towers".

### **The Tower of Sekhaba**

According to those few rumors that seem to match up, Sekhaba was a follower of Thanatos. He was one of the Nithia Ancients transported from the surface world into the Hollow World back in 500 BC. Thanatos had to use all of his Immortal powers to mask Sekhaba's true nature as the other Immortals were purging the evil from Ranak during the transition.

Upon arriving in the Hollow World, Sekhaba fled Ranak and entered the nearby broken lands. Here he eventually discovered a great black tower seeping with evil and hatefulness. Here Sekhaba established the seed of evil within the infant nation of Nithia. He called to those of evil intent, eventually establishing a cabal of dark clerics to further Thanatos' will. Those of the inner circle (high clerics of Thanatos) claim that they are responsible for causing the submergence of Nithia, the Tarthis-Ranak War, and all unrest in Nithia from the ancient times to the present day.

### **The Tower of Soth**

Although the other tower is not filled with evil clerics, its origins are equally mysterious. Again, legends say that it was originally discovered by a wandering magic-user by the name of Soth. Soth was among the population of Dashur whom Kifara uprooted and sent north to form Tarthis. She slipped away from the hover-barges and wandered the grasslands, following voices that promised power for both herself and the new city that would grow on the Nithian delta. The voices led her to an enormous, twisted tower. Her explorations of the tower's interior lead her across a room filled with strange, warped devices that pulsed with power. Soth's explorations also changed her as she made her way from the bottom to the top of the awful tower. By the time she reached the main room, she had been transformed from a gentle, good-hearted mage with her people's best interests in mind, to a twisted, insane vessel for the entropic energies of Ranivorus.

Like Sekhaba, Soth also used her new-found power to call to those of poor moral fiber throughout Nithia. Over the centuries, she has formed a cadre of equal size to the minions of Thanatos. Soth's evil mages work hand-in-hand with the followers of Sekhaba to wreak havoc in the magical lands of Nithia.

### **Pyramids/Ruins**

There are three major pyramid sites: the Old Pyramids, Hutaatep, and the Necropolis of Tarthis. These sites are places of power, wonder, and danger. All of these places pulse with power, and are the sources of the *pyramid energy* that allows *pyramid energy collectors* to work. the *pyramid energy collector* is what makes Nithian household magic and transport work.

### *The Old Pyramids*

The Old Pyramids are, appropriately, the oldest. After Ranak was transported into the Hollow World, several expeditions were sent out across the new territory to locate a unique place to locate the cultural pyramids of the elite, rich, and powerful. Obviously, the site of the Old Pyramids was selected.

The reason for this particular selection has been lost, but deserves some pondering as it was located an extreme distance from Ranak, the only city at the time. Sekhaba had already discovered the ancient tower which now bears his name. He and his followers may have swayed the decision to place the pyramids here. Here they would be accessible to his sect, yet so distant from the populace that "unusual activities" would likely go unnoticed.

No person has been entombed in the Old Pyramids since before the reign of the Pharaoh Hutaatep. Again, rumors claim that early on in Hutaatep's reign, when he was more sane, that he decided to reopen burial proceedings in the Old Pyramids by building a giant pyramidal complex there for himself. Shortly after this decision he went insane and ordered half a million people to form a massive complex of unnatural design in the far eastern desert. Hutaatep himself drew up the bizarre plans, claiming "the voices gave them to me." Central to the design was a twisted pyramid within which was an immense glass globe, affixed atop a giant iron column wound about by miles of copper wire. Although everyone counselled against it, the project was begun. Twenty circles later, the project was abandoned.

Today, the Old Pyramids have been abandoned, or so the public thinks. The followers of Thanatos have recently been discovered poking around the area. Some say that these vile priests have always maintained a secret temple in the area. They also seem particularly attracted to the nearby volcano, Mt. Khufiri.

### *Hutaatep*

After the Old Pyramids debacle, Hutaatep decided to build his own necropolis to the west. Again, he insisted that the designs dictated by "the voices" be used in its construction. Rumors claim that caravans laden with gold and jewels were sent out to the site and buried. However, before the complex was completed, the Jennites staged a major cavalry raid, killing thousands and driving the rest into the deep desert. They plundered the complex, and Hutaatep has ever since remained in ruins. Yet, some tell of deep secret vaults where the majority of the treasure was stored. These tales draw both Nithian and Jennite adventurers to the ruins, making exploration even more dangerous as the two factions kill one another on sight.

Other tales say that before the site was built, another of the strange glass-and-metal artifacts was buried deep below the foundations of Hutaatep. To this day, reports of strange manifestations, and twisted dinosaur-like monsters occasionally come from the region. It is also said that the mage-followers of Ranivorus have a stronghold hidden in the ruins.

### *The Necropolis of Tarithis*

The most modern site of multiple pyramids is the Necropolis of Tarithis. This site is still open and being added to all the time. Most of the major pyramids in this area house the Pharaohs who have died in office or were killed in battle. Of course, no pyramid is as grand as the first, the tomb of Rasiris standing over 166 paces (500 feet) high. All in all, there are about 30 pyramids in the area. The total actually depends upon ones definition of a pyramid—some are very small, while a few others are oddly shaped. The entire area is patrolled by Medjay (guards) and crack squads of Rathanos war-clerics.

## Personalities

Now that you know something of the cities and significant places in Nithia, we will now acquaint ourselves with the famous personalities of today. These are the powerful rulers, devout clerics, heroic warriors, and evil miscreants who shape the lives of most Nithians.

### *Al Fatmah Nikita-Ahmed*

*Vizier of Internal Security in Tarthis*

**History:** Al Fatmah Nikita-Ahmed has risen from the rank of commoner, working the fields along the banks of the River Nithia, to become the second most powerful military personality in Nithia. She was drafted into the army 40 circles ago at age 6. Twenty years later, she joined the *medjay*, or secret police. Since that time, she has worked her way up the ranks to become an *ahauty*, a knight in the direct service of the Pharaoh.

As such, she has used her influence to secure a better existence for all Nithians, from captured slaves to the highest of the common folk. This will toward fairness has earned Al Fatmah Nikita-Ahmed enemies among various factions of the Nithian rulership, but her military connections allow her to keep watch and a tight rein on those who would thwart her plans.

**Personality:** Al Fatmah Nikita-Ahmed is perhaps one of the most practical, intelligent, reasonable women in all Nithia. She is also a woman on the edge. In the course of her career, she has come to realize that there are outside influences that wish to see Nithia destroyed. The *medjay*'s loyalty notwithstanding, Al Fatmah Nikita-Ahmed has undertaken what she believes to be a lone war against these forces, and works within the system to thwart them at every turn. She sees herself as the true guardian of the Nithian people. Al Fatmah Nikita-Ahmed

would lay down her life to safeguard her nation, which she has grown to love. However, in her own words, she would "prefer to see these sons-of-desert rats brought to heel." Al Fatmah Nikita-Ahmed sees the corruption that plagues many facets of Nithian nobility, and rails at her powerlessness to change them.

Al Fatmah Nikita-Ahmed also realizes that the sparring between Ramose IV and Queen Tafiri is actually part of a scheme to wreck the Pharaoh. Unfortunately, try as she might, she cannot overtly affect the situation. This is also a source of frustration for her. She feels that time is running out for Nithia, and secretly fears that her clandestine, methodical approach to helping Nithia will produce too few results too late.

**Appearance:** Al Fatmah Nikita-Ahmed stands 5'7" and weighs 156 pounds. She is of average height, but her lean muscles are honed like iron. Her *medjay* training has taught her how to maximize her strength and speed without adding useless muscle bulk. She wears dark blue linen robes, emblazoned with the golden standard of the *medjay*. She keeps her hair short with a long braid hanging from right side of her head. She also wears leather-soled sandals at all times.

**DM Notes:** Al Fatmah Nikita-Ahmed is the silent hero of Nithia and is being watched by the Immortals as a likely candidate into their fold. Her campaigns, individual acts, and services have saved the nation from many hardships. She often leaves her post of command in the able hands of her officers and strikes out on secret missions of her own. If the PCs are ever in a real bind, Al Fatmah Nikita-Ahmed is a perfect "escape clause" by having her show up on the scene to save the day.

**Combat Notes:** Al Fatmah Nikita-Ahmed is a 29th level specialty runner: AC 3 (harness, all 3 bracers, small shield, and *khopesh* skill); hp 136; MV 120'(40'); #AT 1; Dmg 2d4 + 1 (*khopesh* 1 handed), 1d10 + 1



(khopesh 2 handed); SA F29; ML 16; AL N; S17 I16 W17 D15 Co15 Ch10. Languages: Nithian, Neathar, Jennite, Tanagoro, Milenian, Hutaakan. General Skills: Bracers (all 3, D), Nithian Armor (I), Nithian Weapons (khopesh, I), Resist Heat Exhaustion (Co), Khopesh (W), Nithian Shields (D), Chariot Combat (D), Chariot Driving (D).

**Spells Carried:** None

**Magical Items in Possession:** *Bracers of defense +3, 3 potions of healing, float-chariot.* She keeps these items hidden in a special chamber near her quarters.

## **Djemun**

*Nomarch of Menkara*

**History:** The 40 circle old Djemun is an odd nomarch as she is rarely seen in public and seems to rule from behind closed doors. However, Menkara has flourished during her reign and most of the citizens enjoy the freedom of an apparently "lax" nomarch.

However, in addition to running Menkara, Djemun is actually the ranking member of the royal seal bearers in the Delta Kingdom.

**Personality:** Djemun is very shy and hates large crowds. She prefers to exercise her power and control behind the scenes, using her espionage net to keep the merchants of Menkara in line. Using both her wiles and connections, she has amassed a great deal of money and power. She also happens to be the close personal friend of Senkha, the Delta King. In fact, the two are inseparable friends, though Djemun keeps a few secrets to herself. Djemun has not (and will not) reveal to Senkha that she is a royal seal bearer. However, she has been using her connections to elevate Senkha's powers greatly. In this way she can enjoy the king's power through proximity, yet remain behind the scenes. To date this arrangement has worked phenomenally well.

**Appearance:** Djemun is a small woman standing 4' 8" high. Strangers who meet her in public are amazed that she is a ruler due to her quiet voice and shy mannerism. However, she is a determined mastermind with a will that could bend the most courageous of men into blubbling putty.

**DM Notes:** Djemun would do almost anything to keep Senkha in power and maintain her friendship. Anytime a rival rises from the ranks to contest Senkha's position, they "vanish." If Senkha is concerned that a certain business in the Delta region is failing, that business suddenly receives a boost in business. In fact, Djemun turns every major concern of Senkha's into a mission of the royal seal bearers. In return, Senkha keeps things favorable for Menkara. Recently, however, things have been different; Djemun's operatives have reported strange manifestations near Senkha's dealings, and some have not returned at all. After the most recent incident, a note appeared in Djemun's chambers: "Greater powers than yours guide Senkha's fate. Stand aside or be swept away."

**Combat Notes:** Djemun is a 20th level royal seal bearer specialty thief: AC 3 (bracers and Dexterity); hp 61; MV 120'(40'); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (throwing dagger); SA T20; ML 10; AL C; S8 I16 W14 D18 Co10 Ch18. Languages: Nithian, Neathar, Hutaakan, Tanagoro. General Skills: bracers (all 3, D), Nithian weapons (throwing dagger, I), lip reading (I), signalling, (I), escape artist (D).

**Magical Items in Possession:** Djemun wears a *displacer cloak* and a *ring of spell turning* most of the time.

## Al-Belak

### *The Southern King*

**History:** Al-Belak was born 34 circles ago to a field peasant south of Dashur. He soon found the farmer's life boring, so he ran away to Ranak. There he fell in with the criminal element and worked his way into the position of apprentice in the assassins' guild. Always picking up bits of their trade on the side, he one day noticed a lower ranking member pouring a deadly poison into the master assassin's wine. Realizing the danger, he warned the master and saved his life. In return, the master assassin introduced Al-Belak to the Southern King at the time and indoctrinated him into the royal seal bearers. Al-Belak rose in power until he achieved the honor of serving as the King's personal consultant. In time, poison again changed Al-Belak's life as he caught a Milenian diplomat sprinkling a deadly pollen upon the King's meal. Al-Belak leapt to stop the King from taking the fatal bite, but it was too late. He had already begun to eat, and so lost his life. Al-Belak immediately avenged the death of his King by slaying the Milenian and managed to grasp the throne as a result.

**Personality:** Al-Belak is an opportunist, continually seeking to elevate his power and status. Yet, he has now reached the highest social rank available to him. Thus, he seeks

to improve the status of his Kingdom, not for the Kingdom's sake, but for his own aggrandizement.

**Appearance:** Al-Belak is a tall, lean man standing 6' 11" weighing about 190 pounds. He is lighter complexioned than most (having Milenian blood in him) with dark blonde hair and small scheming eyes. He carries a pair of throwing daggers with him at all times along with a small vial of poison (save vs. death or die).

**DM Notes:** Al-Belak has worked in secret to wrest the title of Pharaoh from the Ramose family line for the past 10 circles. His ultimate goal is to abolish both the Southern and Delta kingdoms, and forge a new Nithian Empire with himself as sole ruler. Secondary to this mission is the revitalization of the Southern Kingdom beginning with the city of Ranak.

**Combat Notes:** Al-Belak is a 14th level royal seal bearer specialty thief: AC 6 (*leather +1*); hp 47; MV 120'(40'); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (throwing daggers) or 1d6 + 3 (*short sword +3*); SA T14; ML 7; AL N; S12 I15 W9 D18 Co12 Ch14. Languages: Neathar, Nithian, Jennite, and Tanagoro. General Skills: Nithian Weapons (throwing daggers, short sword, S), alertness (D), signaling (assassin, I), Detect Deception (W).

**Magical Items in Possession:** +1 *leather, short sword +3*.

## Senkha

### *King of the Delta Region*

**History:** Senkha was born an only child to a wealthy and powerful noble family in Menkara. Early on she was fascinated by magical and political power. She also discovered that she was one of those few individuals who could successfully wield it. She has used her knowledge and ability to work her way up through the echelons of the Northern Kingdom until, at 30 circles of age, she has become King of the Delta Region.



Senkha is the first female King of the Northern Kingdom in over 350 circles.

**Personality:** Senkha is generally a benevolent, considerate ruler. However, she loves power in all forms and her dark side seems to emerge whenever her power is threatened or more power is blocked from her reach. Recently, that darker side has been encouraged by the strange, whispering voices that have started to echo in her mind. They seem to speak to her of hidden power locked within the near-mythical Towers of Sekhaba and Soth.

Senkha has long been attracted to the Pharaoh, Ramose IV, and has also been aware of Queen Tafiri's games. In her heart of hearts, she would like to replace Tafiri in Ramose's affections, giving him "the love and respect he so desperately needs," as she puts it. She believes that this new marriage would bring Nithia to a new Golden Age. Her "secret friends" seem to agree with her.

In the past five circles, Senkha has become aware that her friend Djemun has exerted her influence to help her in various situations, and allows Djemun to keep her secret. However, her major problems of rule tend to solve themselves when she allows her "secret friends" to take care of them. She is beginning to believe—rightly—that she has some form of Immortal magic about her. Little does she know that these effects are actually a result of the Burrowers, guided by the Immortals of Entropy.

**Appearance:** Senkha is very beautiful and knows it. However, most of the time she dresses formally, playing down her natural beauty.

**DM Notes:** Senkha has recently been contacted by both Soth and Sekhaba. The two near-Immortals are intrigued by both Senkha's magical ability and her susceptibility to their manipulation. Both believe that they can greatly benefit from an alliance with Senkha, but are very cautious as betrayal could be devastating. Senkha is in a position

to become the next Pharaoh, either by succession or by marriage. This would leave the throne open to direct manipulation by the forces of Thanatos and Ranivorus, thus giving them a hold over the entire Nithian nation.

**Combat Notes:** Senkha is a 12th level mage-scribe: AC 8 (*glyph of protection*); hp 34; MV 120'(40'); #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger + 1d4 -*glyph of wounding*); SA M12; ML 11; AL L; S10 I17 W15 D14 Co9 Ch17. Languages: Nithian, Neathar, Hutaakan, Tanagoro. General Skills: knowledge (Nithian power structure, I), profession (scribe, I), science (metallurgy, I), detect deception (W), leadership (Ch), persuasion (ch).

**Spells Carried:** 4-1st, 4-2nd, 4-3rd, 3-4th, 2-5th, 1-6th. 1st -*read magic* (× 2), *light*, *hold portal*. 2nd -*locate object*, *wizard lock*, *levitate*, *knock*. 3rd -*dispel magic*, *infravision*, *protection from normal missiles*. 4th -*wizard eye* (× 2), *hallucinatory terrain*. 5th -*pass-wall* (× 2). 6th -*anti-magic shell*.

**Magical Items in Possession:** Senkha has a *glyph of healing* tattooed upon her left wrist and a *glyph of sustenance* tattooed upon her right wrist. She likely carries other glyphs upon her person and items. These should be constructed by the DM before the party encounters her.

## Permon

*Priest and Vizier to Ramose IV*

**History:** Permon has always been a lax follower of Rathanos. He is more of a warrior than a priest and prefers the military life more than the holy life. However, he is a close personal friend of Ramose and was appointed to the high priesthood in return for saving Ramose's life. Permon is a man of some 40 circles who was raised by a Rathanos cleric stationed at the Fortress of Kufneh. Perhaps this accounts for his divided interests between Rathanos and the military life.

**Personality:** Permon is a rather brutish man who gets his way by force and by

bowling over his adversaries. He has little concern about what others think of him. However, he is not a mean man, just a very callous one.

**Appearance:** Permon stands nearly six feet tall. He has dark brown hair which he wears in thick, shoulder-length braids. He always carries his mace-axe with him and has a habit of twirling it by the leather thong attached to its handle. More than once he has broken items near him with his careless antics.

**DM Notes:** Permon is very nationalistic and is very suspect of any foreigner. Permon is currently trying to establish the precedent that all clerics of Rathanos must take extra training in the ways of war (e.g. the war-cleric skill). Although he is a close personal friend of Ramose, the Pharaoh must constantly work to smooth over the numerous *faux pas* committed by his brutish friend. Permon has a bad habit of making many enemies due to his rugged personality.

