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Dune Trader

by Anthony Pryor



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Credits

Designed by Anthony Pryor

Edited by Mike Breault

Project Coordination by Timothy B. Brown

Black & White Art by David O. Miller and Brom

Color Art by Brom

Graphic Design & Production by Sarah Feggstad

Typography by Tracey Zamagne

Cartography by Dave Sutherland

Special Thanks to Robert V. Armstrong, Terri Bates, Sherri Brown, Jeff Carnegie, Scott Casebeer, Beth Davis, Lee Joslyn, Mark McMann, Lloyd Manuel Perez, Sante Peterson, Josh Russell-Bryant, Tom Steward, and Chuck Sweet

TSR, Inc.
POB 756
Lake Geneva
WI 53147
U.S.A



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

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Introduction

A hot wind blows across the Sea of Silt—a wind swift and furious enough to scourge skin and polish bone. A tiny huddle of stone huts clings tenaciously to the shore, like a mekillot hunkered down against a sandstorm. A lone figure stands nearby, swathed in heavy robes, his face muffled save for a narrow eyeslit. He keeps watch, gazing away from the sea, across the endless sands, awaiting those who may never come again. He braces himself against the wicked wind, leaning upon a bone staff as the next blast tears at him.

Abruptly, the sentry stares intently into the gritty maelstrom. Could it be? Yes—there it is—a lone outrider, his swift crodlu gliding through the dust. Then, behind him, another, and yet a third, all clad in silks turned red-brown by the sand, bearing slim lances with fluttering pennants. The sentry's heart leaps as a hitch of great, lumbering beasts emerges from the storm, towing the awesome bulk of a vast, armored wagon. From its prow, this huge ship of the sands flies a single blue banner, bearing the image of a silver jozhal.

The sentry pulls down his mask, revealing a tough, weathered face. With a look of joy and relief,

he raises a silver whistle to his lips. He sends forth three sharp, urgent blasts that cut like a bone dagger through the wind's howl. From the huddled stone buildings emerge the men, women, and children of the village, frantically donning their robes while laughing, joking, or crying with relief.

Although the winds are fierce and enemies abound in the blasted wastes along the Sea of Silt, the villagers know that now they have a chance to live through another year.

The dune trader has come.

Exactly who and what are dune traders? The answer depends upon whom you ask. A simple villager, living in a rude village amid the perils of the sandy wastes, might describe them this way:

"Dune traders? Oh, bless them, by all the elements! If it were not for the traders, we would surely perish in a season! They bring us the food and supplies we need to live, and they trade it to us for our crafts, our produce, or our animals. Sometimes, when we have little to trade, they exchange their goods for services—for places to stay or fodder for their beasts. We are a poor village, and the dune traders treat us



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fairly. Without them, we would perish!"

The sorcerer-kings, on the other hand, maintain somewhat different views:

"Sometimes, I don't know whether to praise them or curse them. They live in my city, they take up valuable space and resources, and yet they obey me only when it suits them. They say that they wish to maintain the general good, keep things stable so that they may make a profit. Sometimes I wonder whether they plot against me, seeking to destroy my authority. Oh, but these traders are a pain!

"And yet, without them, my people would be unable to raise great monuments to my glory, or perhaps even to eat! And should my people grow dissatisfied, they would not submit so easily to my rule, and would not give me the honor and reverence I deserve. These traders are a pain, but what would I do without them?"

As can be seen, opinions of dune traders vary greatly. Possibly the least prejudiced view of the traders may come from a trader.

"What am I? I am a merchant, plain and simple. I do what I must to make a profit and to promote a climate that is conducive to trade. And how must

that be done, you ask? By maintaining absolute neutrality, I tell you. By refusing to join any group or order, by trading with all equally. I trade with all and shun no one. All are welcome to trade—elves, dwarves, gith, belgoi — why, I would trade with the dragon itself if it wished!

"And good will is almost as important as profit, for without good will, profit is often impossible. I cooperate with the sorcerer-kings, even though I find many of them personally distasteful. Without their good will, I cannot trade, and thus I cannot make a profit. And the poor villagers of the sands—I know that often they do not have enough to trade, but without them, my caravans cannot rest or receive sustenance, so I often trade for lodging or meals, or I leave supplies in exchange for a promise of future trade concessions. I do not see this as kindness, mind you. To me, this is simply good business.

"Who am I? I am no more or less than I seem. I am a merchant and a businessman. I am a dune trader."

Dune Trader is a supplement for the DARK SUN™ game world. It deals with the inner workings





Introduction

of the powerful trading houses of Athas. The first section describes the leading trading house of each of the major cities of the Tyr region—Wavir (Balic), Tsalaxa (Draj), Inika (Gulg), Shom (Nibenay), M'ke (Raam), Vordon (Tyr), and Stel (Urik). Each entry discusses the house's history, trade practices, assets, and relations with the sorcerer-kings and other trade houses. The characters and various outposts and headquarters of each house are also detailed.

Following this, some of the hundreds of minor merchant houses are described. As most PC-driven merchant houses will start small and work their way up, this section provides valuable information on how to run such a business.

The next chapter describes the elven merchants. Three major types of elven merchants exist on Athas—the “legitimate” trading tribes that do their business mostly in the open, raiding tribes who occasionally trade, and tribes of elves who trade in the shadows, dealing in contraband and engaging in smuggling, intrigue, and darker activities. A typical example of each of these tribes is detailed.

Finally, there is information on trade routes, trade goods, and how PCs can become merchants, including statistics for the new trader class of player characters.

Armed with the information in this book, a DM can learn the secrets of Athasian trade and create a challenging, realistic trading environment for profit-hungry players. Trade is the lifeblood of Athas. This, then, is the world of the dune trader.

A Note on Abbreviations

Characters and monsters are referred to here by a standard short format. Several new character classes have been introduced for the DARK SUN™ game, and the following abbreviations are used:

B: Bard	C: Cleric	D: Defiler
F: Fighter	G: Gladiator	I: Illusionist
Ps: Psionicist	Pr: Preserver	R: Ranger

Te: Templar Th: Thief Tr: Trader

In short character entries, spells and psionic abilities are listed simply by number per level (for spells) and total number of abilities (for psionics). Spells and psionic abilities for these characters can be chosen by the DM or picked randomly. Detailed personality descriptions list specific spells and abilities, but these can be changed by the DM to fit his campaign.

The Merchants' Code

All mercantile houses follow a strict code of behavior, known as the Merchants' Code. Anyone wishing to join a merchant house must accept all aspects of this code and abide by them or face immediate expulsion. The code varies from house to house, but in most cases it conforms to the following principles:

1. Recognition that by joining a merchant house, an agent forsakes citizenship in any city or membership in any tribe.
2. An oath of allegiance to the merchant house.
3. A promise to perform in the best interests of the merchant house in return for a salary.
4. A promise to deal honestly with stranger, friend, and foe alike.
5. A promise not to flaunt any wealth gained through employment with the house.
6. A promise to uphold the laws of the city in which the agent is stationed, and to do nothing to bring down the wrath of the sorcerer-king or his agents upon the house.
7. A promise to cooperate with other merchants to make life very expensive for any person who unjustly imprisons, blackmails, or otherwise harasses any merchant.

The Major Merchant Houses of the Tyr Region

It would be a terrible mistake to assume that all power on Athas rests in the hands of the sorcerer-kings. Power can be held in many ways, and many hands besides those of the cities' rulers may possess it.

The major merchant houses of Athas hold much of the balance of power, often to the dismay of the sorcerer-kings. The merchant houses supply the lifeblood of Athas—foodstuffs that feed isolated city-states, construction materials to build the palaces of sorcerer-kings and decadent nobles, slaves to toil in fields or fight and die in gladiator pits, and many other vital items.

Organized along family lines with a matriarch or patriarch at its head, a major house controls dozens of caravans, maintains estates in several different cities, sponsors trading villages, and employs (or owns) thousands. The largest houses—Wavir, Tsaxa, and their ilk—are influential enough to make even the most powerful sorcerer-kings take heed.

The leading trade houses of each of the Tyr re-

gion's cities are detailed in this chapter. Information given includes their assets, histories, trade practices, headquarters, caravans, leading personalities, and more.

House Inika

Inika operates out of its headquarters in the city of Gulg. It is small compared to some of the other major houses, but this is by choice. Dealing in small, valuable cargoes, such as kola nuts, exotic feathers, spices, and gemstones, Inika sees the benefit in remaining small and efficient. As a result, the house rakes in profits far out of proportion to its size, gaining a reputation for being one of the shrewdest houses in the region.

House Inika's banner shows a plain gold circle on a black field.

History

Over three centuries ago, in the year of the Des-





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ert's Fury, in the city of Gulg, Taro Inika, a trusted agent of House Riben, broke his merchant's oath and left his employers, starting his own house. Only the good will of Biria Riben, the house's matriarch who had once been Inika's lover, prevented the new house from being crushed within a year.

In Gulg, rivalries between trade houses are kept to a minimum to maintain the peace and tranquility of the city. This proved a rich environment for the new concern. Within a few years, the house assumed its current form: a streamlined business dealing in small but valuable cargoes.

House Vordon, ever on the lookout for weak rivals to exploit or destroy, immediately dispatched raiders to disrupt the silk routes between Urik and Raam. Surprisingly, House Inika gave in immediately, abandoning the routes, effectively ceding them to its wealthier competitor. Unfortunately for Vordon, they soon found that the resources that Inika had withdrawn from the silk route had been rerouted into the spice trade between Tyr and Gulg, where Vordon was extremely vulnerable. Within a few months, Vordon was on the ropes, losing money on the spice route and regretting the day that it ever heard of House Inika.

Such incidents underline two of House Inika's major philosophies: that force is to be used only as a last resort, and that strategic withdrawal to a superior position is often the best route.

Assets

Inika's favored trade goods—kola nuts, spices, gems, feathers, and other small but valuable items, help make Inika caravans small and fast. Gulg's relative tranquility and the regularity of its production provides House Inika with a regular income. Wise investment and conservative spending combine to keep Inika on a solid financial footing.

Caravans: Inika's caravans are small and fast. Elven scouts provide advance warning of ambushes or attacks, which are usually avoided rather than confronted. Cargo is carried almost exclusively on

kanks, although inix are sometimes used for larger cargoes. Mekillots and wagons are almost never found in Inika caravans.

Average caravans include about a dozen elven scouts with up to 20 kanks and (rarely) four to six inix. Due to the caravans' small size, House Inika can afford to maintain many more than other merchant houses. At any one time, Inika can have 50 to 75 caravans carrying cargo across the region.

Inika caravans' tactics are, first and foremost, to avoid any enemy forces. Should this fail, they scatter to break up pursuit. The scouts are expected to seek out the dispersed kank riders and bring them back together after the attack has ended.

Facilities: House Inika maintains very few permanent installations, preferring to temporarily rent or lease space in villages, forts, or cities. The house maintains a few trade villages and fortresses, such as Fort Adros. Major facilities and their resources are listed below.

Fort Adros: 75 employees, 150 slaves. Supply point along the gold route between Walis and Altaruk. Often a target of attacks by elves and gith.

Fort Harbeth: 50 employees, 100 slaves. Supply and storage point in the foothills to the southwest of the Mekillot Mountains, equidistant from Gulg, Salt View, and North Ledopolus. A major trading post for the slaves of Salt View and a place to purchase dwarven items from Ledopolus.

Fort Skonz: 50 employees, 75 slaves. Supply point at junction of three roads between Tyr, Altaruk, and Silver Spring. An increasingly important position as trade links between Tyr and other cities begin to be re-established. Fort Skonz was threatened with occupation by Urik forces during the recent conflict between Tyr and Urik, but the threat failed to materialize.

Shazlim Trade village, 500 citizens. Located along the southern edge of Dragon's Bowl between Raam and Silver Spring, Shazlin represents an important stopover and trade point in the area.

Permanent facilities, such as the house's head-

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quarters in Gulg, are masterpieces of understated luxury. This structure is deceptively calm, with few guards and little in the way of obvious defenses. As would-be intruders have discovered, however, Inika's guards are deadly fighters, and the mansion itself teems with traps and hazards throughout its hundred or more rooms.

Troops: As may be guessed, House Inika shuns large numbers of troops. Those household forces that are permanently maintained are of elite quality, while less-skilled troops are hired only when absolutely necessary, and then on only a short-time basis. Inika permanently employs perhaps 500 individuals whose duties are solely military. These individuals are of 5th level or higher. All are skilled in many different weapons and tactics and can serve as scouts, cavalry, infantry, or elite raiding forces.

Opportunities

Inika is far from a generous employer, preferring to lavish its wealth on trusted agents. Hirelings can expect to work for average pay or less, and they should not anticipate long-term employment unless their performance is exemplary. Should a hireling rise through the ranks to become a valued employee, however, House Inika may offer the ultimate honor—a permanent position as an agent. Particularly successful agents may be invited to join the family itself, but this is very rare.

Agents are well cared for, due in part to their small numbers. Inika is reluctant to share its prosperity with too many house members, so its agents are few but highly skilled. Inika cares for its agents and their families from the cradle to the grave, on the wise thought that such a major investment is not lightly set aside.

Scouts, spies, kank riders, and lightly armed, fast-moving fighters are favored as hirelings. Mages and psionicists are very high priced and are employed only in dire need.

House Inika owns over 2,000 slaves of various races. Inika has a reputation for treating its slaves

well, although slackers and individuals who do not swiftly obey orders find themselves sold to work in mines or for other unpleasant work.

Relations with Others

House Inika stays out of trouble. This is not to say that Inika never engages in intrigue or double-dealing; it's just very difficult to catch Inika at it. Such conduct is usually directed only at those who have done wrong by Inika. House Inika does not get mad, but it does get even.

In dealing with other houses and the sorcerings, Inika takes a nonconfrontational approach. If challenged for control of an important route or commodity, Inika resists strongly to persuade its opponents to commit time and resources to the conflict. Inika then withdraws suddenly, changes tactics, and ends up putting pressure on the opponents in a totally unexpected quarter.

Inika rarely employs large numbers of mercenaries, preferring the services of small, elite groups of raiders to harry their enemies or agents to gather information. Inika is far more likely to engage in intrigue and backroom dealings than to openly attack an enemy with soldiers or magic.

Cordial relations are maintained at all times, even during the most intensive rivalries. The patriarch of a house that had incurred Inika's wrath once commented that Inika was highly skilled at smiling at a rival while it twisted a knife in his back.

Despite this, Inika tries to stay on friendly terms with other houses. House Wavir in Balic is counted as an ally by House Inika. Most others at least have nothing against House Inika, though trade rivalries are common. House Tsalaxa harbors bad feelings toward Inika, but Inika's reputation prevents Tsalaxa from taking overt action.

Because Inika controls virtually all trade in kola nuts, pepper, and saffron, it can manipulate prices in these commodities almost at will. It sometimes draws rivals into the spice trade with low prices, then increases costs overnight, causing severe financial



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strain. Such tactics are reserved for particularly bitter rivals, as Inika prefers good relations with its competitors.

Inika deals well with the oba, the sorcerer-queen of Gulg. Her templars negotiate with trade houses in the name of the people of Gulg. Despite occasional minor disputes and bad feelings between the houses and the templars, this system is generally successful in keeping the city and its merchants prosperous.

In other cities, Inika is scrupulously cautious about obeying local laws, thus maintaining the good will of the sorcerer-kings. Inika never deals in contraband or engages in smuggling, despite the huge profits that may be reaped by doing so.

As with other houses, Inika frequently has trouble with the sorcerer-kings. These monarchs, or their templars, often attempt to squeeze more duties out of House Inika than are strictly necessary. They also try to raid Inika's caravans for their valuable cargoes. In such instances, Inika has been known to quietly withdraw from a city, while urging its friends and allies among the other houses to do likewise, for a sorcerer-king who will cheat House Inika will probably cheat anyone. By the time Inika's actions are discovered, they are usually all but gone, depriving the offending sorcerer-king of trade and important items for his nobles and citizens.

Personalities

Andiama Inika

Female Human Trader, Lawful Neutral

Armor Class 8 (padded armor)	Str 17
Movement 12	Dex 13
Level 19	Con 10
Hit Points 60	Int 19
THAC0 10	Wis 18
No. of Attacks 1	Cha 14

Damage/Attack: 1d8 + 1 (steel scimitar)

Psionic Summary: PSDs 97; Wild Talent-conceal thoughts (PS Wis; Cost -5 + 3/round)

Andiama Inika is a tall, slender woman with black hair shot through with gray. She customarily wears long, silk robes with elaborate sashes. Her manner is at once friendly and firm. Her agents and family members extend unquestioned loyalty to her, and always follow her wishes to the letter.

House Inika's matriarch has maintained control of the house for 18 years now and has led Inika to its greatest prosperity in generations.

Ranis Inika

Female Half-elf Bard, True Neutral

Armor Class 8 (clothes + Dex)	Str 13
Movement 12	Dex 16
Level 18	Con 12
Hit Points 58	Int 16
THAC0 12	Wis 17
No. of Attacks 1	Cha 17

Damage/Attack: 1d6 (flint-tipped spear)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 74; Wild Talent—Enhanced Strength (PS Wis -3; Cost -2 x Added Str pts + Added Str pts/round)

Spells: 1st Level— *burning hands, change self, sleep, hypnotism*; 2nd Level— *alter self, flaming sphere, levitate, locate object*; 3rd Level— *dispel magic, fireball, fleet feet, haste*; 4th Level— *charm monster, minor creation, minor globe of invulnerability*; 5th Level— *advanced illusion, teleport, wall of stone*; 6th Level— *mass suggestion, shades*

Ranis began her career with House Inika as a highly skilled agent. In the guise of a simple wandering bard, she gathered voluminous amounts of information on Inika's rivals, enemies, friends, and even on the sorcerer-kings themselves. When her

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quick thinking saved Andiamia from an assassination attempt by a rival house, Ranis was officially adopted into the family. Since then, she has continued to serve the house faithfully. She is the most loyal member of a family known for its loyalty.

Physically, Ranis is impressive—her exceptional grace and beauty have captivated many, and her skill as a performer has made her a legend throughout the Tyr region. She is known by many aliases; few realize that the beautiful elven bard whose performance is said to have reduced the sorcerer-king of Urik to tears, or the mysterious spy who stole House Rees' most secret trade documents, is actually the most trusted and dangerous member of House Inika after the matriarch herself.

Shallin Losya

Female Human Psionicist, True Neutral

Armor Class 8 (padded armor)	Str 9
Movement 12	Dex 12
Level 18	Con 14
Hit Points 51	Int 14
THAC0 12	Wis 18
No. of Attacks 1	Cha 13

Damage/Attack: 1d4 (bronze dagger)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 247

Defense Modes—intellect fortress, mental barrier, mind blank, thought shield, tower of iron will

Clairsentience— *Sciences:* aura sight *Devotions:* combat mind, danger sense

Psychokinesis— *Sciences:* disintegrate, telekinesis *Devotions:* ballistic attack, control body, inertial barrier, molecular agitation, soften

Psychometabolism— *Sciences:* complete healing *Devotions:* body weaponry, flesh armor

Psychoportation— *Sciences:* ejection, mindlink, probe *Devotions:* contact, ego whip, id insinuation, invisibility, mind thrust, psychic crush, send thoughts

Metapsionics— *Sciences:* ultrablast *Devotions:* cannibalize, convergence, magnify, psychic drain, stasis field.

Shallin is the chief psionicist of House Inika, and as such she is an awesome psychic warrior. Like most household members, Shallin is fanatically loyal to Andiamia and her family, and she never ceases turning her substantial powers to Inika's defense. While her duties include the supervision and training of other psionicists in Inika's employ, Shallin likes to keep her skills in trim by occasionally going on missions, accompanying caravans, or serving for a few weeks at a family outpost.

Normally clad in maroon and gray, Shallin keeps her brown hair cut short, in order to wear a psionicist's skullcap. She normally carries an ornate staff with a carved antler at one end, rumored by many to be magical. Despite her neutral alignment, she reserves a deep and abiding loyalty to her house. Her neutrality is more obvious in dealings with those outside House Inika.

Tomak Reslin

Male Mul Gladiator, Lawful Neutral

Armor Class 3 (braxat hide)	Str 21
Movement 12	Dex 12
Level 19	Con 17
Hit Points 95	Int 12
THAC0 2	Wis 15
No. of Attacks 2	Cha 7

Damage/Attack: 1d10 + 9 (steel two-handed sword)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 218; Wild Talents—life draining (PS Con -3; Cost—11 + 5/round), cell adjustment (PS Con -3; Cost—5 + up to 20/round), enhanced strength (PS Wis -3; Cost—varies), flesh armor (PS Con -3; Cost—8 +4/round)



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Tomak rose to prominence as one of the deadliest gladiators in Gulg. His flesh seemed to absorb the fiercest blows without damage and those who had the courage to fight him often seemed wracked by pain even before they came to blows.

The truth was that Tomak was one of the most psionically powerful wild talents in Gulg's history, and his victories came as a result of martial skill combined with psychic powers. As soon as Tomak realized this, he immediately sought out House Inika, who had been one of his most consistent supporters in the games. He offered his services as an agent if they would buy his freedom. After examining him psionically, Andiama agreed. House Inika purchased Tomak for an enormous sum and immediately granted the gladiator his freedom in exchange for his pledge of loyalty as an agent. Tomak obeyed his pledge to the letter and, like most other Inika agents, continues to work with both diligence and loyalty.

Tomak is an unassuming mul who normally dresses nondescriptly and does little to attract attention. As commander of Andiama's bodyguard and leader of particularly difficult caravans or military missions, Tomak is a terror. He wields his two-handed sword (a valuable antique from a horde of treasure he found in Arkhold) with deadly efficiency. He still endeavors to keep his psionic abilities secret. So far, he has succeeded, but should the psionists of opposing houses ever catch on, Tomak may gain himself some dangerous new enemies.

House M'ke

As chief house of the troubled city of Raam, M'ke maintains a precarious balance between the reviled Great Vizier and the restive populace. The house's reputation has fallen somewhat in recent years due to the near-anarchy in Raam, but M'ke has fallen back on its vast cash reserves to see it through. Houses Vordon and Tsalaxa have been applying pressure on M'ke of late, urging it to join the rebels seeking to overthrow the Great Vizier, but

so far nothing has come of this.

M'ke's symbol is a silver quill pen on a red field.

History

House M'ke's origins are somewhat mysterious. Some claim that the house originated in an unknown area beyond the Tyr region, while others believe that M'ke was founded by dissident templars fleeing their sorcerer-king's wrath. Whatever its origin, M'ke became a force to be reckoned with.

Under the leadership of a veiled sorceress named Katyana, who never showed more of herself than a pair of exotic, kohl-lined dark purple eyes, M'ke quickly unseated House Comis, then the most influential merchants in Raam. This was accomplished through a combination of assassinations, raids on enemy trade routes, and dramatic undercutting of Comis's prices in major cities.

Within a few years, M'ke had taken over major trade routes to Draj, Urik, and Nibenay. Finally, M'ke launched a military campaign against Comis, using household agents, guards, and large numbers of mercenaries to take over the vital trade village of Dayos, between Raam and Draj. This crushing victory sent House Comis fleeing southward to obscurity and eventual extinction.

M'ke's subsequent behavior has been an interesting combination of ruthlessness and caution. They treat more powerful rivals with intense respect, but they steal trade routes and even engage in open combat with weaker houses. Despite their occasional vicious streak, members of House M'ke are generally considered pleasant and intelligent individuals with few bad habits. This is only one of many bizarre contrasts in the confusing, contradictory House M'ke.

As the years passed, intelligent business practices prevailed, and House M'ke amassed a sizeable treasury, setting portions of each year's profits aside for use during lean years.

