

Player's Secrets of

BARUK-AZHUK



BIRTHRIGHT™

DOMAIN SOURCEBOOK





baruk-azhik

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The weathered crests and valleys of the Iron Peaks hardly seem a hospitable place. A handful of human merchants and traders brave these slopes in the gentle months of summer, but even such stalwart travelers could never be convinced to call the mountains home. But to the dwarves of Baruk-Azhik, home lies beneath these ancient mountains. Deep within the granite depths, chiseled caverns and gleaming cities beckon to the dwarves who have occupied this land for untold centuries. To a dwarf of Baruk-Azhik, these ringing halls and networked caverns are nothing shy of cozy. Today, this underground domain recognizes a new leader—your player character.

what you need to play

This domain sourcebook is designed for use with the BIRTHRIGHT™ campaign setting. In addition to the *Player's Handbook* and the *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide* for the ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game, you or your Dungeon Master (DM) should have a copy of the BIRTHRIGHT boxed set. Before attempting to incorporate this material into an existing campaign, be sure that you and your DM have read this product thoroughly.

using this domain sourcebook

This product is designed as an aid for players who wish to install a character as regent of Baruk-Azhik or as a vassal of the overthane. This sourcebook expands upon the information in the BIRTHRIGHT boxed set and provides details of the underground dwarven strongholds, progress in the wars against the orogs, the current political situation, mineral and gem resources, and the mysterious disappearance of Grimm Graybeard. It also provides an examination of the ecology of the dwarves and their natural ties to the earth.

Like all game products, this sourcebook may be modified by the player and DM to suit an individual campaign. Because a player character is assuming the role of regent; that player is free to drive Baruk-Azhik's future in any direction. This material is also appropriate for a DM wishing to play Baruk-Azhik as a nonplayer character domain.

The vaulted audience hall of Baruk-Azhik stretches before you. Deep within this mountain at the heart of the dwarven realm that is your home, you stand ready for the ceremony that will crown you overthane of your people—if the Council of Ancestors finds you worthy.

The audience hall rings with the murmurs of the assembled populace of Baruk-Azhik—tens of thousands of dwarves stand assembled here. Who else but the dwarves could have engineered such a marvel as this chamber? The arching granite ceiling rises more than a hundred feet overhead, yet not a single pillar is called upon to offer support. Chandeliers of quartz crystals hang per-

haps 15 feet from the floor, their oil light reflecting in the facets and casting occasional rainbows on their surrounds. Underfoot, marble tiles stretch the full length and width of the hall,

coronation of the overthane

alternating in bands of deep green and maroon.

As you have done since you were a child, your thoughts turn to the men and women who labored to carve out this chamber many generations ago. You know that your ancestors contributed their lot to its construction—were they the miners who hollowed out this cavern, or perhaps the masons who laid the massive marble floor tiles? Could they have dressed the crystals for the chandeliers, or were they perhaps among the teams that carted stone away to other reaches of the homeland? Whatever their duties, it matters little, for you know that each task bore its own nobility, its own importance, for every duty contributed to the completion of the whole.

As a child, you never dreamed that a day such as this would come—a day on which you would find yourself standing at the rear of the audience hall, awaiting the procession to mark the beginning of your coronation ceremony. Your daydreams

are suddenly interrupted by a signal from the herald. The assembly falls silent, and you see the black, gold, and white banner ahead of you flutter forward down the long aisle. The white-robed acolytes and gold-robed priests slowly follow. Then the honor guard with their polished halberds and gleaming armor clink and rattle almost musically down the aisle ahead of you.

It's your turn. You start down the aisle in your golden tabard, the symbol of the candidate for overthane. Before you've taken even a dozen steps, a cheer arises from the assembled crowd, growing louder as you make the long journey to the front of the audience chamber. The roar of the cheering dwarves seems to shower down on you from the high reaches of the ceiling. You're barely aware of High Priest Ruarch Rockhammer and the three thanes who follow you up the stairs to the platform at the head of the chamber.

an address by wulfram wainier

My brothers and sisters in the mountains, children of Moradin, fellow thanes, and candidate for overthane of Baruk-Azhik:

"May the favor of Moradin flow within us on this noble occasion! May the ghosts of our ancestors bless our new overthane and lend him their wisdom! May the spirit of our beloved Grimm Graybeard smile upon our assembly!

"This is a day like no other—a day which our realm witnesses perhaps once in a century. This is the day on which our carefully chosen candidate for overthane—our hope for the future—stands in judgment before the spirits of our ancestors and the essence of our mountain. May their wise and omniscient counsel find our candidate worthy and befitting of this honor. May they find him to be an example of all the tenets set down by our great god Moradin!

"Our candidate faces the greatest honor of his life—and the greatest set of challenges. Like overthanes past, our new ruler's first priority is the safety and well-being of our kingdom. Like

overthanes past, he must lead the fight in the wars against our mortal enemies—those dread creatures of the underrealms. I shall not taint this honorable and sacred occasion with the mention of their name.

"Finally, our new overthane must be mindful of the activities of the humans who dwell on the sun-blasted surface of Kuldartzik. In the days of our ancestors, their kind was but a sprinkling on this fair land. Now, they not only lay claim to large portions of these lands, but they seek to seize every last plot that strikes their fancy. We have escaped many of their designs—luckily, they favor lands which we ourselves view as inhospitable.

"Our overthane's greatest blessing, though, is his people. The dwarves of Baruk-Azhik are the most loyal, hardworking, honest folk on this continent. Our liege knows that he may draw upon their strength and perseverance at any time. He knows that his people stand ready to aid and defend him in all endeavors. And he knows that he may call upon his followers to take up arms and skillfully fight any threat to our lands—whether below or above ground.

"Fortunately, our overthane needs worry little about our human and elven neighbors. Aside from our grudge against the scoundrels of Ber Dairas who have never repaid their debt to us, and have no doubt forgotten the incident in their short human memories, Baruk-Azhik is without enemies above ground. We have no desire to infringe upon our neighbors' flat lands, and they realize that our mountains are too treacherous to anyone but dwarves. The few humans who have staked small parcels of land in our realm are watched closely and ejected if they appear to be working against us.

"Our overthane is also fortunate to rule such a prosperous domain. Our communities are able to support themselves almost entirely, with some trade within our borders and a small amount of trade without. But should any situation force us to lock our gates and survive below ground, our nations could live indefinitely on our own resources.

"The overthane benefits from the finest advisers in our thanes and high priest. Cairn Vahan, Thane of Bran's Retreat, Hadassah Endrede, Thane of Land's Victory, Bayard Laccolith, Thane of Cliff's Lament, and myself, Wulfram Wainier, Thane of the Promontory, have pledged ourselves to the service of our people and the overthane. Ruarch Rockhammer, High Priest of Moradin's Forge, provides us with excellent leadership and guidance in spiritual matters.

"Let us officially voice our approval of our candidate for overthane. May the Council of Ancestors find you worthy!"

The crowd erupts into an earsplitting roar so loud that the walls should shake. But the quartz chandeliers barely quiver in the din. Ruarch Rockhammer steps forward in full ceremonial regalia and raises his hands for silence.

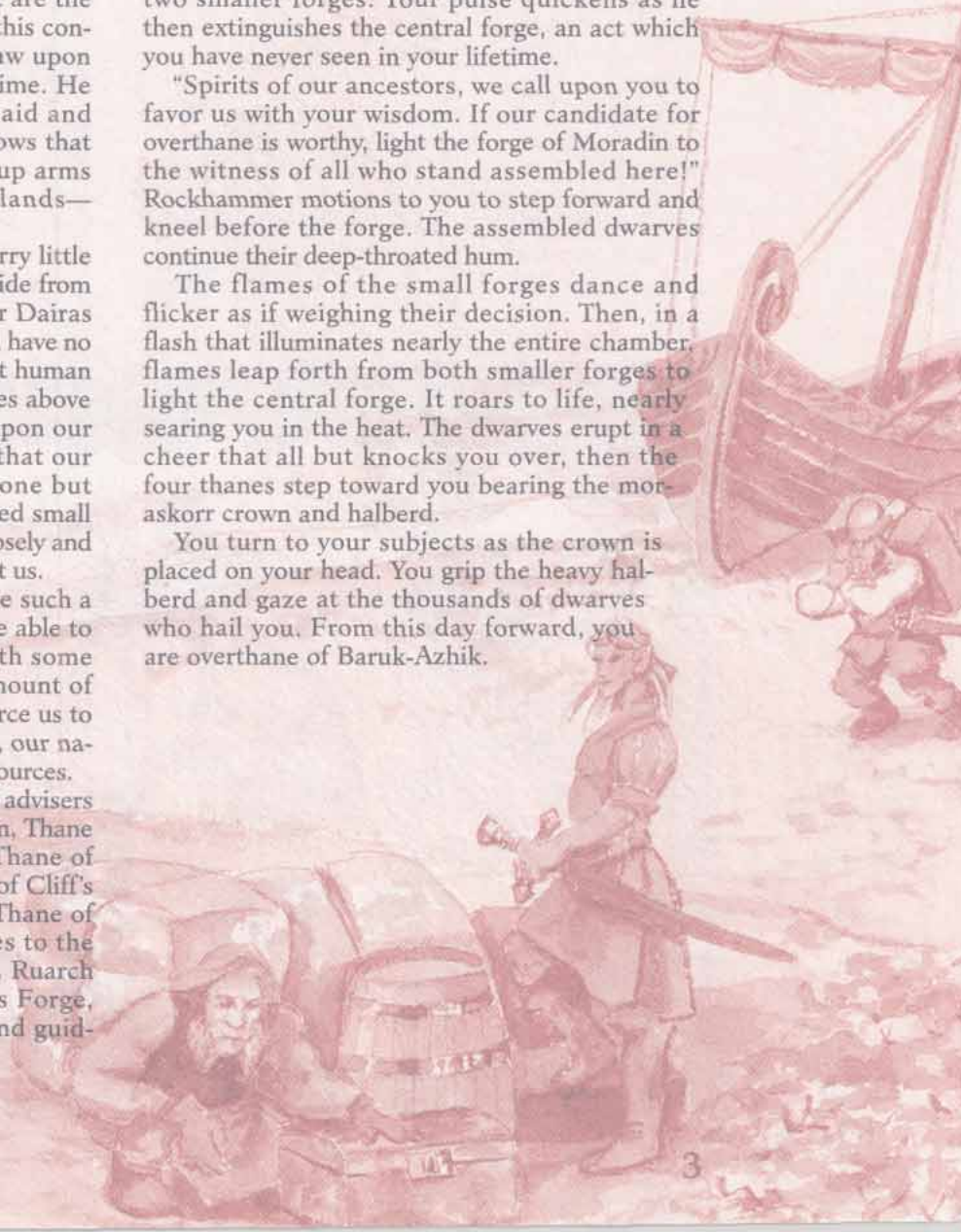
"My brothers and sisters, we must now ask our ancestors for their approval. Join me in calling upon them." The dwarf begins to hum at a pitch so low that it is barely audible. The first few rows of dwarves pick up the sound and it is quickly carried to the far reaches of the audience chamber. The hum rises to the ceiling, filling the chamber and causing the walls to vibrate in harmony.

The ceremonial forge of Moradin occupies the center of the platform where you stand. Rockhammer lights a torch from the forge, then lights two smaller forges. Your pulse quickens as he then extinguishes the central forge, an act which you have never seen in your lifetime.

"Spirits of our ancestors, we call upon you to favor us with your wisdom. If our candidate for overthane is worthy, light the forge of Moradin to the witness of all who stand assembled here!" Rockhammer motions to you to step forward and kneel before the forge. The assembled dwarves continue their deep-throated hum.

The flames of the small forges dance and flicker as if weighing their decision. Then, in a flash that illuminates nearly the entire chamber, flames leap forth from both smaller forges to light the central forge. It roars to life, nearly searing you in the heat. The dwarves erupt in a cheer that all but knocks you over, then the four thanes step toward you bearing the moraskorr crown and halberd.

You turn to your subjects as the crown is placed on your head. You grip the heavy halberd and gaze at the thousands of dwarves who hail you. From this day forward, you are overthane of Baruk-Azhik.



The following passage is chiseled in the polished rock walls around the perimeter of the great audience hall in Stone's Rejoicing. Carved in relief below the tale are intricate scenes of the dwarven creation myth.

On the day of creation, all was at peace in the lands of Kuldazik. The great god Moradin, having come to this new place to test its strength, its heart, and its beauty, determined that these lands should be both blessed and served by a tribe of his children. Moradin cleared a space on the earth for his forge and assembled the finest treasures that this new land had to offer.

Having discovered veins of a wondrous greenish-silver metal of unrivaled strength, the god named this moraskorr, meaning "Moradin's ore." From this he fashioned the frame of his first child.

Moradin then sought to create a heart for his child. He selected a quartet of gems—a diamond for strength, an emerald for wisdom, a sapphire for honesty, and an opal for compassion. Taking up a garnet nearly as large as his fist, Moradin pressed the gems into the center of the red stone (as only a god can do), embedding them in its heart without

sundering the garnet. He chose not to cut the garnet, but to leave it in its natural rawness, so that his child would not be prideful. This heart he placed into the moraskorr framework.

Moradin looked to create flesh for his child. He mixed hard clay and rich loam, desert sand and fine silt. These, he hoped, would imbue his child with all the characteristics of the earth, allowing his offspring to live in harmony anywhere in the land. This flesh he sculpted over the skeleton and heart, creating the form of his first child.

For eyes, the god polished two perfect orbs of obsidian. Their pure, smooth forms gave the child a dark but shining

countenance—and allowed Moradin to see into their depths.

The god's greatest act of wisdom was to create eight such children. He wished no child to be greater than another, and none to claim rights based on the order of birth. Moradin created four daughters and four sons to serve as parents to his new tribe and to guide it in harmony.

Finally, the god sought to breathe life into his

history of the realm



creations. He lay the newly formed frames in a circle—heads pointing inward so that they would be of one common mind, hands clasped together so they would be of one common strength. The god raised a ring of fire around the feet of his children to bake their flesh and make it strong. He cast down a lightning bolt in the center of the circle to energize their bodies and minds. Finally, he summoned a gentle rain to temper their hardened flesh and cool their blazing souls.

Moradin called to his children and they arose to greet him. He named them and paired them as mates—Torvald and his wife Mirvald; Sivia and her husband Kalvia; Zohra and his wife Zahra; and Kalmirn and her husband Kalgraf.

The god instructed his children in his ways and taught them to draw upon the resources of the earth. Then he left them to forge their own lives and carve out their own destinies. But he remained ever near to protect them, guide them, answer their needs, and reward them. The dwarves flourished and begot a great nation.

Moradin's first children determined that every dwarven settlement would dedicate a forge to Moradin and keep it burning at all times. We proudly honor this tradition to this very day.

recent history

The actual date of the appearance of dwarves in Kuldartzik (their word for Cerilia) is lost to time. The first dwarves were peaceful and industrious, and not particularly concerned with the passage of time. Cerilian elves will hotly contest that they appeared in Cerilia first, to which the dwarves will merely shrug. They care little for this distinction, since they feel that they control the finest lands on the continent.

About 1,500 years before the clash at Mount Deismaar, a dwarf priest named Gideon Rinsparr decided to create a record of dwarven history. Using estimates based on the evolution of the underground citadels as well as the memories of the oldest dwarves, he created a timeline. Coincidentally, the dwarven calendar corresponds almost exactly to the calendar based on the Masetian Arrival. In the dwarven realm, this calendar is designated GR (for Gideon Rinsparr). Following is a portion of Gideon's timeline.