**Combat Notes:** Permon is an 8th level non-specialty cleric of Rathanos, which angers many high ranking clerics of that following.: AC 4 (Nithian scale + shield); hp 56; MV 90'(30'); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 or 1d8 (mace-axe); SA C8; ML 17; AL N; S17 I11 W16 D14 Co14 Ch10. Languages: Nithian, Neathar, Tanagoro. General Skills: Nithian armor (I), war-cleric (S), Nithian Weapon (mace-axe, I), intimidate (S), resist heat exhaustion (Co).

**Spells Carried:** 3-1st, 3-2nd, 2-3rd, 1-4th. 1st -*light, resist cold, cure light wounds*. 2nd -*resist fire, silence 15' radius, bless*. 3rd -*continual light, striking*. 4th -*cure serious wounds*.

**Magical Items in Possession:** None.

## Clerics of Chaos

This section lists two clerical specialization skills that were mentioned in the Player's Tome. The information is not for player's eyes as these clerics follow malevolent,

chaotic Immortals with which no PC would deal. However, DMs may find it useful to know the special abilities and powers of these clerics in order to properly pit them against the PCs.

The major drawback to these specializations is the fact that their adherents are hunted down and destroyed by all beings of Neutral or Good alignment. Thus, though they may seem to be quite powerful, they suffer major drawbacks due to society's views about their following.

### Ranivorus

All clerics of Ranivorus have two life goals. The first is to destroy Nithia by spreading hatred and insanity among the ruling class. The second goal is to establish a kingdom of gnolls as the rulers of the Hollow World. Of course, the *Spell of Preservation* prevents either of these from directly occurring. However, Immortals are very ingenious, and subterfuge can work where direct action is useless. Because of this, those not aligned with Entropy must maintain a constant vigil.

At 1st level, Ranivorus' clerics can whisper hateful suggestions to people without seeming to be evil. A d20 is rolled and if it is equal to or below the cleric's level, the whisper is heard but the recipient does not remember who said it. The recipient must make a save vs. death ray or accept the whispered hatefulness as truth. Only one such whisper per sleep may be made.

These clerics are also able to wear plate mail armor and use a flail without suffering any cultural penalties, as these are the favored equipment of Ranivorus. Of course, since such items are hallmarks of Ranivorus, it is not always desirable to use them. Besides this benefit, the clerics can "turn snakes" in addition to the normal clerical ability to turn undead. Ranivorus' symbol, by the way, is a human head with five snakes issuing from its mouth.

As a cleric of Ranivorus grows older, his visage becomes more and more like that of a

gnoll. At 10th level, the cleric can instill a berserker rage (+3 to hit, -1 to AC, 2 attacks/round, Int and Wis of 2) in 1-4 people by merely touching them (save vs. spells negates the effect). Those so affected become crazed killing machines for one round per level of the cleric. They hear nothing except the evil cleric's commands. An additional victim can be controlled at every level following 10th.

At 20th level the cleric permanently transforms into an adult gnoll. At this point, all victims of the *berserker touch* who do not make their saving throw become permanent "soldiers" of Ranivorus.

A large group of these clerics has been poking around the old pyramids near Mt. Khufiri. Rumors have it that they have uncovered information about another world that lies beyond and can be reached through the volcano.

### Thanatos

Thanatos' clerics share a common twisted goal; the complete destruction of all life. However, they hope to bring this about subtly by implementing an ingenious "master plan"—a plan that mocks those it destroys, and brings about their destruction with the people's own sweat and blood. Of course, this refers to the *Master Plan* secreted in the Tower of Soth (see the "Magical Items" section in this book). If it is followed to completion, it will result in the utter destruction of Nithia.

Thanatos' specialty clerics, hereafter known as Thanatons, understand the existence of the underworld better than any. At first level, where Good or Neutral clerics would "turn" undead, Thanatons use their powers to *charm* the undead and use them as allies. At third level, the Thanatons are able to use *pyramid energy collectors* to re-animate dead creatures. This abuse of power re-animates 1 hit die per five points of energy expended. The zombie creature remains undead for one day.

At 5th level, these clerics can wrap themselves in mummies' cloth to gain protection from infravision and life-level drain. At 10th level, they learn the fell procedures for making the dreaded *Ba-warriors*. These advantages are on top of their current abilities as clerics. Finally, at 20th level they are able to sprout rotted, gargoyle-like wings and fly at their running movement rate (in emulation of Thanatos).

These priests may employ a special form of the sword-staff at 8th level. Its statistics are the same as a sword-staff, but it is shaped like a scythe, which is Thanatos' symbol.

Thanatos' clerics must always wear a visible black article upon their body (often a cloak). If this is not done, they lose all clerical and specialization powers until a black article is donned.

## Monsters

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In addition to the familiar creatures of the Known World, each region in the Hollow World sports its own unique denizens. Nithia is no exception in this regard. These include, of course, the ubiquitous Hollow World dinosaurs, but there are many others as well. The following is a list of monsters commonly found in the region.

### Chimer

Armor Class: 0  
 Hit Dice: 20  
 Move: None  
 Attacks: Special  
 Damage: 20d10/4d6  
 No. Appearing: 1  
 Save as: Fighter: 20\*\*\*\*  
 Morale: 12  
 Treasure Type: V  
 Alignment: Neutral  
 Intelligence: 17  
 XP Value: 9,575

*From the records of Narab, an Antalian explorer, in the Nithian Broken Lands:*

"And lo, we passed the last of the great stone pillars, when suddenly our eyes beheld the most wondrous of sights! An entire box canyon, bedecked with precious jewels! You could not have imagined it—tiny flowers made of delicate diamond, shattering the sunlight into a thousand colors! The very rocks, stones, and earth in this canyon were covered with a fine web of diamond dust, and over it all stood six trees—no, I am not drunk—trees of solid diamond!

Within their crystal trunks, I could see fine veins of gold and silver. Their branches spread to a distance of about twenty feet, and in the biggest branches of each tree was a burnished metal disk, suspended by fine wire. Yes, the entire canyon sparkled and shone in the sunlight, and over it all was the most melodious chiming. Never have I heard such beautiful music as that from the diamond trees. Sometimes I could almost make out voices. They seemed to say, 'Come! Rest and listen to our beautiful music! Be free from care and want!' Seemingly from the disks themselves came voices in my head promising me knowledge of world and the cosmos.

"Suddenly, one of our slaves threw down his pack, and ran, laughing, into the canyon. As he entered, the chiming song seemed to take on a sinister tone. The slave, oblivious to the change, leapt and capered wildly, taken by the music. Suddenly, all at once, the crystal flowers and the trees began to shine brighter. All the light seemed to focus on the slave dancing on the canyon floor. In seconds, it grew so bright I could not look. The slave's dying shriek was nearly drowned out by the deafening noise now coming from the canyon. That was when I lost my right eardrum. When the sound ceased and I could see again, there was nothing left of the poor slave but a pile of fine, white ash which disappeared as I watched, no doubt consumed

by the awful crystal creatures."

The chimer is actually a colony composed of thousands of polyps, joined together by metallic rhizomes to form an immense, immobile net of living crystal and metal. The centermost polyps, being the oldest, form the "elders" of the colony.

Since the chimer is immobile, its "attacks" consist of waiting for luckless victims to wander into its range. When victims come within 50 feet of the chimer, they must save vs. spells or be *charmed* by the resonance that gives the creature its name. Those so charmed wander into the midst of the chimer colony, where they are incinerated by sunlight focused on them by the myriad reflective surfaces provided by the chimer polyps. The resulting ash is easily broken down by the polyps as food.

Chimers also have special defensive abilities. The musical chiming can also be focused, inflicting 4d6 damage to a maximum radius of 30 feet (saving throw vs. breath weapon for half damage). Finally, the chimer can duplicate wizard spells of levels one to three, preferring spells like *charm* and *lightning bolt*.

**Crystalweeds:** Crystalweeds are the young, motile form of the chimer. At certain times of year, chimers grow tumbleweed-like clumps of crystal fiber. These detach and roll with the wind until they find a suitable place to grow and begin the process of life again. There are reports of *From the journals of Narab:*

"I believe that all creatures have certain similarities, and the insects known as refractors are no exception. It seems that these ant-like creatures have a social system similar to that of Nithia itself. Our first encounter with the creatures occurred when we stopped our caravan to explore an array of mysterious crystalline discs situated on the ground near one of the pyramids at the Hutaatop ruins. I remember attempting to dislodge one of the discs with a lever, when suddenly both the

## Refractor

	Workers	Soldiers	Nobles	Pharaoh
Armor Class:	8	4	7	8
Hit Dice:	1	2	4	6
Move:	180' (60')	240' (80')	120' (40')	None
Attacks:	1	1	1 (possible spell use)	1 (always spell use)
Damage:	1d4	2d4 or by weapon type	1d4 or by weapon type	Varies (by spell)
No. Appearing:	3d10	3d6	2d4	1
Save as:	F1	F2	F3	F4
Morale:	7	9	6	10
Treasure Type:	U (and see below)			
Alignment:	Neutral	Lawful	Neutral	Varies
Intelligence:	2	2-12	13-16	17-18
XP Value:	10	20	225	950

caravan and myself were attacked by both tiny armored riders, and by miniature siege engines. These small devices focused beams of sunlight on the caravan litters, igniting them in seconds. My slaves ran about, frantically trying to put out the fires. I myself was surrounded, so I threw down my staff and prostrated myself, hoping the tiny savages could understand surrender. I ordered my compatriots to do likewise.

"Amazingly, instead of attacking, one of the riders swaggered forward. From my low vantage point, I could make out the warrior's spiked carapace, its overall antlike appearance. However, to my amazement, the creature wore helm, and carried a small, crystal-tipped lance! Even its steed, who was also antlike, was decked in a tiny set of barding. Both my slaves and I were forced to follow the insect warriors into their den. How did this occur, you may ask? Apparently, through some magic, we were shrunk to a size to accommodate our passage into their city. The warrior gestured with his lance, and suddenly everything blurred. When my sight was restored, the knight towered over me like a man on horseback. We were led into a land of wonders. Somehow, these creatures have been changed by the magic of the pyramids into a race that is capable of constructing marvels. The discs, I now saw, were enormous lenses

used to bring sunlight into the creatures' underground world. My digging, I was shown, was causing serious damage to these people. Far from being mere ants building complex hills, these people lived in vast cities, lit from above by these great lenses.

"Eventually, we were brought to an audience with the Pharaoh of this colony. She was an immense creature, surrounded by warriors and young, her abdomen distended with thousands of young waiting to be born. Her adjudication was that in return for the unwitting damage I caused, we had to leave half of our supplies with the Refractors, as they called themselves, in payment. Seeing we had no choice, I agreed, and we were returned to the surface forthwith. When we awoke, we were disoriented and liberated of half our supplies, but we had escaped with our lives."

The insectile refractors are represented in three main castes: *warriors*, *workers*, and *nobles*. The warrior caste, in addition to having a poison bite that deals 1d4 damage (saving throw vs. poison for half damage), also wields swords (1-6 points damage), shields, and lances (damage 1d6 + 2). Their "steeds" are specialized versions of the warrior caste marked by their greater size (6" and their strong razor-sharp mandibles (1d8 + 2). Refractor siege engines deal 3d8 points of damage per strike, with a focal

range of 50 feet (beyond 50 feet, the sun rays diverge, and the beam is useless). They can fire one "shot" per round.

The worker caste form the rank and file of the refractor society. These creatures perform the labor and day-to-day maintenance of the colony. Using adhesive saliva, they form the cement and bricks that they use to build complex, intricate buildings and cities.

Workers also operate the smelting devices used to create the glass that makes up the majority of refractor constructions. Like the warriors, there are specialized workers whose sole task is to move earth, lift heavy objects, and perform other feats of civil engineering.

Over all the rest is the noble caste. These insects are recognized by their enlarged thoracic shells. In addition, the carapaces are etched and marked in patterns amazingly similar to the jewelry of the Nithian nobles. Noble refractors control the daily running of the colony. Specialized nobles enchant the millions of tiny crystals that make up the giant *solar lenses* that light their cities, as well as the smaller lenses that power their miniature siege engines. (Incidentally, it is these *solar lenses* that form the "city-breaker" weapons on Nithian *hover-barges*.) In addition, other nobles apparently know spells such as *create water*.

Over all is the Pharaoh. Like the queen in an ant's colony, she is the literal mother of the colony. Her entire life is spent in childbirth, but it is also spent dealing with the affairs of her nation. The Pharaoh is also the most powerful magic-user in the colony, capable of wielding spells from first to fifth level. Unlike ants, however, refractor Pharaohs and colonies are able to form alliances and work together. Because of this, it is far more difficult to obtain the *solar lenses* that cap refractor colonies than it used to be. In recent days, the refractors have begun to patrol the surface, making passage near the Hutaatep ruins a very dangerous proposition.

### **Sand-star**

Armor Class: 6

Hit Dice: 9

Move: 0 (80)

Attacks: 6/1

Damage: 1d4(×6)/2d8

No. Appearing: 1

Save As: Fighter 9

Morale: 9

Treasure Type: D (in stomach)

Alignment: Neutral

Intelligence: Low (4)

XP Value: 1,600

#### *From the journals of Narab:*

"This ground-dwelling creature first came to my attention when one of my pack mules stumbled and fell as we crossed the Nithian Badlands. We thought the poor beast had stepped into a mole-rat hole, but when its leg was swallowed to the knee, I knew this was no animal burrow. As my slaves and I rushed to the poor animal's aid, six supple arms rose from the sandy soil, both to grasp the beleaguered mule, and to batter at its would-be rescuers.

"I knew that we were running out of time. The mule was braying in pain and fear, and it appeared that the maw was opening wider in an attempt to swallow the poor beast whole. As my slaves battled the thrashing tentacles, I dashed forward and began to hack at the underground mouth with my spetum. Finally, in desperation, I thrust the spear with all my might into the fleshy maw. With a cry of pain, the beast flung the mule away. The flailing arms, all at once, fell to the ground, twitching fitfully. Fortunately, the little mule was not seriously injured.

"Later, after we had seen to the mule, we dug up the corpse of the beast. We found an immense, sac-like body, covered in leathery skin studded with thick spikes to anchor it into the ground. Six sinewy tentacles surrounded a four-sectioned beak that was set into folds of rubbery skin. Behind this hellish maw was a sac

that my slaves informed me was very valuable. Holding a bowl under the sac, the slave pricked the sac with a sharp knife. To my surprise, out poured a stream of pure water! The slave informed me that the flesh of the 'sand-star', as she called it, was good to eat. We made camp that evening and ate well. However, we also kept our pack-animals close, and did not let them wander lest they not be as fortunate as our luckless mule."

The sand-star remains buried under the sandy soil of the Nithian badlands, waiting for prey to step into range of its muscular, 8-foot tentacles. These can flail about, delivering 1-4 points of damage. On a hit of 18 or better, the tentacles constrict, delivering 2-16 points of damage per round. A successful Bend Bars/Lift Gates check (Strength 18 or better) can break this crushing hold, and the tentacles can be severed by dealing them 10 points of damage.

These carnivores are unique in the fact that they extract and store water from their prey's body tissues. This they store in a sac that stores up to 30 gallons of pure water. In lean times, sand-stars have been known to "pull up stakes" and move overland in search of better feeding grounds. When motile, the sand-star can move at a speed of 80.

### ***Dream-Hunter***

Armor Class: 5  
 Hit Dice: 3  
 Move: 80 (160)  
 Attacks: 1\*\*  
 Damage: 1-2/1-2/1d8 or 2d6  
 No. Appearing: 8-16  
 Save As: Fighter 2  
 Morale: 4  
 Treasure Type: D  
 Alignment: Chaotic  
 Intelligence: High (14)  
 XP Value: 1,600

This strange dinosaur is a result of the tremendous amounts of "wild magic" let loose

in the Kingdom of Nithia. Dream hunters are in essence a group mind, capable of massing their intelligences to create illusions of immense detail. The creatures have been known to trail desert travelers for days, waiting for the right opportunity to spin their deadly webs of deceit. These illusions are used to trap unwary travelers for the ever-hungry dinosaurs to eat. For example, a standard tactic is to generate the illusion of an oasis or caravan in the path of a beleaguered group of adventurers. When the travelers reach the oasis, they find lush plants, palm trees filled with dates, and plenty of fresh water. If the group fails a saving throw vs. spells, they fall prey to illusions that smell, feel, and even taste correct. The illusions are so complete, food tastes like food even as it is chewed and swallowed. As the group luxuriates in their ersatz haven, the dream-hunters pick them off one by one. When the victims are defenseless, the dream-hunters dispel the illusions and feast on their prey.

The dream-hunter's sharp teeth deliver a bite that does 1d8 points of damage. Like its ancestor, the deinonychus, it has a +2 leaping attack with its rear talons that deals 2d6 points of damage to victims. They are both smart and dexterous enough to hold a victim with their front claws while continuing to rake with their rear talons. The front claws deal 1-2 points of damage each. As a final note, dream-hunters always gain initiative in combat due to their illusory ability, and have been known to use illusions in combat. Since they are in essence a communal entity, dream-hunters are never found alone.

## Nithian Writing

Cultures such as the Nithians and Hutaakans use an *ideographic* (literally "idea-sign") method of writing. This language is very different from *phonetic* ("sound-sign"-like our alphabet) writing systems because every word in the language is represented by a specific picture or ideogram. Both the Nithians and Hutaakans use an ideographic writing system known as *hieroglyphics*. The interesting thing about ideographic systems versus phonetic systems is this: If two different cultures use the same system, then the concepts conveyed by the pictures are the same, therefore the two cultures can communicate. Thus a literate Nithian can read ancient Hutaakan ideograms and vice versa. However, the *word* that the two cultures use to describe the concept shown by the ideogram may be completely different. Therefore, though a literate Nithian may be able to *read* Hutaakan hieroglyphics, it doesn't necessarily mean he can *speak* Hutaakan. The sounds used to represent the same ideogram are quite different. For example, in the Nithian tongue, "imy-er" means commander or leader while it is pronounced "hutat" in Hutaakan. Yet, the symbol for commander is the same in both cultures.