Lean years came sooner than expected. Abalach-Re, ruler of Raam, is now a laughing stock, with

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nobles openly warring for control of the city, and many leading citizens calling for her overthrow.

The recent chaos in Tyr, where for the first time in history a sorcerer-king has been overthrown, has added new fuel to the fires in Raam. Battles between bands of noblemen and their followers are common in the city's streets. The Great Vizier's templars, as reviled as their mistress, find it more and more difficult to carry out their duties. While Abalach-Re still maintains a great deal of power, corruption, violence, and crime have run wild. These unsettled conditions have crippled Raam's once-thriving economy, and the city's merchant houses have suffered accordingly.

Much of House M'ke's hoarded wealth is now being channelled into hiring mercenaries to guard warehouses and facilities within the city and to defend the house against the marauding nobles, who are now little better than raiding tribes themselves.

Rebellion is spoken of openly in Raam, an event almost unthinkable in other cities. The Great Vizier's templars are held in utter contempt rather than treated with the respect and fear accorded templars elsewhere. Several nobles are speaking of combining their armies to assault Abalach-Re's palace and put one of their own on the throne as the new sorcerer-king. As the plot spreads, pressure builds from both within and without the city for M'ke to throw in with the conspirators, pressure that M'ke's patriarch Truvo has thus far resisted.

Hamanu of Urik and Tectuktitlay of Draaj also desire Abalach-Re's overthrow. Hamanu sees this as an opportunity to expand his empire, while Tectuktitlay wants some stability in Raam. With such influential sympathizers, the conspiracy against the Great Vizier is certain to continue gaining strength.

Trade by the house has shrunk of late, with M'ke withdrawing to secure citadels and outposts and adopting a fortress mentality to withstand the chaos in Raam. Truvo M'ke realizes that this means the future will hold intense struggles to regain old routes, but the house has been equal to the task in

the past.

Assets

M'ke's greatest asset is its hidden wealth, much of which is contained in the vaults beneath the family palace in Raam. Other caches of wealth are rumored to be scattered throughout the Tyr region as a hedge against future reverses. These are said to be located in inaccessible or dangerous areas, such as beneath the Sea of Silt, in the Aluvial Sand Wastes, or in the infamous city of the undead, Bodach. Should House M'ke's treasure be located in these places, the house's agents must have some secret means of reaching its hiding places and avoiding the natural hazards.

Caravans: Caravans flying M'ke's colors still ply the trade routes to Urik, Altaruk, Tyr, and Balic, carrying metals, food, weapons, and obsidian. The profits from these ventures have been diverted into keeping the house alive as Raam's political situation deteriorates.

M'ke can maintain only ten to 20 caravans at any one time. A typical caravan consists of 20-30 crodlu-mounted scouts, six to ten medium-sized wagons and, on especially important caravans, up to four well-defended armored caravan wagons. Crossbow-armed troops ride in the caravans, while foot soldiers or slaves walk alongside to provide further protection.

Facilities: House M'ke's holdings have shrunk along with their caravan routes. The house maintains small offices, often with skeleton staffs, in most major cities of the Tyr region. Though every caravan route once featured at least one House M'ke outpost, these have dwindled to a fraction of their former number. Major facilities are listed below.

Fort Firstwatch: 30 employees, 50 slaves. Storage and supply point between Raam and Draaj. Frequent target of raids by trade rivals and elf nomads.

Fort Isus: 50 employees, 100 slaves. Supply point and trading post between Raam and Nibenay. Popular spot for trading with nomadic tribes. Thri-



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kreen traders often visit Isus, to trade with elves, although the two races are usually sworn enemies.

Fort Xalis: 100 employees, 150 slaves. Major trading post, supply point, and military base near Black Waters, between Raam and Urik. Much of M'ke's reduced military manpower has been concentrated here, because the obsidian and slave routes between Raam and Urik are vital to Raam's survival and M'ke's continued prosperity. A major attack upon Xalis by an unknown trade rival, who had hired elven, halfling, and thri-kreen mercenaries, was recently repelled, but Fort Xalis's walls were badly damaged in the assault.

Jalaka: Trade village, 250 citizens. Despite difficult terrain and massive logistical problems, M'ke continues to maintain this village, located on the edge of the Forest Ridge approximately 40 miles north of Tyr. The reasons for this persistence are the profits to be gained from the hardwood found in the forest and the unique trade goods from the halflings of the forest. Some also suggest that Jalaka harbors a major cache of M'ke's wealth, though no specifics of this alleged hoard are known.

Troops: With House M'ke's retrenching has come a substantial reduction of its standing military forces. Today, M'ke employs approximately 600 troops, mostly cavalry and armored infantry. Once used to harry or destroy rival caravans, these troops today serve garrison duty in house forts, guard caravans, or protect house members from assassination. The family headquarters in Raam are extremely well defended by troops of 6th level or higher.

Opportunities

House M'ke's agents are masters of negotiation, intrigue, and diplomacy. Rogues and psionicists are often employed here; they may rise high in the organization with continued success. Unfortunately, the mortality rate among M'ke employees, who are expected to die rather than betray or compromise their masters, is quite high.

Lately, M'ke has not been doing much hiring,

but when they do the house pays well (25-50 percent higher than average) but demands absolute loyalty. Employees who transfer loyalty (when offered higher wages, for example) are dealt with harshly. Hirelings must obtain permission from the top in order to change employers.

Work with M'ke is high-paying but hazardous, and new employees can expect constant action, including dealing with raids from outside tribes, nobles, and even rival merchant houses. Special bonuses are paid for particularly resourceful or skilled acts in battle.

The pathetic state of the monarchy in Raam is illustrated by the fact that some of the Great Vizier's templars have been known to offer their services to House M'ke, as guards, spies, or spellcasters. While this is punishable by death, the Great Vizier has never bothered to take any action against underlings who behave in this manner.

Relations with Others

In less turbulent times, M'ke's trade practices are extremely flexible and unpredictable, varying with each situation. Powerful rivals are treated with respect and even friendship, while weaker houses are treated with contempt. M'ke's mercenaries have few qualms about raiding the caravans of small houses or even assaulting their headquarters or warehouses in major cities. Perhaps the best way for a small house to deal with M'ke is to put up a bold front, for M'ke will pounce at the slightest sign of weakness.

Actual trading is done fairly, if rather ruthlessly. M'ke's agents have a reputation for squeezing the last ceramic piece out of customers, but they always deliver what they promise. Favored customers and representatives from other houses are treated with the utmost respect. Woe unto the rival, however, who underestimates or shows weakness to M'ke's masters.

As may be gathered, House M'ke's relations with outsiders vary greatly. With the other great

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houses—Tsalaxa, Wavir, Shom, and the like, relations are friendly and cooperative. M'ke is known for its policy of respecting those who can do it harm. Its representatives frequently visit other houses offering gifts and good wishes, and information on trade routes is freely exchanged.

When dealing with a smaller or less influential house, however, M'ke's friendly facade transforms to one of downright viciousness. Raids by M'ke's mercenaries disrupt small houses' trade routes, damage their warehouses, and injure or kill their personnel. Once a small house is driven out of business, M'ke steps in to pick up the pieces.

Recently, the tables have turned somewhat, as M'ke has been forced to cut back its routes. It now feels the pressure of the vengeful small houses nibbling away at the its profits. As M'ke turns inward, defending itself against the unrest in Raam, pressure on weaker rivals has lessened and pressure from other major houses has increased. Whether M'ke will survive the current period of turmoil is not certain.

M'ke also treats the sorcerer-kings with great respect, even going so far as to maintain strict neutrality while the rest of Raam's populace calls for the Great Vizier's overthrow. M'ke never engages in smuggling, and it is particularly friendly with the kings of Draaj and Urik.

Personalities

Truvo M'ke

Male Human Trader, Neutral

Armor Class 5 (braxat hide + Dex)	Str 16
Movement 12	Dex 15
Level 22	Con 11
Hit Points 64	Int 13
THAC0 10	Wis 17
No. of Attacks 1	Cha 18

Damage/Attack: 1d4 + 2 (stone warhammer)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 85; Wild Talent-poison sense (PS Wis; Cost-1)

House M'ke's patriarch is a wizened human of indeterminate age (some claim that he is over 200). Truvo holds fanatically to the Merchants' Code, even at the expense of his own house as Raam slowly disintegrates around him. He is quiet and slow to anger. Some members of his family wonder if Truvo is still in possession of all his faculties.

Truvo is small, wrinkled, and completely bald. He normally dresses in voluminous robes of black with gold trim, and spends much of his time with his pet raven, Kraa. Although rumors speak of encroaching senility, Truvo's counsel is always wise, but he has been known to mull questions and requests for days before replying.

Rogil M'ke

Male Human Trader/Fighter, Neutral Good

Armor Class 6 (braxat hide)	Str 17
Movement 12	Dex 14
Level 18/10	Con 10
Hit Points 44	Int 16
THAC0 11	Wis 20
No. of Attacks 3/2	Cha 18

Damage/Attack: 1d8 + 1 (steel long sword)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 88; Wild Talent—combat mind (PS Int -4; Cost-12 + 2/round)

Truvo M'ke's great- (or possibly great-great-; no one is certain, even Rogil) grandson is a handsome man with dark, wavy hair, a hawkish face and dark, piercing eyes. He is known to enjoy the company of attractive women, but he is never seen with the same one twice. He freely associates with the nobles of Raam, many of whom consider him to be something of a fop.

Not surprisingly, Rogil's popular image is noth-



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ing more than a cunningly crafted disguise for Truvo's skilled, deadly, and highly intelligent successor. Only Rogil and his great- (or possibly great-great-) grandfather know the truth: that Rogil has been engaged in running many of M'ke's operations for years and that his foppish facade exists to divert suspicion and allow him to gather information about the political situation in Raam. When Truvo dies or retires, Rogil will be fully prepared to take over the reins of House M'ke and guide it through the difficult times ahead.

Rogil is a dual-classed character whose first class was trader. He is now advancing in his second class, fighter.

Astara Legar

Female Human Defiler, Chaotic Neutral

Armor Class 8 (robes + Dex)	Str 10
Movement 12	Dex 16
Level 18	Con 11
Hit Points 35	Int 20
THAC0 15	Wis 15
No. of Attacks 1	Cha 12

Damage/Attack: 1d3 (bone knife)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 88; Wild Talent-animate object (PS Int -3; Cost - 8 + 3/round)

Spells: 1st Level— *affect normal fires, detect magic, feather fall, magic missile (x 2)*; 2nd Level— *esp, flaming sphere, melf's acid arrow, strength, web*; 3rd Level— *explosive runes, fireball (x 2), fly, melf's minute meteors*; 4th Level— *confusion, ice storm, minor globe of invulnerability, psionic dampener*, wall of fire*; 5th Level— *cloudkill, feeblemind, monster summoning III, wall of force, wall of iron*; 6th Level— *disintegrate, monster summoning IV, stone to flesh*; 7th Level— *finger of death, mass invisibility, power word stun*; 8th Level— *incendiary cloud, prismatic wall*; 9th Level— *weird*

*This spell is found in the DARK SUN™ boxed set *Rules Book* on page 91.

Astara is House M'ke's chief wizard. To avoid trouble from the sorcerer-kings, neither she nor her position officially exist; house members immediately deny that anyone associated with M'ke practices magic. She has not been seen in several months, leading some to suggest that she is dead and others to claim that she is on a secret mission to help restore House M'ke's fortunes.

A wizardess of indeterminate age, Astara made her fortune as a mercenary and finally signed on as an agent of House M'ke. Normally, she is the perfect reflection of the master of the house—quiet, contemplative, and unassuming. She does have a temper, however, and she does not hesitate to use destructive spells against any who have wronged her or her house.

Mys'tll

Thri-Kreen Ranger, Chaotic Neutral

Armor Class 2 (exoskeleton + Dex)	Str 17
Movement 18	Dex 17
Level 12	Con 15
Hit Points 64	Int 12
THAC0 3	Wis 15
No. of Attacks 5 or 3	Cha 8

Damage/Attack: 1d4+7 (x4) / 1d4+8 or 1d8+9 (x2) / 1d4+8 (bone long swords)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 58; Wild Talent—astral projection (PS Int; Cost—6 +2/hour)

One of the most unusual members of M'ke's retinue, Mys'tll is one of the few thri-kreen to make its way in human society. After its tribe was wiped out, Mys'tll made a living as a thief (in itself unusual for a thri-kreen). Mys'tll was caught trying to rob one of M'ke's outposts but was pardoned in exchange

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for a vow of loyalty. Retrained as a ranger, Mys'tll became a valued member of the household.

While its chaotic nature causes Mys'tll to vanish on its own missions on occasion, and its behavior can be unpredictable, the mantis warrior continues to honor its vow to M'ke. It is often encountered in the desert, scouting for caravans or acting as a go-between to wild thri-kreen tribes.

House Shom

House Shom, the leading trade faction in the city of Nibenay, is an old and (in the eyes of many) corrupt house. Perhaps the decadent atmosphere of Nibenay has affected the house's rulers, making them strange and merciless. Perhaps centuries of sybaritic luxuries have dulled their minds and convinced them that any means of making a profit is acceptable. Regardless of their motivation, the ancient rulers of House Shom have drifted far from their house's humble beginnings. They now dream

on in oblivion as their house grows old and inhuman and slowly crumbles around them.

House Shom's banner portrays three white dragonflies on a red-and-black, diagonally divided field.

History

Shom may be the oldest trading house in the Tyr region, with a history that stretches back for over a thousand years. The house's origins are shrouded in mystery and legend, but Nibenay's historians are certain that until eight centuries ago, Shom was a tiny house with a few secure trade routes and little ambition. It was when a young merchant named Kys came to power after the unexplained deaths of both his grandfather and mother that House Shom began to grow in size and influence.

Kys waged an aggressive trade war against both House Wavir in Balic and House Inika in neighboring Gulg. First Shom wrested the vital copper and kank nectar routes between Gulg and Ledopolus





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from Inika, then it established a caravan route between Nibenay, Raam, and Draj, bringing much needed hempen rope and ceramics to its home city. Shom's profits quadrupled within months.

Shom's success did not go unnoticed; rival houses banded together to destroy the interloper. Kys had taken the precaution of securing the services of a tribe of thri-kreen warriors, who agreed to guard Shom caravans in exchange for the lives of any attackers, whom they considered "prey." When a party of House Vordon's raiders attacked a Shom caravan, the mantis warriors caught them completely by surprise, and only a handful of the raiders returned to tell the story. This marked the beginning of a long relationship between House Shom and the thri-kreen, one that endured until recently.

Kys's ability to attract unusual allies did not end with the thri-kreen. On more than one occasion, a raiding tribe was horrified to discover that the lightly armed Shom scouts swaddled in burnooses and hoods were actually belgoi in disguise. To this day, belgoi are sometimes employed by House Shom, an unpleasant surprise for those who attack Shom's caravans. It is not known how Shom maintains friendly relations with these hostile creatures.

Shom's successes continued as decades stretched into centuries. Profits from trade in rope, grains, water, obsidian, and precious metals brought prosperity to Kys' descendants. Unfortunately, they also brought decadence and a love of luxury. Members of the Shom family spent less and less time actually managing the house's affairs, leaving such mundane matters to trusted agents. Family members preferred to remain in the padded, silken confines of their vast mansions and isolated villas. Inevitably, as time went by, those trusted agents became less and less trustworthy, realizing that their distant masters cared only that acceptable profits continue to roll in.

Nowadays, as the house's fortunes wane and its rulers grow more isolated, some claim that House Shom's masters have become sorcerer-kings them-

selves, in all but name.

Today, few people can claim to have seen a member of the Shom family. They keep to their palaces, emerging only in heavily curtained palanquins to observe the gladiatorial games, or to attend the elaborate balls staged by Nibenay's nobles.

Assets

House Shom's assets are truly impressive. Unfortunately, much of the house's wealth is tied up in massive mansions and extravagant art treasures. The actual volume of trade the house engages in has shrunk steadily over the past few decades.

Shom exports obsidian, rice, water, and wood from the Crescent Forest, as well as a host of minor products, such as weapons and works of art. Major trade routes carry goods to Urik, Raam, Draj, and Tyr. Pressure from the oba of Gulg, whose rivalry with the Shadow King of Nibenay has intensified in recent years, has forced House Shom out of the lucrative spice and gold trades to the south. It is an indication of how far the house has fallen that Shom's leaders seem to care little about the loss of such valuable routes.

A few of Shom's younger members have realized the dire straits their house is in, and they have begun to move to counteract this peril. Most observers consider these moves too little and too late, but in the world of trade, anything is possible.

Caravans: Shom caravans once ranged far and wide across the Tyr region. Today, perhaps 20 caravans fly Shom's white dragonflies; these numbers decline each year.

A typical Shom caravan is large and slow-moving, burdened by far more troops than it really needs, and numerous employees who, despite impressive-sounding titles ("Master of Slaves and Cargoes," "Assistant to the Second Master of Trade Relations," "Undersecretary in Charge of Water Consumption," etc.), do little more than take up valuable cargo space.

Such a caravan employs 20 to 50 kank- or crodlu-

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mounted outriders, (who usually stick close to the main body of the caravan, thus defeating their purpose), as many as 150 leather-armored infantry, up to ten half-giants, and up to 20 mul gladiators who serve as guards for any family members or senior agents with the caravan. Family members rarely accompany caravans, but when they do, it is in a private mekillot wagon with extensive facilities.

Facilities: While Shom maintains vast holdings in Tyr, Raam, and Draj, and the house's palaces within Nibenay itself are second only to the Shadow King's, many of the house's outposts and villas have been sold to maintain Shom's masters in their accustomed lifestyle.

Typical outposts feature rather spartan quarters for the mercenary guards and outrageously extravagant quarters for the family member or agent assigned to command. Several notable family holdings follow.

Fort Melidor: 60 employees, 150 slaves. Supply point located near Lost Oasis. Melidor is more a resort for Shom family members than an actual fortress. Overstaffed and richly provided with slaves, Melidor costs far more to maintain than the slow trickle of Shom caravans can justify. Most of the time, the fort sits idle, waiting for family members to visit.

Fort Inix: 75 employees, 200 slaves. Supply and storage point located at oasis 30 miles east of Nibenay. Inix is another example of Shom's inefficiency. While this fort is still maintained and richly supplied, it serves no useful purpose, as all major caravan routes in this area vanished years ago. Inix is sometimes raided by slaves from Salt View or by various desert tribes, but in general it is a dull place.

Fort Sunset: 25 employees. This tiny outpost in the shelter of the Ringing Mountains was where Jebra Shom was sent by his sister, who hoped that he would simply disappear. The outpost is quite impoverished, but it occasionally services a Shom caravan or fights off an attack by gith.

Cromlin: Trade village, 300 citizens. Located on

the shore of the Sea of Silt, 30 miles west of Giustenal, this village still does substantial business and is one of Shom's few profitable operations. Cromlin serves as a trading city for nomadic tribes. It also maintains facilities for the repair and storage of silt skimmers, which many trading houses use to cut across the sea and reduce travel time between Nibenay and Raam.

Troops: Shom maintains over 2,000 permanent troops throughout the region. Most of these have no real purpose and simply sit idle, collecting pay, gambling, and getting into drunken brawls. All sorts of warriors find employment with Shom, from light halfling scouts to armored giants. Several tribes of thri-kreen continue to receive payment from Shom, serving the house when called upon. These troops occupy fortresses, outposts, or barracks in various cities. Each garrison has a different organizational system; the administrative problems caused by this cost the family even more.

Opportunities

More than any other house, Shom depends on agents and hirelings for its survival. Since Giovvo and the other members of the Shom family are loathe to even acknowledge the need for profit and mercantile practices, what remains of House Shom's once-vast influence is in the hands of the few agents who retain a shred of loyalty. Even these few are motivated by greed, but they realize that House Shom's demise will deprive them of their jobs.

Current hirelings are extremely jealous of their positions, and thus they are unfriendly to new employees. For their part, agents only rarely allow hirelings to rise through the ranks to the position of agent. For this reason, there is a great deal of intrigue and double-dealing among the employees of House Shom. While pay is extremely good, those lucky (or unlucky) enough to gain employment with House Shom should treat their new house like a dark hole filled with poisonous and extremely hostile



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snakes.

Presently, House Shom has few openings. When hiring does take place, warriors and clerics are most commonly employed. Psionics are frowned upon because Shom's agents are paranoid, distrusting anyone who might be able to discern their secrets. Shom has few qualms about hiring defilers, but they are hired only on a short-term basis.

Despite its diminished status, Shom maintains good relations with several tribes of thri-kreen, as well as numerous belgoi raiders. Those who attack Shom caravans or outposts occasionally find themselves confronted by unexpected hordes of mantis warriors or belgoi in disguise.

Characters who encounter House Shom will almost never see family members (with the possible exception of Jebea), as they prefer to remain in their palaces squandering the family's vast wealth. Day-to-day management of Shom's affairs is left to agents, most of whom are corrupt and jealous of their positions. It is unlikely that such individuals will hire competent underlings, for fear that they will be outshone and lose status.

Reform-minded agents, including the small but growing handful who follow Jebea, may hire player characters, hoping to fill the ranks of hirelings with intelligent, useful individuals. Pay is excellent (up to double normal rates), but new hirelings should guard their backs constantly, given the paranoid nature of other agents and hirelings.

Characters may encounter Jebea himself, who may recruit them into his reform efforts. On the other hand, Temmnya may use her wiles to attract chaotic or evil characters to her cause and to subvert Jebea and his followers.

Relations with Others

House Shom generally does not deign to acknowledge that any other merchant houses even exist; their attitude toward the mighty sorcerer-kings is only slightly better. This does not make House Shom very popular with the other houses, who have lined

up to get a piece of the house's empire when it finally collapses. Aggressive houses, particularly the militaristic House Stel, have engaged in an active campaign of raiding and disruption of Shom's routes between Nibenay and Raam. Once more, the masters of House Shom seem unconcerned, moving only slowly and ponderously to counter the threat. The vast wealth at the house's disposal, as well as the contacts it still maintains with thri-kreen raiders, are now being channeled into defending the house against its enemies. Even so, it may be too late, for Shom's income has dipped sharply over the past few decades, perhaps to levels too low to recover from.

Outsiders dealing with Shom usually have an easy time if they have enough cash for bribes. Shom agents can be persuaded to almost any course with enough ceramic pieces, although reform-minded agents respond to attempted bribes with disdain or even violence.

Personalities

Giovvo Shom

Male Human Trader, True Neutral

Armor Class 10 (robes)	Str 13
Movement 12	Dex 11
Level 20	Con 7
Hit Points 50	Int 16
THAC0 11	Wis 15
No. of Attacks 1	Cha 18

Damage/Attack: 1d6 (obsidian short sword)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 93; Wild Talent-conceal thoughts (PS Wis; Cost-5 + 3/round)

Giovvo Shom was (the last time anyone actually saw him) a vast, corpulent trader given to wearing luxurious robes of the finest materials and swilling great quantities of fine liquors. Once Giovvo was a canny and sharp-witted patriarch determined to

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drag House Shom out of its doldrums. Today, it seems that the love of luxury has gotten the better of House Shom's master; the most anyone on the outside sees of him is the curtained palanquin he travels upon, borne by a dozen slaves.

House Shom's vast entertainments have become the rage of Nibenay's high society, despite the fact that the parties are costing the house a fortune. Giovvo also enjoys gladiatorial games, and has wagered large amounts of the family fortune on long shots. His bets are always delivered by slaves or agents, and none of Shom's current leaders seem overly concerned about his excesses.