-3000	Estimated founding of Baruk-Azhik and the capital of Stone's Rejoicing.
-2600	Five provinces of Baruk-Azhik established.
-920	Dwarves and elves settle their differences and agree to terms of peace; orogs continue warring against the dwarves.
0	Gideon Rinsparr creates a record of dwarven history; humans arrive in Kuldartzik.
515	Battle of Mount Deismaar
530	Five provinces of Baruk-Azhik seal their doors to the outside world in order to escape the chaos raging in the wake of Deismaar; scouts are sent forth every 20 years to assess the state of Kuldartzik
770	Baruk-Azhik opens its doors and begins to normalize relations with humans; discovers that the Gorgon has conquered Mur-Kilad
890	All attempts at diplomacy with Mur-Kilad are failures; beginnings of racial tensions
1488	End of the Anuirean Empire
1530	Increased aggression toward dwarves by the orogs
1595	Coronation of Gunther Graybeard
1770	Dwarves discover the Chimaera's refuge hidden in the Promontory
1785	Death of Gunther Graybeard
1787	Coronation of Knute Graybeard
1835	Gorgon's armies conquer neighboring Kiergard
1842	Completion of Ber Dairas in Binsada
1937	Death of Gorka Graybeard (Grimm's younger brother) in the orog wars
1953	Death of Knute Graybeard
1955	Coronation of Grimm Graybeard
2007	Dwarf armies slaughtered in orog battle; nearly 900 lives lost
2037	Death of Grimm Graybeard
2039	Coronation of new overthane of Baruk-Azhik

Baruk-Azhik occupies one of the most favorable sites in all of Cerilia (from a dwarven point of view). The realm encompasses the northern third of the Iron Peaks, an ancient mountain range rich in mineral and gem resources. These mountains are comfortably rugged from a dwarven perspective, yet forbidding and dangerous to human observers. The dwarves have thus been able to carve out their kingdom with little interference from humans concerned with such things as trade routes or roads for marching armies through the realm.

the iron peaks

This range of mountains is not as old as the Seamists, as treacherous as the Drachenaurs, or as high as the Spear-marches, but the peaks have their own particular charm for the dwarves.

The mountains are steep and the crevasses deep, and the mineral deposits far below ground are unrivaled by any in Cerilia.

Legend holds that the deep valleys were created by Moradin's hammer as he forged the first dwarves.

To the untrained eye, the mountains of Baruk-Azhik appear to be pristine. The dwarves have made every effort to leave the surface of their lands untouched, instead channeling their efforts into creating and expanding their underground realm. A dwarf or elf can easily spot the entrances to the underground citadels. A few human guides and merchants have also learned to recognize these constructs, which amount to little more than anomalies in the naturally-occurring features of the mountains.

moradastrik

This peak is the highest in Baruk-Azhik, and indeed, the highest in the Iron Peaks. Located in the southwest portion of Rivenrock, the mountain is a place of pilgrimage for dwarves seeking special favor from Moradin and for priests seeking guidance

or retreat. A crude outpost consisting of little more than a well-hidden series of caverns is hidden on the western slope of the mountain. The dwarves have left this peak relatively untouched, preferring to preserve it as Moradin's personal mountain.

rax doxik

West of Moradastrik is the great crevasse known as Rax Doxik. This crevasse is so deep that even the dwarves have not fully explored it; the bottom of the crevice is rumored to lie well below sea level. Many human adventurers have set out to explore the depths of Rax Doxik; only a few have returned.

Over the centuries, many legends and rumors

geography

have developed surrounding Rax Doxik, including tales of fabulous lost wealth, secret treasures left by Moradin himself, and mysterious, exotic creatures living in

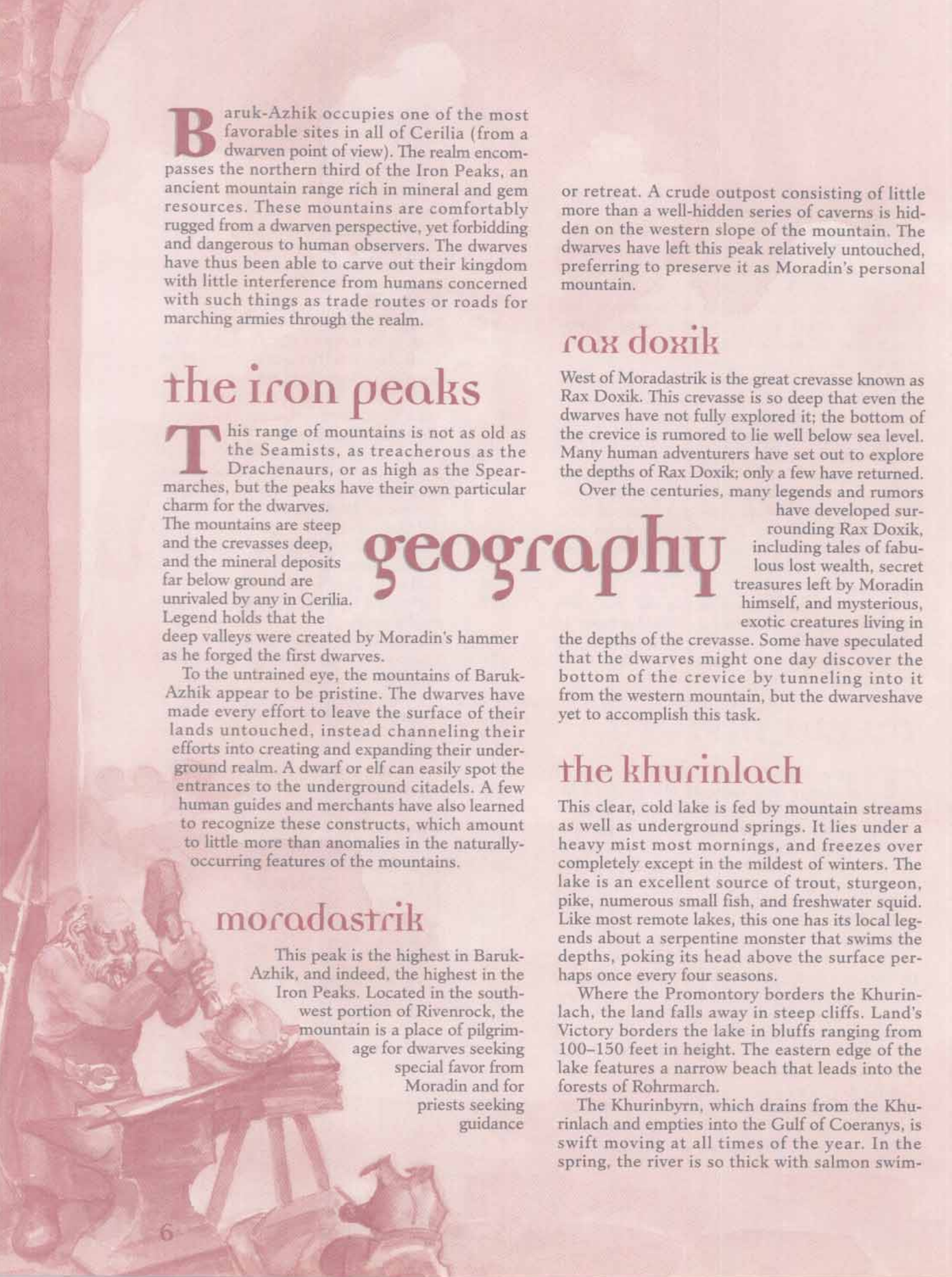
the depths of the crevasse. Some have speculated that the dwarves might one day discover the bottom of the crevice by tunneling into it from the western mountain, but the dwarves have yet to accomplish this task.

the khurinlach

This clear, cold lake is fed by mountain streams as well as underground springs. It lies under a heavy mist most mornings, and freezes over completely except in the mildest of winters. The lake is an excellent source of trout, sturgeon, pike, numerous small fish, and freshwater squid. Like most remote lakes, this one has its local legends about a serpentine monster that swims the depths, poking its head above the surface perhaps once every four seasons.

Where the Promontory borders the Khurinlach, the land falls away in steep cliffs. Land's Victory borders the lake in bluffs ranging from 100–150 feet in height. The eastern edge of the lake features a narrow beach that leads into the forests of Rohrmarch.

The Khurinbyrn, which drains from the Khurinlach and empties into the Gulf of Coerany, is swift moving at all times of the year. In the spring, the river is so thick with salmon swim-



ming upstream that locals claim to be able to walk across the river on the backs of the frantic fish. The Khurinbyrn is an important source of salmon, caviar, clams, and freshwater pearls.

climate

The lands of Baruk-Azhik vary widely in climate despite the small size of the domain. The western provinces are typically temperate: Summer temperatures may reach 80°F, while winter temperatures rarely fall below 0 degrees. Precipitation averages 2 to 3 inches per month. Severe weather such as major thunderstorms or tornadoes is not unknown, but is not common. If not for the rocky soil in the western provinces, conditions would be favorable for farming.

The eastern provinces suffer the effects of high altitudes. Summer temperatures rarely rise above 65°, but winter temperatures can fall as low as -35°. Combined with winds of up to 80 miles per hour in the winter, the climate alone can make these lands dangerous. One to two inches of rain per month is typical in the warm seasons, but the winter can bring 20 to 25 inches of snow per month. Snows can fill the deepest crevasses, making the terrain especially deadly.

Because of the west-to-east weather patterns prevalent in Cerilia, Land's Victory shares the climatic characteristics of Rivenrock and the Promontory. Winter winds, however, tend to be somewhat less intense.

The Suidemiere, being the vast body of water that it is, experiences at least a dozen typhoons in any given year. At least half of them never make a landfall. Roughly twice per decade, however, a typhoon finds its way to the Gulf of Coerans and rolls across the land to dump as much as 2 feet of water on the dwarven realm. Tucked away in the underground, the dwarves pay little attention to these events. Flooding in the mountains is all but unrecorded.

In general, the climate in Baruk-Azhik matters little to the dwarves. Deep in their underground cities, temperatures hold in the range of 50 to 65 degrees, and precipitation is never a problem. The dwarves are somewhat thankful for the extreme weather in the mountains, for it discourages travelers for a little less than half the year.

the provinces

The first thing a visitor to Baruk-Azhik will notice (after marveling at its breathtaking and rugged beauty) is the utter lack of civilization in this region. The dwarves live exclusively underground, and only a sprinkling of human settlements can be found throughout the domain. The humans who live here are usually hermits, outcasts, or others who seek solitude. The dwarves watch such squatters closely; at the first indication of trouble or any sign of a settlement growing larger than two or three families, the dwarves ensure their hasty relocation outside the dwarven boundaries. Force is used only if absolutely necessary, but the dwarves will stop at nothing to evict an unruly tenant.


Each province is home to a single dwarven settlement. Each has a well-concealed main entrance consisting of stone gates that appear crude from the outside (in order to blend in with the landscape) but are engineering marvels that open and close on an intricate system of pulleys and gears. Each settlement is also outfitted with a number of secret exits in the event of an emergency or rapid movement during war.

Some of the underground settlements rival the largest human cities; thousands of dwarves live in each province, in comfortable, clean environments. While many humans find the thought of living underground to be distasteful, imagining nothing but dirt, insects, and oppressive darkness, few realize the quality of life that the dwarves enjoy. In some cases, the common areas of the dwarven citadels rival the finest human palaces.

bran's retreat

This northwest province is mostly rolling prairies, giving way to hills along its eastern flank. Named for a dwarf who retreated to these hills from the underground to lure the orogs into a colossal ambush, the land's mundane surface features belie its rich gem and mineral deposits. Garnets, quartz, and emeralds are mined in abundance here; the under-





ground citadels are almost exclusively hollowed out of quartzite. Many areas of the complex are decorated by rich veins of crystals running through the purplish quartzite.

On the surface, Bran's Retreat is home to half a dozen peaceful human settlements. The dwarves pay particular attention to a hermit dwelling in the northeastern hills; he has been seen creeping into the Sielwode from time to time, but has never displayed any unseemly behavior.

rivenrock

Named after the deep crevasses that distinguish this land, the terrain here is described in legend as the handiwork of Moradin's tools. The mountains are as steep as any in the Iron Peaks; the land is especially treacherous. Two of the domain's most prominent features, Moradastrik and Rax Doxik, lie within this region.

This province serves as the home and personal domain of the overthane; thus, the citadels under the mountain are particularly extensive and fantastic. They are also especially well guarded; dwarves patrol the mountain near the entrance to the citadel daily, except in extreme winter weather.

Rivenrock is almost exclusively solid granite below the surface. Iron, copper, and moraskorr deposits are plentiful, as well as a fantastic variety of gemstones and crystals.

stone's rejoicing

The capital and oldest city in Baruk-Azhik lies within Rivenrock. It is home to 20,000 dwarves, and rivals any human city in terms of cleanliness and creature comforts. Crime is practically nonexistent except for the occasional property squabble or family feud.

The portion of the city that serves governmental functions is separate from the areas of everyday life. Between them lies the great audience chamber, capable of holding every resident of Baruk-Azhik. The hall is acoustically perfect, allowing events to be heard from even the farthest reaches of the hall.

cliff's lament

Like Bran's Retreat, this province is mostly a prairie with rolling hills toward its eastern boundary. A hermit is known to live in these hills, but the dwarves have found her to be peaceful in the past 10 years. She has expanded her plot of land a little at a time, adding gardens of flowers, vegetables, and especially herbs, as well as a small orchard that includes apples, pears, peaches, and apricots. The dwarves suspect that she is a priest of Erik, for her crops are always lush, and some of her sensitive plants (such as the peach and apricot trees) seem to have no trouble surviving even the most brutal winters.

Cliff's Lament boasts vast reserves of silver, iron, and copper as well as turquoise, malachite, and amber.

the promontory

Similar to Rivenrock in terrain and climate, this province is noteworthy for a single structure on its southern border: the refuge of the Chimaera. This ugly, broken tower is home to the awnshagh's laboratory, prison, and untold horrors. The dwarves would like nothing better than to wipe the hideous construct off the map, but they know better than to anger an awnshagh. Instead, the local dwarves embark on daily scouting missions to observe the activities at the refuge. She seems to have no designs on attacking the dwarves, instead preferring to reinforce her own lands. The Chimaera and the dwarves have always maintained an unspoken policy of nonaggression.

The Promontory has significant deposits of iron, tin, lead, and moraskorr, and a specially-designed forge devoted to the creation of moraskorr weapons.

land's victory

Baruk-Azhik's eastern province might be called wasteland by some, but such a reference will infuriate the dwarves. The region can hardly be called mountainous, but the soil is so rocky as to make it nearly uninhabitable. The climate is nearly identical to that of Rivenrock, thus contributing to its ruggedness.

The dwarves, however, are pleased to call this land their own. Land's Victory (named for a skirmish with a minor awnshegh over 1,000 years ago) provides rich reserves of topaz, amethyst, gold, and moraskorr. The dwarves also gather freshwater pearls from oysters found in the Khurinlach.