## Hieroglyphic Forms

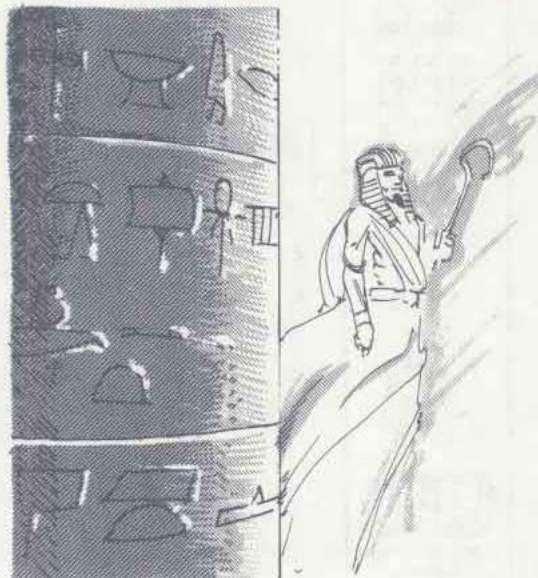
Actually, Nithians use two entirely unique systems of writing. Nithians refer to them as the "ancient" and "modern" forms. One should not be misled by these terms, as both forms have existed throughout all of Nithian history since the reign of the second Hollow World Pharaoh. The difference is this; the ancient form uses pictures to describe whole words, while the modern form uses pictures to describe single sounds. To clarify this, both forms are discussed and demonstrated below.

Over 90 percent of all hieroglyphics are written in the modern system. This is not advertised to the outside world as most Nithians feel ashamed of this "perversion" of the ancient form. However, it is much more usable, and thus, widely employed.

It should be noted that only the ancient form can be read by Hutaakans and vice versa. This is because Pflarr created the Hutaakans prior to the discovery of the syllabic hieroglyphic form. The *Spell of Preservation* unfortunately keeps the Hutaakans from learning the new hieroglyphic form.


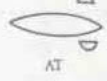













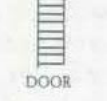


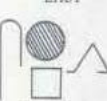
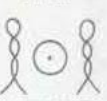







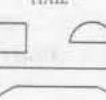

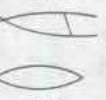

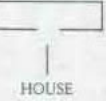
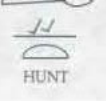

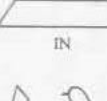
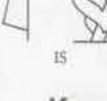












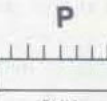
















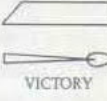









### Ancient Hieroglyphics

A small sample of ancient Nithian ideograms is presented below. Using these as a basis, others may be created as required. Needless to say, this is based on the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic system of our Earth. Unfortunately, it is far from complete. Further information on hieroglyphics, their use, and more symbols can be found at your local library.





## Nithian Ancient Hieroglyphs

<p><b>A</b></p>  ALTAR  AT <p><b>B</b></p>  BAKE  BEFORE  BEHOLD  BLOOD  BODYGUARD  BONES <p><b>C</b></p>  COME  CROWN  CURSE BE ON YOU FOREVER	<p><b>D</b></p>  DARKNESS  DAY  DECAY  DESTROY  DOOR <p><b>E</b></p>  EARTH  EAST  ENTER  ETERNITY  EVERY  EVIL	<p><b>F</b></p>  FIRE <p><b>G</b></p>  GOOD  GOLD  GREAT <p><b>H</b></p>  HAIL  HEAVEN  HIDDEN  HIS  HORIZON  HOUSE  HUNT	<p><b>I</b></p>  I AM  IN  IS <p><b>K</b></p>  KILLED <p><b>L</b></p>  LIFE  LIVING <p><b>M</b></p>  MAGIC  MAGICAL CHARM  MAGICAL POWERS  MEN  MIGHTY	<p><b>N</b></p>  NORTH  NOT  NOW <p><b>O</b></p>  OVER <p><b>P</b></p>  PAIN  PASSAGE  PEACE  PHOENIX  POWER  PROTECT <p><b>R</b></p>  RIGHT	<p><b>S</b></p>  SEE  SHOOTING  SORROW  SOUL  SOUTH  STRENGTH <p><b>T</b></p>  TERROR  THIS  TO GIVE <p><b>U</b></p>  UNDER <p><b>V</b></p>  VICTORY	<p><b>W</b></p>  WEAPON  WEST  WHAT  WHEN  WIND  WILL  WITH  WITHIN <p><b>Y</b></p>  YOU
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### Modern Hieroglyphics

The Ancient hieroglyphic system proved to be very cumbersome, requiring scribes to memorize thousands of symbols. Long ago, this hindrance was overcome when a syllabic system of hieroglyphics was discovered during the reign of the Pharaoh Tur-Ah. This is as close to a phonetic system as the *Spell of Preservation* would allow the Nithians to come.

The modern system is very simple. When a word is written, it is sounded out and a specific ideogram is used to represent each sound. The table below associates these phonemic sounds with their respective ideogram.

#### Monothongs (simple vowels)

Phoneme	Example	Ideogram
ah	father	water
a	mass	hand
ay	mace	mace
eh	mess	health
ee	machine	reed
I	miss	ear
o	most	rope
u	put	foot
oo	moose	stool
uh	must	underworld

#### Diphthongs (complex vowels)

ai	mice	eye
au	mouse	house
oi	moist	hoist







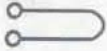






























#### Consonants

Phoneme	Example	Ideogram
b	book	bread
ch	cheer	chalice
d	dear	door bolt
f	fear	feather
g	gear	god
j	jeer	justice
h	here	head
y	year	yesterday
k	king	king
l	leer	life
m	mere	mouth
n	near	knot
ng	seeing	traveling
p	peer	protection
r	rear	rule
s	scar	sun
sh	sheer	shelter
t	tier	tail
th	theory	Thoth
hard th	there	there
v	veer	viper
w	weird	window
z	zero	zenith
zh	pleasure	pleasure

\* Diphthongs can be constructed by combining monothongs. They are included simply because they are common sounds.

For example, the word "Nithia" would be broken down into the phonemic sounds "n-I-th-ee-uh." It would then be represented by drawing the corresponding ideograms: knot, ear, Thoth, reed, underworld.

The actual ideograms for the above system follows.

ah	f <u>a</u> ther	a	ma <u>s</u> s	ay	ma <u>c</u> e	eh	me <u>s</u> s	ee	ma <u>ch</u> ine
									
ih	mi <u>s</u> s	oh	mo <u>s</u> t	u	pu <u>t</u>	oo	mo <u>o</u> se	uh	mu <u>s</u> t
									
<b>Nithian Modern Hieroglyphs</b>				i	mi <u>c</u> e	ou	mo <u>u</u> se	oi	mo <u>i</u> st
									
b	be <u>r</u>	ch	che <u>r</u>	d	de <u>a</u> r	f	fe <u>a</u> r	g	ge <u>a</u> r
									
j	je <u>e</u> r	h	he <u>a</u> r	y	ye <u>a</u> r	k	ki <u>ck</u>	l	le <u>e</u> r
									
m	me <u>r</u> e	n	ne <u>a</u> r	ng	see <u>ng</u>	p	pe <u>e</u> r	r	re <u>a</u> r
									
s	se <u>a</u> r	sh	she <u>r</u>	t	ti <u>e</u> r	th	the <u>o</u> ry	th	the <u>r</u> e
									
v	ve <u>e</u> r	w	we' <u>r</u> e	z	ze <u>r</u> o	zh	plea <u>s</u> ure		
									

## Hieroglyphic Rules

Of course, the phonemic ideograms can also be used to represent exactly what they symbolize. To indicate this, a single horizontal dash is placed under the ideogram. Thus the ideogram of an ear with a dash under it means "ear", not the sound "ee."








In the modern system, plurals are easy to indicate as the desired word is simply written out. Thus, the difference between swan and swans is that the second will have the "sun" symbol as its last ideogram. However, in the ancient system, this method is not available. Instead, plurals are indicated by drawing three vertical dashes under the ideogram. Thus a swan (represented by a drawing of a swan) would be made plural by drawing a swan with three dashes under it.

Also, both forms of hieroglyphics can be drawn so they are read in any direction: left to right, right to left, or top to bottom in columns. They are never read from bottom to top. It is easy to determine the starting place as all ideograms having a face or head face the starting place.

Nithian hieroglyphics also allow for artistic balance. Unlike most other cultures, they do not always place one written symbol after the other in a straight line. Often they will stack two short symbols to make the appearance of the whole more aesthetic.

### Nithian Numerals

As might be expected, Nithians also write their numerals ideographically. The following table indicates the relationship of various ideograms to various numbers.

Number	Symbol Ideogram	Explanation
1		bar
10		knob
100		hook
1,000		lotus flower
10,000		finger
100,000		frog
1,000,000		Pharaoh

The number 1,357 would be represented by one lotus flower, three hooks, five knobs, and seven bars. Again, Nithians always group these into an aesthetic organization even if it is a little harder to read.



## Nithian Mysticism

As can be seen from the writings of various scholars, Nithia is a magic-rich nation. In truth, in its heyday on the surface of the Known World, the magical power and ability of the Nithian Empire were so great that the fabled wonders of Alphatia were primitive in comparison. Indeed, Nithia has become one of the places where the fate of the entire Known World may be decided.

Even after their transport into the Hollow World, Nithian magical ability was great enough to allow them to wage a war that turned the nation into the desert it is today. Thanks to the intervention of both the Immortals and the *Spell of Preservation*, Nithian magical ability has been limited to its present level. It is one that allows Nithia to still be Nithia, and yet not be a menace to both themselves and the Hollow World.

In today's Nithia, mages and clerics control the great powers that give great magic. This situation continues the existence of an upper class, a ruling group of people who run the country. However, the "normal folk" are far from powerless. The citizenry also have access to labor-saving spells. These *household magics* are powered by the boundless stores of *pyramid energy*. Finally, of course, there are the magical items, the use of which can be either for good or ill. Since we've discussed "big magic" for nearly the entire book, let's first focus on *pyramid energy*.

## Pyramid Energy

It is unknown which Immortal first imbued the pyramids with their mysterious power. So shrouded in the mists of time is the event that not records survive. It is taken as a simple fact that the dead are interred in the pyramids, and the pyramids provide power. Thus, in Nithia, even the dead have their part to play in the running of the nation.

To tap into this energy, the *pyramid energy collector* was invented. This device is attuned to the owner, making each one a "one of a kind" item. It looks like a steel rod wound about with copper wire. Atop the steel rod is a glass globe. It attracts pyramid energy by means of the wire-bound rod, and stores it in the glass globe. The owner can then use the stored energy for household magic.

For game use, pyramid power has been translated into a point system. This allows your players to easily keep track of the magics they've used, and their remaining pyramid energy. The whole thing runs like this:

### Pyramid Energy Collectors

Pyramid energy collectors come in three main sizes: 10-point, 20-point, and 30-point. These numbers refer to the number of points of pyramid energy each size can store. Each *household magic* spell requires a number of points of pyramid energy to use. As spells are used, the amount of energy in the collector decreases. When the collector is depleted, it requires a full sleep to "recharge". A collector can never store more than its point capacity. Prices for these little marvels are as follows:

Collector Size	Cost
10 points	1,000 gp
20 points	10,000 gp
30 points	100,000gp

As you can see, *pyramid energy collectors* are not cheap. Still, people save their earnings to buy them, and their use does make life much easier. Rumor has it that the military make use of 40- and 50-point *collectors*, but this has yet to be substantiated.

### Household Magic Spells

The following lists contain household magic spells by point costs. This is by no means a comprehensive list; there is not enough space in this book for such. Consequently, please

feel free to devise more well-rounded lists for your own campaign.

#### Half-Point Spells

Chop  
Groom  
Knead  
Prepare  
Dress  
Cosmetics  
Erase

#### One-Point Spells

Cut  
Comb  
Grow  
Pleat  
Write

#### Two Point Spells

Clean  
Wash  
Dry  
Bake  
Color

#### Three-Point Spells

Braid  
Cook

#### Four-Point Spells

Purify  
Breeze

#### Five-Point Spells

Illuminate  
Lift  
Set Bones  
Sterilize

### Household Spell Descriptions

#### Chop

Range: 10' Duration: Permanent  
Effect: Chops food items

This spell is used as an aid to prepare meats, fruit, and vegetables for salads or cooking.

#### Apply Cosmetics

Range: 0 (Touch)  
Duration: Permanent (until removed)  
Effect: Applies or removes cosmetics

*Apply Cosmetics* allows the user to use the various cosmetics essential to Nithian fashion without the time and mess of hand application.

#### Dress

Range: 1 foot  
Duration: Permanent  
Effect: Skins, cleans, and bones animal carcasses

*Dress* prepares meats for cooking within 1 round. It removes skin, viscera, and bones, and neatly disposes of them.

#### Erase

Range: Touch  
Duration: Permanent  
Effect: Erases ink writing

*Erase* is used to remove mistakes when writing or drawing. The offending character or mark is removed completely from the papyrus, wall, or wherever drawing is present. One need only touch the mark to activate the magic.

#### Groom

Range: 0 (Self)  
Duration: 1 sleep  
Effect: High-speed body cleaning

The *groom* spell is the magical equivalent of a "shower and shave": the body is cleaned, hair is combed, and facial and body hair is removed. In addition, teeth are cleaned, and breath is freshened.

### Knead

Range: 1 foot  
 Duration: 1 hour  
 Effect: Kneads bread dough, clay

The *knead* spell is especially useful when baking. It saves time and muscle power, allowing the artist or baker to concentrate on other things.

### One-Point Spells

#### Call Moisture

Range: 1 foot  
 Duration: 1 hour  
 Effect: Condenses 2 gallons of water per hour

*Call moisture* is especially useful when no other sources of water are available. Enough water is condensed within one hour to keep a person going for a day.

#### Cut

Range: 0 (Touch)  
 Duration: Permanent  
 Effect: Cuts cloth, hair, rope, etc.

To use the *cut* spell, one need only visualize the desired result (i.e., a pattern on fabric) and move one's index finger in a back-and-forth motion. Within three segments, the job is done.

#### Style

Range: 6'  
 Duration: Permanent (until washed off or grown out)  
 Effect: Creatively arranges hair and makeup

NOTE: This spell is usually found in the possession of professionals. Its use by the untrained is not advised, especially since one

can *style* hair and makeup for a full turn per point! In the wrong hands, *style* has been known to result in consequences as dire as execution.

#### Grow

Range: 0 (Touch)  
 Duration: Permanent  
 Effect: Head hair growth

When using this spell, one need merely massage the scalp of the subject. Hair will grow at the rate of one foot per round. Three rounds of hair growth will occur for one point of pyramid energy expended.

#### Pleat (*Reversible*)

Range: 0 (Touch)  
 Duration: Until garment is removed  
 Effect: Pleats cloth

*Pleat* is used as a part of the morning dressing regimen. The spell magically folds one's clothing fabric in the accordion-like creases essential for proper Nithian dress. The reverse of this spell removes wrinkles from clothing and fabric.

#### Write

Range: 6'  
 Duration: Permanent  
 Effect: Writes text on surfaces

Scribes use the *write* spell to quickly jot down text. One need simply think of one's narrative, and the spell does the rest. This is CANNOT be used for magical writing.

### Two Point Spells

#### Clean

Range: 10' × 10' area  
 Duration: Instant  
 Effect: Cleans up room

The *clean* spell scrubs, polishes, and arranges all things in a room. Floors are swept, clothing is folded and stacked, walls are scrubbed, and the room is left much tidier than it was before.

#### Wash

Range: 6'  
Duration: Instant  
Effect: Leaves clothes spotless!

This magic is usually applied to one's clothes prior to the aforementioned *clean* spell. Ten gallons of water are necessary to use this particular magic.

#### Dry

Range: 6'  
Duration: Permanent  
Effect: Removes moisture

When used in conjunction with *wash*, this spell removes the time and hassle from doing one's clothing. *Dry* removes up to 10 gallons of water per round. This spell is also dandy for quick-drying fruit.

#### Bake

Range: 4'  
Duration: Permanent  
Effect: Bakes bread and other foods

The *bake* spell allows the user to cook breads, pastries, and other foods without fire or risk of burning for up to six hours. An open-ended stone box large enough to accommodate the food is necessary for the magic to work.

#### Color

Range: 10'  
Duration: Permanent  
Effect: Colors hair, skin, fabric



As the finishing touch of an intensive beauty regimen, *color* is just the thing! One solid color is permanently applied to one's clothing, hair, or person. Like the *style* spell, *color* should not be used casually. In conjunction with a *combine* spell (see below), *color* can be used to create multicolored patterns and other artistic twists.

#### Three-Point Spells

##### Braid (*Reversible*)

Range: 0 (Touch)  
Duration: 4 months  
Effect: Magically braids hair

*Braid* reduces a job of many days to one turn of game time. Loose hair is gathered and woven into a set of braids, according to Nithian fashion. This handy spell mends rope, too!



### Cook

Range: 3'  
 Duration: Permanent  
 Effect: Cooks an entire meal

This more "complex" cousin to *bake* allows one to cook a complete meal. All one needs are the raw materials, and the recipes.

### Four-Point Spells

#### Purify

Range: 0 (Touch)  
 Duration: Permanent  
 Effect: Purifies up to ten gallons of water per four points of pyramid energy expended.

#### Breeze

Range: 5' per four points  
 Duration: 1 segment  
 Effect: Creates cooling breeze on caster

With this spell, a cooling gust of air blows on the caster. This spell is also useful for dramatic moments.

### Five-Point Spells

#### Illuminate

Range: 0 (Touch)  
 Duration: 1 hour/5 points  
 Effect: Same as *light* spell.

#### Lift

Range: 6 feet per 5 points  
 Duration: 1 turn per 5 points  
 Effect: Lifts up to 500 cn per 5 points

#### Set Bones (*Reversible*)

Range: 0 (Touch)  
 Duration: Permanent  
 Effect: Can properly set breaks ranging from hairline fractures to compound breaks.

### Sterilize

Range: 0 (Touch)  
 Duration: Permanent  
 Effect: Cleans wounds and bindings. Useful when transporting wounded on journeys; reduces need to re-bandage with clean cloths daily.