Temmnya Shom

Female Human Defiler, Neutral Evil

Armor Class 10 (robes)	Str 10
Movement 12	Dex 11
Level 15	Con 16
Hit Points 38	Int 20
THAC0 16	Wis 13
No. of Attacks 1	Cha 17

Damage/Attack: 1d4 (bronze dirk)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 101; Wild Talent—aura sight (PS Wis -5; Cost—9 + 9/round)

Spells: 1st Level— *audible glamor*, *magic missile* (x 3), *phantasmal force*; 2nd Level— *darkness* 15' radius, *flaming sphere*, *invisibility*, *knock*, *spectral hand*; 3rd Level— *dispel magic*, *fireball* (x 2), *hold person*, *vampiric touch*; 4th Level— *confusion*, *extension I*, *magic mirror*, *phantasmal killer*, *transmute sand to stone*; 5th Level— *cloudkill*, *dismissal*, *dream*, *feeblemind*, *passwall*; 6th Level— *invisible stalker*, *shades*; 7th Level— *spell turning*

Temmnya represents everything that has gone wrong with House Shom. Despite her considerable personal charisma, beauty, and intelligence, Tem-

mnya seems mostly concerned with bankrupting House Shom with even more enthusiasm than her father, Giovvo. A dedicated hedonist, she is infamous in Nibenay for her numerous admirers and the excessive parties she throws at her personal villa just outside of town in the Crescent Forest. Her own entertainments have already begun to rival her father's in sheer excess.

Temmnya normally wears rather revealing clothes of black and red, and is usually accompanied by her pet, a black panther called Ger. A thoroughly evil woman, she enjoys using her magic to injure rivals or simply for the pleasure of inflicting pain. She seems uninterested in taking over the day-to-day running of House Shom, which she will undoubtedly be called upon to do should Giovvo expire from overindulgence or age. Like her father and most of her siblings, Temmnya is content to leave management of House Shom to her agents. She lives to throw away the profits from their ventures on her own excessive lifestyle. She has recently joined the conspiracy started by Farlahn Mordis to discredit or dispose of her brother Jebea.

Jebea Shom

Male Human Trader/Fighter, Lawful Neutral

Armor Class 5 (padded armor + Dex)	Str 17
Movement 12	Dex 17
Level 12/5	Con 14
Hit Points 43	Int 15
THAC0 15	Wis 18
No. of Attacks 1	Cha 20

Damage/Attack: 1d8 + 1 (bronze long sword)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 74; Wild Talent—complete healing (PS Con; Cost—30)

Jealous of his position within House Shom, but reluctant to do violence to a family member, Temmnya arranged to have her younger brother Jebea



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shipped to a distant outpost on the edge of the Ringing Mountains. There he spent most of his early years. Unfortunately for Temmnya, the outpost was administered by an agent who still cared for House Shom and its continued prosperity; the young man grew up into a competent, reform-minded trader. While Jebea still has a long way to go to equal the experience of older family members, he has enormous charisma and invariably attracts the loyalty of those around him.

Currently on an inspection tour of Shom's outposts, Jebea has begun to formulate a plan for dragging his house out of its current depths. Other family members, his older sister chief among them, have begun to resent Jebea's reformist attitude, and Temmnya now has reason to regret not disposing of him when she had the chance.

Jebea is deceptively slender, seeming more frail than he truly is. He wears a warrior's armor when in the field. He is a competent swordsman, but his chief talent lies in detecting the weaknesses of opponents and attracting the loyalty of others. While the number of family members who support his reforms is small at present, it is growing steadily.

Jebea is a dual-classed character whose first class was trader. He is now advancing in his second class, fighter.

Farlahn Mordis

Male Human Thief, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 6 (padded armor + Dex)	Str 16
Movement 12	Dex 16
Level 12	Con 10
Hit Points 41	Int 17
THAC0 15	Wis 14
No. of Attacks 1	Cha 15

Damage/Attack: 1d4 + 1 (scourge)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 71; Wild Talent-feel light (PS Wis -3; Cost-7 + 5/round)

Ostensibly one of Shom's leading agents, Farlahn is a rather handsome but thoroughly corrupt individual. His interests have progressed from preserving the integrity and prosperity of House Shom to preserving his own precious safety and luxurious lifestyle. He is perfectly happy to drain huge amounts of cash from the household, while his decadent masters neither know nor care.

Farlahn is totally opposed to Jebea's reforms, since they would mean an end to his life of ease and pleasure. He has entered into a secret alliance with Temmnya Shom and several other agents who wish to keep House Shom on its present course. Their goal is to discredit Jebea and have him disowned by the family or, failing that, to kill him outright and remove his threat to their continued decadence.

House Stel

Closely associated with the warrior culture of Urik, Stel is without question the most aggressive and militaristic of the merchant houses. Stel specializes in the spoils of war—slaves, stolen cargo, weapons and, on occasion, hostages for ransom. While Stel also maintains regular trade routes (albeit heavily guarded ones) and engages in ordinary trade, the house is best known for its violent side.

House Stel's symbol is a pair of crossed black scimitars on a white field.

History

No one who lives in Urik for any amount of time remains unaffected by the city's omnipresent militarism; House Stel is no exception. Founded by a small group of warriors and gladiators nearly 300 years ago, and led by a soldier of fortune named Korvo Stel, the house would not have lasted long without the assistance and good will of the sorcerer-king. This meant acting in good faith and cooperating with the king's militaristic ambitions. While the sorcerer-king did not demand that the new house violate the Merchants' Code by directly involving

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itself in his plans for conquest, he certainly intended to use Stel as a broker for captured wealth. He strongly encouraged the house to develop a powerful military arm.

Experienced in the ways of war, but somewhat naive in the world of business, Korvo cooperated. He built up an impressive trade house whose bases, outposts, and caravans were organized along strict military lines. House Stel's operations thus suffered far fewer losses to raiders than other houses. Unfortunately, safety from raiders did not make up for the fact that Stel's masters had little talent for selecting profitable cargoes or for managing the money the caravans brought in. Extra money was made by hiring out caravans and guards to other merchant houses.

Within a few years, it became apparent that the house needed professional help. Several outsiders, each considered a specialist in running a business, were hired to help Korvo make sense of the mess he had created. After discovering a horrid welter of waste and bad business practices, Korvo was advised to severely reduce his operations and return all profits back into the business. After several lean years, House Stel was finally profitable. Korvo Stel gratefully paid the specialists their money and sent them on their way.

Unfortunately for the warrior, this was not the end of the matter. The leader of the advisors, Iol, a talented psionist, demanded a far dearer price than Korvo was willing to pay. He wanted to be made a full partner in House Stel, and his fellows to be made part owners as well. Korvo refused at first, but soon realized that without help, the house was doomed. Acknowledging that Iol held all the cards (not to mention the books), Korvo at last agreed.

Within a decade, following Korvo's mysterious death (it was said that he literally exploded while on a hunting trip—a death later blamed on the rich meal he had eaten the night before), Iol had taken the name Stel and was head of the household. Of course, many claimed that Iol himself was responsi-

ble for Korvo's death, utilizing his deadly psionic powers. Nothing was ever proven, and such allegations were always said in private, preferably late at night.

Recognizing a niche when he saw one, Iol maintained Stel's specializations, dealing in slaves, plunder, and weapons, while hiring out house guards and agents as mercenaries for other houses and even, on occasion, for sorcerer-kings. Iol put a new spin on Stel's practices, ordering the house's troops to engage in raids for slaves and booty.

Today, the descendants of Iol and Korvo continue to control the house. Any bad blood that might once have existed has been swept away by the affection and brotherhood engendered by a far greater force—prosperity. Many competitors consider House Stel to be little more than a nest of bandits masquerading under the guise of a legitimate trading house, but the good will between the house and most sorcerer-kings keeps Stel in business.

Assets

House Stel deals in the usual variety of trade goods—in fact, most of its wealth is brought in by traditional items, such as weapons, ceramics, and especially iron from Tyr, a vital item for Urik's war industries. Stel is best known, however, for trading in items seized during Urik's conquests—slaves, gold, and a miscellany of stolen cargoes. Stel also engages, behind closed doors, in kidnapping for ransom, although this is considered a violation of the Merchants' Code and is never discussed in public.

Stel's major caravan routes are from Urik to Raam and Draj. These caravans carry slaves, weapons, and water in exchange for iron, grains, and obsidian. Stel also maintains, and jealously guards, the only major routes into the village of Makla and into the Ringing Mountains to Ogo. At these villages wood, feathers, and valuable gems are purchased from the savage halflings in exchange for slaves, gold, and artwork.



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As may be expected, the entire house is organized along military lines, with the patriarch acting as the “general” and subordinates as his “officers.” Strict chain of command is maintained, with superior officers taking responsibility for the actions of those under them and underlings accepting orders without question.

Caravans: Caravans are slow and heavily guarded, under the strict command of the caravan master, with numerous guards and missile-armed skirmishers. Mekillot wagons, often loaded more with soldiers than cargo and mounting ballistae and even an occasional catapult, are favored. These are accompanied by swift crodlu cavalry and slave archers under whip-wielding mul or half-giant guards. A typical caravan includes up to ten wagons of various sizes (larger wagons are favored) and up to 100 foot soldiers and 30 to 40 cavalymen.

These caravans are expensive, but House Stel believes that security is worth the price. At any time, House Stel has 20 to 30 caravans traveling the trade routes.

Facilities: Outposts, trade villages, and the house headquarters in Urik are all built like fortresses. They are sometimes hired out as such, when sorcerer-kings or nomads wish a secure base of operations. Stel maintains at least a token presence in all major cities and many villages. In the south, Stel’s presence in Balic, Altaruk, and Walis is limited to a single office in each city. These offices manage a few caravans a year and spend the rest of the time gathering information on the military assets of potential rivals in the area.

In the north, Stel’s black-and-white banner is a constant presence. Outposts, trade villages, and caravans are common throughout the routes between Urik, Raam, and Draj, and between Urik and the forests of the Ringing Mountains. The main headquarters in Urik is a fortress manned by elite warriors and constantly ready for attack. Outposts and other house operations are smaller but similar in setup. Warehouses are maintained in all

the northern cities; temporary warehouses are used in Gulg, Nibenay, and Tyr.

The following are the best known Stel facilities.

Fort Courage: 150 employees, 200 slaves. Supply point and military base near the Smoking Crown on the route between Urik and Makla. This massive fortress discourages raids against caravans between Urik, Makla, and the halfling settlement of Ogo.

Fort Iron: 75 employees, 100 slaves. Supply point and military base 30 miles west of Silver Spring. This base represented an important advance position during the recent war between Urik and Tyr.

Fort Sandol: 20 employees, 50 slaves. Outpost and trading post in the Tablelands, approximately 50 miles north of Gulg. This distant, lonely outpost occasionally services caravans, but its primary function is as a trading post for the various nomads who travel throughout the Tablelands. Nomads of all races may be found here, selling artwork, weapons, or slaves taken in raids.

Troops: It goes without saying that House Stel’s troops are the finest, best equipped, and most numerous of all merchant houses. Over 3,000 warriors serve House Stel as hirelings or agents. All are 3rd level or above, carry high-quality weapons, and are well trained in all forms of tactics. Armored kank- or crodlu-riders, lightly armored scouts, elite raiders trained in stealth and secrecy, grim and efficient mul mercenaries, dwarf warriors, elven archers, and every other imaginable troop type finds employment with House Stel.

Opportunities

House Stel requires the services of a wide variety of hirelings, with an emphasis on those with military or combat skills. Mages with offensive spells, fire clerics, and warriors of all sorts-all find employment with House Stel’s legions.

Stel is always looking for more guards, mercenaries, spies, gladiators, and the like. Pay rates are average or above; particularly promising hirelings are often promoted to agent status. Agents are rare-

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ly asked to join the family, however, but exceptional acts of bravery or skill have resulted in such invitations in the past.

King Hamanu, ever eager to expand his conquests and give his troops battle experience, often lends the services of his elite troops or even, on occasion, his templars, to help guard Stel's caravans and outposts. In addition to fostering good relations between Urik and House Stel, it also keeps the merchants obligated to Hamanu. Other merchant houses have complained that accepting these warriors violates the spirit of the Merchants' Code, but Stel's obvious power and influence have kept such complaints quiet.

Warriors are well paid by the house, and they often find permanent employment as agents in command of small guard units or outposts. Admission into the family itself is a long, arduous process, reserved only for the most loyal agents.

Relations with Others

Stel's aggressive policies and militaristic nature have made more than a few enemies among their fellow merchants. House Tsalaxa, with its long memory for slights, is a particularly vehement enemy, as is House Inika, whose caravans have been raided and trade routes plundered far too often. Inika's methods of revenge are far subtler than those of Tsalaxa; although nothing overt has come of the conflict, observers are certain that it will emerge into the open soon.

Neutral relations are maintained with House Wavir, with a tacit agreement that the two powerful houses will not interfere with each other, lest disaster befall them both. As most of Wavir's routes and interests lie well to the south of Urik, Stel is content to maintain this agreement for the time being.

Stel's attitude toward the elven houses and small traders is nothing short of murderous. Stel's leaders are known to harbor a deep dislike of nonhumans in general and elves in particular. Conflict between Stel and the elven merchants (particularly the trou-

blesome Swiftwing tribe) is open and without quarter. Stel's hatred of elves is returned in full—few elves will allow caravans flying Stel's crossed scimitars to go unmolested. Recent battles along the caravan route between Urik and Silver Spring have cost both sides hundreds of casualties.

In contrast, Stel maintains good relations with all of the sorcerer-kings, particularly those of Urik, Raam, and Draj, which lie along Stel's major trade routes. City law is obeyed to the letter, and Stel never engages in smuggling or trade in illegal items. Stel's influence reaches well into the Crescent Forest, where the house maintains an uneasy balance between the hostile regimes of Nibenay and Gulg, maintaining friendly relations with both.

Farther south, where House Wavir's influence is stronger, Stel voluntarily limits itself to a few caravans every year that bring in extra profit and help keep an eye on potential rivals in the area.

Personalities

Hargan Stel III

Male Human Trader/Fighter, Lawful Neutral

Armor Class 1 (field plate + Dex)	Str 20
Movement 12	Dex 15
Level 18/15	Con 13
Hit Points 80	Int 20
THAC0 6	Wis 19
No. of Attacks 2	Cha 17

Damage/Attack: 1d8 + 8 (steel long sword)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 90; Wild Talent—all-round vision (PS Wis -3; Cost—6 +4/round)

Both an accomplished warrior and a canny trader, Hargan Stel rose through the ranks of the Stel family the hard way. Like most family youngsters, Hargan began his career as a caravan guard, then rose to the position of caravan master, outpost commander, second in command to his father Hargan



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II, and finally, patriarch of the entire household.

Hargan is a rugged, grizzled warrior with a barrel-chest and an iron-gray beard. When not dressed in his steel armor (bought at great cost from the chieftain of a raiding tribe), he wears elaborate, brightly colored tunics with voluminous puff-and-slash sleeves. Hargan is also fond of elaborate hats with expensive feathers. He is covered in scars and knows the exact history of each one, which he will repeat at the slightest provocation. When positively inclined toward someone (usually a fellow warrior of proven skill) he will stay up until all hours drinking and telling tales. Hargan is a loyal friend who never breaks his word.

Not surprisingly, Hargan leaves business affairs to his agents. He is most at home when he is organizing defenses or military matters for House Stel. He is often away from the family headquarters in Urik, leading an important caravan or seeing to the defenses of a vital outpost.

Hargan is a dual-classed character whose first

class was fighter. He is now advancing in his second class, trader.

Tara Stel

Female Human Trader/Fighter, Lawful Neutral

Armor Class 3 (steel splint + Dex)	Str 18/01
Movement 12	Dex 15
Level 6/10	Con 13
Hit Points 55	Int 15
THAC0 11	Wis 16
No. of Attacks 3/2	Cha 19

Damage/Attack: 1d8 + 4 (steel long sword)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 56; Wild Talent—animate object (PS Int -3; Cost—8 + 3/round)

Tara is young yet, and she still serves as caravan commander or outpost leader while she learns the trades of warrior and trader. She is currently consid-



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ered Hargan's most likely successor, but most feel that he will remain strong and in control for at least another decade.

She is a dark-haired woman, with a broad, strong face and a muscular physique. She, too, has obtained a rare and expensive suit of metal armor. She is rumored to be making tentative steps toward patching up the abysmal relationship between Stel and the elves. Friendly and outgoing, Tara is known to harbor a serious dislike of King Hamanu and his military adventurism, but this has not prevented her from continuing the family's good relations with him.

Tara is a dual-classed character whose first class was trader. She is now advancing in her second class, fighter.

Terric Avan

Male Human Ranger, Chaotic Good

Armor Class 8 (padded armor)	Str 13
Movement 12	Dex 13
Level 17	Con 15
Hit Points 74	Int 15
THAC0 4	Wis 15
No. of Attacks 2	Cha 13

Damage/Attack: 1d8 + 7 (stone battle axe)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 74; Wild Talent—know location (PS Int; Cost—10)

Spells: 1st Level—*animal friendship*, *cure light wounds*, *light*; 2nd Level—*aid*, *dust devil*, *hold person*; 3rd Level—*call lightning*, *locate object*, *speak with dead*

Terric is the chief of House Stel's desert scouts and caravan guards. He has been in Stel's service almost since birth. A close confidante of Hargan's, Terric is one of the house's top military advisors.

Terric's independent nature makes him operate

on his own quite frequently, often feeling that other scouts or rangers will simply slow him down. He is reasonably friendly, although large groups of people make him nervous. As a tracker, spy, or scout, he has few equals. When clad in his trademark sand-colored cloak and tunic, he is said to be almost invisible in the desert.

House Tsalaxa

The leading merchant house of the city of Draaj is infamous throughout the Tyr region. Tsalaxa engages in endless games of espionage and intrigue in order to secure the most valuable trading contracts. This house is well known for its ruthless business practices.

Tsalaxa's symbol is a black banner bearing a pair of glaring, bestial yellow eyes.

History

Tsalaxa has a long and intricate history. After several centuries of existence, no one is certain how much of its origin is fact and how much is mere legend. The Tsalaxa family claims that the house was founded by a powerful mage over 500 years ago; the mage's only aides were loyal half-giants. After a long series of struggles (recounted in great detail in written family histories) in which Tsalaxa found itself beset by enemies ranging from wicked sorcerings to greedy rival merchants and inhuman monsters, the house finally triumphed, becoming a permanent fixture in the city of Draaj. From this point forward (so say the chronicles), Tsalaxa's enemies have fled, its rivals have trembled in fear, and the world has grown to love and respect the house.

The truth is somewhat less complimentary. The tale of the house's founding may well be true (the house's patriarch continues to maintain a steadfastly loyal bodyguard composed entirely of half-giants), but its subsequent conduct has done little to earn love and respect. While Tsalaxa officially adheres to the Merchants' Code and deals reasonably fairly



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with its customers, it is also widely known as an underhanded den of intriguers and schemers whose spies and assassins are second to none.

Recent conflicts with House Wavir, in which raiders hired by Tsalaxa have attempted to disrupt Wavir's most profitable trade routes, are only part of the story. Tsalaxa is also infamous for its long memory. "Never cross the dragon or House Tsalaxa" is a popular proverb in Draji.

Assets

Draji's major products—hemp and grain—are in great demand, giving Tsalaxa a solid economic base on which to build. With a steady source of profit, Tsalaxa is able to speculate in more risky commodities, such as artwork, ornate weapons, and slaves. Many claim that Tsalaxa also deals in contraband, if for no other reason than their well-known love of intrigue and backroom dealing.

Tsalaxa maintains outposts in all the major cities of the Tyr region. It also administers several villages along the trade routes between Draji, Raam, and Urik.

Caravans: Tsalaxa caravans are generally built for speed—small, swift, with numerous riders and few, if any, wagons. Slave caravans are much slower and more ponderous than ordinary caravans; these contain many more wagons and are heavily guarded. As raids against slave caravans have increased of late, Tsalaxa has taken care to increase security.

A typical Tsalaxan caravan is five to ten wagons preceded by a dozen or more crodlu-riders. The wagons are usually open, with 5,000- to 10,000-pound capacity. Armored caravans are rarely used. When a slave coffle is present, it drags along behind the main caravan, constantly patrolled by crodlu-riders and whip-wielding mul or human overseers.

Facilities: Tsalaxa's Draji headquarters are disarmingly innocuous — a simple walled villa with a couple of bored-looking guards lounging about. As might be expected, appearances are deceiving. The villa is protected by numerous traps, magical wards,

and hidden snipers. The seemingly bored guards are actually elite senior agents. The structure is built atop solid rock, and most of its rooms are located underground. Rumors speak of secret tunnels stretching throughout Draji, beyond the knowledge of even the templars. No one knows how such tunnels can be built in the muddy, unstable ground beneath the city.

Tsalaxan outposts are located throughout the Tyr region, all similarly simple but well defended. The exception is Balic, where Houses Wavir and Rees have managed to keep Tsalaxa out. Needless to say, this infuriates Ydris, the family patriarch. Tsalaxa agents are constantly dispatched to Balic to disrupt or destroy Ydris's enemies. The following are major outposts and other installations.

Fort Ebon: 100 employees, 250 slaves. Supply point between Draji and Raam. Ebon is a vital supply link for all of Tsalaxa's caravans.

Fort Kalvis: 50 employees, 125 slaves. Supply and storage point and trading post in verdant belt between Gulg and Altaruk.

Rumish's Rock: 20 employees, 20 slaves. Outpost and trading post 30 miles southeast of Lost Oasis. A small but important post, this is where Tsalaxa obtains much of its gold via trading with caravans coming east from Walis.

Ablath: Trade village, 500 citizens. Located near an oasis 20 miles southwest of Silver Spring. Ablath is Tsalaxa's contact with the tribes of the Tablelands. It is a frequent stopover spot for caravans bound to and from Altaruk.

Troops: Tsalaxa maintains about 1,500 warriors of various races, all bearing the house's two bestial eyes somewhere on their uniform. These troops are divided up into garrisons that occupy Tsalaxa's facilities in all major cities of the Tyr region.

Opportunities

Tsalaxa is always on the lookout for caravan guards and individuals with skills as spies or assassins. Unfortunately, once hirelings learn some of

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Tsalaxa's secrets, the house is reluctant to let them leave. Keeping such individuals around is accomplished through a combination of rewards and threats. Although long-term hirelings and agents are well paid, they know that they would be in grave danger if they ever left.

This house has few qualms about who it hires—defilers, assassins, raiding tribes, even gith, braxat, and anakore, individuals whom more sensible employers avoid like the dragon. Psionicists with detection and observation skills, such as clairaudience and clairvoyance, can almost always find employment. Tsalaxa has a tendency to distrust traditional mages because of the supposed influence and threat of the Veiled Alliance.

Tsalaxa's pay rates are somewhat higher than average. Particularly trusted hirelings and agents are given the run of Tsalaxa's extensive facilities and their choice of luxuries, so long as they get the job done. Tsalaxa has been known to eliminate its own employees if they grow soft from the luxuries and perquisites of the job.

Relations with Others

Tsalaxa's attitude toward competition is that the fit survive, the rest die. House Tsalaxa succeeds and thrives, while others—weak, sentimental, and outdated—fall by the wayside. Of course, if House Tsalaxa can provide rivals with a push to hasten that fall, so much the better. Tsalaxa specializes in undercutting rivals by offering premium prices for its goods, losing money for a season or two until opposing houses are eliminated, then tripling or quadrupling prices to make up for the losses. By this time, of course, most of the competition has been eliminated, and the customer is at Tsalaxa's mercy. Recently, customers have been catching on to this scheme and refusing even the most favorable of Tsalaxa's deals, forcing the house to rethink some of its tactics.

Now enemies have begun to be eliminated in more creative ways. Blackmail, kidnapping, and

even assassination have all entered Tsalaxa's arsenal, along with outright military harassment utilizing the services of mercenary raiding tribes.