Rumors tell of a network of caves in the bluffs rising above the Khurinlach. The dwarves, of course, neither confirm nor deny this. What fantastic scenery or gem-laden architecture may lie within such caves remains the subject of speculation.

flora and fauna

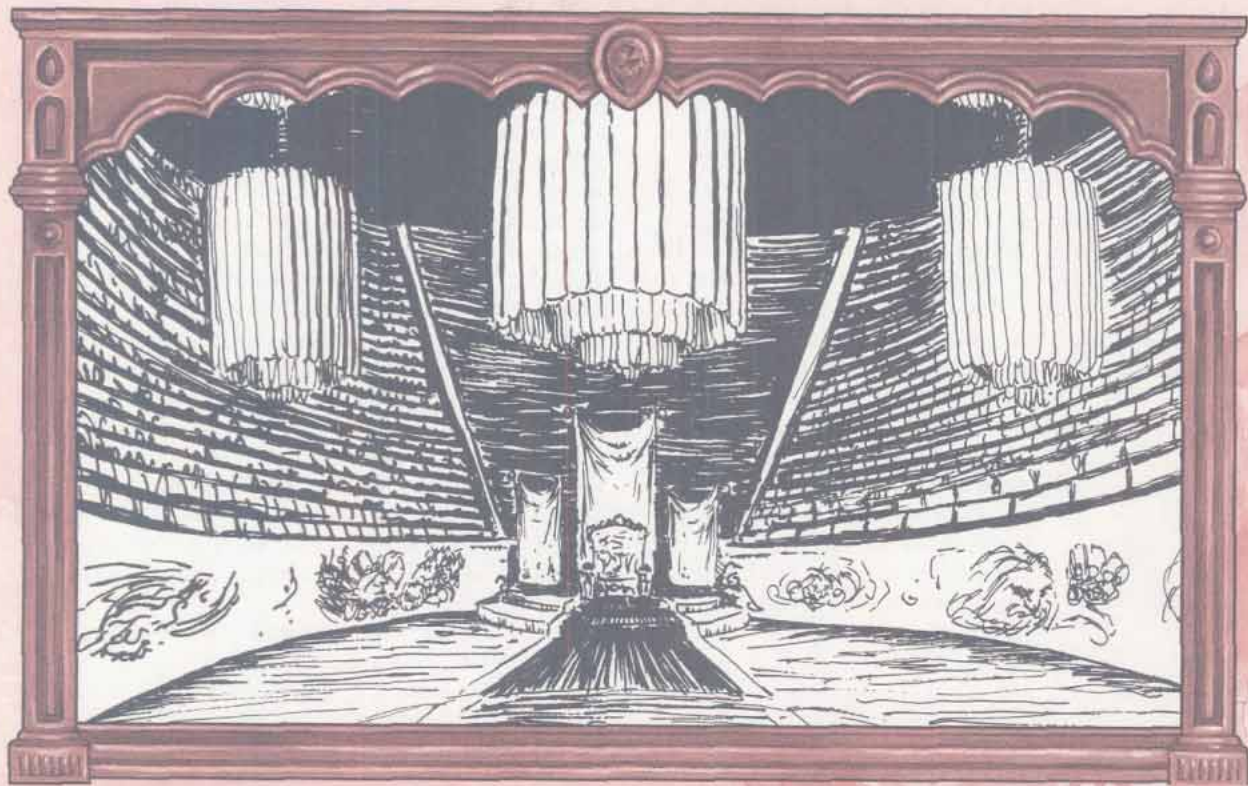
Aside from some of the elven regions, Baruk-Azhik is one of the most pristine stretches of land in Cerilia. Because of the dwarves' disposition toward keeping their construction underground, the surface has barely been touched since the continent's birth. The Chimaera's refuge, less than a dozen human-built cottages, and a narrow, treacherous trail

leading into the Sielwode are the only visible "improvements" on the surface of the domain.

The plant and animal life of the realm has thus suffered little in the history of the region. The land is too harsh to attract trappers and too rocky to permit farmers. The area is truly wild and thus is home to countless species of plants and animals.

Bran's Retreat and Cliff's Lament are home to rabbits, squirrels, weasels, countless varieties of rodents and deer, wolves, and a few bears. Owls, hawks, and eagles rule the skies in large numbers. A species of deer known as the varlhorn is peculiar to the region. Varlhorns are noted for their superior camouflage; the deer are white in the winter, silvery green in spring and summer, and a stunning shade of gold in the autumn. Their horns are delicate and feathery so as to be almost fern-like, but are also razor-sharp to provide protection from enemies. The dwarves, not normally thought of as hunters, will periodically hunt the varlhorns for their pelts and meat, usually in conjunction with an impending royal or priestly ceremony.

The two western provinces are rolling prairies with occasional swaths of hardwood forest. The lands are hospitable to oaks, maples, walnuts, and aspens, as well as typical forest undergrowth. These provinces also boast extensive fields of wild flax, which the dwarves harvest to spin cloth.



The prairie grasses in these regions are tough and drought-resistant, but their hardy appearance is softened by abundant patches of daisies, columbine, and other wild flowers. Because of the chill nights typical of this domain, autumn brings colors so spectacular that visitors might think the trees bore leaves of gold and bronze.

Rivenrock and the Promontory are filled from edge to edge with mountain peaks, and are thus less hospitable to many types of plant life. Below the timber line, aspens, birches, and scrub pines are abundant. Shrubs such as blueberries and bayberries are common, interspersed with hardy flowering plants including wintergreen and laurels. Above the timber line, lichens and tough ferns dominate.

In these mountainous provinces, animal life differs greatly from the neighboring prairie. Rabbits, weasels, and other rodents are abundant; wolves and bobcats round out the mammal population in general. Eagles, both common and giant, predominate among the birds of prey. In a few sheltered valleys, great herds of alpaca are known to dwell; every spring, contingents of dwarves emerge from the underground to trap the creatures, shear their shaggy, thick wool, and set them free.

Land's Victory shares all the physical characteristics and thus the plant and animal life of Baruk-Azhik's other provinces. Nearly any species found in the prairies and mountains can be found somewhere in this eastern parcel. This province is known for a raspberry field that stretches nearly half a mile in both directions—a daunting harvest for thin-skinned humans, but a welcome labor for the stony-skinned dwarves, who barely notice the thorns and brambles.

This province is also home to a species of hardy scorpion. The beastly things can grow to 10 inches long, but like their warm-climate cousins, their poison grows weaker as they mature. The scorpions cannot tolerate temperatures greater than 75°; a stretch of three days or more of such heat will all but wipe out the scorpion population. The arachnids can tolerate temperatures as low as 10°, but a significant stretch of cold weather all but destroys them.

While they are able to survive the climate of Baruk-Azhik, the weather also serves to keep their numbers in check.

monsters

Aside from the oogs in the underground, only a few species of monsters are known to dwell in Baruk-Azhik. Because of the difficult terrain, most of the domain remains unexplored by humans, but the few merchants and trappers who have braved the wilds of the land have reportedly sighted trolls, rocs, giant bats, and leucrotta. No one would be surprised to encounter galeb duhr in these lands; in fact, some rumors claim that the dwarves have struck bargains with such creatures to serve as spies or sentries.

Many newcomers to this land expect to encounter fairies, pixies, brownies, and quicklings, but the forests of Baruk-Azhik are not deep enough and the land is too harsh to satisfy the needs of the fairiefolk. If such creatures exist in the dwarven realm, they are of a variety unique to the clime and are extremely well hidden.

the dwarven diet

While not typically a geographical subject, the topic of dwarven food deserves mention. The diet of the dwarves does factor into the lack of farming and hunting in these lands, and so seems an appropriate topic in this section.

The unusual dwarven physique has never been fully explained. Dwarves are known to be much more dense than humans or elves, to such a degree that dwarves are protected from certain types of physical injury. Dwarven legends tell that they are derived from earth and stone; this must certainly be true to some degree.

That dwarves can subsist on rocks and earth is absolute fact. Troops of dwarves who have been trapped in rockslides or pinned down in caverns as a result of the orog wars have survived by eating the rock and earth around them. Furthermore, these dwarves have emerged from their ordeals none the worse for wear. While they have shown signs of dehydration, such victims experienced no weight loss or weakness as a result of their diet.

Dirt and rock leave something to be desired in terms of taste, however. Certain earthy delicacies exist such as mica chips, mud pies, slate strata (a layered concoction of slate, chopped meat, and oyster sauce), and obsidian flakes; dwarven cele-

brations may include elaborate sculptures of chiseled salt or quartz. In general, however, dwarves tend to gravitate toward foods produced close to an earthy source. Following is a breakdown of foods based on dwarven eating habits.

Preferred staples: Clams, oysters, snails, freshwater squid, mushrooms, fungus, potatoes, carrots, and other root vegetables, onions, leeks, peanuts and other legumes.

Preferred edibles: Strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, all varieties of peppers, green vegetables such as peas, beans, chard, and cabbage, seaweed, artichokes, thistles, radishes, fish, crabs, lobster and other crustaceans, caviar, oats, rye, barley, whole-grain breads, dwarven ale, and goat meat.

Occasional edibles (those items that are rare or are too rich for the dwarven digestive system): Fruits such as peaches, pears, cranberries, and cherries, game meat (bear, rabbit), dwarven sausage, nuts (especially hickory nuts, acorns, and chestnuts).

Delicacies (consumed only on dwarven holidays or at times of special celebrations): Varlhorn meat, lamb or mutton, pomegranates, sumac berries, pine cones.

Avoided foods (generally eaten only if starvation is imminent; dwarves will eat dirt before turning to these foods): All kinds of fowl, whether wild or domesticated, breads (such as white, and sourdough), honey, citrus fruits, cheese, corn.

Indigestible foods (never eaten under any circumstances): Seeds (such as sunflower, sesame, and poppy), bovine milk and milk products.

Taboo foods (dwarven law forbids consumption of these items): Pig (reminds them of the ogres), eggs.

dietary notes

Dwarves show a definite preference for simple food preparation. Many foods, especially vegetables and fruits, are eaten raw. Hot peppers are eaten with nearly every meal. Meats are generally roasted over an open fire, sometimes plain or sometimes with a spicy sauce. Breads, as one might expect, are baked in large stone ovens. Bread baked by dwarves always begins with whole-grain flour and incorporates grains of

wheat, rye, barley, and various kinds of nuts. Dwarven bread might also include chopped meat, mashed fruits, or sliced vegetables. As a result, the breads are extremely heavy and nourishing, and unrivaled in flavor.

Each family of dwarves generally prepares its own meals (as opposed to a communal dining situation), shopping at the local marketplace or taking part in occasional hunting or gathering on the surface. The dwarves keep a few pens of goats within the underground realm to supplement their diet when hunting is not possible or when game is scarce. Goats are occasionally slaughtered in order to thin or improve the herd.

The dwarves also engage in fungus farming. Several caverns in each province are set aside for growing mushrooms, puffballs, and exotic fungi. The farming caves are specially designed and chiseled for optimum growing surfaces, moisture circulation, and lantern light. The interiors of these caves are among the most fantastic underground landscapes in Cerilia. Pillars, honeycomb compartments, and bowl-shaped depressions carved out of the stone drip with fungus in every color and shape.

The dwarves are as frugal with their foodstuffs as they are with stone and gems. Nothing goes to waste; all parts of a slaughtered animal, for example, are put to good use. Hides are cured for clothing; bones are retained for art objects. Dwarves are not squeamish about organ meats or animal by-products; all edible parts of an animal are regarded equally. In the occasional situations where trash disposal is necessary, the dwarves resort to carefully controlled composting.



culture

Most strangers to dwarven culture think of the dwarves as crude, mannerless, and even barbaric. Because dwarves are insular in nature and never dwell outside their own realms, humans have had no real opportunities to learn their ways. Furthermore, human visitors to the dwarven realms are exceedingly rare; it would be safe to speculate that half the dwarven cities in Cerilia have never known a human footfall.

Humans are always surprised, therefore, when they find themselves in the company of a dwarf. They are surprised first simply because most humans have never seen a dwarf, and second, because dwarves are more honorable, refined, and tasteful than most humans expect.

Dwarves are serious by nature, and tend to be quiet and reserved, but hardly deserve the grumpy reputation assigned to them. While dwarves are never the life of a party when they make appearances at dinners of state, they do their best to be polite and to fit in with the unfamiliar human customs. But because dwarves are tenacious traders, they earn their race a variety of colorful adjectives among their business associates.

Humans would be amazed and surprised by everyday life in Baruk-Azhik. In every aspect of their culture, dwarves are fastidious, honorable, and cooperative.

the dwarven surrounds

From the massive stone doors leading into their underground realms all the way down to the most humble dwelling, every aspect of dwarven construction displays only the finest craftsmanship. The dwarves do not understand the concept of "second best"; to them, there is only one way of building a structure or fashioning a weapon.

Every task undertaken by a dwarf is done with the utmost care and attention to detail, using techniques handed down over thousands of years. This should not imply that

dwarves are opposed to technology; dwarves appreciate a new technique or tool as much as any human or elf—perhaps more so.

As a result, the dwarven cities are such marvels of engineering and construction as to make any king or sultan envious. Carved out of the rock native to the Iron Peaks, the dwarven realms open into bustling markets, neighborhoods, and centers of political, artistic, and mining activity. Anyone expecting to find dank, dark caves and long spooky passageways making up the dwarven homelands would be utterly shocked by the beauty, grandeur, and cleanliness of the realm.

Before any mining project is undertaken, engineers and architects determine a use for the spaces created by the excavations before the first hammer blow is struck. The design of the finished space dictates the direction the new mine; only if a vein of ore or deposit of gems varies drastically from the expected result do these plans change.

Once the finished shape of a new area is determined, excavation begins. As rock and ore are removed by miners, teams of builders and finishers immediately set about chiseling columns, polishing walls and ceilings, and preparing the chambers for occupancy. Floors are always dressed last, after mining operations have ceased, but this system results in mines that are cleaner and more beautiful than certain noble residences in Anuire.

Dwarves are frugal in the strictest sense. This is not to say that they are stingy or copper-pinch-ing. Rather, it refers to their consummate efforts to use every resource to its fullest extent—stone is excavated in the largest possible blocks, for example, to be used for construction or exported out of the realm; fragments left by masons are put to use in tools, utensils, or children's toys; and small slivers from cut gems are incorporated in jewelry, clothing, or art objects.

Because of their attention to detail and fine craftsmanship, dwarves keep their domains impeccably clean. All the effort placed in polishing stone and metal to a high sheen is lost if walls, floors, and objects are left to gather dust and grime. As a result, the dwarves clean and polish their homes, work spaces, and public areas regularly. The stone walls and floors do contribute to easy cleaning, however, as does the dwarves' preference for things simple and elegant.

family life

The basic unit of dwarf society is the family. In most areas, dwarves are eligible to marry at the age of 50, but some local customs may allow marriage earlier or restrict it until somewhat later. Dwarves mate for life, and dwarven divorce is all but unknown. In the event of the death of a spouse, a dwarf is allowed to remarry after the traditional two-year mourning period plus an additional three years.

On average, dwarf couples tend to produce four children. Roughly five percent of couples have no children at all, while perhaps 10% produce as many as eight offspring. Traditionally, dwarves have been mindful of population balance and have made efforts not to stress the realm's resources with too many children, but the orog wars have dwindled their numbers severely. For the past 200 hundred years, four children have been the norm, but greater numbers are now being encouraged.

Extended families tend to cluster in close proximity to each other. Four or more generations may be found within a given neighborhood; most families try to live near related households. Newlyweds choose the locations of their homes based on the needs of both sides of the family; parents or grandparents who are ailing, or the survivors of a relative recently lost in war are generally considered most needy. Depending on circumstances, a couple might move several times in order to be near certain relatives.

Dwarves are strict but loving parents. Children learn at a very young age that rules must be obeyed and customs followed. The dwarves' sense of honor and self-worth is instilled in every individual within the confines of the immediate family.

the clan system

While the lines between clans in Baruk-Azhik are cleanly drawn, no hostility or enmity exists between them. Certain rivalries exist, but these stem from a sense of pride and accomplishment—one clan may claim to be the finest iron forgers, while another may claim to produce the finest gem cutters. The rivalries are friendly and productive, rather than destructive. Such claims of skill are regularly put to the test in festivals and competitions.



While dwarves tend to associate and marry within their clans merely as a result of logistics, no laws prohibit intermarriage between clans. Such a couple is allowed to choose where to live, as are all dwarf couples. Two who marry between clans may move between provinces several times during their lifetime.