### *Negative Applications of Pyramid Energy*

As can be seen, some of the aforementioned spells are reversible. Human nature being what it is, some of these reversions have offensive applications, i.e., *unbraiding* the rope supports on a high bridge. The most destructive application of the *pyramid energy collector* is the *bolt* spell. This causes the *collector* to liberate a full day's energy in a single destructive bolt of power. This causes one point of damage per point of the *collector's* capacity. A 10-point *collector* deals 10 points of damage, a 20-point *collector* 20 points, etc. A saving throw can be made to reduce the damage by half.

### Glyphs

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Glyphs are magically enchanted hieroglyphics made by mage-scribes. When Ahmad, the 4th level mage-scribe, wants to pen a new glyph, the player of the mage-scribe character must write down a complete description of what the glyph will do and how it works. The DM then assigns a level and charging time to it; i.e., "2nd level, 30 sleeps to charge." The "second" in the preceding example is the spell level that the glyph drains energy from. "Thirty sleeps to charge" refers to the amount of time it takes for the glyph to accumulate energy. Thus, during the 30 sleeps in which the glyph is charging, the mage-scribe loses the ability to cast one of his daily 2nd level spells. Ahmad may only memorize one 2nd level spell instead of the two normally allowed. This will be the case for 30 sleeps.

It is suggested that standard D&D® game spell effects be used as a guideline to assigning levels. Thus a glyph that performs like a *fireball* would be of the same level as a *fireball* spell. The charging time should be long enough to make the player think twice about making such a glyph, but no so long that the glyph becomes completely unattractive.

For a glyph to become operative, it must be infused with magical energies. These energies are drawn directly from the mage-scribe for the duration indicated (30 sleeps in the above example). During this time, the glyph does not function.

Once a mage-scribe learns how to make a glyph, he can repeat the process as often as desired. He can even make multiple glyphs at the same time! Of course, each glyph eliminates one of his daily spell slots for the duration of the glyph's charging time. Thus, Ahmad the mage-scribe could create at most two second level glyphs, sacrificing his ability to cast second level spells for a period of time. As soon as a glyph is fully charged, the spell slot becomes open again and a new glyph of that level could be penned if desired. The mage-scribe may, of course, leave the slot open for the casting of normal spells.

The few glyphs that follow are listed to assist DMs in assigning spell levels and charging times to the glyphs that players may come up with. They are intended as benchmarks only. If a mage-scribe player is having a hard time coming up with glyphs, you might suggest one of the following to him or even show him these as examples.

#### ***Sustenance (1st level for 7 sleeps)***

When a *sustenance* glyph is touched, the person gains the nutritional benefit of a full meal (including drink). The glyph vanishes upon activation.

#### ***Wounding (2nd for 10 sleeps)***

This glyph is placed on a weapon and given a name. When the glyph's name is spoken, the next blow by the weapon causes an extra 1d4 points of damage. If the blow misses, the weapon sparks and smokes ominously. Only one *glyph of wounding* may be placed upon a given weapon. The blow must come within a round after the glyph's name is spoken. Once the glyph activates, it vanishes.

#### ***Healing (3rd for 30 sleeps)***

This glyph is tattooed upon the body. It causes the individual to heal one hit point every eight hours (if wounded). The glyph is permanent.

#### ***Protection (4th level for 60 sleeps)***

The base level *protection* glyph provides a +1 bonus to armor class and saving throws. It is usually placed upon a robe, shield, or armor, but its magic does not work in conjunction with any other forms of magical protection (including other glyphs of protection). The glyph is permanent.

#### ***Warding (5th for 30 sleeps)***

This glyph is placed on a doorway or similar portal. Anyone attempting to cross the portal must make a save vs. spells or they are halted by a magical barrier. Warding can protect any opening up to the size of a standard door. The glyph is permanent.

### **Nithian Magical Items** \_\_\_\_\_

A few magical items typical of those native to Nithia are detailed in this section. After reading them, the DM should have a good feel for the unique flavor of Nithian magical items. At the DM's option, other such items may be developed for use in a continuing Nithia campaign.

## Common Items

**Ankh:** Many *ankh* talismans are worn in Nithia. A few *ankhs* are magical tokens given by the Immortals. They are usually given in times of need and as rewards for worthy deeds.

*Ankh* powers vary depending upon which Immortal formed the talisman. However, regardless of which Immortal created the ankh, its power only works once. When a magical ankh is grasped, it glows with a brilliant pure light allowing sight in darkness up to 20 paces in all directions. *Ankh* powers are listed below:

Immortal	Effect
Ixion	Shoot a flaming stream causing 1d6 Dmg/level
Kagyar	Walk through stone
Pflarr	Memorize twice the normal number of spells
Rathanos	Summon a fire elemental
Valerias	Enchant a weapon to +1

**Bracers of Defense:** These items are indistinguishable from normal arm, wrist, or ankle bands. Their magic bestows an effective Armor Class equal to someone wearing armor and shield. If armor is worn, the *bracers* have no additional effect, but they do work in conjunction with other magical items of protection. The *Armor Class* bestowed by *bracers of defense* is determined by making percentile roll and consulting the following table:

D100 Roll	Armor Class
01-05	8
06-15	7
16-35	6
36-50	5
51-70	4
71-85	3
86-00	2

**Charms of Resource:** Like magical *standards*, *charms of resource* temporarily imbue their owners with certain powers and abilities. These are generally in relation to survival skills as opposed to offensive or defensive abilities. Some provide resistance to night time desert cold, for instance, while others increase sight and hearing. Some examples of *charms of resource* are provided below:

Charm	Ability
Asp	Resistance to poison
Bread	Provides a full day's food
Fennec	Surprised only on a 1 on 1d6
Hawk	Vision is enhanced 100 times
Raindrop	Provides a full day's water

The DM should feel free to create more *charms of resource* as he or she sees fit.

**Eyes of the Immortals:** Many sarcophagi and burial boxes have a pair of eyes painted upon them near one end. The belief is that the entombed can see through these eyes from within, like a window, in order to watch for signs of the time of rebirth.

In the lands of the living, some of these eyes are magical paintings that allow the user to "keep an eye" on intruders. They work as a permanent *wizard eye* spell.

**Guardian Tails:** *Guardian tails* appear to be normal animal tails from native creatures such as the desert fox, hyena, or caracal. A thong is attached to one end so that the tail can be attached to a chest, bow case, or quiver.

Once so attached, the *guardian tail* will protect the container's contents. The *tail* instantly knows who the owner of the container is, and protects its contents from being molested by anyone other than the owner.

If the contents are molested, the *guardian tail* causes the container to polymorph into an animal of the tail's type (the tail now

being the tail of the animal). It then runs away or fights if necessary, generally choosing the former over the latter. If it escapes or scares off the intruder, the "animated" container will run and find its owner, at which point the container reverts to its original form.

Guardian tails have the following statistics regardless of form: AC 5; HD 2; MV 150; ATT 1; Dmg 1d4; SA C2; AL N. If slain, the guardian tail and container revert to their normal form and the tail will be non-functional for 1 sleep. If the tail is ever cut in two, its magical properties are destroyed.

**Hover-Chariots:** As stated in the Player's Tome, *hover-chariots* are magical devices used strictly by the military. It is rumored that the knowledge to build these weapons was bestowed by Rathanos himself on the weapon-smiths of the Pharaoh Tur-Ah. Since then, the knowledge has remained a royal secret, passed down through the dynasties. When at rest, the *hover-chariot* is a metallic cupola mounted atop an articulated metal frame. When activated, the frame is covered by the fiery manifestation of a beast. The flame-beast moves with the same speed and agility as its physical counterpart. Attacks and defenses are also the same. The differences are that the flaming manifestation of a *hover-chariot* is generally larger than the actual animal it represents, and deals 6d6 flame damage in addition to the claw or bite damage of the animal. *Hover-chariots* cannot be activated without a *control ring* which is worn by the chariot's owner. These rings cannot be transferred to another person without the willing participation of the previous owner.

For the most part, terrain is of no consideration to the driver of a *hover-chariot*. Exceptions to this include dense forest (which makes traveling atop a flaming beast impractical), and high cliffs (those over 75' in height). Those *hover-chariots* designed after

flying birds (hawks, eagles, ibis) have a flight ceiling of 500 feet.

In terms of battle, the *hover-chariot* has an effective Armor Class of -3. Missile weapons used against the chariot must make saving throws vs. fire or be burnt up, causing no damage.

**Hover-Vessels:** These ships are the mainstays of the Nithian fleet. They enable the Nithian military to maintain a presence from the capital to the borders without lengthy foot marches. In commercial use, these vessels enable goods to be shipped from one end of the River Nithia to another, allowing navigators to easily climb the enormous waterfalls of central river.

*Hover-vessels* are built in three main sizes, and are quite expensive to own. Generally, those who own *hover-vessels* are either very rich or on serious military business. Descriptions of the various types of *hover-vessels* are as follows:

**Yachts,** are small craft for personal use, generally 10-50' in length. They are used by wealthier fishermen as trawlers, and by merchants who want their cargo to arrive quickly and quietly. Wealthy families may also own *hover-yachts* as pleasure craft.

**Ships** may carry goods, troops, or offensive armament. Like their seagoing cousins, they provide a number of transport tasks. They are approximately 50 to 150' long, and are less maneuverable than *hover-yachts*.

The massive **barges** (150-300' long) are used for heavy hauling, colonization, and massive military assaults. The entire population of Dashur was transported to the site of Tarthis along with their belongings in three such barges early in Nithia's history.

**City-Breakers:** In military applications, *hover-barges* are mounted with heavy rams which can deal 2d10 structural points of damage to walls. Other barges are mounted with *sun burners* made with magical *magni-*

*flying mirrors* and *magnifying lenses* to focus the sun's rays into a destructive energy beam. (These *mirrors* and *lenses* are, incidentally, created by the refractors (see Monsters) to light their underground cities. They are "harvested" only at great danger to Nithian life and limb, and are therefore quite valuable.) In game terms, the artillery officer aboard a city breaker barge must make a roll to hit (against AC5, focal range 2 miles, no modifiers) to "lock on" a given target. If either the ship or the target is moving, the roll is made at a -2 penalty (if both are in motion, the roll is made at -4). If the roll is successful, the target explodes in a 12d6 fireball (no saving throw). NOTE: The magnifying optics of the sun burner are worth 10,000 gp per lens or mirror. The pyramid energy collector that powers the device is a rare 40-point model that costs 100,000 gp. If one component of the sun burner is broken, the entire device is useless.

In normal use, *hover-vessels* have an operating ceiling of 50 feet. The lowest a *hover-vessel* can float is 10' off the ground. All *hover-vessels* can land regardless of type. Steep mountain ranges, and areas of bizarre magical energy (The Frozen Sands, Nithian Broken Lands, etc.) are dangerous to travel in *hover-vessels*. Since all *hover-vessels* are powered by broadcast *pyramid energy*, their operating range is limited to the Nithian border. Outside this border, *hover-vessels* shut down and simply plummet to the ground, with corresponding damage to all aboard.

**Red Arrow:** Red shafted arrows are not uncommon in Nithia. Some are made from red colored reeds while others are dyed. The common belief is that a red-colored arrow seeks blood, making it more likely to hit and cause damage.

This belief is backed up on the fact that truly magical *red arrows* exist in Nithia. Their source is uncertain. Perhaps a nomadic archer, sect of priests, or elderly scribe has learned of their proper making.

In any event, a true (magical) red arrow provides an equal bonus to hit and damage. They come in various qualities as follows:

1d6	Bonus
1	+1
2	+2
3	+3
4	+4
5	+5
6	cursed, -1

**Standards:** Magical Nithian *standards* are elaborately carved representations of animals used for troop identification in battle. Nithian *standards* usually resemble native animals or monsters. They are mounted atop long, lance-like staves and carried into battle.

Each *standard* has its own special power that is indicated by its form. *Standards* are extremely powerful and rare magical items that convey their power to all within view of the *standard* who wear a corresponding charm. For example, in battle, an ibis *standard* affects all within easy view who wear an ibis symbol or statue upon them.

Effective range is limited to those who could identify the *standard's* form if they looked in its direction (e.g., distinguishing an ibis from an owl). Thus, the *standard's* size indicates its range of influence. A few *standard* examples follow.

Standard	Effects
Camel	Half normal water intake required
Fox	Troops <i>move silently</i> as a 1st level thief
Hawk	Javelins gain +1 attack and damage bonuses
Hyena	War cries cause enemies to save vs. spells or run in <i>fear</i>
Ibis	Death isn't reached until -10 hit points
Ostrich	Prevents heat exhaustion due to running
Panther	+2 morale bonus

Phoenix	Fatal blows are avoided on a successful saving throw vs. death ray
Viper	Victim must save vs. poison or die automatically from a natural 20 attack roll

Only one *standard* can affect an individual at any given time. Those who are affected can switch between eligible *standards* once per round at will.

### Artifacts/Relics

These devices contain especially potent magical powers. They are unique (only one of each exists) and should not fall into the character's hands without a specific reason of great portent.

**Book of Amon:** This relic has no known origin. It has existed since the days of the Nithian Empire of the surface world. It is a large tome weighing nearly 80 pounds, bound in what appears to be red dragon hide, with raised, unreadable glyphs on the cover. Raised areas, like veins under skin, radiate out from the glyphs. Sixteen eyes of precious gemstone stare endlessly out from the cover of the book. To the casual observer, the book appears to breathe.

It is rumored that only the Pharaoh, or the Pharaoh's top priest, is able to read it freely. If anyone else tries, they must save vs. spells or go mad (Intelligence permanently drops to 1). Those who keep their sanity only see blank pages.

According to legend, each page bears the name of an ancient Nithian colony, far away from the Known World. If the Pharaoh wishes to visit one of these places, he or she need simply open the book, and read the name written there. The book then becomes a *gate* to that particular place, and the Pharaoh may travel freely to it. However, due to the *Spell of Preservation*, no *gates* can be opened to the surface, and if more than an hour elapses, the user is automatically

returned to Nithia. Since this is a Nithian artifact, the *Book* itself is constrained to stay within the country's borders, and therefore teleports itself back to its resting place if taken out of the country.

**Master Plan:** The master plan is an ancient set of magical maps written on papyrus scrolls. Strangely, they do not age, and the papyrus remains pliable and resilient, not drying into brittle sheets or yellowing as they should. Each map can be unrolled so that it is half a pace high and five paces long. There are reported to be six in all and when unrolled together they cover the entire Hollow World.

On certain sleeps of the circle when the floating continents align properly, the maps can be assembled to form an indestructible, glyph-covered cube. If the glyphs are read properly (2 percent chance per level), the cube turns inside-out and expands to form a four-dimensional map of the Hollow World showing everything as it is at that moment. A number of small points of light shine on various areas of the map, showing points of power.

The *Master Plan* is actually an artifact of chaos built by Thanatos and Ranivorus to bring about the ultimate destruction of the Hollow World. Those who activate the *Master Plan* are immediately subject to the complete mental control of both Sekhaba and Soth's "towers." The victim becomes a hollow shell, a conduit for contact between the evil agents of Entropy and the sleeping Burrowers. In game terms, those who puzzle out this artifact must make a saving throw vs. spells at -4. If the saving throw is failed, the victim is "burnt out" and becomes a tool of the DM. The *Master Plan* shows the positions of all Burrowers paralyzed by the *Spell of Preservation*. Touching the points of light brings each individual Burrower into mental contact with Sekhaba and Soth and synchronizes their dreams with those of the Towers.

The theory behind the *Master Plan* goes like this: If all Burrowers dream of escape in synchronization, the resultant magical energy may be enough to break the *Spell of Preservation*, allowing the forces of Entropy to once again run rampant throughout the Known World, bringing an age of fear and suffering unlike any experienced by the Known World.

**Pharaoh's Crook & Flail:** Throughout the ages, the Pharaohs of Nithia have passed the *crook and flail* down from ruler to ruler. Every Pharaoh's tomb depicts an image of the Pharaoh holding his crook and/or flail across his chest in the symbolic form so well known by the populace. These artifacts contain immense power.

The *flail* appears to be a small non-functional weapon of a decorative nature. In fact, this ancient artifact conveys all the skills of a fighter for one sleep upon the Pharaoh (the Pharaoh is generally either a cleric or magic-user). Fighter ability gained is at the same level as the Pharaoh's current level. The *flail* also bestows upon the wielder an armor class of 0 or a +5 AC bonus (whichever is greater). The first successful attack on the flail's wielder causes all applicable damage (including magical effects, poison, etc.) to be reflected upon the attacker. Further attacks are resolved normally. Finally, the flail transforms into a *mace-axe* +5 upon command, causing a base of 1d10 damage.

The *crook* is an equally potent magical relic. He who holds it performs in all ways as if his Wisdom score were an 18. It performs as a *ring of human control*, allowing the Pharaoh complete control over foreigners (saving throw applies). Finally, the crook provides the one carrying it with a 50% magic resistance.

Legends state that the *crook and flail* were given to the first Hollow World Pharaoh by Pflarr and Rathanos as a token of love and respect for the people of Nithia.

**Rod of Building:** This artifact was discovered aboard a ship belonging to Thanatos and Ranivorus. It is a testament to the chaotic nature of these Immortals that the *rod of building* is a benign device. Its function is simple, yet very important—with this device, one can literally construct a pyramid, palace, statue, or other stone structure from the ground up.

To use the *rod*, the user must first have detailed interior and exterior plans of the object to be built. Next, the fully-drawn plans must be laid on the ground where the structure is to be erected, and the outside dimensions of the structure's foundation etched, using the *rod*, into the stone or soil. Once the etching is complete, the structure begins to build itself, block by block, at a rate of 10 square feet per round. Underground structures are dug, walls spring up, and outbuildings form under the magic of the *rod of building*. The process does not stop until the structure is complete.

Over the years, the *rod of building* has come into the possession of the Templars, who strictly regulate its use. Only a select few structures are created in this fashion each year.



## Mystical Structures

There are three types of structures found in Nithia around which much mysticism hangs. These are the great monoliths, pyramids, and statues that the people erect along distant horizons. The secrets of all three structural types are revealed below.

## Monoliths

Scattered among the great deserts of Nithia are monoliths and obelisks. These towering stone structures are an enigma to those not initiated into their mysteries. However, everyone senses a powerful purpose about them.

Most Nithians know the monoliths to be magical in nature, but few know their actual purpose. That purpose is to relay and enhance the tremendous *pyramid energy* network that crisscrosses Nithia. Because of this, the stone edifices radiate unnatural energy if a *detect magic* spell is used.