Tsalaxa maintains cordial relations with the sorcerer-kings, realizing that their good will is necessary for continued success. As may be gathered from the previous material, Tsalaxa's relations with most other trade houses are anything but cordial.

House Stel, which often allows Tsalaxa to hire its mercenaries, is the only house with which Tsalaxa maintains a good relationship. Some have suggested that this is not surprising, in that Tsalaxa and Stel are the most unscrupulous and violent merchant houses.

Other houses are seen as little more than obstacles on the way to Tsalaxa's total domination of the Tyr region. Small houses are ruthlessly exterminated by agents wearing Tsalaxa colors and freely admitting their allegiance. Actions against larger houses are carried out more stealthily, by secret agents and hired mercenaries. When hirelings learn too much about Tsalaxa's operations and inner workings, they may be invited to join the household (and woe unto them if they refuse), but this is often simply to keep them on a short leash. On other occasions, hirelings simply disappear.

Larger houses may be plagued by mysterious assassins, raided by masked bandits, affected by strange curses, or investigated by templars on trumped-up charges. Tsalaxa is especially talented at discovering guilty secrets—illegal dealings, illicit assignments, or suspicious political views. Such information, devastating in the hands of templars, can be kept secret for a high price. Tsalaxa also takes pains to avoid being caught in similar traps, so digging up the buried bones in Tsalaxa's past might prove both difficult and dangerous.

Personalities

Ydris Tsalaxa

Male Human Trader, Neutral Evil



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Armor Class 5 (steel chain mail) Str 11
Movement 12 Dex 14
Level 20 Con 10
Hit Points 53 Int 19
THAC0 11 Wis 18
No. of Attacks 1 Cha 13

Damage/Attack: 1d10 + 2 (steel rod)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 91; Wild Talent—aging (PS Con -7; Cost—15)

Crafty, intelligent, underhanded, and sometimes cruel, Ydris has ruled House Tsalaxa for the past 50 years, and his hold on the house shows no signs of weakening. He is the living embodiment of Tsalaxa's business philosophy: profit is all, and those who stand in the way of profit should be removed by the most expedient means. Ydris despises needless violence and cruelty, not for moral reasons, but because they are inefficient.

The years have begun to show in Ydris's face; he must be well over 70, but appears no older than 50. Some family members have begun to grumble that he intends to hold onto power forever; some, particularly his granddaughter Yarsha, have begun to consider deposing him.

Ydris normally dresses in red and yellow robes. He always carries a heavy metal rod that inflicts 1d10 + 2 points of damage in combat. It can also emit an anti-magic ray (as a beholder) three times per day. When encountered, Ydris will almost always be accompanied by 1d4 half-giant guards.

Yarsha Tsalaxa

Female Human Trader/Thief, Lawful Neutral

Armor Class 7 (bone ring mail) Str 11
Movement 12 Dex 17
Level 15/8 Con 14
Hit Points 47 Int 16
THAC0 13 Wis 18

No. of Attacks 1 Cha 19

Damage/Attack: 1d6 + 1 (flint hand axe)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 57; Wild Talent—poison sense (PS Wis; Cost—1)

Ydris's granddaughter is a highly intelligent woman who feels that she could run the house better than her overly cautious grandfather. She has kept most of her plans to herself, but she has begun to gather an inner circle of loyal followers to help her seize power should the need ever arise.

Yarsha is tall (almost six feet), with long black hair and a pleasant face. Despite her appearance and love of luxury, she is intimately familiar with the inner workings of House Tsalaxa. She is currently responsible for Tsalaxa's grain and hemp trade.

Yarsha is a dual-classed character whose first class was trader. She is now advancing in her second class, thief.

Bartis

Male Human Gladiator, Neutral Evil

Armor Class 3 (braxat hide) Str 20
Movement 12 Dex 16
Level 17 Con 15
Hit Points 82 Int 11
THAC0 4 Wis 9
No. of Attacks 2 Cha 8

Damage/Attack: 2d4 + 8 (stone morning star)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 80; Wild Talent-danger sense (PS Wis -3; Cost—4+3/turn)

Bartis is a former gladiator who has worked as a guard and military expert for House Tsalaxa for 20 years. While he is not overly intelligent, he has an innate grasp of tactics and other military matters. His loyalty to House Tsalaxa, and particularly to

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Ydris (who rescued him from the gladiator pits and gave him his freedom), is unbreakable.

Kargash

Male Human Defiler, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 10 (robes)	Str 10
Movement 12	Dex 13
Level 15	Con 10
Hit Points 29	Int 19
THAC0 16	Wis 12
No. of Attacks 1	Cha 17

Damage/Attack: 1d4 (scourge)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 60; Wild Talent—catfall (PS Dex -2; Cost-4)

Spells: 1st Level— *feather fall, friends, hold portal, jump, spider climb*; 2nd Level— *flaming sphere, fog cloud, invisibility, scare, stinking cloud*; 3rd Level— *fireball (x 2), slow, vampiric touch, wraithform*; 4th Level— *fear, ice storm, shadow monsters, wall of fire, wizard eye*; 5th Level— *animate dead, monster summoning III, summon shadow, transmute rock to mud, wall of iron*; 6th Level— *death spell, invisible stalker*; 7th Level— *limited wish*

Kargash has no official title, but if he did it might be that of chief schemer, master of spies, and expert meddler. Despite his chaotic alignment, he is loyal to House Tsalaxa with an enthusiasm and relish that borders on the diabolical. Many outsiders have gone so far as to suggest that Kargash is demented, citing his mercurial temperament and the apparent enjoyment he derives from inflicting injury.

When not engaging in mischief on his master's behalf, Kargash can be pleasant, charming, and disarmingly friendly. Unfortunately, such emotions are invariably an act, as this defiler trusts no one. He uses people merely to gain more power or glory for himself or House Tsalaxa.

Garchom

Male Half-Giant Fighter, Lawful

Armor Class 8 (robes + Dex)	Str 23
Movement 12	Dex 16
Level 16	Con 19
Hit Points 180	Int 12
THAC0 5	Wis 8
No. of Attacks 2	Cha 9

Damage/Attack: 2d4 + 11 (bronze ranseur)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 72; Wild Talent-suspend animation (PS Con -3; Cost-12)

Garchom is the captain of Ydris's personal bodyguard of half-giants. He is comparatively intelligent for a half-giant, and he is extremely loyal. His lawful alignment is fixed—regardless of whether he is currently neutral, evil, or good, his major loyalty remains to Tsalaxa. While in his lawful neutral or evil alignment, Garchom unquestioningly obeys any orders given to him by a Tsalaxa family member. When lawful good, he obeys but is reluctant to take a life without cause (when evil, he relishes it).

House Vordon

Once one of the most feared and respected of Athas's great houses, House Vordon has become something of a laughingstock. This transformation is mainly due to the demented excesses of Tyr's sorcerer-king Kalak. Kalak diverted valuable resources to the construction of a massive ziggurat and all but bankrupted his city. This caused massive resentment among Tyr's nobles and merchants. With Kalak's excesses at an end and the city in the hands of revolutionaries and former slaves, House Vordon is poised to return to prominence once more.

Vordon's banner shows a black diamond (representing iron) on a red-brown field (representing the mountains surrounding Tyr).



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History

House Vordon originated in the ancient city of Kalidnay, strategically located astride the vital trade route between the gold mines of Walis and the hungry markets of Tyr and Gulg. Exactly what caused the fall of this great city is not known today, but the patriarch of House Vordon apparently had some warning of the catastrophe. He and his retainers managed to escape just before the disaster, bearing what wealth they could.

Relocated in Tyr, the house struggled in dire financial straits for years, slowly rebuilding its shattered empire. When iron was discovered in the mountains surrounding Tyr, all of the city's merchants prospered, including Vordon. Parlaying the sudden windfall into a sizeable fortune, the newly ascendant Vordon quickly moved into markets from Bitter Well to Siren's Song, shipping iron throughout the Tyr region.

With increased prosperity came respect. Vordon's offices and outposts sprang up throughout the region. Soon even the hardest desert raider came to realize that Vordon's caravans and warriors were forces to be reckoned with. Vordon gobbled up numerous smaller houses, even displacing the venerable House Krosi of Urik as the chief carrier of iron and obsidian. By the time sorcerer-king Kalak ascended to the throne, House Vordon was the richest and most influential merchant dynasty in the region.

At first, the prosperity continued, with Kalak's stern but fair rule bringing prosperity and security to the city. Members of the Vordon family became imperial favorites, sitting at the right hand of the sorcerer-king at the gladiatorial games, openly associating with Kalak's templars and nobles.

For a thousand years this situation prevailed and House Vordon grew powerful and arrogant. But in recent years, as Tyr's vast resources were diverted to constructing Kalak's ziggurat, House Vordon's fortunes declined. Trade goods were sold to obtain cash for materials, slaves were requisitioned and set

to work on the monument, and the entire city suffered. Soon, Vordon had become an object of derision and ridicule by other houses, who chortled at Kalak's senility and Vordon's troubles.

Vordons are nothing if not pragmatic, however, and the patriarch Thaxos soon joined other Tyr citizens in the conclusion that Kalak should be destroyed. While claiming that his only interest was the welfare of Tyr and her citizens, Thaxos secretly desired to take the throne for himself, elevating himself from simple merchant prince to powerful sorcerer-king. To this end, he began diverting house resources into the creation of several dummy merchant houses secretly controlled by House Vordon. He also started to assemble a secret army, with which he intended to seize power "in the name of the oppressed people of Tyr."

Kalak's dramatic overthrow, as he attempted to sacrifice every citizen and slave in Tyr, cut short Thaxos's plans. Now he is rethinking his scheme, realizing that the return of prosperity to Tyr would aid his plans and that his ascension as sorcerer-king has simply been delayed somewhat. In the recent war with Urik, Thaxos further endeared himself to Tyr's new rulers by lending troops and materials to the city's army.

Assets

When not plotting revolution and similar non-mercantile behavior, House Vordon specializes in the export of iron from Tyr. This rare and vital element is in demand throughout the Tyr region. As iron's primary supplier, Vordon can virtually set its own price. It is the iron trade, in fact, that kept Vordon solvent as civil order in Tyr dissolved.

Other export items include slaves, artwork, and textiles, but the shortage of labor as Kalak diverted more and more resources into the construction of his ziggurat virtually eliminated these as trade goods. Financially strapped and on the verge of starvation, Tyr was forced to import vast quantities of food, water, and kank nectar. Vordon helped to

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provide the city with these items, but a chronic cash shortage within Tyr kept their profits low.

With Kalak overthrown, iron is once more being exported from Tyr, and Vordon's fortunes are looking up. Funds from the newly-improved trade have been diverted to continue building Thaxos's secret army, now hidden in outposts and fortresses throughout the region. So far, only select members of Thaxos's immediate family and particularly trustworthy agents know of his plans. Some younger family members have gotten wind of the plans, and they seek to oppose Thaxos should he ever press ahead with his scheme.

Caravans: Vordon's caravans are large and well guarded. Twenty or more armored *crodlu* riders provide cover, while as many as 50 bow-armed footmen accompany the five to ten armored wagons that make up the caravan proper. Half-giants and muls also provide defense if needed. Even in its current troubled state, House Vordon operates at least 20 caravans at a time, while its dummy houses control a dozen more.

Facilities: Outposts are maintained mostly along the Tyr-Altaruk, Tyr-Urik, and Tyr-Balic routes, which have traditionally been the house's most profitable. Other outposts have been abandoned, but some are kept operating even at a loss, or are leased out to other houses simply to bring in profits. Although slaves have officially been freed within Tyr, Thaxos continues to keep slaves in his facilities outside the city; he has come up with numerous excuses for not freeing them. The following are major forts and outposts of House Vordon.

Fort Amber: 75 employees, 100 slaves. Supply and storage point between Tyr and Altaruk. Also intended as a refuge for the household if the chaos in Tyr becomes too great, Amber is well stocked with supplies and secret cash reserves hidden in underground vaults.

Fort Thamo: 50 employees, 125 slaves. Supply point and trading post between Grak's Pool and South Ledopolus. This fortress maintains an impor-

tant link with the south, particularly Balic. It will be an important trading spot when Tyr's iron begins to flow once more.

Mira's Halo: 20 employees, 30 slaves. Outpost located in sandy wastes between Tyr and Urik. Named for an unusual rock formation nearby, this outpost is officially owned by House Qual, one of Thaxos's dummy trade houses. Occupied by Urikite forces during the conflict with Tyr, it has since reverted to its original owners. It will be used to house iron shipments from Tyr. The Halo also has facilities to house 100 or more troops, although it currently holds no warriors.

Troops: Vordon officially employs 2,000 troops, mostly to guard against disruption of business in Tyr. During the recent revolution, Thaxos attempted to ingratiate himself to the city's new rulers by allowing his troops to be used to quell disturbances and to fight the advancing army of Urik. In addition to these troops, House Vordon secretly controls over 1,000 more through its various dummy houses. These numbers are constantly increasing, especially as new profits from the iron trade begin to refill House Vordon's coffers.

Opportunities

To outsiders, House Vordon has seemed to be retrenching recently. It appears to be hiring very few, if any, new employees. In reality, large numbers of warriors and spellcasters are being hired, but Thaxos employs them through his dummy houses. The new employees are legitimate hirelings of the new houses. For a time they will continue pursuing normal duties, such as guarding caravans, managing accounts, detecting rivals, and providing magical support. For this, they are well paid, often up to 50 percent more than normal wages.

When Thaxos feels the time is right, those new employees who have distinguished themselves in the service of his dummy houses will be told of the coming conflict. These select hirelings will be offered valuable rewards in exchange for their continued



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loyalty. Thaxos intends these individuals, along with his most trusted agents, to serve as the backbone of the templars who will serve him when he is king.

Most of Thaxos's agents are loyal, honest men and women who believe in the Merchants' Code. They would be horrified if they learned of his plans. If Thaxos actually tries to overthrow Tyr's government, many of his agents are sure to turn against him. This would plunge House Vordon, and possibly all of Tyr, into a new and bloody civil war.

Relations with Others

Vordon was once held in enormous esteem by other trade houses—the object of both fear and respect. Other houses stayed scrupulously out of Vordon's way. The sorcerer-kings themselves disliked the house but quickly acknowledged its importance. Vordon earned this respect through a combination of deep business sense, ruthless efficiency, and sheer luck.

Today, much of the awe that other houses felt for Vordon has evaporated with Vordon's fortunes. No longer do other houses bow and scrape in Vordon's presence. As the larger houses aggressively subvert Vordon's influence along the major caravan routes, the smaller houses nibble away at less well-defended assets. Vordon scrambles to repair the damage.

Such a situation cannot, of course, continue. Thaxos Vordon's plans are all directed toward what he considers his greater destiny—that of king. His dummy houses serve primarily to bring loyal conspirators into his circle, while new profits from Tyr's once-more vibrant economy have enabled Vordon's agents to fight back against those who would plunder their house's wealth. House Vordon is a flash point for all the trouble currently plaguing the city of Tyr. How the entire affair will end is anyone's guess.

Personalities

Thaxos Vordon

Male Human Trader, Lawful Evil

Armor Class 8 (padded armor)	Str 12
Movement 12	Dex 13
Level 20	Con 15
Hit Points 52	Int 12
THAC0 11	Wis 20
No. of Attacks 1	Cha 18

Damage/Attack: 1d6 (bone short sword)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 100; Wild Talent—adrenaline control (PS Con -3; Cost—8 +4/round)

Thaxos Vordon has ruled his house for 50 years with an iron hand. Now he feels that leadership of one of the most powerful trading houses on Athas is not enough. The current troubles in Tyr have given him the perfect opportunity to advance his ambitions: Thaxos aspires to nothing less than the position of king.

Thaxos is a handsome man despite his apparent age of 100+ (many claim that he has access to numerous potions and magical devices to extend his life). He dresses habitually in black and yellow. His lean, bearded face is the very picture of malevolent wisdom.

Derlan Watari

Male Halfling Thief, Neutral Evil

Armor Class 6 (robes + Dex)	Str 12
Movement 6	Dex 19
Level 16	Con 15
Hit Points 49	Int 18
THAC0 13	Wis 14
No. of Attacks 1	Cha 11

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Damage/Attack: 1d4 (poisoned bronze dagger)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 74; Wild Talent—astral projection (PS Int; Cost—6 +2/hour)

Derlan is Thaxos's personal bodyguard, attending Thaxos on all public occasions. He is a renegade from his tribe, cast out because of his evil ways. A skilled sneak, backstabber, and poisoner, Derlan also serves Thaxos in the covert capacity of disposing of his employer's enemies. His poisoned dagger is never far from his side, and he eagerly follows Thaxos's orders, preferring those that result in the most mayhem.

When in public, Derlan is treated almost as a figure of fun, dressed in smaller versions of his master's tunics, garnering laughs with his bumbling antics and roisterous commentary. The truth is far deadlier, as Thaxos's enemies have found.

Talara Vordon

Female Human Trader, Neutral Good

Armor Class 7 (steel ring mail)	Str 12
Movement 12	Dex 14
Level 15	Con 13
Hit Points 48	Int 18
THAC0 13	Wis 19
No. of Attacks 1	Cha 17

Damage/Attack: 1d8 (bone long sword)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 72; Wild Talent—time shift (PS Int; Cost—16)

Thaxos's cousin, Talara has only recently arrived in Tyr. She was withdrawn from a closed outpost and now awaits reassignment. A slender, red-haired woman with an innate sense of justice and fairness, she has begun to suspect that all is not what it seems with Thaxos. She has discovered his dummy houses





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and unusual military preparations and is appalled by the implications. Thaxos has taken note of her investigations and realizes that if she discovers his coup plots she will be a dangerous enemy. He is determined that she never get the chance.

House Wavir

Under the leadership of its current patriarch, Tabaros, House Wavir has risen far above its humble beginnings to become one of the most powerful merchant houses in the Tyr region. From its base in Balic, Wavir now controls vast trade routes, dominating the shipment and sale of grain, ceramics, and precious metals.

Wavir's business practices border on the ruthless, but they are always conducted in accordance with the Merchants' Code. All profits are reinvested in house operations. House Wavir's enormous wealth and influence have led many to speculate that Tabaros has a secret source of income (speculations that are discussed in detail later), but so far no proof of this has been found.

House Wavir's symbol is a silver jozhal on a blue field.

History

House Wavir's history is a success story that has few equals. The house began a little over two centuries ago when a freelance adventurer, Traxidos Wavir (now fondly remembered simply as "The Wavir") founded the company as a joint venture with several of his adventuring companions.

Traxidos's own story is just as fascinating as that of his merchant house. A former slave gladiator who bought his own freedom, Traxidos fell in with a number of other adventurers. The band set out to explore the ruins near Balic. The going was rough at first—attacks by raiding tribes and thri-kreen hunters took the lives of several of Traxidos's companions. The ruins themselves proved to be home to a nest of gith, who engaged the companions in an

epic running battle. Finally, the gith fled, leaving Traxidos and three other survivors to loot the ruins. Exactly what was found is untold, but it must have been substantial, for the four returned to Balic with mekillot-loads of plunder. With these profits, the companions entered into partnership, selecting Traxidos as the new trading house's leader.

Despite the substantial profits from their adventuring, Traxidos and his partners soon realized that even their own awesome wealth did not compare to that of the established houses. Tomblador, Rees, Malaxi, and the other houses were loathe to share their markets with upstart ex-slaves and adventurers. Prices of goods and services unaccountably rose, and the services of guards, agents, and mercenaries became suddenly scarce. Masked assassins slew Thassa Amita, the only psionist in the group; a similar attempt upon Traxidos's life was foiled.

The cost of outfitting House Wavir's first two caravans used up almost all of the partners' cash. By the time the embattled merchants had sent them out, their situation was indeed desperate. Again, luck was with Wavir, for their first caravan, loaded with water and grain, reached Urik just as that city was in the midst of a major drought and subsequent famine. Wavir was able to name its price, and a grateful sorcerer-king paid huge amounts out of his treasury to feed his restive subjects. The second caravan survived an attack by elven raiders and also returned a substantial profit.

Soon, it became apparent that House Wavir would not simply disappear. Rival houses began to bow to the inevitable; they allowed Wavir to continue to do business, relatively unmolested. This period (often called "the bleeding") is typical of new and ambitious merchant houses. Few upstart houses ever survive it. Wavir proved an exception in more ways than one, for Traxidos proceeded to grow wealthy and powerful, laying the foundations of the legendary house that was to survive him. He died peacefully in bed nearly six decades later, safe in the assurance that his descendants would rule over one

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of the greatest Athasian merchant houses.

Since then, House Wavir has not forgotten its humble origins. Remembering how intrigue and assassins almost destroyed them, Traxidos's descendants remain ever vigilant. Their guards and agents are trained in the arts of counter espionage and detection. In addition, House Wavir seems to value competition as a means of maintaining healthy markets (and also for the challenge it represents), and it rarely harasses or attacks smaller trading houses. In fact, many claim that they have received loans and other assistance from House Wavir, particularly if the smaller house's activities serve to frustrate Wavir's rivals.

Today, House Wavir reigns supreme, dominating even its old enemies, Tomblador and Rees. Wavir's bitterest rival, Malaxi, is no more, swept away like desert sands by time and misfortune. Dozens of caravans fly Wavir's silver jozhal, and the house maintains permanent bases throughout the Tyr region. House Wavir provides lasting proof that with luck and bravery, even the lowest of the low can rise to become rich and powerful.

Assets

Wavir is acutely aware of its origins as a two-caravan house. It understands that only good luck and vigilant business practices have brought it this far. Young members of the family are encouraged to work the caravan routes or help staff outposts; high-ranking family members expect little of the luxury and sybaritic privileges extended to other merchant house members.

House Wavir maintains several official positions that improve its image with commoners, but strike other merchants as somewhat indulgent. Wavir caravans sometimes allow villages in dire straits to buy supplies and food on credit, with the promise of future concessions or in exchange for lodging or professional assistance.

Another of House Wavir's features is its deep and abiding hatred of slavery. Wavir was founded

by a former slave, and future generations were raised to feel that slavery was an evil thing. Many of the house's employees are former slaves who wholeheartedly support this position. Some of Wavir's rivals have gone so far as to accuse the house of fostering and supporting slave revolts in contravention of the Merchants' Code, which forbids direct intervention in partisan matters. Nothing has ever been proven.

Caravans: At any given time, there are 40 to 50 caravans that fly the Wavir blue and silver, loaded with every imaginable commodity. Caravans are generally well guarded, with both elf mercenaries and crodlu- or kank-riders as scouts. Numerous lightly armed archers accompany the wagons and pack inix. A typical caravan has 20 to 30 elven scouts, a dozen riders, 20 to 30 archers, and up to ten wagons of varying size. As many as ten pack inix and numerous kank and crodlu bearing cargo may also accompany the caravan. Wavir uses armored caravan wagons on long journeys, or when the cargo being carried is extremely valuable.

Facilities: House Wavir maintains holdings in every major city of the Tyr region, as well as outposts and villages all along its caravan routes. Wavir's headquarters in Balic rivals the palaces of many sorcerer-kings. Well-paid mercenaries patrol the outer walls, while trusted mages and psionics appear from time to time to check for surreptitious or magical entry. Inside, the family mansion is said to contain nearly a thousand rooms, numerous spyholes, secret passages and hidden chambers. Elite guards and agents are constantly on guard within the house, protecting family members from attack. No enemy has actually entered the mansion, although many have tried.

Other bases and outposts beyond Balic are organized along similar lines, under the command of a family member or senior agent. Magical, psionic, and military defenses are quite impressive, as Wavir's concern for security often borders on the paranoid. Wavir facilities are almost unique in that



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they utilize no slave labor. For this reason, Wavir's forts tend to have larger staffs, as all menial labor is performed by employees.