In all matters personal and public, Baruk-Azhik carries no laws restricting its citizens' activities between provinces. The occupants of the realm are all treated equally with regard to clan association.

government

Society in Baruk-Azhik is structured and orderly; government follows suit with a system defined by clearly stated laws, specific protocols for virtually every situation, and well-defined procedures for changes in office, advancement of government members, and general daily administration. These laws have been expanded and modified over thousands of years to the point that the dwarves feel that their government system is nearly perfect; only *extremely* strong evidence contrary to a certain law (and subsequent months of meetings by those in power) can bring about a change in the legal system. As the laws continue to age, so too do they solidify and resist alteration.

The realm is led, of course, by the overthane, who also rules the province of Rivenrock. The overthane is assisted by two advocates (one junior and one senior), and a staff of eight scribes. While the overthane hardly requires eight scribes, they each bear this title, nonetheless. The staff busies itself taking statements for legal matters, making travel arrangements, translating incoming documents, handling tax payments, and caring for various other bureaucratic duties.

The advocates serve as direct advisers to the overthane. (Because of the structure of the dwarven government, they will have been in office for many years prior to the installation of the new overthane. They are not restricted by the level limits normally imposed on a regent's advisers.) Their primary responsibility lies in assimilating espionage reports and information coming in from around Cerilia. They also evaluate the status of the

military and make recommendations to the overthane regarding troop numbers.

Provincial governments also follow a bureaucratic hierarchy. Each thane is assisted by a senior advocate and a staff of three scribes. The overthane commands such a staff who see to matters in Rivenrock, in addition to the aforementioned staff who are concerned with matters affecting the entire realm.

The thanes of Baruk-Azhik's four outlying provinces are as follows: Bran's Retreat—Cairn Vahan; Land's Victory—Hadassah Endrede; Cliff's Lament—Bayard Laccolith; The Promontory—Wulfram Wainier.

the constabulary

Each province maintains a small force of city guards. Their job is to patrol the various areas of the underground domains, watching more for signs of orog incursions than for dwarven law-breakers. Citizens in Baruk-Azhik rarely break the law, leaving the constables free to carefully observe their surrounds. Areas requiring repair or maintenance are also reported by the guards.

The constabulary is led by a number of local sergeants and corporals who report to the commissioner of each province. The five commissioners, in turn, report to the high commissioner of Baruk-Azhik, currently a middle-aged dwarf named Urgh Kraksohl.

the scales of justice

Although a judicial system is rarely needed, Baruk-Azhik maintains a stable of barristers who are available in the event that a crime or offense is committed. This usually amounts to the accused party meeting with a barrister, discussing the offense, and agreeing to a fine or community service to make amends for the violation. Typical "crimes" in this lawful good domain include littering, public drunkenness, untidy personal areas visible to passersby, and property disputes.

Barristers function as part-time employees of the government; their duties are called upon so infrequently that more frequent service is unnecessary. All barristers attend legal seminars one day each month in order to keep current on the rare changes in established law and to debate those statutes that seem to leave loopholes.

A council of five barristers is organized in

din, and the basics of physics and engineering. Older students are educated in dwarven law, advanced engineering, and government.

the arts

While dwarves are rarely considered creative, they do have an excellent sense of aesthetics. Balance, contour, and form are all important in architecture and engineering; carving and sculpting of stone are the primary art forms practiced by the dwarves.

Students are watched from an early age to detect those who show artistic promise. Individuals who qualify may be sent to a specialized school to learn the intricacies of carving, sculpting, or architecture. In such an environment, pupils learn to become master artisans or instructors for future generations.

A few dwarves also show talent as painters. These are taught the fine points of portraiture; eventually, they may be commissioned to paint portraits of the thanes and their families, as well as other dignitaries. In general, dwarf artists limit themselves to painting portraits; painting landscapes is considered a waste of time. (Why paint a scene when it can be permanently chiseled in stone?) Abstract subjects are simply unheard of in the dwarven realms.

Performing arts are barely recognized among the dwarves. Dance is unheard of; dwarves who visit outside realms and witness a dance can barely contain their laughter. Singing is usually part of a religious ceremony or war rally, or part of children's games.

The performance of plays is also rare among dwarves. This activity is usually reserved for relating events of history or religion and normally amounts to an event closer to a dramatic reading than an actual play.

Musical instruments are limited in the dwarven realms. Drums in varying sizes and styles, bagpipes, rattles, tambourines, other percussion instruments, and an item resembling a marimba are generally the only instruments used by dwarves. These are played almost exclusively at war rallies and religious ceremonies, including weddings.

Rivenrock in the event of a trial of an outsider. If humans or elves are discovered violating any of the realm's laws, they are immediately taken into custody and tried within a few days of their capture. The council is unfailingly fair; Baruk-Azhik's laws leave little room for interpretation.

In general, the dwarves do not believe in capital punishment. The penalty for the worst offenses such as murder or treason is exile. Outsiders who are found guilty of violating dwarven law are usually escorted to their home law enforcement agency and turned over so that justice may be served. In the case of minor offenses, a criminal might be fined or sentenced to community service such as scrubbing stables or streets, then escorted out of the realm.

religion

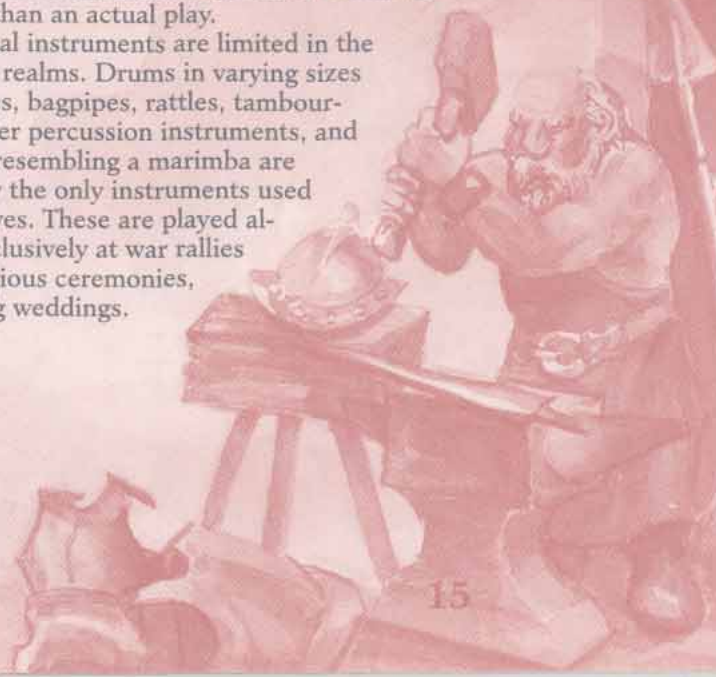
All dwarves, without exception, follow Moradin. Each province in Baruk-Azhik has an official, grand temple dedicated to the creator of the dwarves. Smaller local chapels are also scattered throughout the province to provide easy access to all citizens.

Dwarves normally attend services dedicated to Moradin at least once per week. Six holy days are also observed every year, including one commemorating the dwarven creation.

Every temple or chapel of Moradin includes a consecrated forge that is kept burning at all times. Several smaller, secret forges are normally kept burning at each holy site so that one will remain lit in the event of desecration of the temple. Some scholars outside the realm believe that the dwarves have a superstition regarding the forges: If a forge is ever extinguished for any reason, the temple must be torn down to the last stone and entirely rebuilt on a different site. Whether the dwarves in Baruk-Azhik follow this belief is unclear.

schooling

Education is important to the dwarves in Baruk-Azhik. All children begin attending classes at the age of 10, and continue schooling until the age of 25. The younger students learn to read and count; they are also taught the foundations of construction through the use of blocks and building toys. Middle-grade students learn the basics of carving and chiseling, dwarven history, the laws of Mora-



The City of Stone's Rejoicing

Stone Gates to the Surface

Visitors' Center

Palace of the Overth

Emergency Escape Route

Emergency Escape Route

Audience Chamber

Military Stables

Military Barracks

Military Training Grounds

Park

Park

Government District

Park

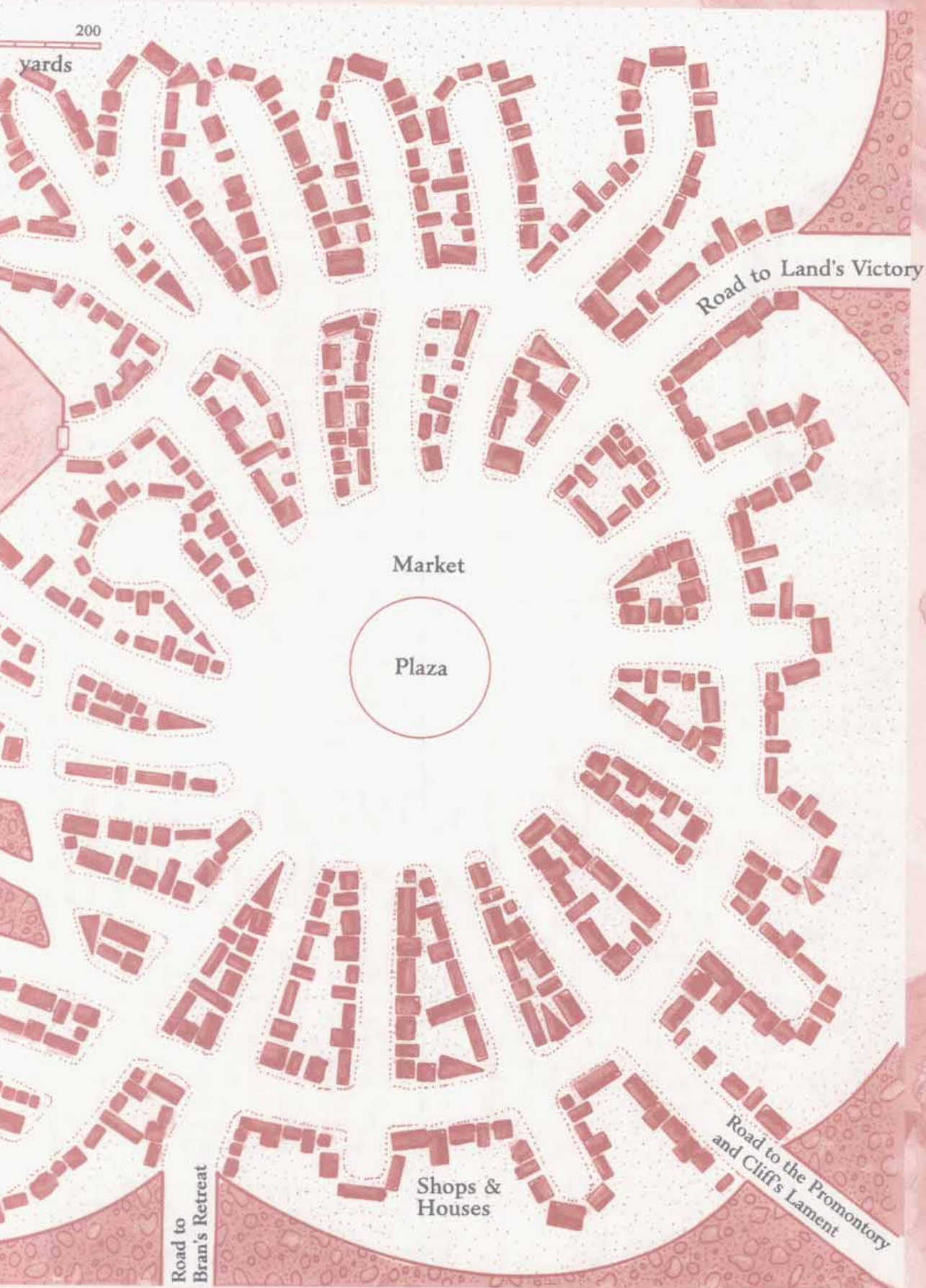
Park

Fungus Farms

Goat Pens

200

yards



Road to Land's Victory

Market

Plaza

Shops &
Houses

Road to
Bran's Retreat

Road to the Promontory
and Cliff's Lament

grimm graybeard

Former Overthane of Baruk-Azhik

Grimm Graybeard was the beloved overthane of Baruk-Azhik for 82 years. Under his rule, the realm held onto every inch of ground within its boundaries, never yielding to humans, monsters, or awnsheghlien. Baruk-Azhik currently has no enemies, thanks in large part to Graybeard's efforts.



The overthane's diplomacy with elves and humans alike served to maintain all political relations and observances. Most regard this as an admirable feat, considering the greedy nature of humans with regard to land. This success is especially noteworthy considering the human lifespan; while Graybeard served as overthane for 82 years, humans rarely even live this long. The human perspective, therefore, is routinely rushed. While a dwarf may feel comfortable analyzing a decision for a year or two, humans have relatively little patience and almost always formulate answers in less than a day. Their short lifespans prohibit them from wasting any kind of time. Graybeard dealt effectively with humans in all situations despite their short thinking.

A related problem in diplomacy with humans is their frequent change in leadership. Because humans age so quickly, a human realm is likely to have three to six different rulers during the reign of a single dwarf leader. In the case of an especially long dwarven reign (200 years or more), a human realm may change leaders 10 to 15 times! A dwarf overthane, therefore, finds himself frequently in the position of learning the habits and preferences of a new human leader.

The orogs under the mountains, however, presented the former dwarven ruler with no end of problems. Graybeard recognized that the orogs were able to propagate their species

more quickly than the dwarves. This, coupled with their ever-increasing awareness and understanding of technology, served to make the orogs Graybeard's worst nightmare. He worried continually about how the dwarves might conquer the beastly tribes once and for all. In the final years of his life, the overthane all but despaired. Although he only admitted it to a few trusted advisers, Graybeard was convinced that the dwarves would never vanquish the orogs, and that eventually, his people might fall prey to their ever-increasing numbers.

The overthane wanted to accomplish only one thing in his lifetime—to ensure the protection of his people, regardless of personal cost. He challenged the priests of Moradin and his military advisers to devise a scheme by which he could ensure the safety of his people for all time. Finally, the priests struck upon a plan. At Graybeard's urging, they set out to attempt an entirely new process of priestly magic that had never been tried in all the history of dwarfdom.

After years of research, preparations, and supplications to Moradin for his divine favor, the priests set about their ritual that would allow Graybeard to transcend his physical body and become one with his beloved land. Moradin must have smiled upon Graybeard on that day.

At the climax of the ritual, the overthane lay naked on a specially constructed altar of earth.

the dwarves of baruk-azhik

As the priests sprinkled his body with salt and holy water, Moradin answered their prayers. Graybeard's form began to vaporize, changing to a cloud of cool, gray steam. The mist quickly changed to fine, silvery dust, retaining Graybeard's features perfectly even though he chanted with the priests continually throughout the transformation. His powdery form eventually sank into the earthen altar, disappearing completely. The overthane's chanting stopped only when the last speck of dust vanished.

For several days, the priests had no way of knowing whether they had been successful, although somehow, they felt that their leader was still near. Following the twelfth day, in the dead of night, as all

diirk watershold

Guildmaster of the Royal Guild of Baruk-Azhik
10th-level dwarf thief

S: 17
D: 16
C: 13
I: 12
W: 9
Ch: 15

AC: 1 (armor plus -2
bonus for Dexterity)
hp: 42
MV: 6
THAC0: 16
#AT: 1
Dmg: by weapon; 1d8 (battle
axe), 1d6/1d8 (short sword)



Bloodline: Anduiras, minor, 29
Blood Ability: Detect lie
Equipment: dwarven plate mail, battle axe, moraskorr short sword (+1 damage bonus)

Diirk Watershold was perhaps Grimm Graybeard's closest personal friend. Few mourn the loss of the overthane more than Diirk, but Graybeard's ever-more-frequent appearances have helped to bolster his spirit.