Nearly all monoliths are built under the carefully guided instruction of a *montoth* (specialty magic-user). This society of adepts predates Nithian history. As each member is inducted into the organization, they are sworn to secrecy, carrying their arcane knowledge with them to the grave and beyond. "Be as silent as the stones," reads a famous *montoth* motto.

### Monolithic Powers

To create the monoliths and obelisks of the pyramid energy network, each structure is empowered with a secret magical function. Although this power is secret, the concentration of magic is so great within them that odd side effects or "magical eddies" occur nearby.

A few of the monolithic powers (or side effects) are listed below. These are only

examples and others may be created at the DM's option.

### Monolithic powers

1d12 Powers

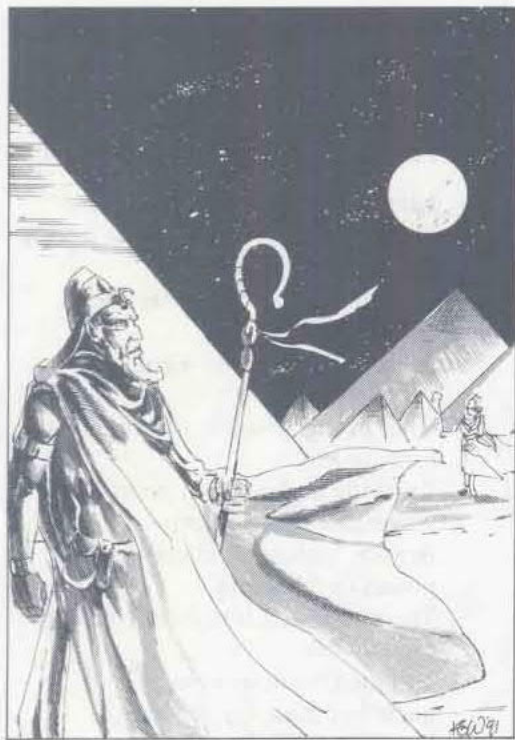
1. No plants grow within 10 flights
2. All spells within a flight have a 50% chance of backfiring
3. A fresh water spring always flows near the base
4. All sound is silenced within 300 paces
5. Gold brought within two flights turns to lead
6. Touching it gives a +1 bonus to attack dice for one sleep
7. Anyone looking at it must save vs. poison or fall asleep
8. Those touching it strike the nearest person once
9. Drinking water in sight of it quenches thirst for 30 sleeps
10. Experience gained within 1 march is doubled once
11. Pyramid power is doubled within 1 march.
12. Anyone resting within a flight does not wake for a sleep unless they save vs. spells

One interesting aspect of monoliths is that they can't be abused. Those that produce beneficial effects are so remote that only the bravest of heroes can reach them.

Occasionally the monoliths' powers change (at the DM's option) especially if it is likely that they will be abused. And, as with all *montoth* magic, their powers are concealed from the populace at large.

Rumors abound through the normal populace that some of the monoliths are hollow and can be entered through magically guarded secret doors. It is believed that within the monoliths are secret chambers filled with crystals enabling someone to





control the monoliths' powers and perform other fantastic feats.

As always, the montoth society is secretive about this and does not speak on the subject. However, the society does build some of them hollow, stocking them with food and water to serve as secret oases for other montoths. There is a 1 in 10 chance that any monolith is such an oasis. The montoth do not tell others of this, as the store of supplies would be depleted instantly by desert travelers.

One thing all monoliths have in common is their durability. They weather the blasting of sand, the constant heat, and the passage of time as if these forces did not exist. Foreigners occasionally try to chip off a piece of statue or monolith as a souvenir of their travels. Unfortunately, all they receive for their troubles is a blunt tool or weapon.

## Pyramids

Throughout Nithia there are pyramids dotting the desert and badlands. Some are well known such as those in the necropolis of Tarthis located some 50 flights (2 miles) south of the city. Others have been hidden in the deep desert and badlands for ages. Pyramids are grand structures that seem to radiate great power. Foreigners are generally struck dumb with awe of the enigmatic Nithian pyramids.

### *The Legend*

*As related by Verian, a scribe in the Milenian Ministry of Truth:*

"Almost all Nithians believe that one sleep the dead will arise to walk the world again. This tale has been passed down throughout the ages since before the Nithians arrived in the Hollow World. For an equal time, great pyramids have been built to serve as burial tombs capable of spanning the ages until the *time of rebirth* at last arrives. It is believed that when that sleep comes, only those properly entombed will rise to take back their possessions, lands, and power, living an everlasting life. Some even claim that all will then be equals with the Immortals and live among them.

"This belief is so strong that almost every Nithian would gladly die to share a sarcophagus in the Pharaoh's tomb, even if his life were cut short to do it. The prime motivators for this are not so much love and respect for the Pharaoh as they are hope and greed—hope that one may be selected by a dying Pharaoh to accompany him, and greed for the powers that supposedly result from this ritual burial.

"As soon as a Pharaoh comes to power, one of the first acts he performs is the authorization for initial construction of his pyramid. This is a lengthy process and

occasionally, the Pharaoh dies before his tomb is complete.

"Pharaohs are not the only people who make pyramids, but they are the only ones who may authorize their construction. Few have the wealth and power to bring such a project to completion without the Pharaoh's aid.

"All this simply supports the fact that the Nithians, though proud, are essentially a simplistic, superstitious people who are blind to the light of reason. They are obsessed with death. Only a backward, barbaric culture would promulgate the belief that flinging oneself into an open grave would impart 'mystical powers'."

### **The Truth**

*From a conversation with Jedda, an ancient Nithian high priest of Pflarr:*

"In truth, pyramids do radiate magical power. The full origin of this energy is shrouded in uncertainty. Although death is an enlightening thing, even I, having been here for these many centuries, do not know all the mysteries of the afterworld. However, the effects are of importance here, not the cause.

"What I am about to tell you is known to only a few, and even they do not understand it all. It would take the living many lifetimes to piece together the knowledge I shall reveal in this little conversation. And it is just as well! Remember, keep this to yourself, lest the Immortals grow annoyed at your folly in revealing it. Are you taking notes? Well, stop it!

"Once a pyramid is completed, it begins to accumulate *pyramid power*. This is a slow process, taking circles before a significant amount of energy has built up. The interment of the dead contributes to and accelerates this energy buildup. Upon entering the lands of the dead, those who pass on find that their service of the

Immortals has not ended; indeed, it has truly just begun.

The exact duties of the dead, from the lowest slave to the old Pharaohs themselves, are unknown to me, and I cannot fully explain my own tasks. What I can say is this: after being placed in the soil of Nithia, we are a part of Nithia, and must serve her cause. The exact ends of this servitude, I do not know. I have a great suspicion that the Immortals themselves are in turmoil over this. Suffice to say, however, that our illustrious patrons, Pflarr and Rathanos, store and nurture the souls of the dead, teaching us what we need to improve our power now that we have shed the casings of flesh. Yes, little one, we are trained at the feet of the very Immortals themselves!

"No, I shall divulge nothing of what this training entails. That is not something you need to know. You will find out once you get here. But I can tell you that what you know as "pyramid energy" is both our payment and gift to the land that gave us birth. The Immortals teach us that in return for living in Nithia, we must pay her back by giving of ourselves to power her magical needs. Now, wipe that worried look off your face! Believe me, we are proud to serve the Twin Powers by helping the living. It does my heart good to know that I am helping to bake the bread of a humble Nithian family, or am powering a mighty sun-burner to torch the camps of the evil Jennites! We are pleased and proud to help you live folk in so humble a fashion.

"However, (and this, especially, you must keep to yourself) there is turmoil even here, in the afterlife. Those fell Immortals, whose names I cannot mention lest they hear me, also have access to the Nithian folk of the afterlife. Oh, there are those miscreants who follow them willingly—your garden-variety criminals and those guttersnipe Pharaohs of the Ninth and Tenth Dynasties immediately come to mind—but most of their victims are seduced to follow the forces of Entropy. I

believe that this is the reason we were brought to the Hollow World to begin with (I told you death was enlightening). No, do not turn away! Face this responsibility, and maybe we can change things! Hear the truth: Our ancestors were beings of great power, but also great naivete. They thought that they could actually control the forces of Entropy. The price for their folly was complete domination by the Lords of Rot and Conquest. Because of our ancestors' evil ways, we were placed here to learn many lessons. Yes, the lords of ancient Nithia still work their foul deeds to this day! But the time is coming when they shall be brought to task for their evil. There will be a day of reckoning! Help the living to take heart, little one, and to avoid the clutches of the Dark Ones! Use the powers we give you wisely, and shun those who abuse them. Go, child, and help us in our task!"

### Using Pyramid Power

Pyramid energy can be used to perform numerous things, some of which have been mentioned previously. Other applications (and misuses) are outlined below. Of course, a *pyramid energy collector* is necessary to perform any task involving pyramid energy. If something is desired that is not on this list, the DM must determine if it is possible at all, and how much it costs. To do this he must use the following examples as a base. Pyramid power can be used to perform almost anything associated with mysticism and magic. The primary uses of pyramid power involve household magic, and powering the engines of *hover-chariots* and the mighty *hover-barges*. Other more expensive uses of pyramid energy are listed below, along with their point costs.

Use	Cost
Healing	2 points per round
Control Statue	5 points per round
Research	10 points per hour
Create Undead Warrior*	1000 points
Activate Undead Warrior*	100 points

\* Used only by followers of Thanatos or Ranivorus.

**Healing:** This use of pyramid energy allows the user to heal one hit point of damage per every two points of pyramid energy used. For most people, this means a swift drain on the day's pyramid energy charge. However, when there is no other way to help the severely injured, many people use this power without hesitation. It is especially useful when used in conjunction with the five-point household spell, *set bones*.

**Control Statue:** This application allows the user to "remote control" a statue into which a pyramid energy collector has been built. Using *control statue* a statue can be made to walk around and perform simple tasks, like bashing one's opponents.

Statues cannot speak, and have no intelligence. No statue smaller than man-sized can be controlled with this ability. Furthermore, the point cost given above for *control statue* is a median, based on a man-sized statue. Individual strength, hit dice, damage, and pyramid point cost to run is adjusted based on their size as follows:

Size	Str	Hit Dice	Dmg	Points/Round
3-6'	18	4+4	1-3*	5
7-12'	18/50	6+6	4-6*	10
12-24'	20	10	9-11*	20
25-50'	23	20	2d8+11*	30
51-100'	25	30	3d10+14	50

\* Means "or by weapon type." Strength bonuses apply when weapons are used.

Man-sized statues usually have an AC of 6 (due to being stone). The statue's Armor Class may be adjusted by size and type of stone it is made from.

**Research:** This application allows the mage or cleric to access a "spirit library," consulting with wise folk in the afterlife to gain insight into new magical and clerical spells. To use this skill, one must first invest 10 points of pyramid energy per hour of "consultation," then roll on the following table, or pick a result as you see fit:

**D10**

Roll	Result
1	Spirits cannot be bothered. Find out for yourself.
2	You receive a small hint. Reduce research time by one sleep.
3	A capricious mage (or cleric) lied to you! Double your research time.
4	You contacted the wrong spirit. Your spell will be successful, but add $\frac{1}{4}$ to your research time.
5	You contacted a real weirdo! Your spell will yield results quite different from what you intended (DM adjudication)!
6	Your spell is very important in the scheme of things. Halve your research time.
7	Cosmic censors pull a fast one. Quarter your research time, but reduce your spell effects by half.
8	Cosmic censors really don't like your spell! Everything works (i.e., special effects, light, sound, etc.), but your spell is a dud!
9	Hard work pays off. Research time reduced to $\frac{1}{4}$ of original amount.
10	Immortal sees your spell research and says, "Neat!" Research time cut to overnight.

**Create Undead Warrior:** This magic is used by followers of the Immortals of Entropy to create guardians for crypts, strongholds, and other places of power. For detailed information on the processes by which a body is mummified, consult your local library's Egyptology section. However, in game terms the process involves special enchanted lacquers, and a complex curing process. During this time, the mummy is bathed in pyramid energy (100 points per week) for 9 weeks. At the end of this time, the final 100 points are shunted into an amulet that places the *undead warrior* under the creator's control.

*Undead warriors* fight and cast spells at the same levels of ability as when they were alive. Movement rates are also the same. They react to clerical "turning undead" at the level of a vampire. It is also immune to spells such as *charm*. Due to the enchanted lacquers and special drying processes used in their creation, all *undead warriors* have a base Armor Class of 2. They can wear armor and use the same weapons they used in life.

In combat, the *undead warrior* is a tireless fighting machine. It does not check morale, nor does it give quarter. If the party chooses to retreat or run away, the *undead warrior* pursues, not stopping until it either destroys the party to the last character or is itself destroyed.

Destroying an *undead warrior* can be a difficult proposition. Simply beating on the construct may damage it, but the pieces remain animate, imbued with a sense of deadly purpose. Burning the thing is an option, since the lacquers used in the *undead warrior's* construction are quite flammable. The final option is to destroy the thing's control amulet, which causes the *warrior* to crumble into dust.

**Control Undead Warrior:** This magic is the "spark" needed to set *undead warrior* into deadly action. As can be told by the point

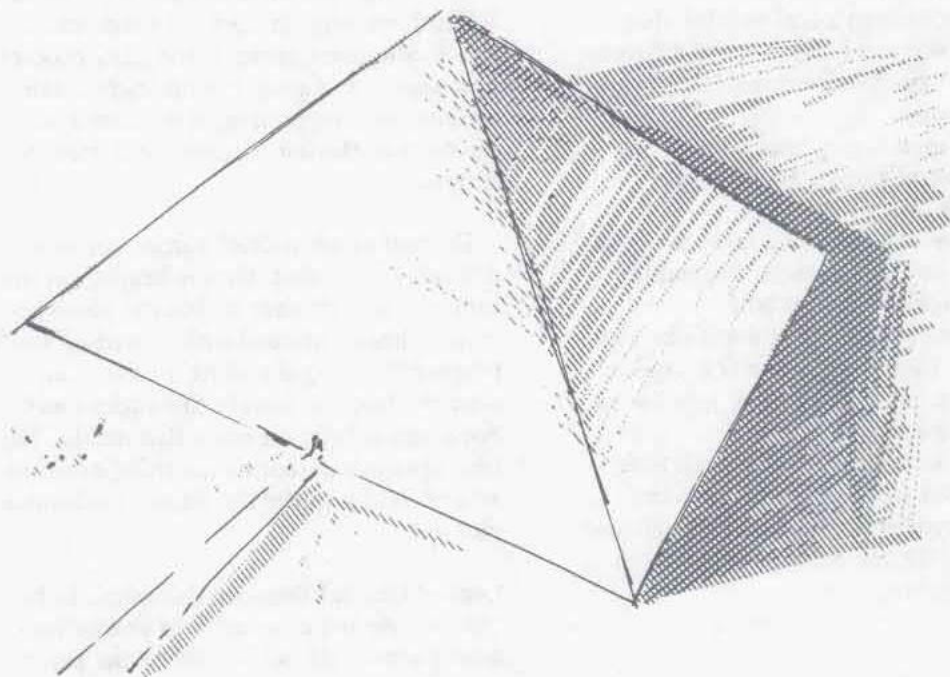
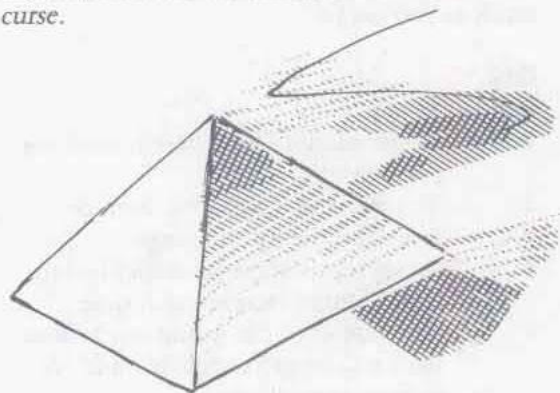
cost, this is an investment of power. Such a thing is not without drawbacks, however: there is a 25% chance that the *undead warrior* will be "flawed," and attack its owner upon activation.

## Pyramid Magic

The pyramids often have certain magical effects on those who venture within them. A sample list of such effects follows:

1d6	Effect
1	Turning undead always fails
2	Mummy's Curse (see below)
3	Anyone who takes treasure loses one XP for every 10 gp taken
4	No 1st level spells will function
5	All spells have a 25% chance of functioning at twice the normal power or duration
6	All spells have a 25% chance of failing

At the DM's option, a *mummy's curse* causes would-be tomb robbers to make a saving throw vs. death ray, or fall ill and slowly die over the course of the next 30 sleeps. Another *curse* effect may cause the victims to go insane and wander aimlessly through the tomb, to be picked off one by one by the tomb's defenses. Returning the treasure and apologizing sincerely to the person entombed negates all negative effects. Feel free to invent other fiendish manifestations of the dreaded *mummy's curse*.



## Setting the Scene

This adventure opens at the palace of Turak. This ancient building has not been entered since Hutaatep, the last of the southern Pharaohs, ruled from Ranak nearly 500 circles ago. After Hutaatep's assassination, Turak was sealed. It was decreed that none should enter it until a Pharaoh should once again reign from Ranak.

Recently, a diplomat from the Jennite Holdings has met with Al-Belak, the southern king. The Jennites have secretly informed Al-Belak that they are interested in striking a truce with Southern Nithia. They want to settle the boundaries between these two nations once and for all. Furthermore, they are sending Trularnan, a Jennite prince, and his escort to meet with King Al-Belak if the Nithians offer them a suitable meeting place.

Al-Belak has decided to break the decree set on Turak and hold the meeting there. The main reason he is doing this is to salve wounded pride. He is embarrassed at Ranak's attrition from a city of 200,000 to one of 45,000, and feels that it is an unsuitable place from which to rule. He has always wanted to reopen Turak and establish it as the seat of the southern throne. Also, Al-Belak is banking on the shock value of Turak. He hopes that the grandeur of this ancient and vast palace will overwhelm the Jennites, making his negotiating position stronger.