The house tries to maintain good stocks of water and supplies at its various outposts, but many of the outlying bases, isolated by distance and Athas's fierce weather conditions, often go for months without contact.

Along with former rival houses Rees and Tomblador, Wavir maintains the major trading village of Altaruk, southeast of Tyr.

Major outposts and fortresses throughout the Tyr region include the following:

Fort Glamis: 150 employees. Supply point at junction of Balic/Ledopolus road. An important crossroads between Balic and the rest of the region.

Fort Thetis: 75 employees. Supply point and trading post at southern end of mountains, 60 miles east of Walis. Wavir completely controls this gold route between Balic and Walis. This fortress is a frequent target of attacks by gith and human tribes, as well as by trading rivals, such as House Tsalaxa.

Outpost Ten: 15 employees. Trading post located on western edge of boulder field, 70 miles southwest of Tyr. Wavir's outposts have numbers rather than names. This small fort lies on the very edge of the Forest Ridge. Here Wavir maintains tenuous trading connections with the halfling savages, who trade hardwood, gems, and exotic animals for gold, spice, and weapons.

Outpost 19: 20 employees. Outpost at northeastern end of Mekillot Mountains. Here Wavir supplies caravans and trades with the former slaves of Salt View. Wavir often trades weapons and other vital items to the slaves at unprofitable rates, but continues to do so because of its hatred of slavery.

Opportunities

House Wavir offers generous incentives to persuade agents and freelance adventurers to join the household. Employees are constantly in demand, particularly warriors, rogues, and psionics.

Wavir's obsession with defense and security leads it to hire many psionics and mages with detection and defensive skills. A family member or ranking agent rarely appears in public without a psionist in attendance. Any structures that are to be occupied by family members are thoroughly checked out by mages and psionics beforehand.

Those psionics with good clairsentient and telepathic abilities are likely to find work with House Wavir. If they are particularly successful and loyal, they may even find themselves invited to join the household as agents. A skilled psionist can expect to receive 20 sp or more per level per month.

Magic and psionics are used extensively by House Wavir, especially to detect and eliminate enemy spies and agents. Of course, due to the illegal nature of magic within the city-states, preservers must serve the house under cover identities, often in menial roles to avoid suspicion.

Defiler magic is shunned and hated; defilers are emphatically denied employment. Wavir generally does not give favorable treatment to customers who employ large numbers of defilers.

Priests, especially those dedicated to elemental water, are employed by Wavir. Many occupy positions as agents or senior agents. Water priests serve on caravans, creating water in emergencies and assisting in finding water. Of course, such priests are in high demand with other merchant houses and with the sorcerer-kings, so Wavir takes care to pay them well. Standard pay for a priest is 15 sp per month per level, 20 sp for a water priest.

Relations with Others

House Wavir takes pains to maintain good relations with the sorcerer-kings and other merchant houses. The house's reputation for swift and overwhelming response to treachery or attack keeps others friendly toward Wavir, at least on the surface.

Relations between Wavir and the Dictator Andropinis, sorcerer-king of Balic, are cordial, but Andropinis has been known to confide in his min-

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ions that he would be much happier if House Wavir dropped off the face of Athas. He can do little about it, however, as Wavir controls much of the trade that is vital to Balic's survival.

Because Wavir's net of trade connections extends across the Tyr region and beyond, few sorcerer-kings are openly hostile. Lalali-Puy, oba of Gulg, dislikes the fact that Wavir's traders often outsmart her templars when bartering on behalf of the city. Warm relations exist with the new government of Tyr, due in part to the fact that all of Tyr's slaves have been freed. Hamanu of Urik, who enjoys conflict and relishes the taking and selling of slaves, is openly hostile toward House Wavir, believing them to be indirectly responsible for several slave revolts and attacks on his slave caravans.

Relations with other trade houses are a bit more complex. While Wavir cooperates with Houses Tromblador and Rees of Balic in the maintenance of the vital trade fortress of Altaruk, the three are anything but allies. House Tromblador maintains a grudge since Wavir outcompeted it over a century ago, and today it seeks to foil its now-larger rival at any turn. It is understood, however, that this conflict can never be allowed to explode into open warfare, for all know that this would be bad for business.

House Tsalaxa of Draji, however, has no such qualms in its campaign to ruin Wavir. The two sides have met in the desert in open battle on several occasions, as mercenaries in Tsalaxa's pay sought to raid Wavir's caravans or kidnap important family members. Tsalaxa's representatives have been abroad, spreading wild rumors about Wavir and offering to take over their established trade routes for ridiculously low prices. While neither side will admit to the conflict (and members of both families are cordial toward one another), it is clear that Tsalaxa wants to usurp some of Wavir's most important trade routes, a situation that might prove disastrous for Wavir.

Wavir is known for having little quarrel with non-human and small houses. It rarely engages in the

sort of bullying it suffered during its own early history. Many claim that Wavir has extensive contacts with the Shadows, a mysterious group of elves that is said to engage in espionage, smuggling and trade in forbidden substances. While Wavir publicly does not deal in such illegal items as spell components, many suspect that they do so through the Shadows and other underworld contacts.

Relations with other houses are comparatively normal—namely intense competition coupled with healthy respect and public friendliness.

Personalities

Tabaros Wavir

Male Human Trader, Neutral Good

Armor Class 2 (bronze field plate)	Str 9
Movement 9	Dex 11
Level 20	Con 6
Hit Points 61	Int 18
THAC0 11	Wis 17
No. of Attacks 1	Cha 15

Damage/Attack: 1d4 (bronze dirk)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 108; Wild Talent—mind bar (PS Int -2; Cost—6 +4/round)

Now over 90, Tabaros is the current Wavir patriarch, following in the footsteps of the great Traxidos. A wily intriguer and skilled trader, Tabaros is nonetheless feeling the effects of aging, and he is frequently ill. As the effects of mortality weigh more and more heavily upon him, Tabaros has begun to realize that he will not live forever. He soon plans to step down in favor of his son, Targ, who is now over 60 and every bit as cunning as his father.

Falmon Durow

Male Half-Elf Thief/Psionicist, Lawful Neutral

Armor Class 6 (robes + Dex)	Str 15
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Movement 12
Level 13/12
Hit Points 46
THAC0 14
No. of Attacks 1

Dex 19
Con 12
Int 15
Wis 16
Cha 9

Damage/Attack: 1d8 (obsidian long sword)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 143

Defense Modes – intellect fortress, mental barrier, mind blank, thought shield, tower of iron will

Clairsentience – *Sciences*: clairaudience *Devotions*: all-round vision, danger sense.

Psychometabolism – *Sciences*: metamorphosis *Devotions*: body weaponry, cause decay, chameleon power, flesh armor

Psychoportation – *Sciences*: teleport *Devotion*: astral projection, dimensional door, time shift, time/space anchor

Telepathy – *Sciences*: ejection, mindlink, psionic blast *Devotions*: conceal thoughts, contact, ego whip, esp, id insinuation, identity penetration, psychic crush

House Wavir's master of agents is a talented and deadly operative. He is tall and slender, more elf than man. His gray eyes reflect only single-minded dedication and a near-fanatical sense of duty. Those who cross Falmon rarely live long enough to regret it. Ruthlessly efficient, Falmon's ardor for his work

ranks second only to his loyalty to Wavir. He operates out of Wavir's headquarters in Balic, where he tirelessly works to foil enemies. Falmon also disappears periodically to gather intelligence or perform missions for Tabaros.

Nnn'tkk

Thri-Kreen Fighter, True Neutral

Armor Class 5 (exoskeleton)	Str 17
Movement 18	Dex 20
Level 14	Con 13
Hit Points 69	Int 13
THAC0 7	Wis 14
No. of Attacks 5 or 3	Cha 8

Damage/Attack: 1d4 + 1 (x 4)/1d4 + 1 or 2d4 + 1 (x 2)/ 1d4 + 1 (gythka) + special (saving throw versus poisonous saliva or paralyzed)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 64; Wild Talent – dimensional door (PS Con -1; Cost -4 +2/round)

This solitary thri-kreen's official designation is "Master of Hunters," but his actual function is as a scout. He is one of the finest scouts in Tyr. He considers House Wavir to be his pack, and he loyally follows the orders of his superiors.

Small Trading Houses

While the dynastic merchant houses of the city-states dominate trade across Athas, the world is also home to a multitude of smaller trading houses—tiny, often one-caravan operations that continually totter between solvency and bankruptcy. While some may rise to prominence, even becoming dynastic merchant houses themselves, the vast majority fail disastrously, or at best just manage to scrape by.

Any PC-owned trading concern begins life as one of these small houses. In addition to major trading houses, which often cannot tolerate even the tiny amount of competition represented by a small house, new mercantile concerns also have to deal with other small companies, that cannot survive if competitors are allowed to exist. Wars between small houses are equal in ferocity, if not in extent, to those fought by the dynastic houses.

The following pages describe several prominent smaller houses, along with their home bases, resources, capabilities, attitudes toward competitors, and current statuses. These houses are likely to be

encountered by player characters, either as friends or enemies.

House Ardian

Based in the village of Walis, Ardian wields influence well out of proportion to its size. Controlling much of the vital gold traffic out of Walis, Ardian reaps enormous profits from other houses that must pay a tariff on all gold carried out of the mines above the village. Most of these mines are staffed and guarded by Ardian's agents and hirelings. All are well guarded and rigged with magical or physical traps and devices set to destroy the mines should any hostile force attack them.

Because of the house's stranglehold on the gold trade, other houses gnash their teeth and complain about Ardian's arrogant attitude, but they can do nothing else lest they threaten the gold trade.

Ardian is currently the exclusive dominion of the Ardian family, with the trader Eloyas Ardian (who





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is also secretly a preserver) at its head. The Ardians brook no interference from others, even the most powerful and influential of the dynastic houses. While Ardian's numbers are small, their agents and hirelings are all of the elite status, paid and treated better than many dynastic employees.

Ardian's main interest is the gold trade, but Eloyas maintains several caravan routes to Balic, Altaruk, and Tyr. These reap substantial profits.

Dealings with others on issues not directly related to the gold trade are usually handled with courtesy and little competitiveness. On the issue of gold, however, Ardian is adamant. No other house must be allowed to trade in gold anywhere near Walis. Any that do risk the most severe of consequences.

Assets: Ardian maintains a single large fortress and several small outposts in the region of Walis. Caravans are not the house's major source of income, but Walis maintains three or four at any one time.

Ardian's troops are of high quality, although only 300 or so are maintained on a permanent basis.

The Dedys Consortium

This alliance of three small houses (Terg, Voyan, and Shakkur) operates out of the city-state of Draj, normally the territory of the predatory House Tsalaxa. The consortium survives because of its extremely cunning nature, and the generous assistance it receives from Tsalaxa's enemies, particularly House Wavir of Balic.

In fact, the alliance between the three houses came about in large part because of pressure from House Tsalaxa. After a series of devastating raids by mercenaries in Tsalaxa's pay, the three houses met in secret in the village of Dedys, where they decided to forge an agreement. From that point forward, they agreed, resources and information on trade and rivals were to be pooled, and profits were to be shared equally. Almost immediately, House Tsalaxa responded to the threat, sending assassins to behead the new consortium. Fortunately, House

Wavir's agents learned of the plot and warned the consortium. The assassins were ambushed and wiped out, and the bodies sent to House Tsalaxa as a none-too-subtle warning.

Ydris Tsalaxa was enraged. He redoubled his efforts to wipe out the new company. Although badly hurt, Dedys managed to survive, mostly as a result of loans and other assistance from House Wavir. Today it is a profitable, if still small, merchant house, reaping considerable profits from the silk trade.

As the consortium seems to be on the way up, and it wastes no opportunity to tweak the hated House Tsalaxa's tail, many adventurers and other reckless sorts work for Dedys. Its tactics with rivals are cunning and subtle, but Dedys holds no particular hostility for other small houses—unless of course they interfere in the silk trade, Dedys's main source of profits. In these cases, subtle threats and suggestions that a different course of action would be more profitable are usually sufficient to dissuade any rivals. Dedys has yet to fight a full-scale trade war; with its still-meager resources, it is not likely that it can.

Assets: The Consortium maintains three fortresses (one for each member house) and six outposts. It maintains up to six caravans at any one time. Currently, 500 troops serve Dedys.

House Fyra

This house is a bit of an anomaly, as it operates out of the slave village of Salt View. Made up exclusively of escaped slaves and ne'er-do-wells, Fyra is one of the few trade houses that is run democratically. A leader is chosen every two years, and this leader may appoint whatever assistants and officers he or she desires.

While this sounds good in principle, in practice House Fyra is wracked by dissent and power struggles. There is enormous competition, bad blood, and dirty dealing among candidates for leadership of House Fyra. Supposedly democratic meetings have been known to disintegrate into brawls with



weapons drawn, serious injuries, and even occasional fatalities. In Salt View, it is customary when witnessing a violent altercation, to comment that “House Fyra must be having a meeting.”

Fyra specializes—not surprisingly—in the salt trade. Salt is found nearby in abundance, and it can be a high-profit item in such distant cities as Tyr and Draj. Unfortunately, salt gathering is time-consuming and dangerous, so Fyra must pay its workers well. In the cash-poor world of Salt View, this is a major drain on resources. The only thing that keeps Fyra alive and reasonably healthy is its relative isolation and lack of importance. Few larger houses care to compete in the salt trade, leaving Fyra as one of a handful of houses to do so.

The slaves of Salt View are distrustful of strangers, since they must constantly guard against bounty hunters sent by masters to retrieve runaway slaves. For this reason, other trade houses are unlikely to gain a foothold in Salt View, even if they are so deranged as to want to do so. House Fyra maintains an extremely protective attitude toward the village (their mercenary guards are generally the best trained and equipped troops in Salt View). It will oppose to the best of its ability any attempts to damage the village or usurp the salt trade.

Assets: Fyra maintains only a single fortress, south of Salt View, which also serves as a military strongpoint for the community. Fyra rarely sends out caravans, preferring to trade with outsiders. Nearly 300 warriors serve Fyra; many of these are freed slaves or former gladiators, so their skills are substantial.

House Ianto

Once on the verge of becoming a major house, Ianto fell on hard times when the trade in Tyr’s iron fell off (due to the now-overthrown sorcerer-king Kalak’s dementia). Ianto has considered relocating to another city, but resources are so limited that even this option is not feasible.

Ianto, under the leadership of patriarch Strabo

Ianto, has attempted to expand into silk and fabrics, but even these normally reliable markets are drying up in the face of economic crisis in Tyr. Without the cash reserves of the larger houses to fall back upon, Ianto is tottering on the edge of oblivion. The return of the iron trade in the wake of Kalak’s demise may bring a return of Ianto’s fortunes, but only time will tell.

Assets: Ianto has concentrated its resources into a single fortress ten miles south of Tyr. There, relatively safe from the strife in Tyr, Ianto can retrench in peace. A few small outposts are sprinkled along the routes from Tyr to Altaruk, Silver Spring, and Urik. Perhaps 200 troops serve Ianto.

House Klethira

Another house only barely clinging to existence, Klethira operates out of Urik. It runs its two caravans along the obsidian and slave routes through the Ringing Mountains to the halfling settlement of Ogo. Raids by hostile halflings have proved costly; an attack by an elven tribe recently freed a coffle of over 200 slaves, costing Klethira profits from an entire caravan.

It does not help matters that Klethira has earned the ire of House Stel, militaristic traders also based in Urik. Considering itself the sole possessor of the slave and obsidian routes to Ogo, Stel has applied pressure to the Klethira upstarts, attacking several of its outposts along the way. Stel has also threatened to expose Klethira’s masters as secret members of the Veiled Alliance (the charges are false, but certain templars will believe anything). Klethira has attempted to strike back, kidnapping a prominent Stel agent, but this has failed to deter the attacks. With its merciless militaristic attitudes, Stel is willing to sacrifice an agent or two to the cause of disposing of enemies.

Like House Ianto, Klethira has been considering relocating. Unlike Ianto, Klethira may succeed by simply loading all its resources, personnel, and equipment onto one or two caravans and slipping



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away in the dead of night. Raam and Balic currently seem to have better climates for houses such as Klethira, and this move may actually take place soon. Should Stel learn of Klethira's plans, it will immediately hire mercenaries to wipe out its rival as it flees, as final proof that House Stel reigns supreme in Urik.

Klethira still has a few tricks up its sleeves. Its matriarch, Drynnia Klethira, is a powerful psionicist (even House Stel does not know it), and she can use her powers to frustrate Stel's plans. Klethira has also managed, at great cost, to place a pair of deep agents in House Stel, and one has risen to considerable prominence. It is possible, though unlikely, that one of these agents may get close enough to Stel's leaders to do considerable damage, as revenge for or to head off any attacks on House Klethira. Drynnia is canny enough to meet with House Stel, asking for peace in exchange for Klethira leaving the area, and agreeing never to compete with Stel again. Whether this will satisfy Stel or not is yet to be seen.

Assets: Klethira maintains one fortress, northwest of Urik, which is heavily guarded against attack by House Stel. Only one or two caravans a year manage to pass through the fortress. Preparations are currently underway for House Klethira to quit the region altogether. Klethira employs 150 warriors to defend the fortress, as well as numerous slave archers to help safeguard its caravans.

House Lamnos

This small house has no real headquarters. It is something of an extended nomadic tribe, with its patriarch Airos traveling in a heavily guarded caravan. His precise location is never known to outsiders, for he moves from caravan to caravan. Only Airos's closest advisors—family members and trusted agents—know his location for sure; they are charged with bringing him reports and relaying his orders to other caravans.

This arrangement has drawbacks, since the house's decentralized nature makes communica-

tions slow. Advantages seem to outweigh problems, however, and the dispersed nature of Lamnos's power structure makes it virtually impossible to wipe out without an enormous investment of resources.

Lamnos's security makes it a somewhat irreverent house, gleefully teasing the major houses, interfering in their trade affairs, raiding their caravans, then vanishing into the desert. This frustrates the house's enemies, for they find themselves incapable of taking revenge.

Even identifying Lamnos's caravans is difficult, for the house has no symbol and runs its caravans under a wide variety of banners, sometimes even those of major dynastic houses. Lamnos's members often wear the colors of House Tsalaxa, Vordon, or Shom. Needless to say, this infuriates the real owners of these colors, and they will pay virtually any price to see House Lamnos eliminated.

Lamnos is much more lenient when dealing with other small houses. Airos's innate sense of fair play (he is a former slave) prevents him from bullying weaker houses. This philosophy is reflected in the actions of his employees and agents.

Assets: As previously noted, Lamnos has no permanent installations, but it maintains as many as six caravans at any time. Over 500 warriors serve House Lamnos.

The Renythi League

A dozen houses, ranging from moderate-sized companies to single-caravan operations, are lumped together in this loose alliance. The Renythi League extends across the entire Tyr region, with no permanent headquarters. The league is a grand experiment—many leagues have existed before, but never one with such a wide variety of members or great geographic scope.

Meetings of the heads of the various members of the league take place every three to four months. Decisions are made at these meetings, usually by consensus, although votes are sometimes taken. The league has no permanent leaders, although an indi-



vidual must be chosen to act as chairman of the meetings. The chairman acts as supervisor and has no real authority beyond that.

As in Salt View, this system works much better in theory than in practice. Meetings are punctuated by fierce bickering and members are constantly joining, quitting, and rejoining, depending on their leaders' attitudes.

The league has recently come to gain a fair amount of influence, especially with the decline of such once-powerful houses as Shom and Vordon. Only its chaotic structure prevents the league from gaining even more power. Its wide-ranging interests and growing influence have attracted the attention of larger houses, who have begun to meet together, seeking ways of reducing or destroying the league's influence.

The league also employs numerous agents and spies and is not unaware of its rivals' plans. It has commenced hatching plots of its own, doubling the guard on caravans and hiring adventurers to do mischief against its enemies. The league's power—possibly rivaling that of the hereditary dynastic houses, may soon be put to the test. Should Renythi prevail, it may encourage other houses to follow its example.

Assets: The league's assets are hard to pin down, since members come and go constantly. On average, the league controls four or five fortresses, twice that number of outposts, and has as many as ten caravans in operation at any one time. The league also employs 300 to 600 troops on a permanent basis.

House Sysra

So far gone that it no longer maintains a headquarters in a major city, House Sysra is confined to

a single tiny outpost deep in the wilderness of the Great Aluvial Sand Wastes, with a handful of pack animals and a few loyal retainers.

Begun by adventurers, Sysra was profitable for a few years, before dishonest agents robbed a rich caravan and vanished. Struggling to regain his position, leader Andris Sysra, a ranger and trader, moved the household to a distant fortress and sent out several small caravans.

Virtually every one came to grief, leading Andris and the few adventuring companions who remained by his side to suspect that an unknown enemy was out to get them. Events proved them right. One of Andris's most trusted followers, the elven fighter Tandysa, was discovered to be in the pay of House Vordon, and had been selling secrets to Andris's business rivals. In a rage, Andris slew his friend, and sank into a deep depression, which continues to this day.

Since then, House Sysra's fortunes have at least stabilized. No longer considered a threat, the company is now left in peace, and it may yet stage a comeback. Currently planning a final caravan, Andris and his companions have placed all their remaining funds into this latest effort.

Sysra is only too eager to accept help from anyone who offers it. Unfortunately, it cannot pay much, but it promises favors later, if the house survives. Andris and his fellow adventurers may yet succeed and return to plague their enemies.

Assets: Fortress Sysra, deep in the Tablelands, is the house's only permanent facility. Sysra can afford to maintain only one small caravan at a time. Perhaps 50 warriors and slaves can be called to defend the house if it comes under attack.

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Sharing the world of Athasian commerce with the dynastic merchant houses, the elven merchants live a precarious existence. They must evade the sorcerer-kings' templars while simultaneously foiling the schemes of established merchants houses and competing elven tribes.

Nearly all elven houses are nomadic, moving from city to city, setting up ragtag elven markets on the edge of town or outside city walls. Here, much to the chagrin of the sorcerer-kings or village elders, virtually any item may be obtained if the price is right. Psionic and magical safeguards protect the elves from prying templars, while the tribe's mobility helps keep the human merchants at bay.

Most elven merchants fall into one of three broad categories. There is much crossover, and some tribes defy any simplistic organization, but the following guidelines cover most of them.

First there is a purely merchant group, such as the Clearwater tribe, whose primary source of income is trade. These groups are not above an occasional

raid or act of intrigue, but most of their time is spent engaging in mercantile endeavors.

The most common sort of elven traders, typified by the Swiftwing tribe, is a group that engages in raiding, herding, hunting, or trade as it pleases. Often economic conditions—bad weather, lack of caravan traffic, unusual pressure from templars—forces the tribe to adopt a different lifestyle for a time, but as soon as conditions improve, the elves are back to their old ways. These tribes are untrustworthy even for elves. They have been known to engage in such outrageous practices as raiding merchants with whom they have just dealt to steal back their merchandise, or betraying contraband purchasers after being bribed by templars. Although such tribes are often the only source of such banned items as spell components, books, and magical items, customers are warned to be on their guard.

Trade is of lesser concern to the last, and rarest, group of elven merchants. These groups, of which the most famous is the mysterious tribe known only





as the Shadows, specialize in intrigue, espionage, and—according to some—murder for hire. Trade concerns for these groups include contraband, slaves, and stolen items of great value or notoriety. But trade is peripheral to their primary interest—the underside of Athasian society.

Clearwater Tribe

The Clearwater elves are a permanent fixture in the Tyr region. Their nomadic travels have taken them from the Lake of Golden Dreams to Bleak Tower, from Bitter Well to Walis and beyond. Clearwater traders are known for their skill at bargaining and appraisal; dealing with them takes every ounce of business savvy and guile possible.