The guildmaster has managed to conduct business in a normal fashion in the past two years since Graybeard's death, but expended all of his energies maintaining contacts and trade partners; he spent little time looking for new opportunities. Watershold admits that he is now feeling more like his old self, and hopes to improve and expand his deals and trade connections in the future.

Diirk will be extremely important to the new overthane. He has innumerable connections in Osoerde and Coeranyas as well as other realms, and his spy network stretches far and wide to bring information from all parts of Anuire and select regions of Khinasi and Brecht lands.

Watershold's particular value to the new overthane lies in information. Anything the new ruler needs to know can be found with Diirk; anything Diirk can't

of Baruk-Azhik lay silent, High Priest Ruarch Rockhammer was awakened by a whispering sound. Although he could barely make out the words, he immediately recognized the voice of Grimm Graybeard. The ritual had been a success—the overthane had been imbued into the mountain itself.

Today, Graybeard is still perfecting some of the powers he commands. These are likely to improve and expand over time, but his current abilities follow.

I: 14 AL: LG
W: 17 MV: 360
Ch: 18

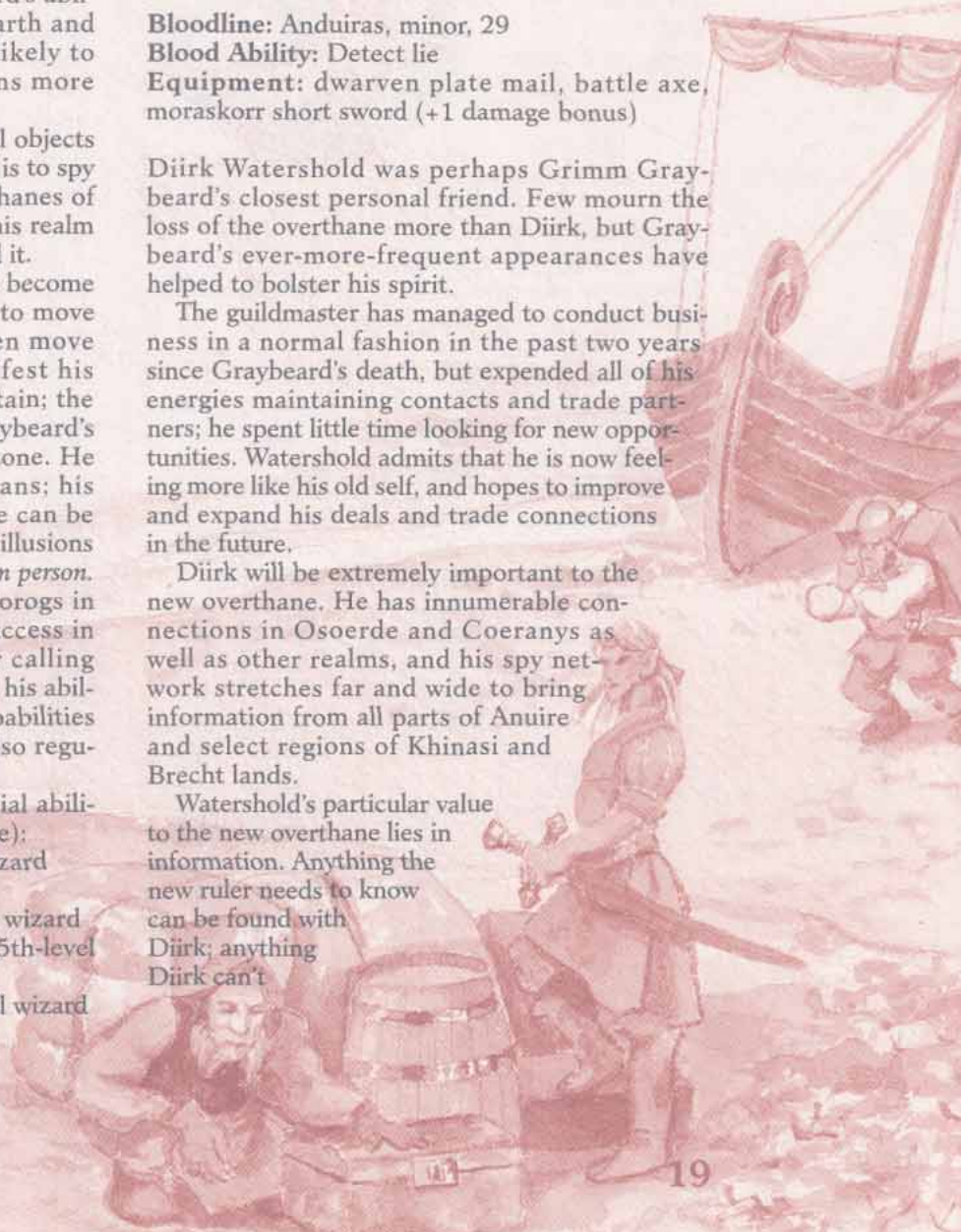
The movement rating refers to Graybeard's ability to move his persona through the earth and rock of the mountain. This rating is likely to increase as the former overthane gains more practice with his powers.

Graybeard cannot manipulate physical objects and thus has no attacks. His present goal is to spy on the oogs, report their plans to the thanes of Baruk-Azhik, and generally watch over his realm and do anything in his power to safeguard it.

The dwarf has no form; his essence has become part of the mountains. Thus, he is able to move through stone as easily as his brethren move through air. He can sometimes manifest his ghostly image in the stone of the mountain; the priests have occasionally witnessed Graybeard's face appearing as a living relief in the stone. He cannot be injured by any physical means; his extreme speed makes it unlikely that he can be injured through spells. He is immune to illusions and to mind-affecting spells such as *charm person*.

Graybeard is capable of scaring the oogs in this ghostly form, and has had some success in leading them astray by whispering or calling orders to them. He continues to work on his abilities in this new form, improving his capabilities for speech and communication. He is also regularly discovering new talents.

The overthane has the following special abilities (these are likely to improve over time):
Glitterdust once per day as a 4th-level wizard
Dig once per day as a 2nd-level wizard
Stone shape twice per day as a 12th-level wizard
Transmute rock to mud twice per day as a 5th-level wizard
Wall of stone once per week as a 12th-level wizard



answer, he learns from his sources in under two days. He will be unfailingly loyal to his new ruler.

Ruarch Rockhammer

High Priest of Moradin's Forge

11th-level dwarf priest

S: 14
D: 12
C: 14
I: 15
W: 17
Ch: 16

AC: 5
hp: 68
MV: 6
THAC0: 14
#AT: 1

Dmg: by weapon;
1d6+1/1d6
(mace),
1d4+1/1d4
(warhammer)



Bloodline: Anduiras, major, 41

Blood Ability: Divine aura

Equipment: dwarven chain mail, mace, moraskorr warhammer (+1 damage bonus)

Ruarch Rockhammer has held the position of High Priest of Moradin's Forge for just over 200 years. He inherited the title from his mother, who ruled the temple for 142 years.

Rockhammer's loyalties lie first with Moradin, second with the overthane, third with his followers, and fourth with all dwarves. He would never undertake any action that would violate the trust of the overthane, but he will never allow the will of a dwarf, even the overthane, to overshadow the worship of Moradin.

Rockhammer is currently in the sticky position of overseeing temples in Mur-Kilad. The Baruk-Azhik dwarves carry a deep racial hatred for the Mur-Kilad dwarves; if anyone in Baruk-Azhik were to discover Rockhammer's activities, the resulting scandal might shake the domain to its roots. His interest in Mur-Kilad promise several dangerous

possibilities if he were discovered.

First, the Gorgon would no doubt unleash his wrath on Baruk-Azhik. The Gorgon holds Mur-Kilad in his iron grip, and loathes the idea of organized religion in any form. Was he to learn that the dwarf supported organized temples in his realm, the Gorgon would stop at nothing to bring Rockhammer to a painful and tortured death. If the dwarves of Baruk-Azhik suffered in the process (or if the realm fell under his power), so much the better.

Second, the Gorgon would likely crush every dwarf in Mur-Kilad. He would regard their activities as deceitful and treacherous, viewing them as unworthy to labor in his realm.

Third, the dwarves of Baruk-Azhik, including the overthane, might well call for Rockhammer's exile if he were discovered consorting with Mur-Kilad. The two nations hate each other so deeply and completely that no reasoning, no matter how noble, could forgive such activity. The laws of Baruk-Azhik are clear with regard to treason; nothing short of exile is considered sufficient punishment. (The dwarves do not believe in capital punishment.)

Despite these formidable dangers, Rockhammer maintains his temples in Mur-Kilad. He understands the potential disaster that could come of the arrangement, but he answers to a higher power: Moradin. He is driven to saving as many Mur-Kilad souls as he can; he is nothing but noble in his desire to bring Moradin's light to all dwarves. He also believes, perhaps naively, that Moradin will support his efforts and prevent such a disaster from occurring.

Rockhammer's hope is to bring enough Mur-Kilad dwarves into Moradin's favor and train enough priests so that the sect can survive on its own, without his own continued guidance and intervention. Once he can break free of their temples, he can put the dangers to himself, both realms, and all dwarves to rest forever.

The high priest estimates, however, that this effort will require no less than 20 more years of clandestine operations. With so many years of work ahead of him, the chance of discovery is great, but Rockhammer remains steadfast in his belief that his noble cause will ensure his success.

Aside from a few small sums of gold secretly borrowed to assist the startup of the Mur-Kilad temples (all of which was repaid), Rockhammer has never drained even a copper from any of the resources of Baruk-Azhik. The Mur-Kilad temples are simple and plain, but have reached a level of self-sufficiency.

cairn vahan

Thane of Bran's Retreat
8th-level dwarf fighter

S: 17
D: 12
C: 15
I: 11
W: 8
Ch: 11

AC: 2
hp: 63
MV: 6
THAC0: 13
#AT: 3/2

Dmg: by weapon;
1d6/1d8 (sword),
1d4+2/1d4+1
(warhammer)



Bloodline: Brenna, minor, 22

Blood Ability: Unreadable thoughts

Equipment: Dwarven plate armor, short sword, moraskorr warhammer (+1 damage bonus)

At the age of 207 years, Cairn Vahan is the youngest of Baruk-Azhik's thanes. He has held this post for 15 years, making him a relative novice at rulership, but came to the position with considerable military experience. He is recognized as a hero in the orog wars.

Cairn inherited his rule from his uncle, Koll Vahan. Koll was an ancient dwarf who died at the age of 512 years, having reigned for the last 298 years. Koll had no offspring of his own, and so trained Cairn for this office from an early age. Cairn has been involved in duties of the office since he was a boy of 20, serving as a page.

Cairn's most striking feature is his jet-black hair and beard. This trait runs strong in his family; even upon his deathbed, Koll's black hair revealed not even a single strand of gray.

As a young ruler, Cairn is cautious and enthusiastic. He is eager to make the right decisions for his province, and will not allow himself to be pressured into any options which he has not fully considered. He is utterly loyal to the overthane. He is still evaluating the other thanes to determine their strengths and weaknesses and to decide which traits would be wise for him to adapt.

hadassah endrede

Thane of Land's Victory
9th-level dwarf priest

S: 13
D: 14
C: 15
I: 12
W: 18
Ch: 15

AC: 5
hp: 61
MV: 6
THAC0: 16
#AT: 1
Dmg: by weapon;
1d6+1/1d6 (mace),
1d4+2/1d4+1 (warhammer)

Bloodline: Reynir, major, 38

Blood Ability: Healing

Equipment: Dwarven chain mail, mace, moraskorr warhammer (+1 damage bonus)

Hadassah (pronounced ha-DAHSS) Endrede has garnered an extraordinary amount of respect from her fellow thanes, her followers, and the whole of Baruk-Azhik in her 90 years as thane. She is a woman of limitless patience who is able to assess any situation quickly and bring matters to speedy resolution. She is not hasty or judgmental, but simply has a knack for finding solutions quickly.

Endrede is 362 years old, but is wise beyond her years and as agile as a woman 100 years her junior. She is married to a dwarf gemcutter named Kulwik, and the couple have two daughters named Maeve and Gilvert. Like all dwarven women, Endrede does not have a beard.

As a consummate diplomat, Endrede has often been sent out of the domain to deal with human and elven realms. Endrede has enjoyed success with the elves and welcomes such missions, but has never understood the unusual treatment she has received from humans. Human rulers, she feels, tend to patronize her; they are polite and attentive, but seem to put little stock in her words and diplomatic efforts. She has occasionally disqualified herself from diplomacy with humans, allowing a male counterpart to perform such duties in her place.



bayard laccolith

Thane of Cliff's Lament
8th-level dwarf thief

S: 13
D: 16
C: 13
I: 12
W: 10
Ch: 13

AC: 3
hp: 36
MV: 6
THAC0: 17
#AT: 1

Dmg: by weapon:
1d6+1/1d8+1
(sword), 1d4/1d3
(dagger)

Bloodline: Vorynn, major, 32
Blood Ability: Animal affinity (minor—owls), character reading (major)
Equipment: Dwarven chain mail, moraskorr short sword (+1 damage bonus), dagger

Bayard Laccolith is perhaps the most flamboyant of the thanes of Baruk-Azhik. While flamboyance under dwarven measure comes nowhere near flamboyance under human criteria, this dwarf is considered boisterous and free-spirited by his fellows.

Laccolith is recognized as a fine leader by most, but his gregarious nature and colorful manners take many who meet him by surprise. Anyone who takes the time to observe the dwarf at work, however, will quickly recognize his talents.

The dwarf's nature has a distinct purpose within the realm. Oftentimes, especially recently in light of the orog wars, the dwarves become downcast and serious, but Laccolith's activities often serve as comic relief in too-tense meetings. In gatherings that deteriorate into doom and gloom, the thane's personality usually brings involved parties to their senses and to more accurate assessments of the facts.

Laccolith is single and considered an eligible bachelor by the women of Baruk-Azhik. He is cautious to choose a mate carefully however, so as not to weaken his bloodline in his heirs.



wulfram wainier

Thane of The Promontory
10th-level dwarf fighter

S: 18
D: 13
C: 15
I: 12
W: 14
Ch: 16

AC: 2
hp: 79
MV: 6
THAC0: 11
#AT: 3/2
Dmg: by weapon:
1d6+1/1d8+1
(sword),
1d8+1/1d8+1 (axe)

Bloodline: Anduiras, great, 48
Blood Abilities: Detect illusion (minor), divine aura (great)
Equipment: Dwarven plate armor, moraskorr short sword (+1 damage bonus), moraskorr battle axe (+1 damage bonus)

Wulfram Wainier is the oldest of the thanes of Baruk-Azhik (387 years old) and has ruled the Promontory for 216 years. According to dwarven custom, he is next in line for the throne of the overthane, with the exception of any heirs of the current overthane.

Wainier has a commanding presence, and can bring a roomful of buzzing government officials to silence merely by entering. All dwarves, as well as most humans and elves, find themselves compelled to listen to his words whether in a large-scale address or on a personal level.

Even at his advanced age, Wainier is a handsome dwarf. His hair and beard are steely gray, nearly the greenish gray of moraskorr. He is in excellent physical condition and works out regularly. His wife, Katmia, passed away three decades ago, but Wainier still enjoys the company of his three children and five grandchildren.

The new overthane will find Wainier's knowledge, wisdom, and diplomatic skill to be indispensable.



the privileges of office

The overthane of Baruk-Azhik, in addition to his considerable responsibilities, enjoys a number of benefits unique to the office. Foremost among these is the privilege of residing in the royal palace. A map of the palace appears on the cover of this sourcebook; descriptions of the areas on the map follow.

The entire area designated as the palace grounds occupies a single cavern. A main entrance leading from other parts of Baruk-Azhik can be closed off by massive iron gates.