As the adventure opens, Al-Belak and his entourage have met on the steps of Turak. A tidy clearing has been made before the palace to serve as an entry glade and temporary resting place while Al-Belak's servants prepare to open and clean out those sections of the palace that will be used. The Jennites should arrive in about 8 hours.

The PCs should be in the clearing with Al-Belak. There are several ways of explaining this "coincidence." Native Nithian PCs could be here because they are honorary heroes or high ranking servants in Al-Belak's employ. Where outlanders are concerned, Al-Belak may have hired foreign mercenaries (the PCs) to act as retainers during this meeting.

At this point in the adventure, it matters not whether the various PCs know each other or have the same background. Thus, it makes a wonderful first adventure in the HOLLOW WORLD™ campaign setting.

Al-Belak is detailed in the Personalities section of this tome. His two bodyguards, Atoom and Hatom, are twins. They are 8th-level fighter/heavymen specialists: AC 1 (plate mail with battle helmets and common shields); hp 65, 49; MV 60'(20'); #AT 1;

Dmg 1d10+2 (khopesh + specialty); SA F8; ML 14; AL N; S15 I8 W9 D13 Co14 Ch11. Both carry poison made by Al-Belak himself. It causes 1 point of damage each round until the victim makes a successful saving throw vs. poison.

Al-Belak is also escorted by Tishet, a cleric of Pflarr who serves as his counselor and aide. Tishet is a 7th-level female specialty cleric of Pflarr: AC 4 (all three bracers, harness, and breastplate); hp 27; MV 120'(40'); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (staff) or 1d4 (throw stick); SA C7; ML 10; AL N; S12 I13 W17 D9 Co10 Ch15. Her spells are (3/2/2): 1st—*cure light wounds, detect magic, light*; 2nd—*know alignment*; 3rd—*continual light, striking*. Today, Tishet has traded in a second level cleric spell for the second level magic-user spell *web* as per her specialization.

There are four 1st Level fighters who also serve Al-Belak as litter-bearers and guards: AC 5 (textile armor and helm); hp 9, 7, 6, 4; MV 90'(30'); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (short spear) or 1d8 (setu w/ long bow); SA F1; ML 12; AL L.

The entourage is completed by 8 commoner-caste servants, and 10 hereditary slaves. These retainers are non-combatants with no training in weapons.

## The Unsealing

When Turak was abandoned after the reign of Hutaatep, all its entrances were sealed shut with stone. Now, Al-Belak has ordered the opening of the northern entrance. Unsealing the ancient doorway takes about an hour of hard work.

As the seal is broken, a gust of dank, stale air issues forth like the breath of an awakening monster. At this point, the slaves and commoners will balk at entering, muttering among themselves about "great evil" and "disturbing the sleep of the ancients." However, Al-Belak's two strongmen "encourage" them to move forward.

After several of his servants precede him, Al-Belak enters with his ranking entourage. He soon settles on an area for the upcoming meeting. "I shall use the guests' meeting hall," he announces pompously. "Slaves, servants, hearken to me," he commands. "You shall clean the hall thoroughly, as well as the passages leading to it." Turning to the PCs, Al-Belak adds, "I would like you to stay with them, to keep them from jumping at shadows." With a contemptuous snicker, he then returns to the outside to await the place's preparation.

Nearly an hour passes, during which things go smoothly. This soon changes when screams issue from within the palace. The PCs soon find out that Al-Belak's words were quite prophetic: six shadows attack the humans.

They dart in and out between the pillars as well as behind the huge linen curtains that hang in numerous places throughout the palace. The curtains are all old and partially decomposed. Once temporary wall partitions, the curtains now form a great maze of musty, degenerated walls. The rotted curtains cover entrances, lay across tables and statues, and cling to pillars.

The shadows attack for only one round, then dart away, keeping the servants in abject terror, and the PCs in suspense.

**Shadows:** AC 7; HD 2+2; hp 14, 13, 12, 6, 6, 5; MV 90'(30'); #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 + special; SA F2; ML 12; AL C; XP 35.

### The Wait

If characters or NPCs stray off over the next six hours, they are attacked by four shadows (see above). During the cleanup, three giant scorpions are also found hiding under a heap of fallen curtains.

**Giant Scorpions:** AC 2; HD 4; hp 17, 17, 12; MV 150'(50'); #AT 3; Dmg 1d10/1d10/1d8 + poison; SA F2; ML 11; AL N; XP 125.

Though the servants work quietly, they are constantly on the alert, and speak only in hushed whispers. At this point, if the PCs talk to the servants, they are informed that "the ancient spirits are displeased with the king's presence." Further questioning uncovers the name "Hutaatep," but little else.

### The Arrival of the Jennites =

After six hours, a Nithian trumpet is heard in the distance. It heralds the Jennites' arrival at the docks. They are on board a Nithian Ahaw (Man-of-War class *hover-ship*). Soon the Jennites are escorted to the palace by eight Nithian fighters.

**Fighters:** AC 6 (textile armor); hp 9, 8, 8, 8, 6, 5, 3, 2; MV 90'(30'); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (short spear or bow w/ sunet); SA F1; ML 10; AL N.

With them will be Trularnan, a prince of the Jennites. Trularnan is a 10th level fighter: AC 3 (*Jennite scale* +2); hp 78; MV 120'(40'); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (*war hammer* +2) or 1d6 (*Jennite short bow*); SA F10; ML 16; AL N; S17 I11 W12 D13 Co13 Ch11. Trularnan is escorted by seven Jennite fighters of the 3rd level: AC 5 (*Jennite scale*); hp 25, 23, 22, 17, 17, 16, 14; MV 90'(30'); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (*short sword* or *Jennite bow*); SA F3; ML 12; AL N.

Al-Belak and his three top escorts watch Trularnan's band approach along the Nithian causeway from the river to the palace. He makes no move to meet the Jennites halfway. When Trularnan's entourage reaches

the steps before the palace, Al-Belak welcomes them to Turak, palace of Southern Nithia. Though both leaders behave in their best formal manner, they want to begin negotiations immediately.

### The Giving of Gifts

Once the combined party reaches the conference hall and seats themselves about the negotiating table, Trularnan brings forth a tiara of wonderfully set stones. He offers this gift to Al-Belak, informing him that the jewels were selected and set by his mother, Queen Truisa. Al-Belak accepts the gift as per Jennite custom. In return, Al-Belak offers Trularnan an exquisitely carved golden statue of himself. This causes some consternation among the Jennites, not only because of Al-Belak's conceit in giving the Jennites an image of himself, but because such statues are known to be "cursed." Trularnan swallows his disgust, accepts the statue, and the meeting continues.

Wasting no time, Trularnan speaks. "My father, King Tiolathar, is willing to make peace with you Nithians. His terms are simple: the border between the two nations must be established as running through the exact center of the Ruins of Hutaatep." Al-Belak's response is equally terse: he wishes to set the border at the far edge of the Hutaatep Highlands. Neither side is willing to compromise, leading to a very tense situation. Then one of the Nithian leaders breaks in with a side offer, such as a reduced tax on imported Jennite gold-crafts, etc.

### Hutaatep

The discussion over borders goes on for nearly an hour. Just as a compromise is about to be reached, a sudden gust of cold wind blows through the hall, causing the curtains to shift ominously. Suddenly, both leaders draw weapons, calling on their entourages to do the same. The hall erupts in combat. Just as battle begins in earnest, another gust of cold wind rushes through the hall, turning everyone but the PCs into stone statues. No magic will revert the statues to their normal forms, nor will further damage harm them.

As if things aren't complicated enough, an glowing image slowly coalesces and addresses the PCs. "I am Tur-Ah, Pharaoh of centuries past. You must help me, for the lives of your king and the Jennite prince are in grave danger. For the past 500 circles, I have contained the efforts of the mad Pharaoh Hutaatep to destroy Nithia. Now, he has grown too powerful for me to stop alone, for he plots with the Immortals of Entropy. Hutaatep

influenced this fool Al-Belak into arranging a meeting with the Jennite prince, with the intent of destroying both of them. If these people are not revived, rumors can easily be spread that the Jennite prince attempted to ransack my palace. Al-Belak will appear to have attempted to stop this, making him a hero and leading all Nithia down the road to war.

"I can only return these men to health if you retrieve the gorgon from Hutaatep's own pyramid. It lies in the ruins of the Hutaatep necropolis, and cannot be opened without the strength of an army. I will send my servant to aid you in your task. Time runs out for Nithia. Now go, lest she be plunged into eternal war with the Jennites." With that, the image fades away.

### Tur-Ah's Servant

As the PCs exit the palace, there is no servant to be seen. Nothing stirs until the group steps down to the terrace below. As they stand here, a great rumbling sound bursts forth from behind them that shakes the ground. Looking around, they see that a panther between the two stairways has shaken off its stone covering, revealing itself to be a glittering automaton which is now standing and staring at them. The bronze beast stands 18' high at the shoulder, and approximately 40' long from nose to tail. It does not speak, nor does it move until the party begins to leave. It then follows as a house cat might.

This great cat does not always accompany the party. It prefers to move inconspicuously. It always knows where the party is, and meets up with them when other people aren't around. However, it does not interact with the party except as noted.

**Automaton:** AC 0; HP 98; MV 90' (220'); #AT 3, Dmg 2d8/2d8/2d10; AL N.

### Hutaatep

Eventually the PCs arrive at Hutaatep, and the bronze automaton is there waiting for them. Here they are faced with a dilemma. Which pyramid belongs to Hutaatep? There are three great pyramids, seven large ones, and numerous pyramids of average to small size. Hutaatep was said to have been entombed in the great central pyramid, but to confuse tomb robbers, he was buried in the lesser pyramid noted on the map. If the PCs do not possess magic to help them locate the proper pyramid, Tur-Ah's cat servant will guide them to the correct tomb.

### Entering Hutaatep's Pyramid

Hutaatep was insane when he authorized the construction of this necropolis. Thus, many odd sights and strange structures exist. For example, the pyramid he now resides in was once made of solid stone. It had no interior rooms of any sort. He used his magical abilities to hollow out this tomb for himself. In addition, he designed the entrance mechanism so that only the strength of many men could open it. Detecting secret doors or spotting hidden objects reveals that a single giant block of stone some 10 feet high, 20 feet wide, and 50 feet long fills the entrance. This is the only way to enter the pyramid.

It is unlikely that the PCs have any ability to enter the pyramid by themselves. However, if the PCs request its help, the great bronze cat assists them. Placing one mighty paw upon the block, the cat extends its claws into the stone as if it were made of soft wood, and drags the block out with obvious effort. The automaton's exertions cause the ground to tremble. However, the block is slid out far enough for the PCs to enter. At this point, the cat goes back to bask in the sun and wait for the PCs to return.

### Hallway to the Underworld

This long hallway has several drawings on the wall depicting a powerful Pharaoh standing on the steps of Turak. Around these are many sketches of servants and numerous hieroglyphics. Most of the hieroglyphics are modern, and give a detailed account of Hutaatep's "achievements." These include things such as his discovery that no two grains of sand are identical. If the player characters examine these walls, they eventually find a series of ancient hieroglyphics. These state that Hutaatep's sarcophagus rests in "the mouth of the jackal." Observant PCs also notice a set of impressions carved into the walls of the hallway.

There are two pits that are set in the middle of this hallway. Both appear to be 30 feet deep (3d6 falling damage) 20 feet long, and eight feet wide, leaving a foot of "safe" passage on either side as the hallway is 10 feet wide. However, all is not as it seems. The ten foot separation between these illusory pits is actually another illusion covering the real 10' x 10' by 30 foot deep pit. Anyone who attempts to step out onto the "floor" between the two pits vanishes, falling to the stone below. Furthermore, the pit has permanent *silence* and *darkness* spells on it so the victim cannot communicate with his fellows above. The only way of traversing the illusory separation is to use the hand and foot holds carved into the wall. The bottom of the pit is filled with an inch of acid that causes 1 hit



point of damage per round. The walls of the pit are as smooth as glass, causing thieves' climbing checks to be made at a -50%. The only hope is for the victim's comrades to toss down something to help him climb out of the pit, or to throw up a rope in hopes that those above them will see it and grab hold.

### Crypts

This room is filled with sarcophagi, containers of ancient dried food, and other provisions of everyday life. Most of the people in this room were lesser servants of Hutaatep. Two members of his personal guard are also contained here. They have been transformed into *undead warriors* who open their sarcophagi and attack if the room's secret door is discovered. The "secret door" is actually a *magic door* activated by pressing a small stone block.

**Two 8th level fighters:** AC -5 (plate mail armor over lacquered bodies); hp 80, 73; MV 90'(30'); #AT 1; Dmg 1d10 +3 (*sword-staff* +3); SA F5; ML 12; AL L.

### A Tomb with a View

The PCs enter this room through the *magic door* activated in the previous room. It disappears once the party comes in. A grand sight stretches before them. This oval room is 100' long and twice as high. Most of its expanse is taken up by a great man-o-war boat. Although not visible from the floor, Hutaatep's sarcophagus lies in the hold of this boat. To either side of the boat are long stone benches containing small sarcophagi and burial treasures. At the far end of these two benches are great mounds of treasure totalling 10,000 gp each. Eight grain bins also stand in the room as well as woven chests containing all forms of royal clothing, dinner wear, etc. A small series of rooms stand off to the PC's immediate right. Finally, a small pyramid rests at the far end next to an enclosed altar to Ranivorus.

The gorgon statue that the PCs seek is mounted on the man-o-war much like a figurehead. Its size would make it weigh 500 pounds, but it is easy to remove (taking but a round) and instantly shrinks to palm size weighing but 2 pounds.

A deep voice suddenly echoes around the room, saying, "Greetings. You now stand before me, the great Hutaatep. I know of your mission, and am prepared to counter my adversary's offer. Leave the statue, and I will give you all that you see before you. If you persist in your folly, you will not leave this room alive." If the party looks for the source of the voice, they find it issues from the desiccated, bandaged-wrapped corpse of a groll that is standing on the deck of the man-o-war. He waves the staff he

wields, and the far end of the room dissolves into a giant (50' × 50') *magic door*. The view within the *door* shifts every few seconds to reveal wondrous landscapes and panoramic vistas.

Hutaatep is a 28th level cleric of Ranivorus. Because of this, what the party faces when the sarcophagus opens is a spellcasting undead groll. In combat, Hutaatep tries to herd the party toward the shifting *magic door*. He hopes to maroon the party separately in various planes of existence, and on various worlds. If the adventurers stand and fight, they must endure the punishment for three rounds before help arrives in the form of the bronze cat automaton. It takes three rounds before Tur-Ah can "solve" the *magic door* spell and control it. This beast is also quite capable of rescuing those who may be trapped by the *magic door* in otherworldly surroundings.

**Hutaatep:** 28th level cleric; AC -7 (plate mail armor); hp 197; MV 90' (30'); #AT 1; Dmg 1d10 +5 (*mace-axe* +5) or by spell, bite for 1d4; SA C28; ML 8; AL C.

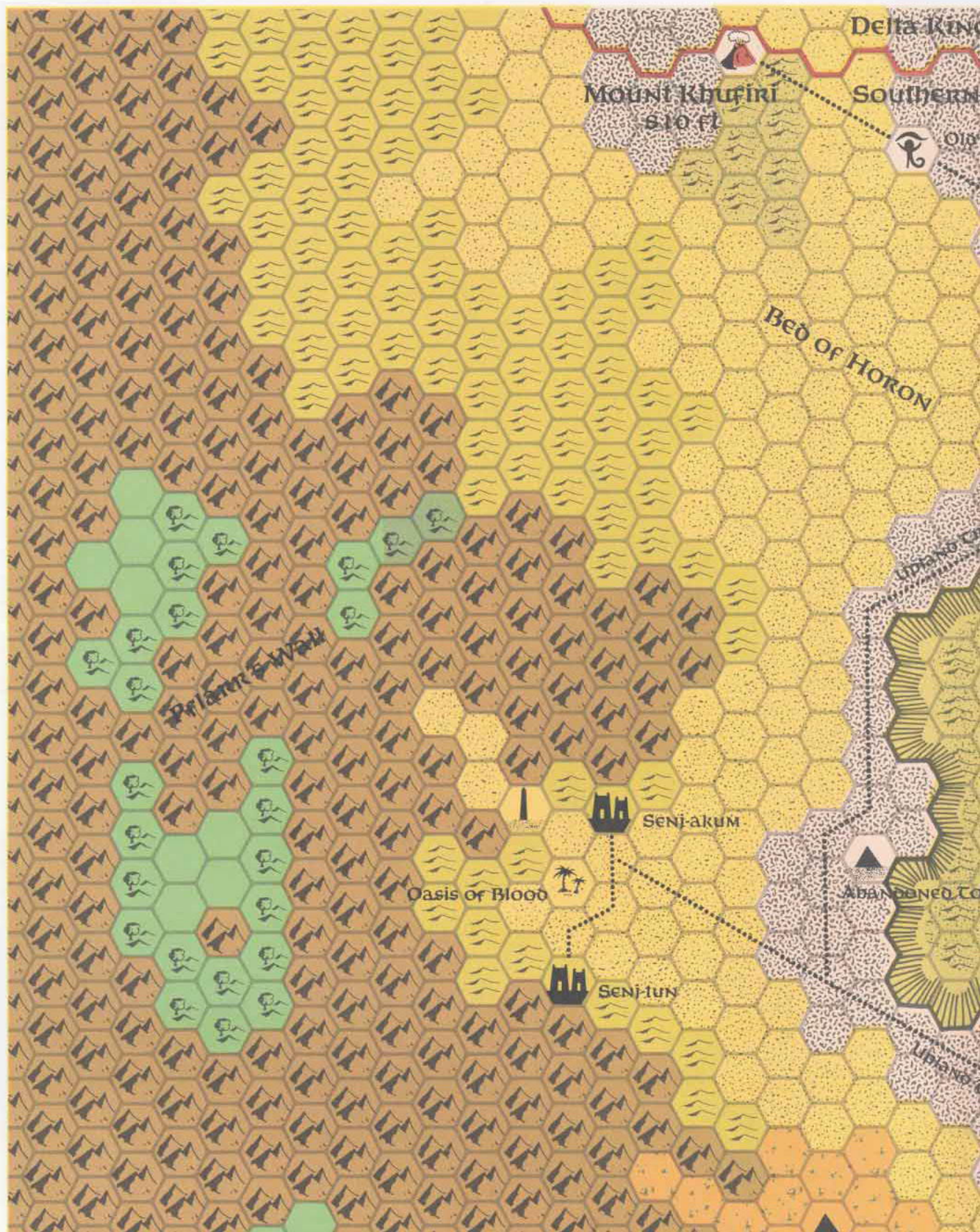
**Spells Available:** First Level, 8; Second, 8; Third, 7; Fourth, 7; Fifth, 7; Sixth, 6; Seventh, 5. Due to his mental instability, Hutaatep may use literally any clerical spell at any given moment.