Clearwater elders tell tales, passed down for generations, of days when the skies were blue and vast green forests grew beside deep, cool streams. Athas was not always the way it is now, they say. Water once flowed here; it is possible, they say with cryptic smiles, that it might yet flow again.

History

A group of ancient and venerable origins, the Clearwater elves claim to trace their lineage back to the days when Athas was green and fertile, and water flowed fresh and clear. The truth of such claims cannot be verified, for it is known that Athas has been a desolate, near-lifeless land for many thousands of years. In any event, many visitors to Clearwater camps have been enthralled by the elders' vivid tales of Athas's past.

Recent history is a little more specific. The tribe appeared in the Tyr region nearly 800 years ago, journeying over the Ringing Mountains from the west. Arriving near the city of Tyr, the Clearwaters, under the leadership of Chieftess Annawn, set up an elven market outside the city walls. Within days, the newly ascended sorcerer-king Kalak received information that the Clearwaters were selling contraband such as spell components and spell books.

Templars immediately descended on the Clearwater market, only to find a wholly innocuous marketplace filled with ordinary trade items.

The tribe moved on to other cities, where they continued to flaunt local law while avoiding direct confrontation with the templars. Spies and skills sent in to purchase contraband or illicit services from the elves came away empty-handed; the tribe seemed to possess a preternatural ability to detect enemies or threats to their safety.

In Gulg, however, the elves fell afoul of the city's oba, whose templars were both skillful and inventive. Several Clearwater tribe members were caught selling spell components, arrested, and sentenced to death in the city's dungeons. When the oba's torturers arrived to carry out the sentence, however, the elves were gone, as was the Clearwater tribe. The Clearwaters did not visit Gulg for many years, until the old oba had been replaced by the current ruler.

In the Ivory Triangle south of Gulg, the elves came under assault by gith from the Mekillot Mountains. The battle was furious, but when it ended, not a gith remained standing. The Clearwater elves had lost nearly a quarter of their adults and much of their transport. In order to recover from this catastrophe, the elves settled near North Ledopolus, much to the chagrin of the dwarves there.

The dwarves' antipathy was short-lived, as the elves' trading skills gave a boost to their economy and helped sharpen the dwarves' own mercantile abilities. The tribe was also instrumental in helping to repel an attack by human nomads that threatened the entire settlement. This marked the beginning of a close relationship between the Clearwater elves and the dwarves of Ledopolus. On occasion, Ledopolus dwarves have traveled with the elves, selling their stonework and weapons (often in pursuit of their focus). The elves always stock goods from Ledopolus among their wares.

After several years of living near the dwarves, the tribe moved on, journeying south to Balic and Walis. Then, unexpectedly, their wanderings took them



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south farther still, beyond the Tyr region, and out of sight for almost a century. They returned just as unexpectedly, loaded with valuable trade goods and spell components, leading many to speculate as to the true nature of their secret wealth source in the south. Several expeditions have since journeyed south to investigate, but to this date those that returned at all have done so with tales of unending wastes with no signs of civilization.

Recent years have seen the Clearwaters return to their wandering ways, appearing one month along the shores of the Sea of Silt, and crossing the Great Aluvial Sand Wastes the next. Troubles with sorcerer-kings and templars are just as common as ever, as are the Clearwaters' talents for avoiding them. Recent antics in Draj have turned the sorcerer-king Tectuktitlay against the elves, and the deaths of two Clearwater warriors have resulted in that city being scrupulously avoided.

Tribal Society

The Clearwater elves are in many ways a typical nomadic elven tribe—chaotic and independent, yet loyal to each other, willing to die to protect the tribe and fighting viciously if its security is ever threatened. They are somewhat better organized than other elven tribes, such as the Swiftwings, but they still present a confused and somewhat bizarre impression to outsiders.

Clearwater chiefs are chosen once every two to four years, by consensus among all clan elders. Chiefs are absolute rulers only in battle, when their orders are obeyed instantly and to the letter. In peacetime, chiefs seek out the advice of elders, and they make decisions based on consensus opinion.

Society centers around several pursuits, the most important of which is trade. Although many Clearwater elves serve the tribe as warriors, most possess at least some skill as traders. What a Clearwater elf does not know about business and barter is generally considered not worth knowing.

A Clearwater elf's primary loyalty is to his tribe.

Individuals are never left in jeopardy; those who are captured or otherwise menaced by outsiders tend to vanish. The murder of a Clearwater elf will invariably bring about revenge by the entire tribe, although that revenge may be delayed for years.

The tribe consists of a dozen clans, each containing from 300 to 700 members. The tribe's total population is around 5,000. Each clan has its own history, traditions, and symbols, as briefly described in the following paragraphs.

Marriage between members of different clans is acceptable but rare. Any children who result from such marriages choose which of their parents' clans they wish to join when they reach the age of ten.

Each clan has a symbol, usually worn as a three-dimensional emblem around clan members' necks.

Fireshapers: This group is primarily a wizardly clan, with a large number of clerics and a few warriors. As may be gathered from their name, the Fireshapers specialize in magic of a fiery nature, with a large number of invokers and clerics of the elemental sphere of fire.

The clan's symbol is a single orange and red flame; most house ceremonies involve the creation and contemplation of elemental fire. The ten highest-ranking warriors fight with ancient steel *flame tongue* swords, while the highest-ranking warrior (chosen each spring in tournaments of deadly combat) earns the right to bear the tribe's sacred *sun sword*. This sword is the symbol of the Fireshapers' heritage; if it is ever lost or stolen, the entire clan will direct its abilities to retrieving it and punishing the thief.

Fireshapers sell weapons, fine clothing (usually with a flame motif), and spell components. Their steel weapons are considered sacred to the family. These are offered only as gifts to those who have served the clan or made a great sacrifice. It is known that the dwarven hero Tolkas of Ledopolus wields one of their *flame tongue* swords, but neither he nor the Fireshapers will say what he did to receive it.

Graffyons: Named after an extinct species that

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the Clearwaters claim was once common in the mountains of Athas, the Graffions are a warrior house that produces many elite fighters. By tradition, Graffions do not perform magic; any clan members who show a talent for such things are allowed to join another clan where their skills can be properly nurtured.

Graffions engage in extensive combat rituals and tournaments with other clans, which helps hone their martial skills.

Graffions trade mostly in weapons, although their domestic animals—kanks, crodlu, and inix—are well trained and reputed to be among the best available. This clan may sometimes be persuaded to part with one of its valuable steel weapons, but the price offered must be considerable, or the service rendered great.

Graffion's symbol is a four-clawed talon gripping a stone or uncut gem.

Graystar: Along with the Sandrunners, the Graystars serve the Clearwater tribe as scouts. They also scout the desert around the tribal encampment, checking for the approach of possible enemies. Graystar scouts bear the gray, six-pointed star that is the clan symbol, usually tattooed between the eyes or in the center of the forehead. Graystar elves are among the most independent and antisocial of the Clearwaters. They usually only spend short periods of time with the tribe before venturing off into the desert again. While in the desert they are not above engaging in occasional raids against caravans or other elven tribes.

Graystars do not engage in trade often, as they are rarely around long enough to do so. When they do, they offer fine cloaks, the dried meat of animals which they hunt, shoes and boots, bone or stone weapons, or booty gathered while exploring (and sometimes raiding) in the desert.

Graystar elves bear crudely carved, six-pointed stars of gray stone.

Lightning: Members of the Lightning clan specialize in weather and earth magic, with large num-

bers of invokers and abjurers. Members wear black or blue tunics with small stylized lightning bolts on the sleeves or collars. Groups from this clan often journey into the desert to raise quasi-elemental lightning as part of tribal rituals. It is not unusual to see a circle of Lightning clan elves gathered in the wasteland, directing lightning, fireballs, and other destructive spells into deserted areas while retelling epic stories of the tribe or adopting a new member into their ranks. They rarely use weapons, preferring cloaks or rings of protection and *invisibility* spells for defense, and wands or rings of fireballs or lightning bolts for attack. The *wand of wonder* is the most valued magical item for the Lightning elves. Only one of these items is possessed by the clan, and they hold it in awe similar to the Fireshapers' reverence for their *sun swords*.

Lightning elves will eagerly sell spell components. Virtually any kind is available, although costs are always high, and they sell only to those they trust. Enchanted items, such as staffs, rods, wands, and clothing, are available from these elves as well, but they will sell only to those whom they are certain will never injure the Clearwater tribe.

Onyx: The Onyx clan specializes in espionage and assassination. They also practice magic associated with stealth and concealment, and they value any enchanted items that enhance these qualities. They dress in black for ceremonial occasions, but they wear whatever color best hides their movements at all other times. Their name derives from the razor-sharp, polished onyx daggers they traditionally carry. Magical stone daggers with names like *Lifeseeker* and *Ender* (varying from +1 to +5) are used for special missions. These are sometimes sold to trusted nonelven friends.

The Onyx rarely deal in legitimate merchandise, preferring to sell stolen or forbidden items in secret, back-alley deals. They will steal any item for a price, although they will do this only for those who have proven their trustworthiness. It is said that the Onyx are responsible for the deaths of several templars in



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Draj after the recent troubles there, but nothing has ever been proven.

Sandranners: Like the Graystars, the Sandrunners serve the Clearwater tribe as scouts, running ahead of the tribe as it travels from place to place. Their symbol is a crodlu carved of obsidian or other black stone, set in a circlet of bronze or tan stone.

The Sandrunners are far more sociable than the Graystars. They are a constant presence at Clearwater feasts and celebrations, where they frequently challenge Fireshapers and Stonecutters to drinking contests or feats of skill. Sandrunners are popular in human circles. They have even performed on rare occasions before sorcerer-kings, for their singers and dancers are known far and wide as performers of unparalleled skill.

As merchants, the Sandrunners are canny and eager to deal (although their “deals” often leave their customers wondering how they came to lose so much money for such shoddy goods). They favor dealing in gems, jewelry, wines, and musical instruments. Enchanted instruments, such as chimes, harps and pipes, can sometimes be purchased from this clan. Some disgruntled customers claim that the Sandrunners’ magical items cease working as soon as the Clearwater tribe has left the area.

Seafoam: The Seafoam elves boast a wide variety of skills. They are all-purpose servants of the Clearwater tribe—warriors, wizards, scouts, traders, accountants, seers, healers, and clerics. Their trade skills are considerable, and they deal in almost any item.

The Seafoam clan’s symbol is a pyramid carved of green stone.

Silverleaves: The Silverleaves serve the Clearwater tribe primarily as accountants and traders. They are responsible for managing and protecting the tribe’s wealth. A few are warriors, but large-scale military action is left to other houses. The Silverleaves’s wizards and psionists are skilled in the arts of detection and stealth; it is they who safeguard the elven market from intrusion by enemies.

The clan’s symbol is a small leaf of silvery metal or shiny stone.

The Silverleaves are the most highly skilled merchants in the tribe; nearly all are of the trader class. Like the Seafoam clan, the Silverleaves can obtain virtually any item, licit or illicit, for a price. Psionists and mages are constantly on guard for templars, informants, and dishonest traders.

Songweavers: After learning many artistic trades from the Ledopolus dwarves, the Songweaver clan went on to become the most skilled artisans in the Clearwater tribe. Many different classes serve the Songweavers, but all must possess at least some artistic skill. Songweaver warriors design, tool, or cast their own armor and weapons; wizards carve and enchant staves and wands; clerics craft their own elemental symbols and garb. Art produced by the Songweavers always fetches high prices. Some of it graces even the palaces of sorcerer-kings.

Songweaver traders deal in artwork, clothing, cloth, silk, gems, and fine jewelry. They are not particularly underhanded in their dealings, for they know that their work is highly valuable even without deception. Many of the Songweavers’ items are enchanted, in addition to being masterful works of art.

The Songweaver clan symbol is a coil of green and gray material.

Steeljaw: Clan Steeljaw takes its name from an ancient species of extinct carnivores. Metalsmiths and weapon makers, Steeljaw supplies Clearwater with its weapons and armor. Most of these weapons are nonmetallic, but a few are still made of fine steel. These weapons are highly valued by the Clearwater elves; they are rarely sold to outsiders. Elves of this house are also fierce warriors.

Steeljaw wizards and psionists are all combat-oriented, using offensive abilities against Clearwater’s enemies with ruthless efficiency. Trade is generally with other warriors, who consider Steeljaw weapons of bone, stone, and obsidian almost the equal of some metal weapons. Enchanted weapons may sometimes be bought, for an exorbitant price.

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The Steeljaw symbol is the snarling head of a long-muzzled, fanged mammalian carnivore.

Wavedivers: Wavedivers are spellcasters and clerics who specialize in water-based spells. High-level clerics are able to gate in water for the tribe when supplies run low, or as trade goods when visiting water-poor regions.

As traders, Wavedivers are pleasant and friendly, for elves. They sell water, vessels to hold it, and enchanted items that help find it.

The Wavediver symbol is a circle of polished stone that contains a stylized blue wave.

Windriders: Scout riders, evokers, and clerics of elemental air, the Windriders claim to once have ridden gigantic birds into battle, before the species became extinct and the Clearwater elves forever tied to the earth. Today, their scouts and spells help the elves survive in the wilderness and help foil the plans of the tribe's enemies.

Windrider warriors fight with bows, spears, and other missile weapons. In close combat they favor

light weapons, such as rapiers, short swords, etc. Some are made of metal; these are jealously guarded and never sold. Magical items of an aerial nature and items that convey the power of flight are particularly valued. Cliffglider-riding scouts can sometimes be seen traveling in the vanguard of the advancing Clearwater tribe.

The clan symbol is a blue and white spiral.

Trade Practices

The Clearwater elves are comparatively trustworthy — for Athasian elves that is. Although from time to time the Clearwaters have been known to sell shoddy merchandise for far more than it is worth or to pass on magical items whose abilities vanish overnight, they generally reserve such conduct for those whom they feel deserve it—arrogant nobles, overly rich merchants, slavers, templars, and other despicable types.

The elves freely trade in ordinary items, often at





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rates that compare quite favorably to those of human merchant houses. Human merchants often dislike such conduct, but repeated attempts to discourage the elves have been thwarted by the elves' psionic and magical wards.

A wide variety of contraband—books, magical items, spell components, and so on—is available from the Clearwater elves, but they are reluctant to sell to anyone they do not trust. Past experiences, in which templar agents lured the elves into traps, have made the Clearwaters reluctant to sell such items save under the most secure of conditions.

Personalities

Jentil Steeljaw

Female Elven Psionist/Preserver, Neutral Good

Armor Class 6 (braxat hide)	Str 16
Movement 12	Dex 14
Level 18/17	Con 14
Hit Points 49	Int 19
THAC0 12	Wis 17
No. of Attacks 1	Cha 20

Damage/Attack: 1d6 + 1 (bone short sword)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 231

Defense Modes—intellect fortress, mental barrier, mind blank, thought shield, tower of iron will

Clairsentience — *Sciences:* clairvoyance
Devotions: all-round vision, danger sense, poison sense

Metapsionics — *Sciences:* empower, split personality
Devotions: prolong, psionic inflation, psychic drain, splice, wrench

Psychokinesis — *Sciences:* disintegrate
Devotions: control flames, soften

Psychometabolism — *Sciences:* shadow form
Devotions: biofeedback, body control, body weaponry

Psychoportation — *Sciences:* banishment, summon planar creature, teleport
Devotions: astral projection, dimension walk, dimensional door, dream

travel, teleport trigger, time shift, time/space anchor

Telepathy — *Sciences:* mass domination
Devotions: contact, ego whip, mind thrust

Spells: 1st Level— *color spray, detect magic, feather fall, shield, wall of fog*; 2nd Level— *darkness (15' Radius), detect psionics, strength, tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter, web*; 3rd Level— *dispel magic, fly, lightning bolt, vampiric touch, wraithform*; 4th Level— *confusion, enchanted weapon, minor globe of invulnerability, wall of fire, wall of ice*; 5th Level— *advanced illusion, cloudkill, rejuvenate, stone shape, wall of iron*; 6th Level— *chain lightning, control weather, disintegrate*; 7th Level— *doom legion, monster summoning V, teleport without error*; 8th Level— *create tree of life, incendiary cloud*

Jentil Steeljaw has served the Clearwater tribe as chieftess for over three decades. Her excellent leadership has compelled the elders to renew her chieftainhood each time she has come before them. Such is the Clearwater elves' devotion to her that for the past four councils no one has opposed her.

Jentil is an elf of great beauty and wisdom; her hair is a pale silver and her eyes a deep violet. Her combination of magical and psionic abilities makes her an awesome opponent. She is a highly respected individual on a world where deadly skill and violence are commonplace. Tales throughout the Tyr region tell of her exploits as a Steeljaw mage and as the leader of the Clearwater elves.

Little is known of her early years, for she is quite old and few recall those days. For many years a battle mage with Clan Steeljaw, Jentil became renowned for her magical and psionic abilities during battles against thri-kreen raiders. For over a century, she served with great distinction, rising to high rank within Clan Steeljaw. After the former chief was slain by belgoi, she was chosen to replace him. Her first order of business was to journey alone into the desert to exact revenge against the belgoi—she returned ten days later with the heads of the six who

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had done the deed.

Arvos Silverleaf

Male Elf Trader, Neutral Good

Armor Class 7 (bone ring mail)	Str 17
Movement 12	Dex 12
Level 16	Con 11
Hit Points 53	Int 16
THAC0 13	Wis 18
No. of Attacks 1	Cha 15

Damage/Attack: 1d6 + 1 (steel short sword)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 76; Wild Talent—time shift (PS Int; Cost—16)

Arvos is the chief trader of the Clearwater tribe. He supervises all mercantile activities, making certain that the tribe is making sufficient profits and dealing honestly with those who do deserve it. While no clan is required to obey Arvos, his opinion carries considerable weight. If he asks a clan to cease a certain activity, the clan almost always obeys.

Arvos is over 100 years old. He has a handsome, fine-boned face, and his hair remains a rich red-gold. Quite friendly with other elves, even Clearwater's rivals, he is very reserved with outsiders, particularly humans. His trust is not easily given, but he is rumored to have at least one or two human friends somewhere in the Tyr region. He will do almost anything for those he considers friends.

Keyvas Graffyon

Male Elf Fighter, Chaotic Neutral

Armor Class -1 (see text + Dex)	Str 18/51
Movement 12	Dex 16
Level 13	Con 17
Hit Points 90	Int 11
THAC0 8	Wis 13
No. of Attacks 2	Cha 14

Damage/Attack: 1d8 + 6 (steel long sword +2)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 73; Wild Talent—body weaponry (PS Con -3; Cost—7 +4/round)

For the past 80 years, Keyvas has fought the Clearwaters' enemies. He is currently the best warrior of the Graffyon clan. Master of a wide range of fighting styles, he favors the traditional elven long sword. Keyvas wields the enchanted blade *Graffyon's Claw*, a +2 nine lives stealer (currently four lives have been taken; the sword can steal five more). He also wears a *suit of chain* +2 and carries a *shield* +1. All of these items are of ancient origin and are worth a king's ransom. Keyvas does not take well to larceny; numerous would-be thieves have suffered at his hands.

Years of battle have hardened Keyvas, and now he lives only for the fight. Several prominent scars mar his otherwise handsome and serene face. He has no close friends among the tribe. Nevertheless, he is acknowledged as one of the leading warriors of the Clearwater tribe, and his martial prowess has saved his fellows on numerous occasions.

Swiftwing Tribe

Emerging from the desert, racing like a hot, destroying wind across the dunes, voicing high, ululating war-cries — few things in the desert are more terrifying than the Swiftwing tribe of elves on the attack. Their raids are notorious throughout the Tyr region; in combat they have few equals.

The Swiftwings are the essence of a desert tribe—fast, cunning, and deadly. They are feared and respected by the traders who travel across the wastes of the Tyr region, and they are the scourge of other elven tribes as well. But the Swiftwings have another side, almost as well known. When not raiding or fighting other tribes, they find time to trade. Although the Swiftwings are a source of many normally forbidden goods—books, spell components, writing supplies, enchanted items, and so on—the



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average Athasian should be on guard.

History

The Swiftwings date their history back over 500 years. At that time, a small group of rebels broke off from their main tribe, the Red Sand elves, after a disagreement with the tribe's leaders. The tiny band seemed doomed, but their stubborn sense of honor drove them on, away from the Red Sand tribe. After seemingly endless weeks wandering through the Aluvial Sand Wastes, the rebels were guided to the Dragon's Bowl by a flock of birds. There they made friends with the druid who protected the lake. They took the name Swiftwing in honor of the birds that had guided them.

The new tribe struck out into the Tablelands. They were soon raiding caravans along the Silver Spring-Altaruk-Gulg route. The name Swiftwing began to be spoken with concern, disdain, and fear. Templars began to accompany caravans (a move almost unheard of in other cities) and all guards were doubled. It was all to no avail; the attacks continued, and revenue from the vital trade route declined still further. The nobles and merchants of Gulg grew determined that something had to be done about the Swiftwings.

A notorious mercenary band known as the Brotherhood of the Black Stone was hired and told to eradicate the Swiftwings. Posing as a poorly armed caravan, the Brotherhood awaited the elves' attack. It never came. Someone had tipped the Swiftwings off, and the Brotherhood spent weeks traipsing across the desert, growing weary and tired.

Finally, as the Brotherhood was about to give up, the Swiftwings attacked. The battle was fierce, but the Brotherhood was scattered in the end.

Next, the nobles engaged the services of two rival elven tribes, including the Swiftwing's nemesis, the Red Sands tribe. The combined pressure from these two tribes proved enough to convince the Swiftwings that the region was getting too hazardous. Unfortunately for the merchants of Gulg, the

Red Sands elves remained in the area for some time, continuing to raid caravans.

The Swiftwings wandered for a time, raiding and fighting. At last, weighted down with booty, they arrived in Balic, where they set up an elven market outside the city walls. Like most elven markets, the Swiftwings' operation drew unwanted attention from Balic's templars. As in most elven markets, however, the templars were unable to find any evidence of wrongdoing.

When the templars were away, the market offered a wealth of contraband, all guaranteed to enrage the authorities. Members of the Veiled Alliance discovered the market, and huge profits were reaped from illegal spell components and rare magical documents. As they left Balic, the Swiftwings realized that there was more to life than raiding.

Raiding and fighting continued to be a large part of the tribe's existence, but the newly discovered world of trade became more and more important as time passed. The Swiftwings treated trade with the same chaotic glee that they normally reserved for raids on caravans. Contraband, stolen items, and goods both legal and illegal were freely sold and eagerly bought by customers throughout the region.

The Swiftwings' dealings in illegal items attracted the attention of a powerful defiler named Shardas, who purchased large quantities of spell components and magical items from them. The Swiftwings agreed, after glimpsing the defiler's gold, to sell to him on credit. After a particularly large shipment, the Swiftwings waited months for Shardas to pay them. Emissaries sent to the defiler's tower in the Ringing Mountains never returned. The tribe, its honor slighted and its bloodlust enraged, entered the mountains in search of vengeance.

Unfortunately, the defiler struck first. In the dark of night, Shardas's shadowy minions stole into the tent of Chief Anor and made off with his twin daughters. A simple message left on one of the young elves' pillows stated the defiler's position clearly—desist and leave the mountains, or the

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chief's daughters die.

To all appearances, the threat worked. The Swiftwings immediately struck camp, turned around, and headed back toward the Tyr region. But, as the Brotherhood of the Black Stone had learned, little of what the Swiftwings did was as it appeared. As the bulk of the tribe crossed the mountains, a small group of elite warriors made its way deeper into the mountains, where Shardas's fortress crouched like an evil beast. Scaling the walls, they entered the fortress, avoiding Shardas's guards and confronting the defiler himself. Shardas was gravely wounded but escaped with his life, while the Swiftwings rescued his prisoners and reduced his fortress to rubble. To this day, the Swiftwings frighten their young ones by saying that Shardas still lurks in the shadows, eager to take vengeance for his humiliation.