The palace itself is constructed of red granite, polished to a high sheen. Every stone is fitted perfectly, and every detail is artistically executed. The outside perimeters of both the palace and the cavern wall are etched with stylized trees, flowers, and plants, giving the illusion of an exotic underground garden.

Because the dwarves have untold mineral, gem, and metal resources available, the palace is tastefully decorated with gold, silver, and moraskorr leaf, studded gems, and decorative stonework and statuary. Any king in Cerilia would be envious of this marvelous structure.

A1 and A2: Gardens. These areas are stone flowerboxes filled with stone sculptures of trees, flowers, and shrubs, as well as live plants.

B: Visitors' Reception Area. This expanse contains several meeting rooms, a lounge, a small dining room, and two guest rooms for overnight visits. Business can be conducted in this portion of the palace without giving access to the private areas of the dwelling.

C and D: Servants' Quarters. The palace employs several dozen full-time servants who see to cleaning and maintaining the dwelling, preparing meals, and caring for guests. These duties are positions of honor among the dwarves. Servants dwell here with their families, and each family is provided a spacious, private apartment. Areas are also set aside for a school for the children, a common lounge, and a workshop for artistic pursuits.

E: Formal Dining Room, Ballroom, Art Gallery, Guest Suites. These areas are reserved for state dinners and visiting dwarven dignitaries. The overthane occasionally hosts parties celebrating

promotions of high-level dwarves, birthdays, and other events. Dwarves also have a custom of observing a two-year mourning period following the death of a relative or dignitary; the end of this period is marked by a celebration, and the overthane usually hosts such an event following the mourning of a thane. This area is visited only by dwarves; no human has ever set foot in this part of the realm.

F: Main Kitchen. This expansive kitchen is used for preparation of state dinners and the overthane's daily meals.

G: Arcade. This stretch of hallway serves simply to divide the overthane's private quarters from the more public areas of the palace.

H: Courtyard. A place for relaxation, the courtyard has no roof and is open to the rest of the palace cavern. It is filled with exotic rock gardens and stone sculptures.

I: Overthane's Personal Quarters. This portion of the palace is divided into bedrooms, studies, a library, a recreation hall, and other rooms. The overthane and his family and a few trusted servants have the only access to these quarters.

J: Royal Stables. The overthane's personal mounts and caravan ponies are housed here.


K: Hedge Maze and Playground. This recreation area is available to all residents of the palace grounds.

L: Exercise Grounds. The royal ponies are trained and exercised here.

other assets

The overthane is free to commission any moraskorr weapons or armor that he may desire, as well as personal furnishings for the palace. He may also choose a personal mount.





Baruk-Azhik is a land of riches. The deposits of metals and gems under the mountain, and indeed the stone itself, provide a nearly endless source of raw materials and trade goods. The dwarves have put their resources to good use in building their realm over the centuries and have been successful traders in exporting stone, ore, raw gems, and finished goods.

What the dwarves have not yet grasped, however, is the value of their commodities in the outside world. While they have always commanded fair deals for themselves in trade, they have only scratched the surface of their potential for income. Were the dwarves to place all their energies into mining and producing goods for export, they could quickly find themselves sitting atop a heap of gold bars (in addition to those that they could manufacture themselves!) The human demand for ores and gemstones is never-ending, and if the dwarves desired, they could place themselves in the position of working as full-time exporters.

The dwarves are mindful of their talent for self-sufficiency, however, and are reluctant to sacrifice this ability in the interest of building a treasury. In times of desperation, though, the folk of Baruk-Azhik could quickly amass capital through widespread trade.

To make the situation even more interesting, all of these trade options would be possible even while keeping the dwarves' moraskorr a secret. This ore has been unknown in Cerilia since its birth; the dwarves have never let slip a word about the wondrous metal. The smiths of Baruk-Azhik continually produce moraskorr weapons and ceremonial objects at a slow pace; the metal's most admirable qualities make it difficult to forge except under optimum conditions and consummate skill.

No one outside the dwarven domain would have any measure of success attempting to forge moraskorr. **Special note: All moraskorr weapons carry a +1 bonus to damage.**

If the dwarves chose to introduce their most precious metal and weapons to the outside world, however, they would find themselves literally beating off potential buyers.

Every ruler and regent in Anuire, and in fact in most of Cerilia, would be knocking at the dwarves' doors to purchase weapons or ore. The dwarves could find themselves in the position of draining the treasuries of many of the land's wealthiest families.

On the other hand, Baruk-Azhik would likely find itself

the target of conquest by every

awnshegh on the continent. As soon as any of the evil abominations learned of the wondrous ore, they would no doubt set their sights on taking over the dwarven nation. The awnsheghlien, of course, would never pay for that which they could take by force—especially when they would stand to control the entire known deposits of moraskorr. Baruk-Azhik would likely be doomed

Furthermore, the result of such greed could bring about a war to rival Mount Deismaar. If the awnsheghlien were to battle each other head to head over the dwarven realm, many abominations would likely die. The survivors would naturally grow more powerful—and the fate of Cerilia might be changed forever. The dwarves fully understand what might follow if they were to unveil this amazing resource to the rest of the world—and that's why it has been such a strict secret for so many centuries.

resource conversion

The rules for generating a regent's income as described in the BIRTHRIGHT boxed set hardly seem fair to a nation of dwarves who have gold and gems literally lying at their feet. Therefore, the overthane of Baruk-Azhik (as well as the four thanes of the provinces) may generate wealth according to the rules for the *alchemy* realm spell. This is considered a domain action and is not an actual spell; thus, it is not subject to the requirement for a source. It is offered as a means to compensate for the considerable wealth commanded by the dwarves.

armies

Baruk-Azhik currently maintains four units of dwarf guards and four units of dwarf crossbows. These are the elite troops of the realm; pikemen or infantry can be mustered at any time. Because of the ongoing wars with the orogs, the dwarves are prepared for war at a moment's notice, with weapons and armor at the ready. As a result, the overthane can muster one unit of infantry as an *extra* free action each domain turn; this unit is subject to normal mustering and maintenance costs. Although army units are not normally available immediately, this unit is available in the same action round as it is created.

fortifications

The underground dwarven cities certainly qualify as fortifications for purposes of war against the orogs, but have little or no value in a surface battle. The Dungeon Master and player should discuss the features of Baruk-Azhik's cities and identify them as castles or fortifications, and assign them a level as such (see Part II: Domains in the *Rulebook*). They should also discuss the value of the cities in the event of a surface battle.

roads

Although the surface of Baruk-Azhik is unmarred by construction other than the massive stone doors leading into each city, the living spaces used by the dwarves are hardly isolated. Major underground roads lead from each province to the next, providing easy access for trade, movement of armies, evacuation in emergencies, and participation in festivals and events of state.

The underground roads measure roughly 100 yards across, and the tunnels are finished with the same detail as the other dwarven living areas. Traffic is normally present in both directions. In the event of an emergency, with traffic moving in a single direction, the wide tunnels allow for quick travel; a province could be completely evacuated in under an hour.

Baruk-Azhik's roads more than qualify for the roads required for the establishment of a trade route.

trade routes

The dwarves of Baruk-Azhik are hardly eager traders, but they do realize the limits of their own resources. They have also come to realize that increased trade might free them from mundane tasks such as harvesting and allow them more time and energy to fight the orogs. Thus, trade with Baruk-Azhik is likely to increase in the near future.

Still, the dwarves will never agree to open their doors to outsiders. All trade will be conducted primarily through Diirk Watershold, and secondarily through the Anuireans Elamien Lamier or Moerele Lannaman (since they have already proven themselves to the dwarves). All available slots for guild holdings in Baruk-Azhik are currently filled, so new guilds will not be opening any time soon.

Trade routes are in place leading to Ruorven in Coerany (via the waterway known to the dwarves as the Minder River), to Shieldhaven in Mhoried (via the Khurinbyrn or Minder to the Gulf of Coerany and up the River Maesil), to Ilien (via the rivers and the Gulf), and to Moriel in Osoerde (also via waterways). The new overthane need only determine whether they are open and active or have fallen out of use in recent years.

Naturally, the dwarves would prefer not to mar their lands with overland roads in order to conduct trade (roads also have the unpleasant side effect of allowing enemy armies to easily march into a realm). Their preference will always be for trade partners to come to the dwarven realm (as opposed to the dwarves hauling their goods to their destination). They would also pressure trade partners to haul merchandise via waterways to avoid the need for roads. At least 75% of the goods arriving in and departing from Baruk-Azhik do so via the Khurinlach.

The dwarves also engage in occasional trade with the elves in the Sielwode. This is accomplished via a secret underground road that travels from the heart of Baruk-Azhik just past the border of the Sielwode, where it emerges above ground. The elves have used specialized magic to camouflage the entrance and



prevent unwanted access. The dwarves have constructed numerous dead-ends and baffles along their road; only trained guides can navigate the stretch successfully.

holdings in baruk-azhik

The table of holdings from the *Ruins of Empire* booklet is reprinted here for convenience.

Province	Law	Temples	Guilds	Sources
Bran's Retreat (4/1)	XX (4)	MF (4)	DW (2) EL (2)	-
Cliff's Lament (4/1)	XX (4)	MF (4)	DW (2) EL (2)	-
Land's Victory (3/6)	XX (3)	MF (3)	DW (3)	-
The Promontory (3/6)	XX (3)	MF (3)	DW (3)	-
Rivenrock (5/4)	XX (5)	MF (5)	ML (3) DW (2)	-

Abbreviations: XX=formerly Grimm Graybeard (Baruk-Azhik), currently the new overthane; MF=Moradin's Forge (Ruarch Rockhammer); DW=Diirk Watershold (Royal Guild of Baruk-Azhik); EL=Elamien Lamier (Points East Trading Guild); ML=Moerele Lannaman (Maesil Shippers).

law

Until his demise, Grimm Graybeard controlled every law holding in Baruk-Azhik. During the two-year mourning period, the four thanes each took control of the law holdings in their provinces; the law holdings in Rivenrock came under the control of Wulfram Wainier (eldest of the thanes).

Upon the coronation of the overthane (indeed as part of the coronation ceremony), control of the law holdings immediately passed to the new ruler. The new overthane now controls the five holdings and collects regency points accordingly.

The law holdings in Baruk-Azhik consist of the barristers and courts, the constabulary, and the six commissioners who oversee all levels of the constabulary.

guilds

The previous section on trade routes provides some details about the guilds in Baruk-Azhik, including the dwarven attitudes toward trade and



established vehicles for trade. The new overthane should become familiar with this information.

The three guildmasters of Baruk-Azhik, Diirk Watershold, Elamien Lamier, and Moerele Lannaman, maintain a slightly antagonistic but friendly relationship. Each grasps his holdings in an iron grip, unwilling to lose control to one of the other guildmasters. However, when trading among the three guilds, the men do tend to give each other a break in terms of price, delivery, or other concessions.

The three will occasionally unite when dealing with other realms, especially those with difficult guildmasters. The trio has evolved a system of "good guilder, bad guilder, *worse* guilder" for purposes of outside trade—an impressive act that serves to coerce, influence, or even bully other guilders into submission.

Overall, Baruk-Azhik's trade relationships are healthy and profitable. As long as conditions remain this way, the new overthane will have few worries with regard to the status of guilds in the realm.

temples

The only religion recognized in Baruk-Azhik is Moradin's Forge. All dwarves revere and worship Moradin and make a practice of studying his laws. Religion is deeply embedded in dwarven society; many day-to-day customs reflect religious beliefs or observances.

Ruarch Rockhammer is the high priest of Moradin's Forge and thus controls all temples in the realm. Much of the regency that he collects is voluntarily transferred to the overthane. The church and the state maintain a complimentary relationship; the church willingly adds gold to the state coffers when needed, and the state assists the church if necessary. The church tends to have few expenses since the dwarves of the realm see to the construction of everything in the underground.

SOURCES

No sources are controlled or maintained in Baruk-Azhik. Any wizard wishing to gain control

of a source will first need to gain the trust and confidence of the dwarves. Any wizard who enters the land and establishes a source without the permission of the overthane will be summarily deported.

The dwarves would consider an arrangement that would allow a wizard to control a source in Baruk-Azhik (and even project ley lines from it) if the wizard could provide some useful service such as defense against outsiders or orogs, or perhaps offensive magic that would be useful against the orogs.

The dwarves, being nonmagical in nature, are somewhat suspicious of wizardly magic. In order for a wizard to prove himself to the powers of Baruk-Azhik, he might be asked to perform some task to demonstrate his ability and test his mettle.

Any wizard who wins the favor of the dwarves is lucky indeed. The dwarves will protect the interests of such a wizard right down to a military battle. In addition, the wizard stands to control some areas of high magical potential. Depending on the campaign world, these magic ratings may climb even higher given the possibility for fantastic underground formations that may be heavy producers of mebhagh.

Currently, no ley lines are known to cross Baruk-Azhik. If the dwarves discovered such lines in their realm, they would likely trace them to their source and determine the motives of the wizard responsible for them. If the dwarves determined that the wizard's motives were less than honorable, they would do anything in their power (including hiring a wizard to sunder the lines) to destroy, disrupt, or otherwise prevent the use of the lines.



This section is designed to provide a DM with ideas for adventures in Baruk-Azhik, and to provide players with story threads they would like to follow. Some might be short adventures; others might turn into long campaigns or open new opportunities or difficulties for the overthane of Baruk-Azhik.

rumors

Following is a list of rumors that might be heard anywhere in Cerilia. These may be used as adventure starters, political leverage, or the beginnings of wild goose chases.

- ◆ Grimm Graybeard is dead and the dwarven nation is in chaos. (False)
- ◆ If every forge in Cerilia dedicated to Moradin is extinguished, the dwarves' nations will die. (False)
- ◆ The dwarves have discovered a fantastic ore that is stronger than the finest Anuirean steel. (True)
- ◆ An exiled dwarf lives in the Chimaeron and serves its awnshegh leader. (True)
- ◆ A dwarf's heart is a ruby as large as a melon; when a dwarf is killed, the gem may be stolen. (False)
- ◆ The dwarves have hired a mage to help protect their lands and aid them in war. (False, unless the campaign dictates otherwise.)
- ◆ A serpent measuring more than 100 yards long lives in the Khurinlach. The dwarves feed it and nurture it so that it helps to protect their beaches. (False)
- ◆ The nation of Baruk-Azhik is slowly being corrupted by an unknown awnshegh. (False)
- ◆ The dwarves would consider going to war against the Gorgon if it would gain them an ally to help the war against the orogs. (True)
 - ◆ The Promontory is home to a powerful magical source; its magic rating is double what scholars believe it to be. (False)
 - ◆ The dwarven kingdoms are rich in gold, silver, gems, and metals; a conqueror of the realm would control vast wealth. (True)

secrets and plots

the foil of baruk-azhik

An exiled dwarf named Charrek Ironfist is known to live in the lands of the Chimaera; indeed, he is the ruler of the province of Ruorkhe. None can say for certain from which realm he hails, and none of the dwarven nations recognize him as one of their own. Chances are good that he once called Baruk-Azhik his home; after all, he was exiled and lived to tell

rumors, secrets, and plots

about it. If he was a native of Mur-Kilad who committed some offense, execution would have been a more likely punishment.

Ironfist isn't admitting to his homeland or his crime. Some speculate that he's waiting for the right opportunity to reveal this information; what might constitute the "right opportunity" is anyone's guess.

If Ironfist does hail from Baruk-Azhik, he could be extremely dangerous to his homeland. His age is estimated at 120 years, meaning that he is an adult dwarf who would have had every opportunity to fully explore the far reaches of the underground city he called home. If he originated from Rivenrock, the Promontory, or Land's Victory, he would likely know the secret of the dwarves' moraskorr; if he came from Bran's Retreat or Cliff's Lament, he may not know of this fantastic metal.