**Magic Items in Possession:** *mace-axe* +5 (on person), *potion of ethereality* (2 vials), *wand of negation* (in boat).

### In Closing

The rest of the adventure is very straightforward. The PCs return to Turak. The great cat again lies down by the steps of its master's palace, turning back into a statue after magically reopening the palace. The PCs find all the members of the meeting in stone form. As soon as the gorgon statue is placed upon the ground, or touched to any of the people, it grows to the size of an adult gorgon, animates, and breathes on the victims, returning everyone to normal. After a few tense moments, everyone realizes that they have been affected by magic, and the negotiations are brought to a swift conclusion. It is decided that the Jennites have no use for a place as dangerous as Hutaatep. The Nithian-Jennite border is established well west of the offending site. Trularnan then prepares for the return trip to the Jennite Holdings.

Though Al-Belak offers honorary noble positions to the PCs in gratitude for their great work, the PCs should remember that they have thwarted the plans of Ranivorus. This insolence is something that neither Al-Belak nor the fell Immortal will forget, and should provide a springboard for any number of exciting and dangerous Nithian adventures.



Delta King

Mount Khufiri

510 ft

Southern

OASIS

Bed of HORON

WATER

Senj-akum

Oasis of Blood

Senj-tun

ABANDONED CO

Upland

# The Kingdom of Nithia

Southern Region Scale: one hex equals 8 miles

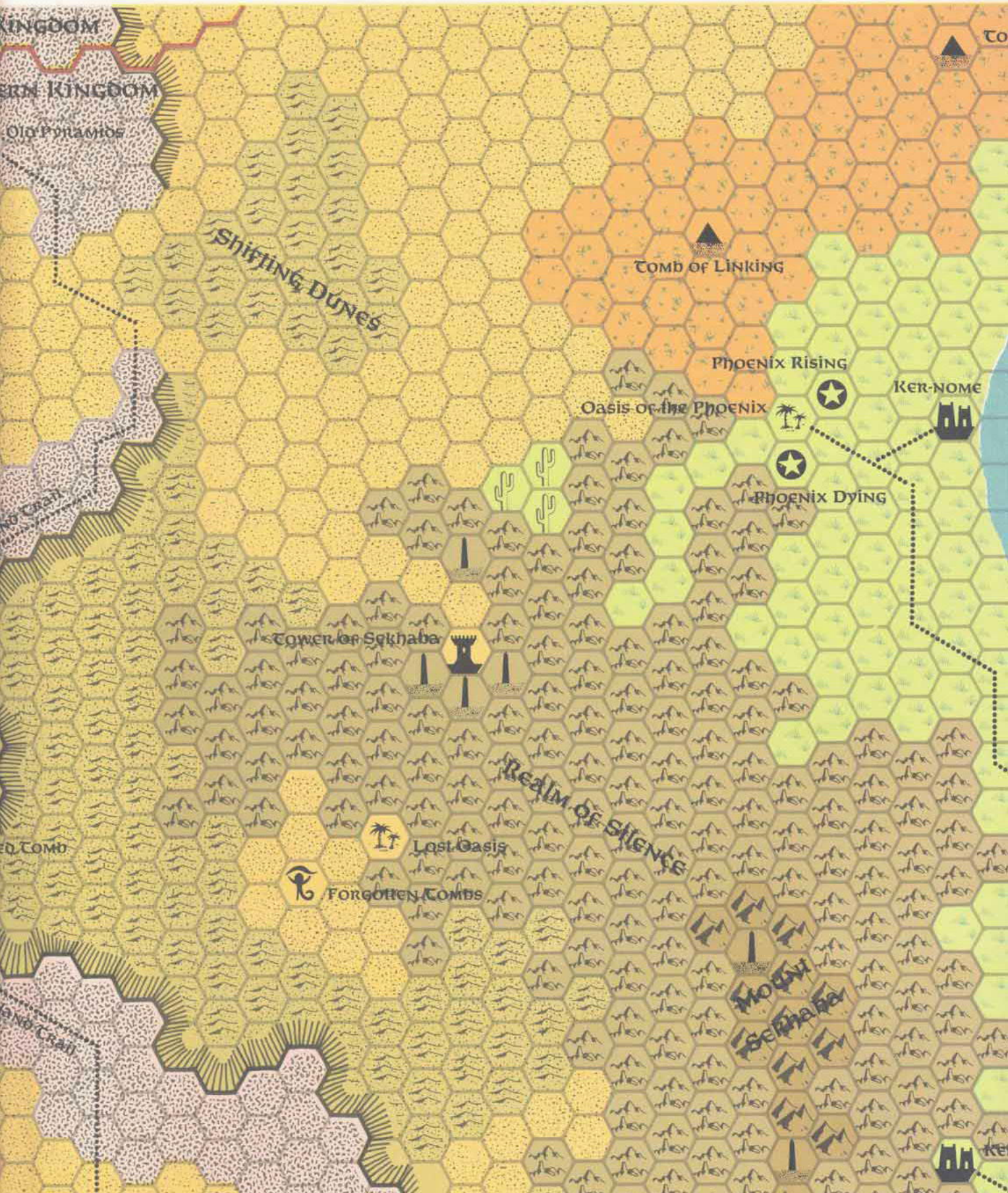
Ketpou



Statue of the Panther

Tomb of

	Capital		Road		Light Cactus Scrub
	City		Trail		Heavy Cactus Scrub
	Town		Kingdom Boundary		Jungle
	Village		Oasis		Light forest
	Palace		Badlands		Heavy Forest
	Tower/Keep		Rocky Desert		Savannah
	Fortress		Sand Desert		Broken Terrain
	Fort		Hardened Clay Desert		Swamp
	Small Fort		Hills		Bog
	Pyramid Complex		Mountains		River/Lake
	Pyramid/Comb		Forested Hills		Plateau/Cliff
	Statue		Clear		Rapids/Cataract
	Mining		Sand Dunes		Greater Rapids/Cataract
	Battle		Volcano		Monolith