The tribe returned to the Tyr region loaded down with booty from Shardas's fortress. This loot was quickly converted into gold. The elves returned to

their old ways -traveling, fighting, and trading when the mood struck them.

Tribal Society

The Swiftwing tribe is led by a chief and council of advisors known as the "Learned Ones." The Learned Ones are neither elected nor appointed. Rather, in true elven fashion, members of this council are chosen by consensus. Those who participate in the council claim that they simply know intuitively when the time is right for them to take their place with the other Learned Ones. These individuals are all elves of great skill and accomplishment—warriors, magicians, craftsmen, hunters, clerics, and so on. When the attitude of those around them meshes with their own sense of accomplishment and self-confidence, they join the council. Those who are clearly unqualified would never be taken seriously by other Learned Ones; these elves never attempt to join the council.





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Decisions by the council are made by consensus as well. Not every Learned One is present for every decision – only those who feel they are needed or who take a personal interest in the issue at hand.

The chief is chosen in this fashion from among the Learned Ones. Once chosen, a chief rules by decree, although Learned Ones who disagree with his decisions may dispute them and attempt to change the chief's mind. Should either party seem adamant in his or her opinion, the other will often relent or compromise. Only in the rare instances where both parties are equally determined are the Learned Ones convened to decide the issue. Should the chief disagree with the consensus of the Learned Ones in such a situation, he or she is removed and a new chief chosen.

As may be inferred from the above information, there is complete sexual equality in the Swiftwing tribe. The rugged nomadic lifestyle has bred females capable of working, traveling, and even fighting while with child, up until only a few days before birth. Consequently, there are no restrictions as to what position either males or females may hold.

After all is said and done, the Swiftwings are at heart a tribe of nomadic warriors. All actions of the tribe revolve around travel from place to place, and the eventual necessity of battle. Trade is a comparatively recent innovation. Even though trade has taken on considerable importance, it is subject to the demands of the Swiftwings' nomadic lifestyle.

Shelters for the tribe are light and easily transportable. Most Swiftwings live in tents that vary from tiny one-man lean-tos to large, multiroomed structures inhabited by the chief and other prominent members of the tribe. Tents are made of brightly colored cloth, often decorated with pennons, captured banners, trophies, and the skulls of enemies or monsters. Even the largest of these tents can be disassembled and packed up in a matter of hours; smaller ones may be taken down in just a few minutes. Many of these tents are so small and light that they can be converted into backpacks and used

to carry personal gear. Larger tents are loaded onto kanks or crodlu for travel.

All Swiftwings travel on foot, as their lean, fast-moving bodies are ideally suited to the rugged environment of the desert. Mekillot- or inix-drawn wagons may sometimes be utilized, especially when large amounts of booty or trade goods are being transported.

The Swiftwings' economy is driven by several factors. Although tribe members are loathe to admit it, raiding is not the tribe's main source of sustenance. Hunting, gathering, and herding erdlu, crodlu, and kank provide most of the tribe's food, while trading in stolen goods brings in most of its income.

Participating in raids and battles with tribal enemies is the surest way for a tribe member to gain status. Many different acts of bravery (or foolishness, according to outsiders) can provide status to a Swiftwing tribesman. Each act is recognized by fellow warriors by a different badge, symbol, or decoration. Killing an enemy warrior, for example, is rewarded with a black or gray bead that is worn around the neck or braided into the warrior's hair. Swiftwing warriors with numerous beads should be treated with the utmost respect.

Some warriors enter battle unarmed and unarmored, relying on their agility and martial arts abilities to overcome their enemies. A warrior who slays an enemy in this fashion earns the right to wear a red bead, either on a necklace or in his or her braids. The tribe treats these warriors—known as "avengers"—with near-religious awe.

The tribe's highest status is reserved for those individuals who have slain a defiler who is a proven enemy of the tribe. Defilers are particularly hated by the Swiftwings. The few warriors who can claim to have slain a defiler may tattoo themselves with the image of a nine-pointed star. This tattoo may appear anywhere, but is most common on shoulders and foreheads. Although the tribe's attitude is that the only good defiler is a dead defiler, the star is awarded only if the slain defiler is a known and

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active enemy of the Swiftwings. Slaying an ordinary wizard, cleric, or psionicist is rewarded with a green bead or bracelet.

Other, lesser honors also exist. Scouts who slay an enemy receive a blue bead or bracelet; they receive a white bead or stone if they find a particularly rich caravan for the tribe to raid, and so on.

Swiftwing elves dress in bright clothing, with colors signifying the individual's occupation. Warriors wear warm colors, such as red, yellow, and orange; spellcasters and psionicists wear blue or violet; scouts wear desert tan or brown. Black is reserved for the chief and his family. These color conventions are not hard and fast rules— wizard may wear yellow if he desires, for example—but they are a good general guideline for determining an individual's occupation.

Trade Practices

Actual trade for profit, with the Swiftwings buying goods in one city and transporting them to another, is a new concept to most tribe members. They have still not gotten the hang of it. Recently, for example, the tribe suffered acute embarrassment when it arrived in Gulg with a load of exotic feathers, items that Gulg already possessed in abundance.

The Swiftwings are improving, however, as they learn from the practices of other elven traders, such as the Clearwater tribe, and from the dynastic merchant houses of the city-states. Only recently have genuine traders emerged among the Swiftwings. Most of these are still of low level, although they are gaining experience and skills rapidly.

Potential customers can expect the Swiftwings to be hard bargainers despite their lack of expertise, especially when it comes to spell components and magical items. These objects are hard won and highly sought after, and the elves are unlikely to let them go without substantial cash incentives.

Personalities

Targaz

Male Elf Fighter, Neutral Good

Armor Class -2 (hide, Dex, ring)	Str 19
Movement 12	Dex 22
Level 14	Con 12
Hit Points 71	Int 17
THAC0 7	Wis 17
No. of Attacks 2	Cha 16

Damage/Attack: 1d8 + 10 (steel *bastard sword* +3)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 80; Wild Talent—control light (PS Int; Cost—12 +4/round)

The current chief is a very old elf. Targaz has served as a tribal warrior for at least 60 years. He had been offered the position of chief innumerable times by the Learned Ones, but he refused each time, claiming that he could not give the post the attention it deserved. At last, after the death of the previous chief in battle, Targaz accepted.

Tall and almost skeletally thin, he is an impressive sight with his fine white hair bound up in braids bearing countless honor beads of every color. He wears unadorned mekillot hide armor, supplemented by both his unbelievable dexterity and a *ring of protection* +3. He fights with an ancient steel *bastard sword* +3. This sword is called *Soulblade*, and it may possess powers known only to Targaz.

His skill as a fighter is matched by his wisdom as a leader, for under his leadership the tribe has prospered. The tribe's recent move to serious trading took place with his approval and assistance; he spares no expense to see to it that the tribe's traders are well trained. He sees trade as an interesting and profitable experiment, but doubts the tribe will ever give up its ruthless, raiding ways.



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Yarma

Female Elf Ranger, Chaotic Neutral

Armor Class 5 (leather + Dex)	Str 17
Movement 12	Dex 17
Level 16	Con 14
Hit Points 82	Int 16
THAC0 5	Wis 15
No. of Attacks 2	Cha 11

Damage/Attack: 1d8 + 1 (steel long sword)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 82; Wild Talent-mind bar (PS Int -2; Cost-6 + 4/round)

Spells (priest): 1st Level— *animal friendship, entangle, pass without trace*; 2nd Level— *messenger, snake charm, speak with animals*; 3rd Level— *plant growth, spike growth, summon insects*

Yarma is one of the leading Learned Ones. An accomplished ranger and scout, she can often be found in the desert, racing on foot across the dunes, searching for danger or loot. She has many honor beads, but she is best known as the tribe's leading avenger, often attacking the tribe's enemies with neither weapons nor armor (with an effective AC of 7 due to her Dexterity), relying on her considerable skills with unarmed combat. When not fighting as an avenger, she wears leather armor and carries a long sword. She is also known as a defiler-slayer, bearing no less than five star tattoos on her face, arms, and shoulders.

Yarma is a grimly violent elf, enjoying combat over most of life's other pleasures. Her handsome, high-cheekboned face is marred by several scars, while her silver-blond hair is so full of honor beads that it could conceivably be used as a weapon. She rarely speaks to other tribe members, save in council, where she invariably favors the most dangerous and violent courses of action. She does not speak to outsiders at all, preferring to fix them with an icy

stare until they leave.

Many Swiftwings claim that Yarma's parents were both slain by templars (or gith; the story varies) when she was young, and that she carries emotional scars to this day. There may be some truth to this story, for she refuses to discuss her parents and seems to single out templars for special attention in battle.

Silax

Male Elf Preserver, Chaotic Neutral

Armor Class 10 (cloak)	Str 11
Movement 12	Dex 13
Level 14	Con 13
Hit Points 33	Int 18
THAC0 16	Wis 14
No. of Attacks 1	Cha 14

Damage/Attack: 1d4 (stone dagger)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 70; Wild Talent—detonate (PS Con -3; Cost-18)

Spells: 1st Level— *armor grease, magic missile, shield, sleep*; 2nd Level— *detect evil, invisibility, melf's acid arrow, stinking cloud, summon swarm*; 3rd Level— *fireball (x 2), fly, haste, invisibility 10' radius*; 4th Level— *fear, ice storm, stonewall, wall of fire*; 5th Level— *cloudkill, summon shadow, teleport, wall of stone*; 6th Level— *death fog, globe of invulnerability*; 7th Level— *spell turning*

Silax is a wizard every bit as distinguished and respected as the finest Swiftwing warrior. He dresses in somber blue and gray. He is slow to anger but swift to punish the enemies of the Swiftwing tribe.

Though he is quiet and rarely has a cross word for anyone, Silax has a deep hatred of slavers and of the gith. He takes great pleasure in fighting them.

Quite old, Silax is a mine of information about the Swiftwings and their history, but he does not



give his confidence or friendship easily.

Dylauris

Male Elf Trader, Chaotic Good

Armor Class 7 (studded leather)	Str 14
Movement 12	Dex 12
Level 15	Con 13
Hit Points 47	Int 18
THAC0 13	Wis 16
No. of Attacks 1	Cha 18

Damage/Attack: 1d6 (stone flail)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 68; Wild Talent—truthhear (PS Wis; Cost—4 +2/round)

Dylauris is without a doubt the most accomplished Swiftwing trader. He is famous for his trade journeys, which have taken him from one corner of the Tyr region to the other. His adventures have gained the status of legends, as has his ability to get the better of humans, dwarves, and giants. Several tales even tell of Dylauris outwitting a sorcerer-king or powerful defilers. The truth of such tales is questionable, but in Swiftwing society the truth of a tale is secondary to its entertainment value.

Dylauris is a witty, at times bothersome, elf. He has adopted many human mannerisms— a fault that his fellow Swiftwings find annoying, but they forgive it because of the wealth and glory he has brought to the tribe. He dresses in brown, gray, tan, and yellow — all colors of the desert.

The Shadows

DM Take Note! Much of the following material is unknown to the average Athasian. The Shadows are intended to be dark, mysterious, and possibly dangerous. Player access to this section should be limited, and the facts herein should be divulged grudgingly.

Among the wild, twisted elves of Athas, the most

mysterious is the tribe known only as the Shadows. Whether this is what they call themselves, or if it's simply a name tacked onto them by their victims, clients, or those who tell stories about them, is not known.

What is known is that the Shadows are a vast, secretive group of elves, specializing in many covert and illegal activities—espionage, assassination, theft, extortion, and so on. However, the activity of most interest to this work is, as with the other groups discussed, trade.

Many other groups trade in contraband and forbidden items—even, on occasion, the dynastic merchant houses. But no others have honed the practices of smuggling and trade in illegal objects and substances to such a height as have the Shadows, and no one knows exactly how they do it.

History

Many Athasians claim that the Shadows have always existed. There is little evidence to contradict this, for references to the Shadows go back hundreds of years. After so much time, the Shadows have evolved considerably, becoming less a tribe or family and more a vast, complicated secret society with an exclusively elven membership. While most Shadows are born into the group, outsiders are sometimes admitted.

An early reference to the Shadows comes from an ancient epic sung by bards. This is known as “The Saga of the Fall of Kaday.” The song speaks of Kaday, a powerful defiler, who is undone by a jealous ex-lover. Spurned and rejected, a beautiful wizardess makes a pact with a mysterious group of black-clad elves, giving them all her worldly possessions in order to grant her vengeance. To her dismay, the elves retaliate out of all proportion, casting down Kaday in a cataclysm that destroys both him and everything he owns. In the end, the distraught wizardess repents of her deed and dies of grief.

This story, a popular tragedy told in innumerable versions (in one, the rejected wizardess and her lover



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still wander the wilderness of Athas, wailing endlessly), illustrates several points that are familiar to those who know the Shadows. An inherent (if chaotic) sense of justice and fair play seems to permeate their dealings. Orders are often followed to the letter, even to the extent of causing destruction and grief far out of proportion to what the client initially requested. The Shadows, it seems, are determined to teach foolish outsiders to think about the consequences of their actions.

Every city, as well as most villages, has tales about the Shadows. They can take the role of heroes, villains, or an amoral force of nature. Sometimes, they are thieves who can be foiled only by the quick thinking of brave templars. At other times, the Shadows are noble avengers who frustrate the goals of greedy sorcerer-kings or brutal bandits. In all the stories they are similar—dark-clad, soft-spoken elves who provide any service or obtain any item, for a price.

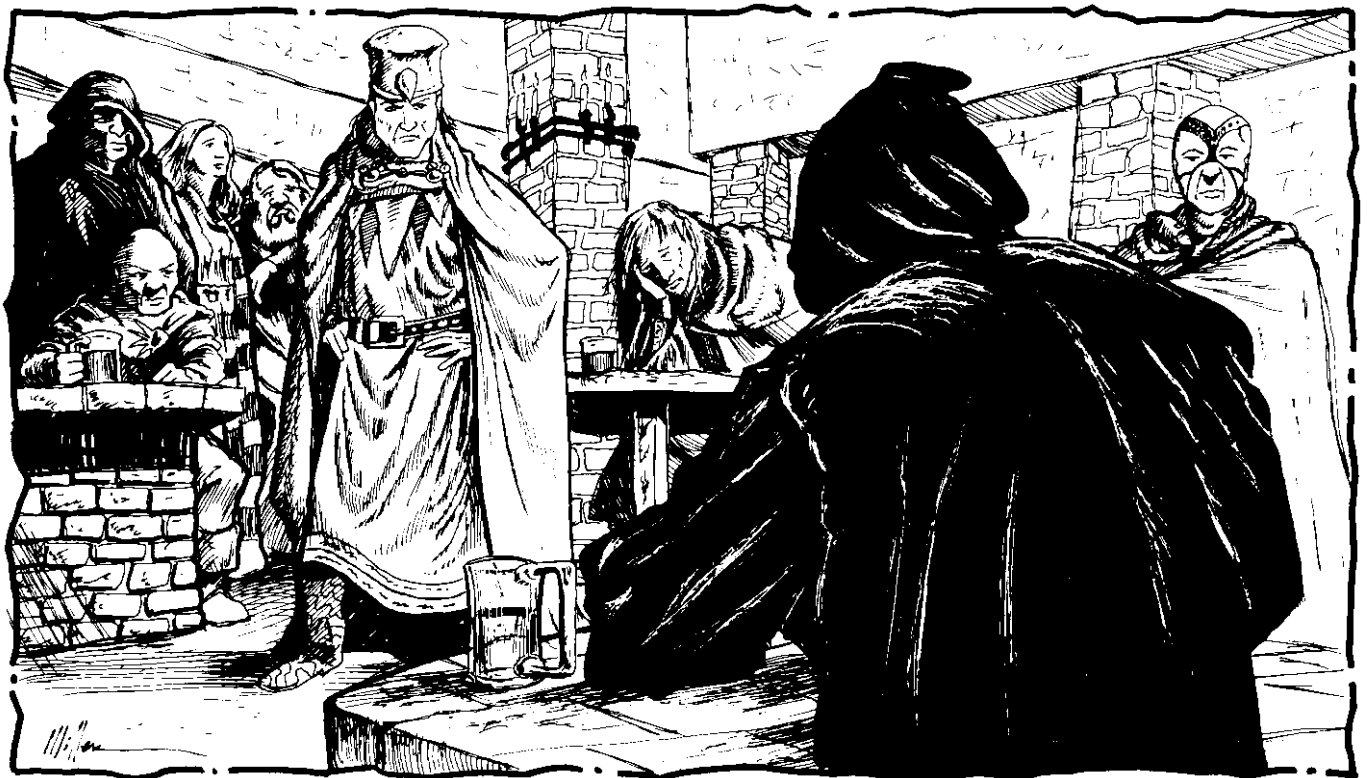
Recently, however, the Shadows seem to be grow-

ing less active. While many assassinations, thefts, and other acts of mayhem have been blamed on this mysterious group, there is little evidence that the Shadows are involved. True, their handiwork is still seen on occasion, but to nowhere near the extent that it was in the past.

Some claim that the Shadows are dying out. Most learned scholars agree that the Shadows are still active, but they have simply changed their tactics. The thefts, killings, and espionage continue, and are still offered to anyone who knows the right questions to ask, but now the Shadows seem to have discovered an easier, more certain way of life. Like many other elven tribes, the Shadows have discovered trade.

Tribal Society

The general populace knows little about the Shadows, thinking of them only as mysterious elves who appear — sometimes unexpectedly — to offer



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their services to anyone who can afford them. As for the exact internal workings of the tribe, few know or care.

All of this is fine with the Shadows. A vast and unthinkable old organization, the Shadows have survived this long by keeping their secrets safe from outsiders.

The Shadows are divided into numerous cells, known as talons. Each talon is based in a different city and is responsible for all activities in the vicinity. A talon is led by a talon-master, usually a high-ranking rogue or wizard, who acts as patriarch (or matriarch) of what amounts to an extended family.

Talon-masters meet once every ten years in a secret location to select the grand shadow master, who leads the tribe for the next decade. The grand master arbitrates disputes, selects new talon-masters, and coordinates all activities. The talon-masters are autonomous leaders, with no obligation to follow the grand master's edicts, but the grand master retains the right to remove talon-masters from office, so his wishes are usually respected.

Below the talon-masters are numerous sub-commanders, known as shadow-masters, each responsible for a different section (or "claw") of the talon. A fighter leads the mercenary claw, a wizard the magical claw, a thief the espionage claw, etc. Under the shadow-masters are numerous elves with skills appropriate to their section. Some Shadows are not associated with any particular claw, but work temporarily for whichever is most appropriate at the moment. Most talons have added a claw devoted exclusively to trade, led by a high-level trader and employing lower-ranking Shadows of every class. Various claws, their rules, and organization, are listed below. Some details vary from talon to talon, but the basic functions remain the same.

Mercenary Claw: This is the claw most frequently encountered by outsiders. Many Shadow mercenary claws are known only as freebooters with no connection to the mysterious elves. These groups have their own history, heraldry, and uniforms, lead-

ing customers to believe that they are independent elven mercenaries.

Magical Claw: Shadow defilers favor spells of stealth, deception, and illusion (there are a large number of illusionist specialists). These specialists are almost always assigned individually to assist other claws in the pursuit of missions. As with the mercenaries, members of the magical claw sometimes masquerade as independent agents, hiring out to the highest bidder. Funds from their employment go back to the magician's talon, without the knowledge of the employer.

Thieving Claw: Thievery is one of the Shadows' specialties. This claw includes mostly thieves, plus a few illusionists skilled in concealment spells. Numerous supposedly impregnable vaults and heavily guarded fortresses have fallen to their near-miraculous skill. The Shadows' skill as thieves has entered popular legend, for if a certain task is deemed impossible, a popular proverb states that "you might as well try to hide treasure from the Shadows."

The Shadows' services do not come cheaply. A deposit of up to 100 gold pieces is required for particularly difficult assignments, an amount that few Athasians can afford. After the job is done, the Shadows demand up to one-half the value of the item they are asked to steal. Woe unto the individual who cheats the Shadows, for the item in question will invariably disappear, along with much of the employer's wealth.

Espionage Claw: The Shadows' skill at intrigue is every bit as impressive as their talent for theft. Secrets known only in the deepest hearts of Athasian nobles have become common knowledge or fallen into the hands of extortionists as a result of the Shadows' activities. Secret trade agreements, communications between conspirators, and crimes against sorcerer-kings—all are targets of the Shadows' spies, and nothing seems truly safe.

Should the Shadows feel that their employer will use the information gained for evil or selfish pur-



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poses or to harm the innocent, that employer may well find himself the target of the Shadows' vengeance. Often, information or acts similar to what the employer requested are visited upon him, or his enemies learn his most devastating secrets. There is no telling exactly when the Shadows' sense of fair play will be offended, but when it is, disaster invariably follows.

Raiding Claw: Raiding claws are not assigned as much as they are simply unleashed. Those who require their services often hire them simply to disrupt an enemy's caravan traffic. Material gain is not an issue for the employer, as raiding claws take all they find as part of the claw's pay.

These claws have a composition similar to a normal tribe, with fighters, scouts, wizards, and so on. Pay depends on the plunder to be gained from the target. Extremely lucrative targets are raided for next to nothing (a few dozen gold pieces), while poorer victims cost more (hundreds or thousands of gold pieces).

Merchant Claw: Until recently, trade was a limited part of the Shadows' activities. Small merchant claws were maintained to fence stolen goods or to buy supplies needed by the talon. In the past few years, however, Shadow merchants have gained considerable status, and their activities have grown to equal or eclipse the Shadows' familiar pursuits.

Trade with the Shadows is simple. They will buy or sell anything, any time, anywhere, and to virtually anyone. Prices depend on the Shadows' attitude toward the individual. Buyers or sellers of chaotic or good alignment are usually favored, although those of a neutral bent also receive good treatment. Evil or lawful individuals can get good deals, but they must bargain skillfully. The only groups the Shadows refuse to deal with are the sorcerer-kings and their templars. They will even deal with outside defilers, although they charge exorbitant prices for doing so.

Most often, Shadows appear and disappear as silently and mysteriously as their name suggests. An

individual in need of a certain item will often find that exact item offered to him by a mysterious, hooded elf who speaks little but always delivers as promised.

Shadows sometimes operate out of a normal elven market, usually by agreement with the tribe that operates it. Although they will sometimes present themselves openly as Shadows, they most often do business in the guise of their host tribe, allowing their hosts a share of the profits. The Shadows never themselves operate elven markets, preferring to work individually or in very small groups.

Personalities

Darzus

Male Elf Thief, Chaotic Neutral

Armor Class 4 (leather + Dex)	Str 15
Movement 12	Dex 19
Level 12	Con 20
Hit Points 42	Int 15
THAC0 15	Wis 16
No. of Attacks 1	Cha 13

Damage/Attack: 1d8 (steel long sword)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 50; Wild Talent—heightened senses (PS Con; Cost—5 +1/round)

Darzus is one of the few Shadows known by name to the general public. Over his long life, he is said to have entered the inner sanctum of sorcerer-kings, stolen secrets from the Veiled Alliance, and even robbed the horde of the dragon itself.

Of course, with the Shadows, it is difficult to separate fact from fiction, but many of the tales regarding Darzus seem to be true. He is currently a member of an espionage claw in the city of Urik, but often serves in other capacities and locations.

Darzus is tall, dark complected, and of a rather taciturn nature. He rarely speaks more than absolutely necessary, save to accept a contract, or to

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report on its completion. Like all Shadows, he never forgets a slight and does not hesitate to take vengeance on anyone who double-crosses him.