No one can say how many dwarven secrets Ironfist holds. If he ever chooses to use them against his people, however, he could seriously jeopardize the underground domains of the dwarves.

the lost city of kheleb-izhil

According to human and dwarven records, a city named Kheleb-Izhil once existed in Cerilia. It was a vast and powerful realm of indescribable beauty at the heart of a great mountain. The city was rumored to be one of the oldest civilizations in Cerilia.

From all estimates, around the year 890 MA, the dwarves sealed the doors to their city and disappeared completely. Over time, the location of the city was forgotten; most speculate that it lay in eastern Rhuannach.

This lost realm holds no end of adventure opportunities. The dwarves of Baruk-Azhik may know the location of the lost city, and may still maintain ties to it. The dwarves of Kheleb-Izhil may have moved to Baruk-Azhik, claiming one of the provinces as their own and gradually assimilating into the culture. The city may still exist in Rhuannach, untouched by time, wars, and politics on the surface.

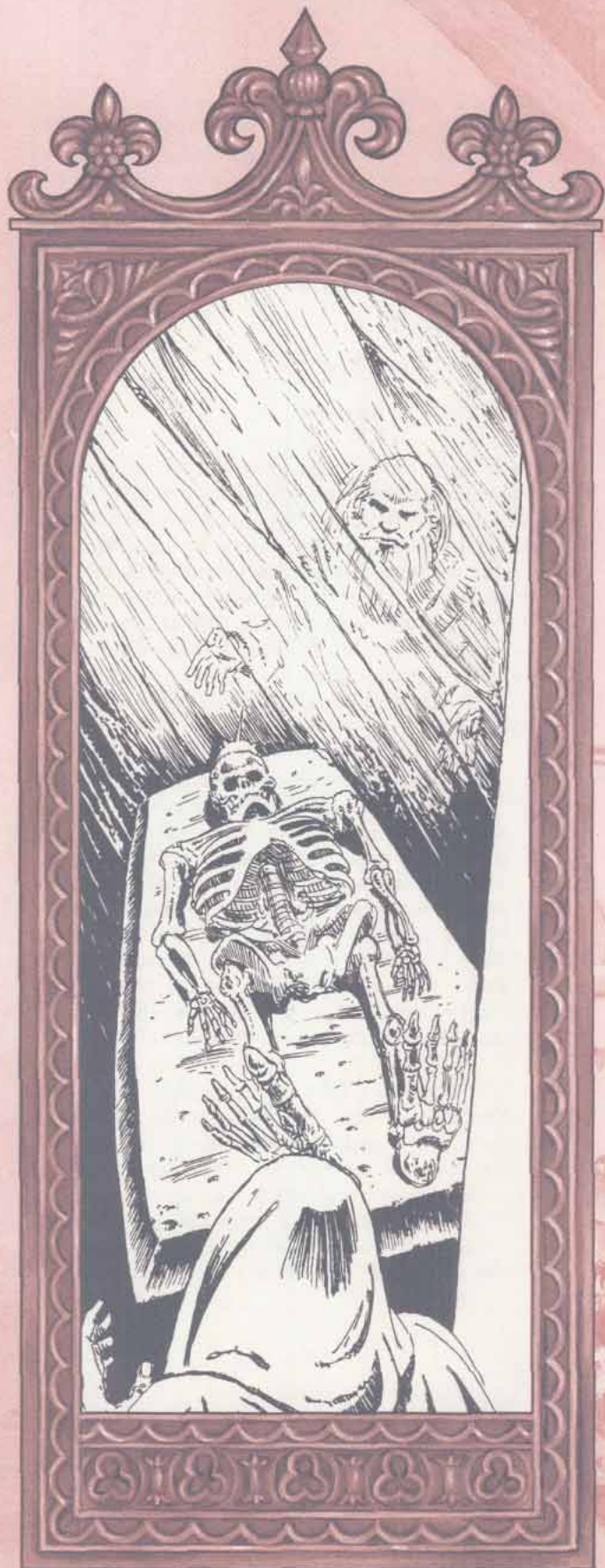
The discovery of this city would be a thrill for any adventuring group; such a party would garner honors and accolades from every corner of the continent. If the dwarves wished to remain undiscovered, however, the party may find itself the target of a relentless assassination attempt.

Depending on the goals of a campaign, Baruk-Azhik might serve as a catalyst for a quest to discover the lost city. Any sort of clues or directions may be found among the dwarves, but such clues are not without a price. Any group hoping to make a deal with the dwarves will find itself requiring topnotch diplomatic skills, and will likely need to perform an important and dangerous quest to earn the dwarves' trust in order to gain clues.

a cry for help

Although the dwarves of Baruk-Azhik and Mur-Kilad hold a deep hatred for each other, the dwarves of Mur-Kilad have nearly reached the breaking point. They have been controlled by the Gorgon for a number of years and have been forced to work side-by-side with the goblins of Markazor. Life in Mur-Kilad can hardly become any more miserable.

In all likelihood, the overthane of Baruk-Azhik will one day receive a plea for help from Mur-Kilad. Rather than dismissing it out of hand, the overthane will feel obligated to at least investigate the message to determine the status of the



enemy dwarves. An adventuring party will most likely be hired to infiltrate Mur-Kilad, determine the legitimacy of the message, and report back to the overthane. He will, of course, require some kind of proof as to the authenticity of the request as well as the current status of the dwarves and verification of any promises the Mur-Kilad nation offers in return.

the thane's kidnaping

Because the orogs have grown in power in recent decades and have discovered the art of the sneak attack, it is likely that the orogs will succeed in an attack sometime in the near future. Orog are hardly masters of diplomacy or negotiation, but they do understand the value of a hostage. Given the opportunity and a stroke of luck, they might capture one of Baruk-Azhik's thanes and spirit him back to their lairs.

This situation presents several adventure options.

- ♦ The dwarves may choose to negotiate with the orogs on neutral ground (perhaps in the Sielwode or Coerany). The diplomats may require an adventuring party to accompany and guide them or to provide extra muscle. The dwarves might use this opportunity to slay an enemy leader (although only under sufficient provocation; it's not in the dwarves nature to start a fight while on a diplomatic mission). They might also see this as an opportunity to study the enemy to discover a weakness.
- ♦ The dwarves might agree to negotiate within the orogs' realm. They will choose this option only if it seems likely that they can discover weaknesses, secrets about the enemy's armies, or information about the orog tunnels. The dwarves, being consummate miners, will remember every detail of their journey into the orogs' lair, even if they are blindfolded.

- ♦ What may seem to be a kidnaping to the orogs may actually be an elaborate dwarven hoax. The dwarves could arrange for someone other than the overthane to be kidnaped in order to gain access to the interior of the orog lairs. A wizard would be needed to help disguise the "victim"; any number of warriors or adventurers might follow the kidnapers invisibly and silently to effect an ambush or a rescue.

recipe for disaster

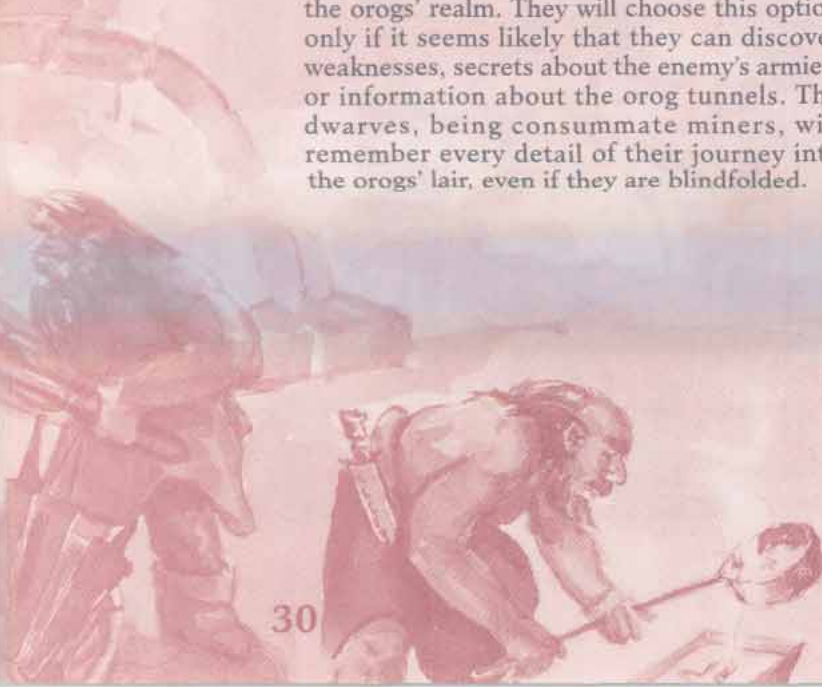
One of the dwarves' greatest obstacles fighting the orogs is the necessity of battling on enemy territory. The dwarves know the wisdom of fighting on their own terrain—but how to lure the orogs into their tunnels?

Cairn Vahan, the youngest of the thanes and a war hero in his own right, is willing to lead preparations to invite the orogs into Baruk-Azhik. First, he will direct his fellows to lay traps and other dangers, then he will organize a propaganda campaign. The dwarves will "let slip" the information that a disaster has occurred underground (a flood from the Khurinlach, fires, or perhaps an earthquake) and that the dwarven nation is in chaos. Assuming that such information leaks to the orogs, they will no doubt believe the dwarves to be easy prey and descend upon them en masse. With their careful preparations, the dwarves should be able to slaughter the waves of orogs attempting to infiltrate Baruk-Azhik.

mystery in rax doxik

A rumor reaches the outside world that a fantastic treasure lies in the depths of Rax Doxik. None can say whether this treasure is a deposit of gems or ore, a forgotten cache of gold coins, or an item of untold magical powers. Adventurers come from far and wide to try their luck at finding the prize, greatly disturbing the dwarves. They must drive the disruptive parties out of the dwarven lands, adjudicate their squabbles, and otherwise put up with humans and their petty concerns.

The dwarves might also wish to step up their attempts at mining into Rax Doxik from the interior of their home. If they can beat the outsiders into the crevasse, they may be able to scare off the intruders or foil their attempts. It's possible that such a treasure does exist, and has escaped



the dwarves' attention for many centuries. It's also possible that the orogs started the rumors in order to distract the dwarves and assist them in a future ambush.

moradin's child

Sometime after the coronation of the new overthane, Grimm Graybeard will appear to the new ruler and pass along a secret known only to the overthanes of Baruk-Azhik and a few distinguished and ancient, holy dwarves. Hidden deep in the realm, at the very root of the mountain, lies an age-old sacred treasure.

Graybeard will escort the overthane (and no one else!) to the secret cache, past several traps, secret doors, and hopelessly twisting tunnels. In a secret vault sealed with interlocking stone doors lies the dwarves' most sacred treasure.

Lying on a low, stone altar, the overthane will discover the skeleton of a dwarf—a *skeleton constructed of moraskorr*. It is of the finest craftsmanship—so fine, in fact, that even the most skillful dwarves would have difficulty creating such a work of art. According to Graybeard, the legend passed down through the overthanes tells that this skeleton belonged to one of Moradin's children. It was discovered in millennia past and secreted here to preserve it.

The dwarves have no way of knowing to which of the eight children the skeleton belonged. But there is little doubt that this was the work of Moradin.

Because this find was so incredible, the skeleton was placed here until Moradin's will could be determined. But in all the centuries that have passed, no dwarf has ever been able to make a decision regarding the fate of the skeleton. Should it be placed on display as a holy relic? Should it be forged into holy weapons to aid in the orog wars? Or would it be desecration to do anything with the skeleton other than preserve it? And if this skeleton exists, are the other seven hidden somewhere about the realm? If all eight were ever brought to light, what sacred phenomena might result?

This information, while awe-inspiring, carries a tremendous burden. The overthane must swear to absolute secrecy, on the condition that the skeleton be revealed only when the appropriate action is ready to be taken. The dwarves have always hoped that Moradin would provide a sign to the overthane to guide his decision, but until now, the god has remained silent about his wishes for his child.

the missing link

A rumor surfaces that the dwarves are harboring an exotic and dangerous creature unlike any beast ever seen in Cerilia. It is vaguely humanoid in form but exhibits monstrous features such as 6-inch fangs and claws, red glowing eyes, and bristly fur. The creature is housed somewhere in a remote underground area of Bran's Retreat.

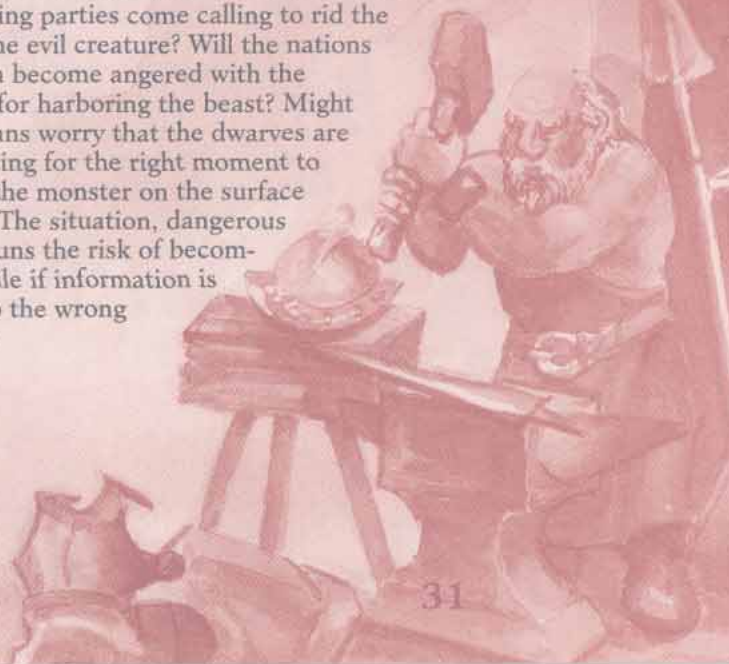
No one can say why the dwarves have chosen to hide this creature. Some scholars speculate that it is a minor awnshegh previously unknown in Cerilia. If so, why would the dwarves take such care in concealing it?


If the beast is indeed an awnshegh, the folk of Baruk-Azhik certainly know the terror the creature could wreak on the outside world. A stone cavern with securely locked gates is without a doubt the safest possible place for the beast. But why harbor the creature at all—why not kill it and end the risk to the world?

The dwarves no doubt fear the monster's evil bloodline. None are willing to run the risk of liberating Azrai's power or absorbing it themselves. The dwarves are happier keeping the beast locked away until it dies a natural death.

The dwarves have no doubt discussed the option of setting the awnshegh free in the orog realms. The beast would no doubt wreak havoc on the orog population, but it would likely grow in power as a result. The dwarves would also bear the responsibility of turning an awnshegh loose on Cerilia—and although the creature might never be traced back to the dwarves, the folk of Baruk-Azhik could never bear the guilt of such a terrible deed.

Will the dwarves manage to keep the monster in its stony prison until its death? Might the orogs accidentally tunnel into its cell? If the outside world learns of the monster, will adventuring parties come calling to rid the land of the evil creature? Will the nations of Cerilia become angered with the dwarves for harboring the beast? Might the humans worry that the dwarves are only waiting for the right moment to unleash the monster on the surface nations? The situation, dangerous as it is, runs the risk of becoming volatile if information is leaked to the wrong listeners.





The overthane of Baruk-Azhik stands at a pivotal point in the land's history. Until now, the land has been insular, but has survived and flourished. Now, the orog threat is greater than ever—and unless a solution is found quickly, Baruk-Azhik may fall to its racial enemy.

If the overthane hopes to maintain the domain's insularity, he must be especially creative in responding to the orogs. The population of the dwarven nation has been stagnant for the past thousand years, but the orog numbers are growing. If Baruk-Azhik begins losing warriors in large numbers, it has little hope of recovering; its glory days are likely to be over.