KINGDOM

ERN KINGDOM

Old Pyramids

Shifting Dunes

Tomb of Linking

Phoenix Rising

Oasis of the Phoenix

Ker-NOME

Phoenix Dying

Tower of Sekhara

Realm of Silence

Lost Oasis

Forgotten Combs

MOUNTS  
SERRAVAL

ED Tomb

No Crail



Whispering Canyons

Takduti's Tomb

Tomb of Felines

Lost Royal Tower

Fort Natotep

Shaset

Statue of Tur-Ah

Statue of Tur-nah

Unnamed Tomb

Battle of Lizards

Fort Gebin

Medja

Fort Nut

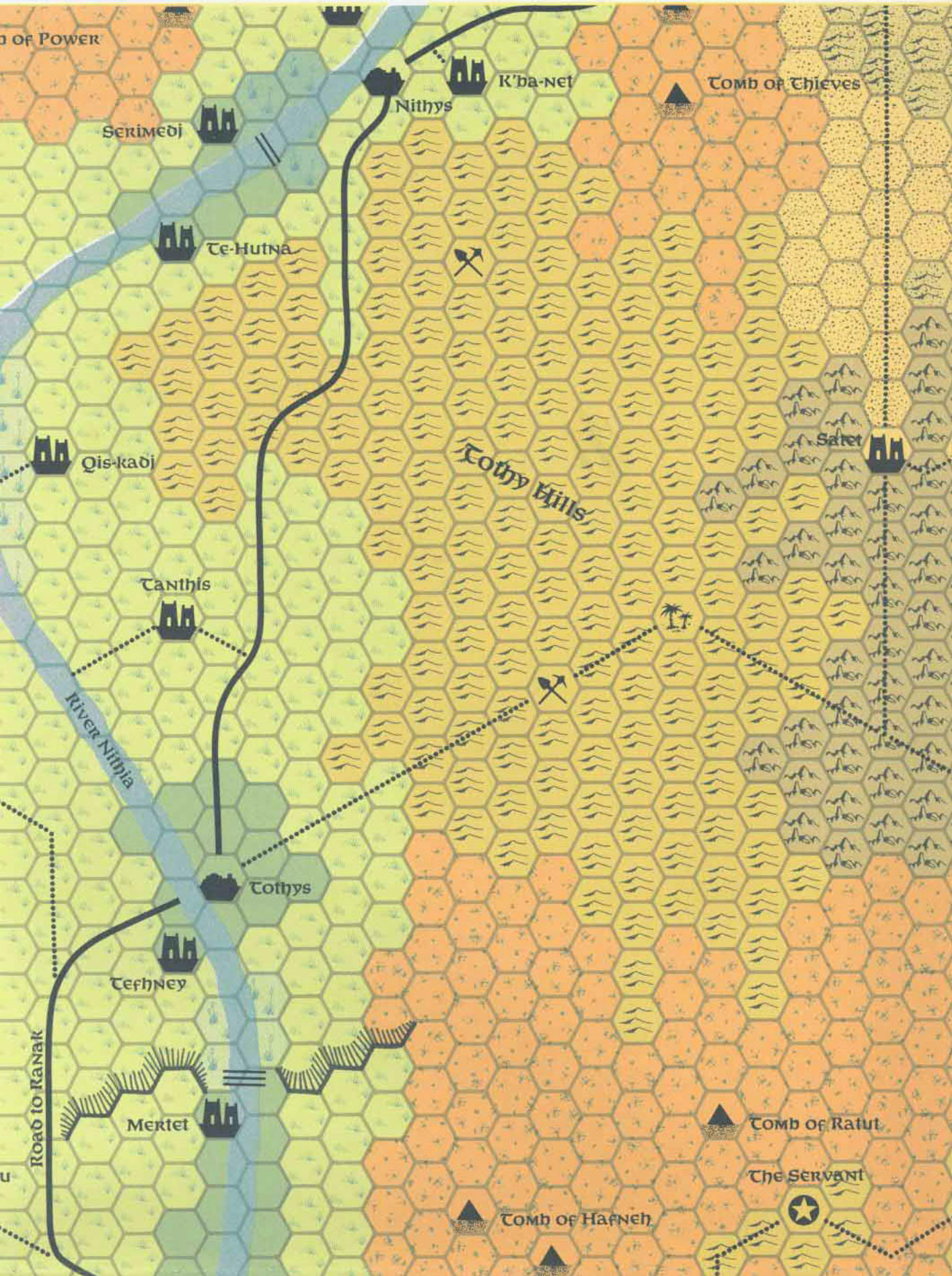
River Nithia

Renef

Dash

Southern Plains

HOLLYWOOD



o of Power

Serimedj

Te-Hutna

Nithys

K'ba-net

Tomb of Thieves

Qis-kabi

Tothy Hills

Saret

Tanthis

River Nitpia

Tothys

Tefhney

Mertet

Road to Kanak

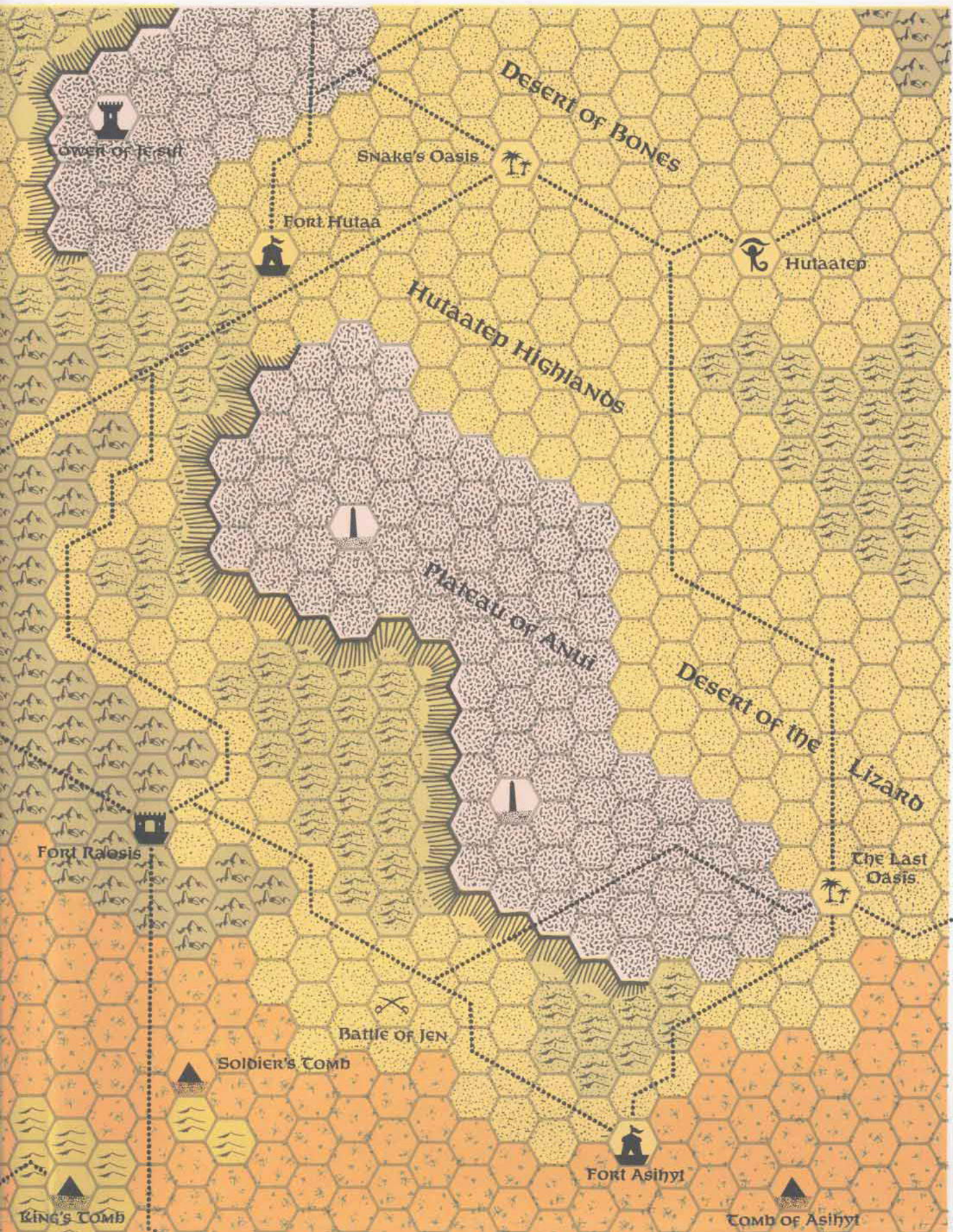
Tomb of Ratut

The Servant

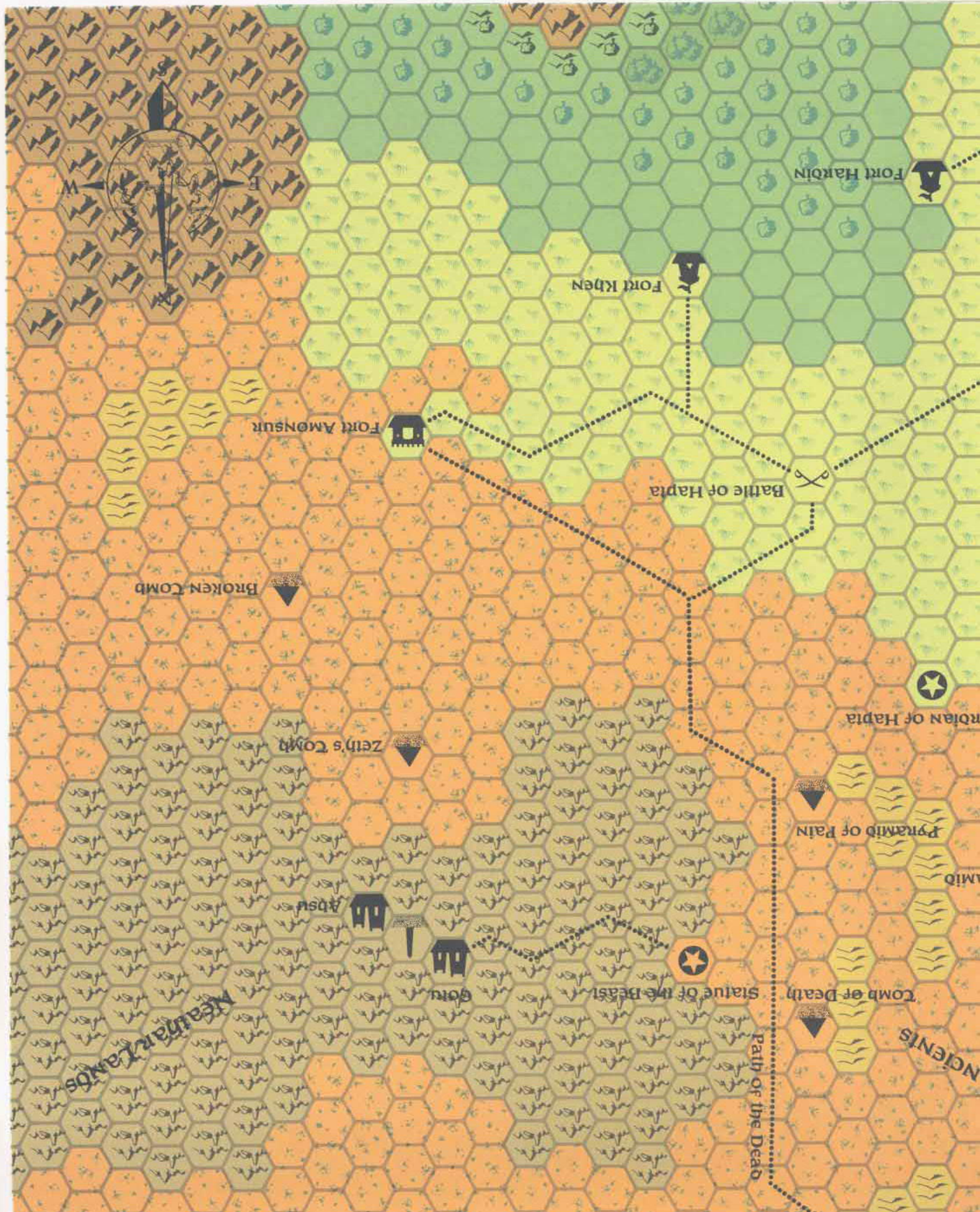
Tomb of Hafneh



# LOW WORLD







Fort Harbin

Fort Khen

Fort Amonsur

Battle of Hapia

Broken Comb

zeih's Comb

Pyramid of Hapia

Pyramid of Pain

Apsu

Statue of the Beast

Tomb of Death

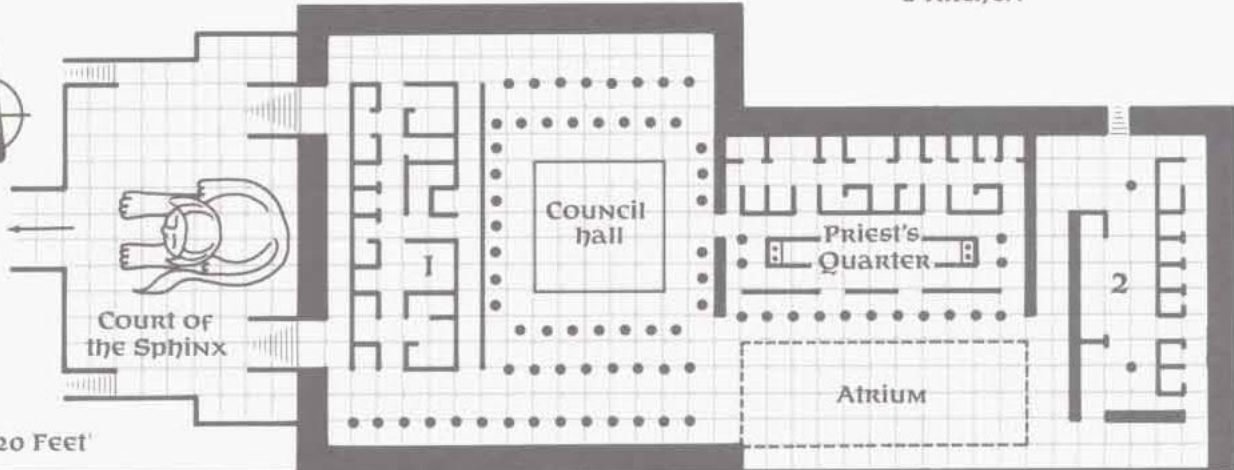
Path of the Dead

Meahar Lands

NGENTS

# Royal Palace of Tur-Ah

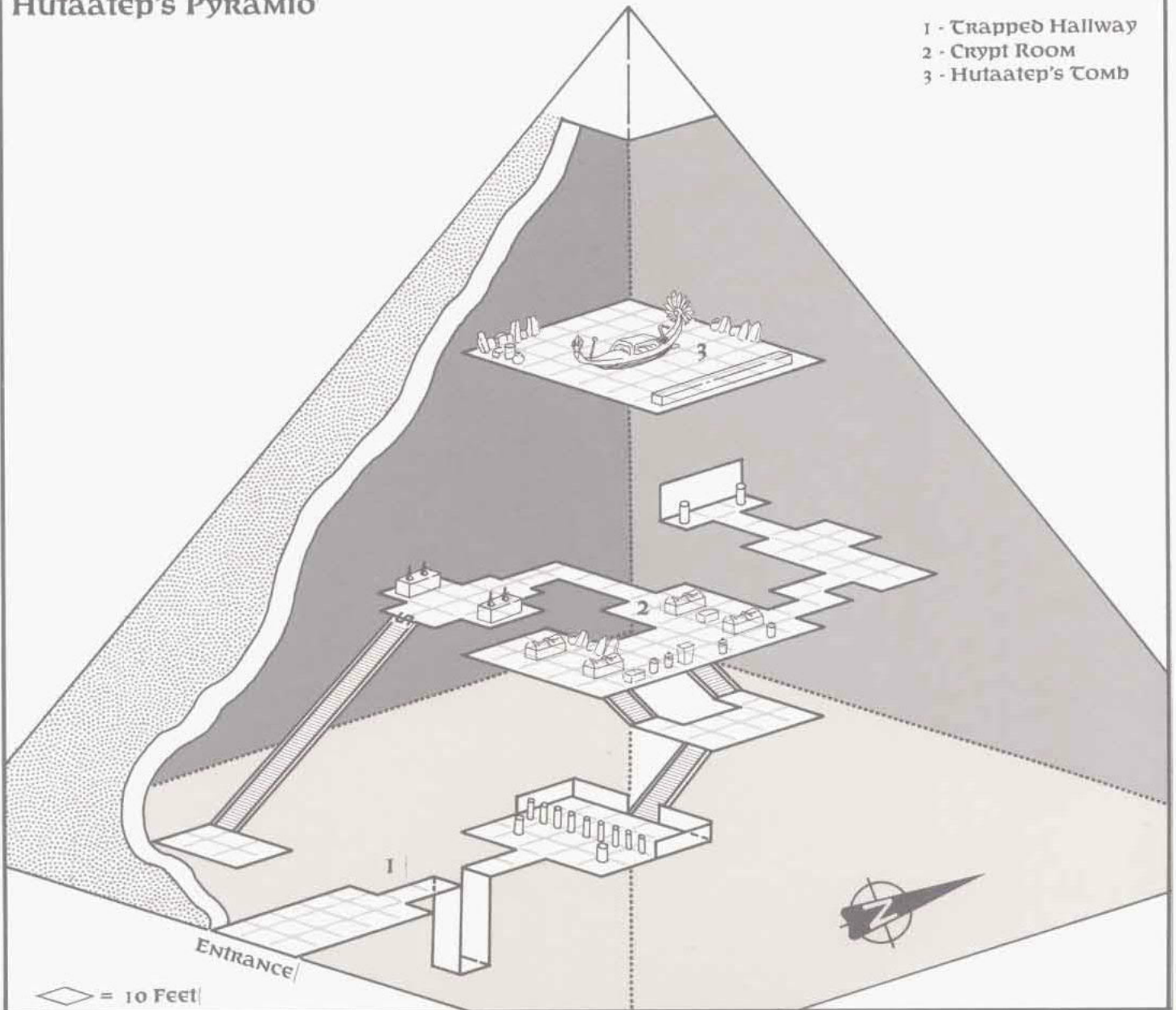
- 1 Guest Quarters
- 2 Kitchen



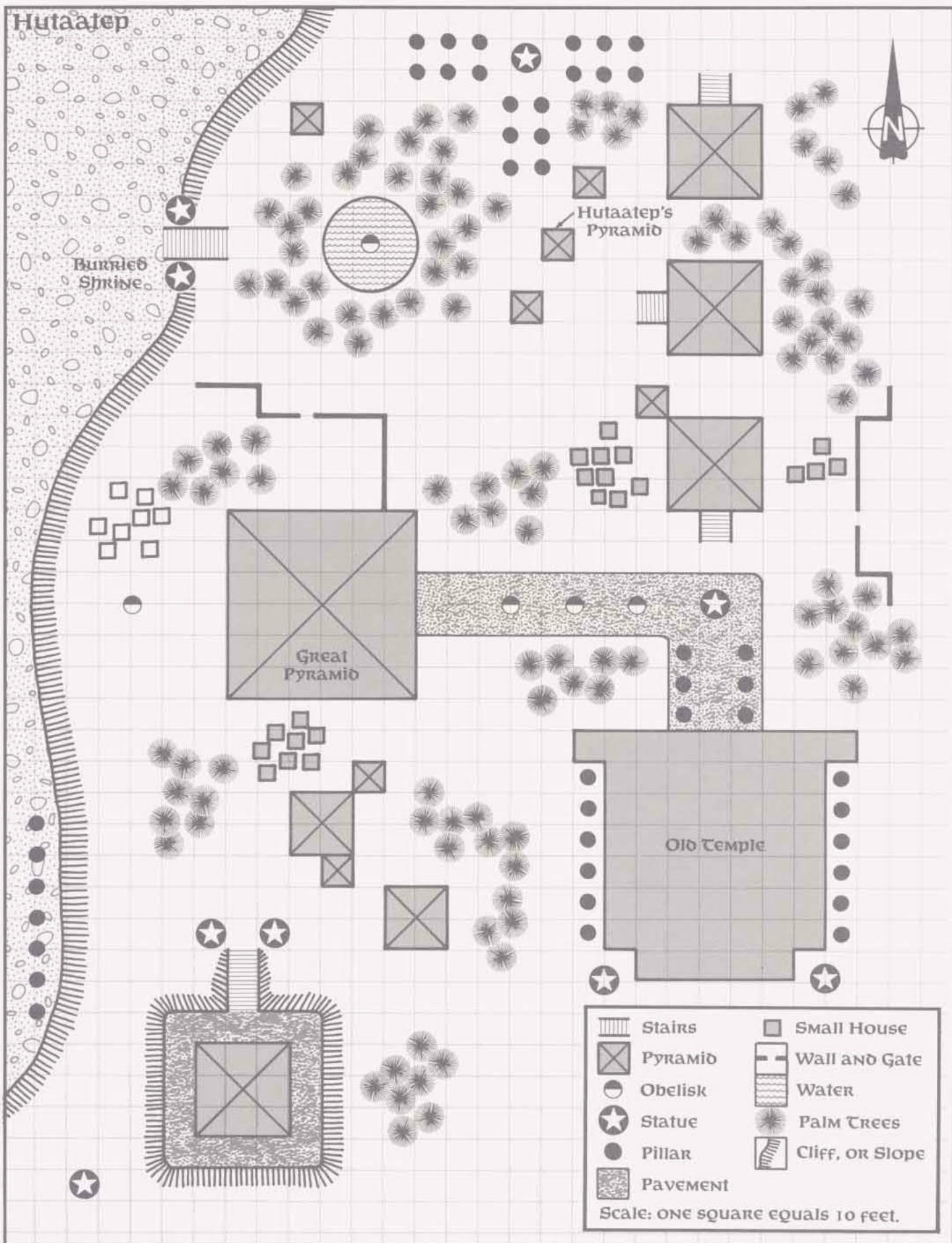
□ = 20 Feet

# Hutaatep's Pyramid

- 1 - Trapped Hallway
- 2 - Crypt Room
- 3 - Hutaatep's Tomb



◇ = 10 Feet



Hutaatep

Buried Shrine

Hutaatep's Pyramid

Great Pyramid

Old Temple

	Stairs		Small House
	Pyramid		Wall and Gate
	Obelisk		Water
	Statue		Palm Trees
	Pillar		Cliff, or Slope
	Pavement		

Scale: one square equals 10 feet.

## Cultural Melee Weapons Chart

Weapon	Cost	Encumbrance (cn)	Standard Damage	Skilled** Damage	Notes
Axe, Battle	7 gp	60	1d8		
Axe, Heavy Eye	5 gp	40	1d6	1d8	
Club	3 gp	50	1d4		
Mace	5gp	30	1d6		
Mace-axe	Special*	40	1d8	1d8/1d10	Combined mace & axe head
Sword, Normal	10gp	60	1d6	1d8	Curved blade
Sword, Normal Khopesh	25gp	100	1d8	1d10	Can be used two-handed
Sword, Short	7 gp	30	1d6	1d8	Nithian shortswords have curved blades
Sword, Short Khopesh	15gp	80	1d6	2d4	Sickle-shaped blade
<b>Polearms</b>					
Halberd	7gp	150	1d10		
Pike	3 gp	80	1d10		
Pole Axe	5 gp	120	1d10		
Staff	5 gp	40	1d6		
Sword-staff	4gp	100	1d8	1d10	Similar to a Bill in construction

## Cultural Missile & Hurling Weapons

Weapon	Cost	Encumbrance (cn)	Standard Damage	Standard Range	Skilled Damage	Skilled Range
Axe, Hand	4 gp	30	1d6	10/20/30		
Axe, Light Eye	3 gp	20	1d6	10/20/30	2d4	15/30/45
Bow, Long	40 gp	40	1d6	70/140/210		
Bow, Short	25 gp	20	1d6	50/100/150		
Dagger	3 gp	10	1d4	10/20/30		
Javelin	1 gp	20	1d6	30/60/90		
Sling	2 gp	20	1d4	40/80/160		
Spear	3 gp	30	1d6	20/40/60		
Spear, Short	2 gp	20	1d4	20/40/60	1d6	25/50/75
Staff-bow	15 gp	40	1d4	40/80/120	1d6	60/120/180
Throwing Dagger	3 gp	10	1d4	10/20/30	1d6	15/30/45
Throwing Stick	1 gp	10	1d2	10/20/30	1d6	15/30/45

\* Mace axes cannot be purchased. They are ceremonial gifts from the Pharaoh.

\*\* Improved weapon statistics refer to use of the *Nithian weapons* skill with that particular weapon.

## Arrows

Name	Cost	Damage	Description
Setu	1 gp	1d8*	Heavy, barbed war arrow
Sunet	1 sp	1d6	Standard arrow

\* Refers to a range penalty. When using the setu, bow ranges are reduced by half due to the weight of the arrow head, i.e., short bow ranges are reduced to 25/50/75, long bow ranges 35/70/105.

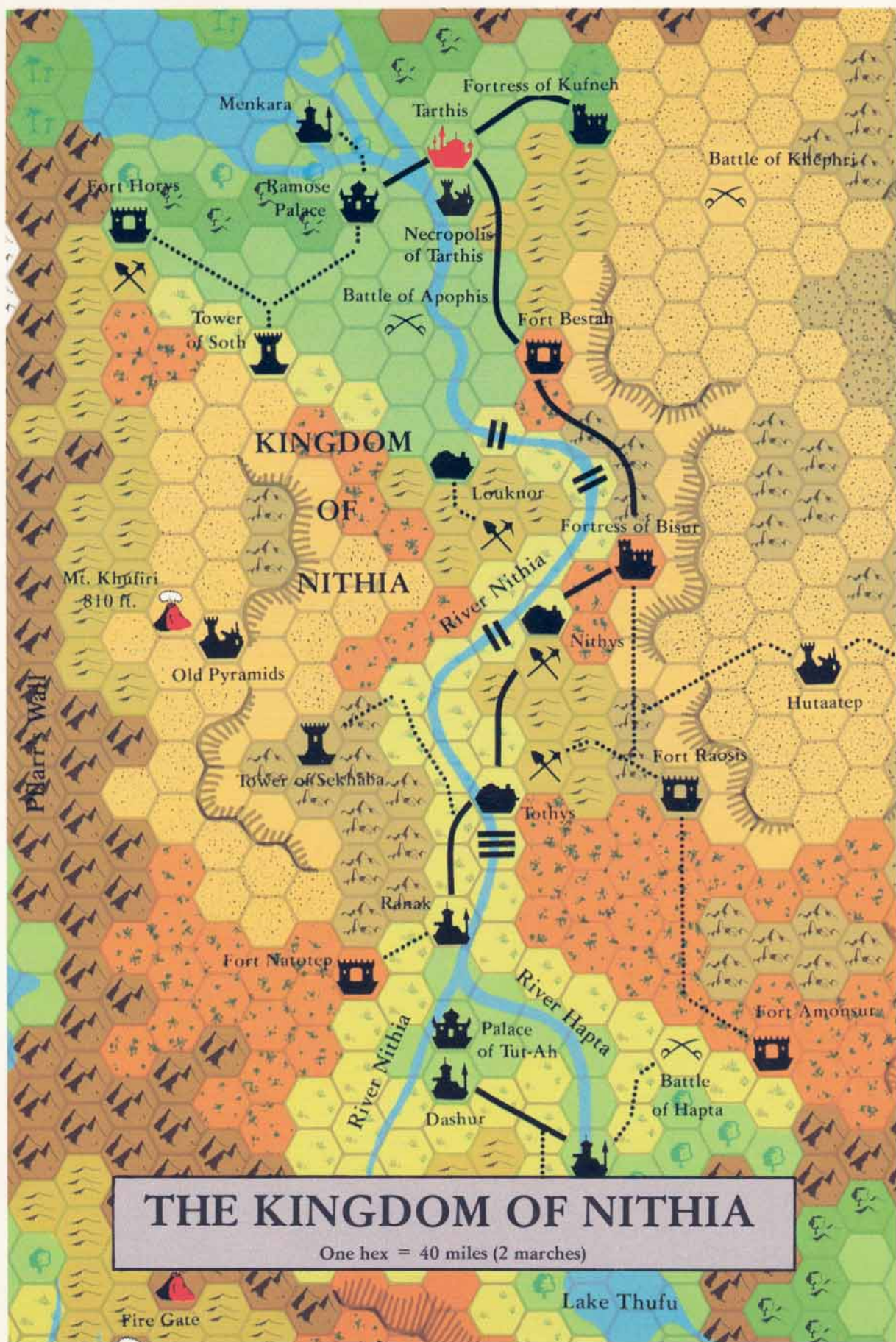
## Heat Exhaustion Triggers (Save vs. Death Ray)

Condition	Check Every:
Combat	10 rounds
Running	10 rounds
Heavy Manual Labor	4 hours
Activity without Water	4 hours
Walking in Heavy Armor*	4 hours
Walking while Encumbered	4 hours

\* Nithian *battle helms* negate this penalty.

## Heat Exhaustion Effects

d20 Roll	Effect	Results
1	Heat Stroke	Fatal
2-3	Delirious	Attack fellow party members until Collapse
4-5	Heat Stroke	2d6 points of damage
6-7	Delirious	Run wildly until Collapse (see below)
8-9	Heat Stroke	1d6 points of damage
10-11	Delirious	Continue current activity until Collapse (see below)
12-13	Heat Stroke	1d4 points of damage
14-15	Delirious	Victim hallucinates until water is drunk and shade is found
16-17	Collapse	Die in 1d4 hours unless water is drunk and shade is found
18-19	Pass out	Awaken in 1d6 turns
20+	No effect	



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# HOLLOW WORLD™

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Accessory

## Kingdom of Nithia

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ISBN 1-56076-145-8



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