The dwarves do not quite understand the value of their minerals, gems, and weapons in human terms. Any regent would turn a greedy eye toward the dwarven treasures and would likely sacrifice armies in exchange for such wealth. The overthane must proceed with caution, however, so as not to invite a greedy assault on dwarven lands for the sake of their treasures.

The overthane is not without options, however. Several choices are outlined here.

Strike a deal with neighboring humans. Kiergard suffers occasional raids from the orogs and would be glad to see this menace eliminated. They are likely to offer troops in exchange for quantities of gems, precious metals, or dwarven weapons. Once the battles are finished and payments are received, the humans will view this as a completed deal and will not press for future considerations from the dwarves. Using human armies, however, means allowing humans into the dwarven halls where none have trod since the beginning of time.

Strike a deal with the neighboring elves. The elves are likely to enlist in the dwarven cause, but their price will no doubt be higher than that of the humans. In addition, they will expect the dwarves to take the elven view toward humans, and will expect the dwarves to come to the elves' aid in subsequent battles. The elven warriors are slightly superior to the humans, but the price may not be worth it. Any deal struck with the elves must be carefully arranged.

Enlist aid from a wizard. Baruk-Azhik currently has no source holdings and thus is highly coveted by wizards. The dwarves should have no trouble enlisting the powers of a wizard (or even two) in exchange for

strategies

granting rights to build and develop sources. Again, any such agreements must be carefully worded and all details spelled out precisely.

Consider borrowing the powers and influence of the Chimaera. Baruk-Azhik has maintained an unspoken agreement with the awnshagh for years; no time is better for cementing that agreement. The Chimaera might be persuaded to aid in the wars against the orogs (taking as many as she desires for consumption or as prisoners) in exchange for legitimate rights to maintain her refuge in the Promontory.

Work toward building bonds with the dwarves of Mur Kilad. This scheme will likely take 10 or more years of planning and negotiating. The dwarves of Mur-Kilad originally settled their lands in order to fight the orogs. When the Gorgon moved in and forced them into the status of a puppet state, the dwarves were ordered to fight alongside the goblins in whatever wars the Gorgon selected. The dwarves would naturally like to see this situation ended and regain control of their small land.

This tactic would likely require a specific series of events: first, secret negotiations with the dwarves to establish a relationship; second, an instigation to war against the Gorgon by the dwarves and goblins, aided by the dwarves of Baruk-Azhik (the dwarves and goblins have no way to come to the aid of Baruk-Azhik while under the Gorgon's influence); third, a war against the orogs with the aid of Markazor and Mur-Kilad; and fourth, a treaty that ensures the rights and borders of Baruk-Azhik, reestablishes the nations of Markazor and Mur-Kilad, and creates a nonaggression pact among the three nations. Any merging of Baruk-Azhik and Mur-Kilad would be a separate issue, but may be worth exploring by the regents. In any case, the final result should be a merging of enemies against a common enemy, with the effect of the three nations living independently in peace.



the laws of moradin's children

When Moradin created his children, he asked each of them to design a law that would govern their group and be passed down to their heirs. The eight sanctions that follow are regarded as laws of the highest order. A violation of them is regarded as a crime against Moradin himself; offenders found guilty of such a crime may be banished from the realm.

Torvald's Law

All dwarves answer first and foremost to Moradin. Their lives must be dedicated to his laws and teachings.

Mirvald's Law

The bonds of the family must be regarded as sacred. No dwarf shall undertake any action that might tear a family asunder.

Sivia's Law

Every dwarf of Baruk-Azhik is of equal worth. No dwarf shall place himself or herself above another.

Kalvia's Law

The safety of Baruk-Azhik's lands and people must never be compromised.

Zohra'a Law

The dwarven lands are a gift from Moradin. Their resources and wealth must be treated with respect and used to their fullest potential. The land's treasures must not be squandered.

Zahra'a Law

Evil must never be allowed to triumph over good.

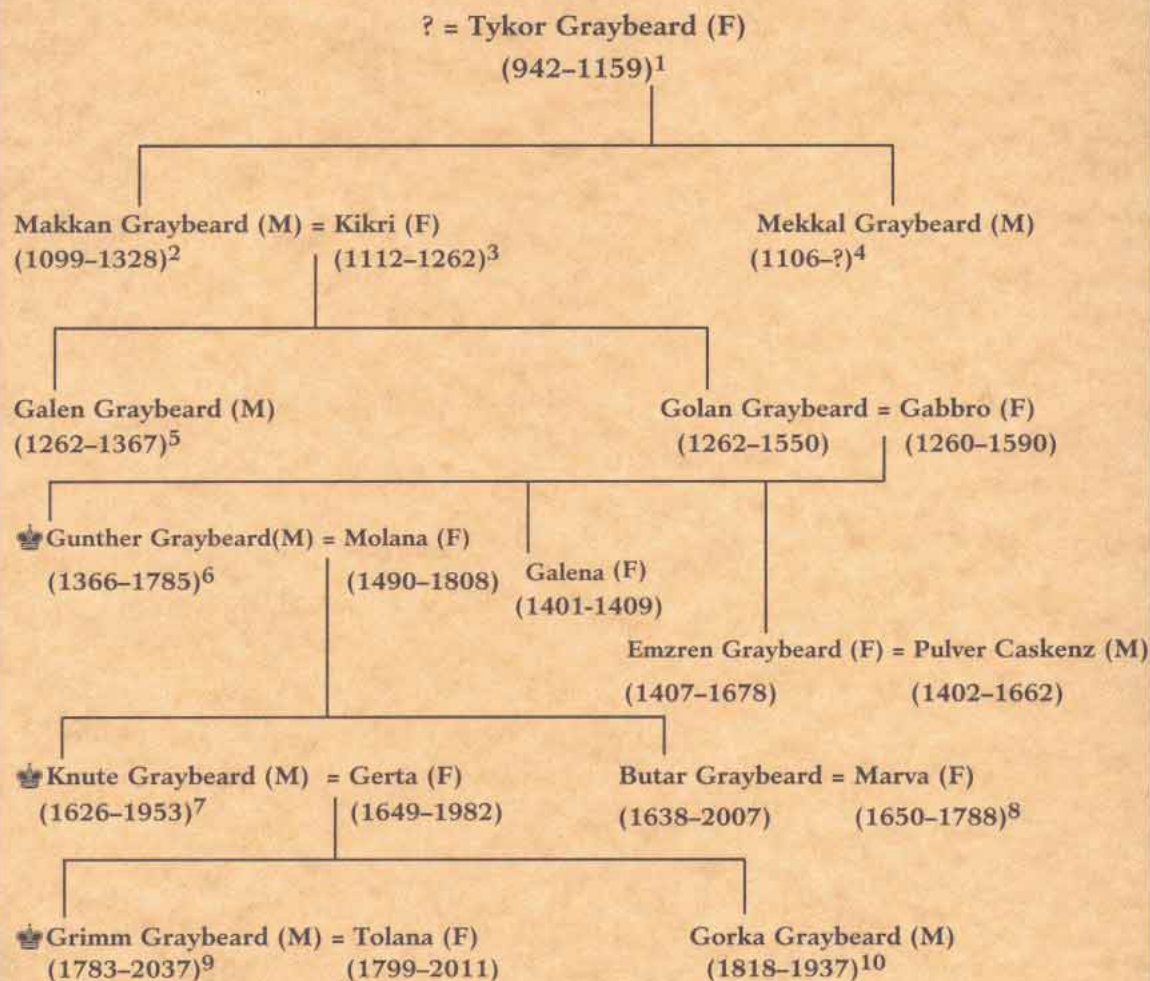
Kalmirn's Law

Enslavement of a dwarf must never be tolerated.

Kalgraf's Law

No dwarf in Baruk-Azhik shall want for food, shelter, or companionship. Dwarves must care for their own kind, especially the aged and infirm.

Lineage of The Graybeard Overthanes



- 1 No record exists of Tykor's husband. Why this information disappeared remains a complete mystery.
- 2 Killed; ambushed while on a diplomatic mission.
- 3 Died in childbirth.
- 4 Mekkal disappeared in 1182; no satisfactory explanation has ever been offered.
- 5 Galen was killed in a cave-in resulting from a trap in the orog realms.
- 6 Ruled 1595-1785; ascended to the throne following the death of Overthane Mokkor Ironfoot. Gunther died of old age.
- 7 Ruled 1787-1953.
- 8 Marva died of illness six years after the marriage. Butar never remarried and never had children.
- 9 Ruled 1955-2037.
- 10 Gorka was killed in the orog wars.

the
SIELWODE

KIERGARD



Vale
of
Moradin

Rivenrock

Moradastrik
Rax
Doxik

Bran's Retreat

the Promontory







Land's
Victory

Cliff's Lament

the
KHURINLACH

CHIMAERON

COERANYS

	Forests
	Mountains
	Traders' Caves
	Hills
	Gates to Underground Cities
	the Chimaera's Refuge

Visitors' Center

Gates to the Interior

Guest Rooms

Private Meeting Rooms

Lounge

Kitchen

Dining Room

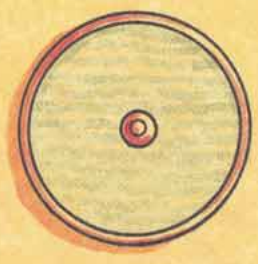
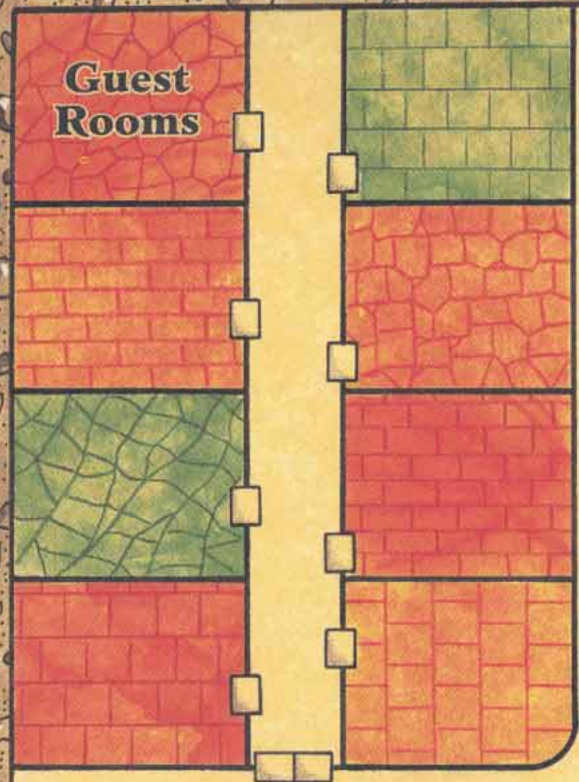
Meeting Room

Meeting Room

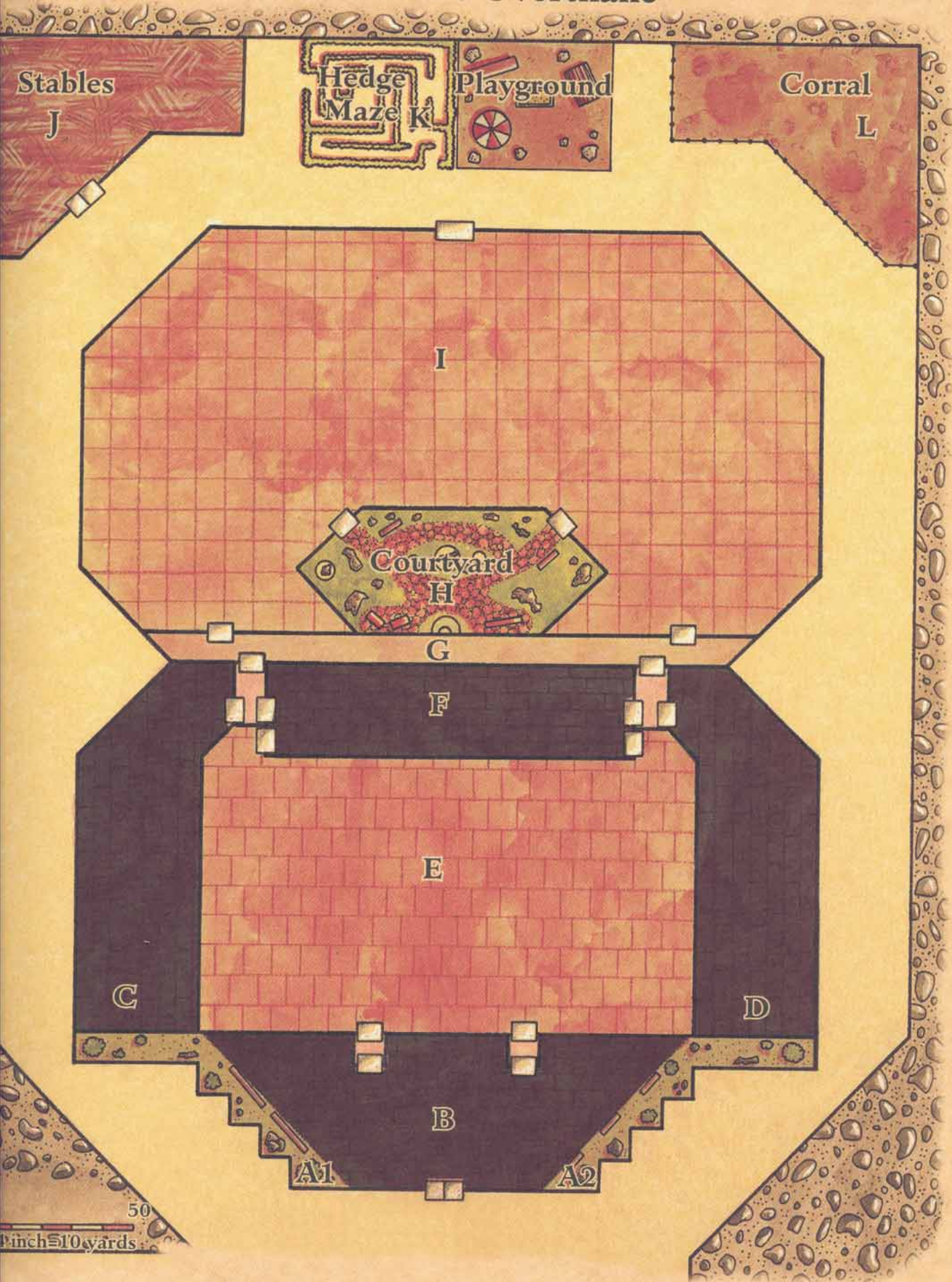
Meeting Room

Exterior Gates

1/4 inch = 10 yards
0 50



Palace of the Overthane



Dungeons & Dragons

Player's Secrets of

BARUK-AZHİK



by Anne Brown

Long before humans invaded Cerilia, the dwarves of the land had carved out a peaceful life for themselves, marred only by the persistent savagery of orog tribes. Since the human incursion, life has changed little for the natives of Baruk-Azhik, sequestered safely beneath the inhospitable mountains known as the Iron Peaks.

Baruk-Azhik is a domain of untold riches; there seems no end to the precious metals under the mountains, and surface-dwellers are always eager to trade. But the domain is not without its perils. The orogs have grown more numerous and more cunning, and outside help may be needed to defeat them for once and for all.

The character who ascends the throne of Baruk-Azhik assumes command of a mighty and loyal nation—but one whose existence hangs in the balance. Only a leader with nerves of steel, hardened determination, and superior command skill can guide the dwarves into a future full of promise and free of war.

This BIRTHRIGHT™ domain sourcebook is designed for players who wish to take the role of the Overthane of Baruk-Azhik. It may also be used by players playing nobles, vassals of the regent, or adventurers from this domain.

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