Strannys

Male Elf Psionist, Chaotic Neutral (Good)

Armor Class 10 (robes)	Str 11
Movement 12	Dex 12
Level 18	Con 15
Hit Points 60	Int 17
THAC0 12	Wis 18
No. of Attacks 1	Cha 14

Damage/Attack: 1d6 (short sword)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 249

Defense Modes— intellect fortress, mental barrier, mind blank, thought shield, tower of iron will

Clairsentience— *Sciences*: aura sight, clairvoyance, precognition *Devotions*: all-round vision,

combat mind, danger sense, know location, poison sense, radial navigation, spirit sense

Metapsionics— *Sciences*: ultrablast *Devotions*: cannibalize, gird, magnify

Psychokinesis— *Sciences*: detonate *Devotions*: animate object, levitation, molecular manipulation

Psychometabolism— *Sciences*: banishment *Devotions*: astral projection, dimensional door, time shift

Telepathy— *Sciences*: probe, psionic blast *Devotions*: contact, ego whip, esp, id insinuation, truthhear

Strannys is a psionist who specializes in espionage. He dresses in bright colors and likes to travel incognito, posing as an entertainer or freelance psionist. His skill with the lute and his singing voice are said to rival even the bards, but his real love is for intrigue.

He is usually accompanied by two or more lower-ranking Shadows who circulate through the communities with Strannys, looking for potential





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customers. Those who seem to need his services are contacted and told to meet Strannys at night in a neutral location. Strannys uses his aura sight and precognition to determine if the customer is sincere or not. If the tasks required are beyond Strannys's abilities, he acts as an agent, putting the customer in touch with other Shadows who can help.

Deryssa

Female Elf Defiler, Chaotic Neutral

Armor Class 3 (robes + Dex)	Str 11
Movement 12	Dex 15
Level 13	Con 14
Hit Points 27	Int 19
THAC0 16	Wis 13
No. of Attacks 1	Cha 17

Damage/Attack: 1d3 (stone knife)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 52; Wild Talent—catfall (PS Dex -2; Cost -4)

Spells: 1st Level—*magic missile*, *protection from evil*, *shield*, *sleep* (x 2); 2nd Level—*detect evil*, *invisibility*, *melf's acid arrow*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *summon swarm*; 3rd Level—*fireball*, *flame arrow*, *fly*, *haste* (x 2); 4th Level—*charm monster*, *dig*, *monster summoning II*, *phantasmal killer*; 5th Level—*chaos*, *conjure fire elemental*, *feeblemind*, *telekinesis*; 6th Level—*death spell*, *invisible stalker*

Deryssa dwells openly in the city of Balic, known to her neighbors as a simple dealer in rugs and handicrafts. Her secret life as a spellcaster is known to but a few and is kept especially well hidden from

the templars. She is in contact with other members of her talon, who also dwell more or less openly in Balic.

An accomplished intriguer as well as a wizard, Deryssa serves both as an individual wizard and as support for other talon members. In her public life as a shopkeeper, she dresses in bright colors and plays at being somewhat dim. When on assignment, however, Deryssa wears gray or black; her awesome intelligence is evident at these times.

Sellak

Male Elf Trader, Neutral Good

Armor Class 8 (leather armor)	Str 13
Movement 12	Dex 12
Level 11	Con 10
Hit Points 40	Int 16
THAC0 15	Wis 17
No. of Attacks 1	Cha 16

Damage/Attack: 1d8 (bronze long sword)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 55; Wild Talent—life detection (PS Int -2; Cost -3 +3/round)

A reasonably good-natured (for a Shadow) elf, Sellak likes to play the role of the mysterious smuggler. He greatly enjoys meeting customers in the middle of the night, swathed in a deep hooded cloak. He does this even when he is dealing in legitimate trade goods, if only to maintain his image.

Sellak relishes the role of trader, especially since mercantilism is a comparatively recent innovation for the Shadows. He is determined to distinguish himself as a trader without equal.

Other Nonhuman Traders

Given the vital nature of trade to Athasians, virtually every race engages in mercantile activities at some time or other. Although only humans, elves, and half-elves can be members of the trader character class, most other races have some skill at bargaining, buying, and selling. The major Athasian PC races (as well one or two NPC races) are listed below with their trade practices.

Belgoi

These objectionable humanoid actually engage in trade from time to time. Their evil nature makes them thoroughly objectionable, and they enjoy trading in the most distasteful items. The belgoi's lawful alignment, however, insures that they are reasonably honest in all dealings. Despite this, the fact that belgoi are almost universally hated and reviled prevents many other races from dealing with them.

Dwarves

Dwarves are by nature industrious, skilled, and materialistic. They thus are natural merchants, specializing in the trade of handicrafts, weapons, and armor. Dwarves are loathe to bargain; they never let an item go for less than they feel it is worth.

Most dwarven tribes and villages have several individuals who specialize in trade. These individuals also serve the tribe as warriors, clerics, and craftsmen, but their most important contribution to their community is as merchants.

Dwarves sell weapons and armor of all descriptions. They remain one of the few races that retains the secrets of working metal and creating high-grade steel. Dwarven metal weapons are renowned throughout the world as the finest available. Only rarely will a dwarf part with enchanted arms or armor, and then only for a great price.





Other Nonhuman Traders

Giants

Giants do not enjoy trade, but they engage in it when necessary. Their limited intelligence makes them easy to cheat, but few traders take any pride in such an act.

Giants deal in livestock, foodstuffs, and crude handicrafts. They prefer barter, for they see little value in human-style monies. Humanoid giants do not attack those who approach with the intent of trade. Beast-headed giants, however, rarely engage in trade and often drive off potential traders with boulders.

Gith

Like the elves of the deep desert, gith prefer to make their living by raiding, but they sometimes trade if circumstances demand it.

Chaotic evil gith are dangerous trade partners, but they sometimes offer items of great value for bargain prices. Most of the items gith trade are booty from raids—treasure, trade goods, slaves, and captives for ransom. Those trading with them should take care not to display excess wealth, for the gith have been known to attack their former customers in order to regain the items they just sold.

Half-Giants

Members of this exotic race engage in trade as their changeable nature strikes them. Lawfully inclined half-giants are more likely to trade than chaotic individuals (and they are more likely to deal honestly). Half-giants deal in anything. As some are quite bright, even the most experienced trader may find that they drive a hard bargain.

A half-giant's variable alignment means that caution should be exercised. Traders should put as much distance between themselves and the half-giant as possible before the following sunrise.

Halflings

Savage Athasian halflings are a great danger to travelers and adventurers. Outsiders can trade with halflings, however, particularly the halflings of such villages as Ogo, who are used to bartering with the merchants of Urik and Makla.

Other halfling tribes are very dangerous, but they can often be induced to trade if the items offered are valuable enough. Many halfling tribes of the Ringing Mountains have access to gem deposits, hardwood, exotic feathers, and other precious trade goods. They will happily trade for colorful clothing, weapons, glassware, livestock, and other (to them) rare items. All the same, traders must exercise continual vigilance against hostile moves by the volatile halflings.

Thri-keen

Surprisingly, mantis warriors function quite efficiently as merchants. When not hunting, they often meet with other desert tribes to trade for food, water, and other vital substances.

Thri-keen carry their warrior ethic over into trade. They consider each transaction a contest between hunter (buyer) and hunted (seller). Bargaining is an art with thri-keen, one with many ritualistic aspects. A thri-keen buyer always begins a transaction by listing his lineage and achievements as hunter and warrior; a seller is expected to recount the history of the item for sale, who produced it, and its strengths, as well as his own pedigree and history. The deal then proceeds in a familiar manner—the buyer responds with an offer far less than the worth of the goods, the seller with an offer far higher. Bargaining is a contest of wills and personal honor.

The final deal is considered done when both sides' pride is satisfied. Thri-keen believe cheating is dishonorable—a buyer derives no pride from cheating a seller, while a merchant who allows a customer to pay too much feels sullied himself.

The Trader Campaign

Across the burning, dust-swirled deserts of Athas, from water-starved village to greedy city, from bloodthirsty halfling tribe to ancient elven nation, a single thread unites a dying world. That thread is trade.

Player characters in the world of the Dark Sun will encounter traders and their followers constantly. The universal nature of trade will make many want to become traders themselves. This chapter establishes rules and guidelines for a successful trade-based campaign, and for individual adventures involving trade.

Trader

Ability Requirements: Intelligence 10
Wisdom 15
Charisma 12

Prime Requisites: Wisdom, Charisma

Races Allowed: Human, Elf, Half-elf

Racial Class and Level Limits:

Human: U

Elf: 16

Half-elf: 10

Multi-Class Combinations:

Elf or Half-elf: Any combination of Trader with either one or two of Fighter, Mage, Cleric, Thief*, and Psionicist is allowed.

*Half-elves can substitute "Bard" for "Thief."

In a world where life's basic necessities—food, water, metal—are in short supply, the individual who can provide them wields enormous influence. While disliked and often openly reviled by the sorcerers, traders are popular with ordinary citizens. They are tolerated everywhere, for without them life on Athas would come to a grim end.

Traders gain experience and hit points as described under "Rogues" in the *Player's Handbook*. They also use the rogue THAC0 progression. Traders have no restrictions as to weapons or armor, but any armor heavier than leather pre-





The Trader Campaign

vents the trader from using any thieving abilities. In day-to-day life, traders usually wear ordinary clothes and carry only such weapons as may be easily concealed.

Traders may be of any alignment.

While all traders aspire to become master of a major trading house, most have to start small. They generally have no qualms about accompanying bands of roving adventurers, acting as negotiators, interpreters, and diplomats, appraising and bargaining for treasure and supplies. Those adventurers who accompany a young trader often form the core of a new trading house, are adopted into the trader's family, or live well as senior agents when the trader becomes successful.

Once a trader reaches 10th level, he begins to attract agents, similar to the way in which a fighter attracts followers. These agents are individuals of exceptional abilities, rather than the large numbers of low-level warriors attracted by fighters. A trader need not accept the services of a given agent (for example, good-aligned traders will not want to attract defilers), but if an agent is rejected, the player may not roll again. Templars are never attracted as agents of PC traders. A trader attracts new agents as he rises in level, as shown on the following table.

TRADER'S AGENTS

Trader's Level	Number of Followers	Followers' Level	% Special
10	1d3+1	1d4+1	0
11	1d3+2	1d4+2	5
12	1d4+1	1d6+1	10
13	1d4+2	1d6+2	15
14	1d6+1	1d8+1	20
15	1d6+2	1d8+2	25
16	1d8+1	1d10+1	30
17	1d8+2	1d10+2	35
18	1d10+1	1d12+1	40
19	1d10+2	1d12+2	45
20	1d12+1	1d12+3	50

Once the number of agents and their levels are determined, roll 1d100 for each agent and check the result against the appropriate "% Special" column. If the roll is less than the number listed, the agent is a special agent. Roll on the Special Agents table for him. If the roll is greater than the "% Special" number, skip the Special Agents table and roll for a typical agent.

SPECIAL AGENTS

D100

Roll	Type
01-15	Fighter or gladiator including followers (if any) as described in the DARK SUN™ <i>Rules Book</i>
16-25	A multi-classed character of the DM's choosing
26-35	Roll for agent normally, but add 1d6 levels
36-45	Aarakocra
46-55	Belgoi*
56-65	Tohr-kreen**
66-75	Pterrann**
76-85	Kenku
86-95	Pseudodragon
96-00	Select any one from above, or roll on the optional Exceptional Situations table

*Accepting a belgoi as an agent may be considered an evil act by the DM.

**Pterranns and tohr-kreen are described in *MC12, DARK SUN Appendix, Terrors of the Desert*.

For each agent who is not a Special Agent, roll 1d100 on each of the following tables to determine the agent's race and class. If the class roll results in a class normally forbidden to the agent's race, roll again. Adjust levels for nonhuman agents if necessary according to the Racial Class and Level Limits table in the DARK SUN *Rules Book*.



AGENT'S RACE

D100

Roll	Race
01-10	Dwarf
11-20	Elf
21-40	Half-elf
41-45	Half-giant
46-50	Halfling
51-80	Human
81-95	Mul
96-00	Thri-kreen

AGENT'S CLASS

D100

Roll	Class
01-05	Bard
06-15	Cleric (roll 1d4 to determine type; 1 = Fire, 2 = Water, 3 = Air, 4 = Earth)
16-20	Defiler*
21-25	Druid
26-40	Fighter
41-50	Gladiator
51-55	Illusionist
56-60	Mage
61-65	Psionicist
66-70	Ranger
71-85	Thief
86-00	Trader

*Accepting a defiler as an agent may be considered an evil act by the DM.

Exceptional Situation (optional)

If the DM feels the trader's actions or circumstances warrant it, the player may roll 1d20 for an exceptional situation on the following table. The trader may get a roll at 10th level and one roll per level after that. This is by no means automatic; only those traders who have been in close contact with one or more of the groups or individuals in the Exceptional Situations table should be allowed to roll.

If the result is a group or individual with whom the trader has never had any contact, then the roll fails.

EXCEPTIONAL SITUATIONS

D20

Roll	Result
01-04	Friendship of a thri-kreen tribe
05-10	Friendship of an elven tribe
11-14	Friendship of a halfling tribe
15-18	Friendship of a raiding tribe
17	Favor of a sorcerer-king
20	Services of a creature of the planes

The friendship of a tribe, such as thri-kreen or halflings, indicates that the trader or his family has done a favor for or maintained good relations with the tribe. The DM should create a description of the tribe and a reason why the friendship exists. Friendly tribes are always well inclined toward the trader and his companions. They offer food and shelter and, in extreme cases, fight for the trader. Note that friendship is not easily given. Any who abuse the trust of a tribe will find that friendship can swiftly turn to hostility.

The "favor" of a sorcerer-king is considerably less than the friendship of tribes. A trader who is in a king's favor may ask for assistance from the king's templars (although there is no assurance that such assistance will be given). He can also expect to be able to bend local law without being harassed. Any trader who abuses the favor of a sorcerer-king will find that favor swiftly withdrawn.

Services from planar creatures, and the exact nature of those creatures, are to be determined by the DM. Note that many of these creatures (such as baatezu and tanar'ri) are evil, untrustworthy creatures. Any services provided will not come cheaply; the cost may be such that not even the most foolhardy trader will want to pay.

A trader has the following special benefits:

A trader starts with 2d6 x 60 cp.



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A trader is a master of intrigue and espionage. A trader is trained from birth in the ways of stealth, double-dealing, and (to be perfectly frank) thievery. He may use all the normal thief abilities given in the *Player's Handbook*. These are modified by race, dexterity, armor, etc. Like a bard, a trader adds nothing to these base values at 1st level. Each time the trader rises a level in experience, the player receives another 20 points to distribute. No more than 10 of these points can be assigned to a single skill, and no skill can be raised above 80 percent. Since single-classed PCs on Athas begin at 3rd level, a trader PC begins with 40 points to distribute.

A trader is a master of poisons. He gains knowledge of poisons as described under bard in the *DARK SUN™ Rules Book*.

A trader is a skilled linguist. He gains an extra language per three levels of experience, in addition to those listed for Intelligence in Table 4 of the *Player's Handbook*.

A trader has the natural ability to fast-talk. Fast-talk is the art of distraction and conning. If a successful Charisma check is made, the fast-talker is able to persuade his target to cooperate with his scheme. This may be an out-and-out fraud, such as selling worthless merchandise for a fortune in ceramic pieces, or it may simply be an attempt to gain a better price for an ordinary mercantile shipment. Modifiers are based on the Intelligence and Wisdom of the target, as well as the difficulty or plausibility of what the trader is attempting, as shown on the following tables.

FAST-TALKING MODIFIERS

Target's Intell.	Modifier	Target's Wisdom	Modifier
3 or less	n/a	3	-5
4-5	-3	4-5	-3
6-8	-1	6-8	-1
9-12	0	9-12	0
13-15	+ 1	13-15	+ 1
16-17	+ 2	16-17	+ 3

18	+ 3	18	+ 5
19	+ 5	19+	n/a
20+	n/a		

DIFFICULTY OF TASK

Difficulty	Modifier
Easy (getting up to 10% more or less than item's actual worth; persuading target to believe a plausible exaggeration or falsehood)	0
Average (getting up to 20% more or less than trade item's actual worth; persuading target to believe a moderately plausible falsehood, such as "this gem is from the horde of sorcerer-king Hamanu"; convincing a single belligerent of equal or lesser level not to attack)	+ 1
Moderate (getting up to 30% more or less than trade item's actual worth; persuading target to believe an implausible falsehood, such as "if you kill me, you will be slain by a terrible curse"; convincing a group of 1-10 belligerents of equal or lesser level not to attack)	+ 3
Difficult (getting up to 40% more or less than trade item's actual worth; persuading target to believe an extremely implausible falsehood, such as "I am a powerful wizard and can strike you dead"; convincing 10-20 belligerents of equal or lesser level not to attack)	+ 5
Very Difficult (getting more than 40% more or less than trade item's actual worth; persuading target to believe a completely implausible falsehood, such as "I am the sorcerer-king Hamanu"; convincing more than 20 belligerents, or belligerents of higher level not to attack)	+ 6 or more (DM's choice)



The modifiers in the previous two tables are cumulative. Targets of Intelligence 3 or less are so dim that attempts to fast-talk them fail automatically. Targets with Intelligence greater than 20 or Wisdom greater than 19 are impervious to fast-talking.

Difficulty levels are determined by the DM. Some scams may be so outrageous that they fail automatically.

Proficiencies

Traders have access to all proficiencies normally available to rogues, as well as warrior and general proficiencies. In addition, traders may take the Bureaucracy proficiency, normally available only to priests. Proficiencies from other groups cost double the normal number of slots, as described in the *Player's Handbook*.

If nonweapon proficiency rules are being used, a trader is required to take Appraising and Bargain with his first two proficiency slots. Other useful (but not required) proficiencies include Bureaucracy, Etiquette, Intimidation (new proficiency; see following), Riding, Survival, and Weather Sense.

Intimidation

(General proficiency, 1 slot, see the following text for the appropriate ability score and modifier)

This is a talent for bending people to your will by scaring the living daylight out of them. NPCs who are intimidated are quite likely to do what they're told out of fear. On the negative side, they are also very likely to harbor resentment against the character who intimidates them. The NPCs will keep their resentment hidden until the first chance to avenge their pride arises.

Intimidation may be attempted with one of two abilities: Strength or Charisma. If Strength is used, the character threatens immediate, bodily harm. If Charisma is used, the intimidation consists of more subtle threats, which need not be physical. If successful, the NPC is convinced that the intimidator is ready and able to make his life miserable.

Player characters should not be forced to submit to intimidation, or they should do so only with a substantial modifier, at the DM's discretion.

Individual Class Awards

Traders receive Individual Race Awards as normal. Individual Class XPs are awarded as listed for rogues, with additional awards as follows:

Per ceramic piece profit on a single trading mission (in addition to rogue award)	5 XP
For successfully furthering the goals of his trading house or employer	100 - 1,000 XP

Getting Started

The most vital commodity for a new trading house is also one of the most difficult to obtain—money. There are several ways to obtain start-up money, not all of them legitimate. The following methods of raising money are the most popular ones, but by no means does this represent a comprehensive list. Players should be encouraged to come up with creative financing schemes, which DMs should provide with both advantages and disadvantages.

Earning Money

This is the safest means of obtaining start-up funds, but also the hardest and most time-consuming. Money from legitimate jobs rolls in slowly and must be saved (a difficult task in the harsh environment of Athas), while money from adventuring is dangerous to obtain.

Many Athasian trading houses operate lending houses. These houses are run for profit, of course, which is gained by charging interest. Interest charged to new traders varies from 10 to 20 percent per year, and varies according to how safe the money is (low interest for low-risk ventures, high interest for high-risk ventures). Loans to more-established houses are generally at 5 to 10 percent interest.



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Loans are normally due in full (with interest) in one year.

For role-playing purposes, Athasian merchants do not speak in terms of percentage interest, but rather make such statements as “I will loan you 1,000 silver, but in one year you must pay me 1,200 silver to replace it.” (This would be a 20% interest loan, payable in one year.)

It is perfectly permissible for player character traders to borrow money from trading houses to finance their trade missions (once they get established, they could even open such an enterprise on their own, charging comparable fees and using the money gained to expand their business). The obvious problem starting characters will encounter is that if a venture loses money, either no one will lend them money or the money lent will be at a much higher interest rate. Only with success can the characters expect a continual cash flow. Should they lose a lender’s entire loan in a disastrous expedition, for example, the characters can expect vengeance in any number of forms.

Consequences for default can be severe. Less violent houses, such as Wavir, simply seize the borrower’s remaining assets and write the remainder off as a bad debt. On occasion they allow the borrower to work off the debt.

Brutal and territorial houses, such as Tsalaxa, do not tolerate failure. At best, defaulters can expect to be stripped of all their possessions and forced into permanent indenture to pay off the debt. Defaulting on large amounts can result in attacks by a house’s hired thugs, while death (in varying levels of unpleasantness, depending on the perceived offense) is the punishment for truly major defaulters.

Some criminal cartels in larger cities act as loan sharks, lending money to those who cannot borrow through legitimate channels. Interest varies from 20 to 75 percent, often with many hidden costs, of which the borrower is informed when it is too late. Payment is demanded in full when the loan comes due. The consequences for failure are every bit as

harsh (or worse) than those inflicted by Tsalaxa and like-minded houses.

Partnerships

The partnership method for beginning a trading concern keeps the characters relatively safe from major loss or retaliation, but it also requires the participation of an outside investor, who often demands a considerable say in how the enterprise is to be run. This is not always a bad thing, for investors are interested in safeguarding their money, and they are often very experienced in the world of business.

Small trading companies, dynastic houses, wealthy nobles with too much money, disenfranchised traders seeking to turn their fortunes around—all of these and more are potential investors. Those who contribute money to a trading venture expect profits in proportion to the amount they have given. Often, if a noble or other wealthy investor grants the entire cost of an expedition in exchange for adventurers’ expertise (sometimes staying safe at home while his new partners take the risk), he will allow the partners 25 to 50 percent of the profits.

Should an expedition fail, the investor rarely has any recourse, for it was he who invested the money and trusted his partners. Sometimes, an evil or chaotic investor may blame player character incompetence for his failures and attempt to seek vengeance. But most Athasian investors chalk up lost money to experience, although they may advise their friends never to invest in the characters again.

Successful partnerships may build a foundation for future relationships; some may even lead to a new dynastic trading house. Should the player characters be successful, partners will wish to continue investing, and others may wish to contribute money as well. Players should be aware, however, that allowing more partners into an enterprise increases friction within the partnership.



Basic Expenses

Once financing has been secured, the characters still must outfit their expedition. Prices for required items are listed in the *DARK SUN™ Rules Book* and the *Player's Handbook*. New items and their prices are listed in the following table.

Item	cost	Weight (lb.)
Tack and Harness		
Crodlu, leather armor	35 cp	100
Crodlu, chitin armor	50 cp	150
Crodlu		
Riding	10 sp	—
War	20 sp	—
Chariot		
one crodlu, one warrior	10 sp	—
two crodlu, two warriors	20 sp	—
four crodlu, three warriors	40 sp	—

Salaries

If the players feel nervous about guarding and managing a caravan with just their PCs, then they should engage some NPC hirelings. Salaries for these individuals are listed in the *DARK SUN™ Rules Book* (page 50).

In addition, characters may hire NPC adventurers to provide other important services (for example, many caravans carry at least one water cleric to gate in water to supplement the caravan's normal water supply). Monthly salaries for NPCs (who usually must be hired on a monthly basis) are equal to that NPCs' initial character funds, as listed in the *DARK SUN Rules Book* (page 51).

Supply and Demand

Obviously, a trader is nowhere without trade goods. These are available, but quantity and price varies from place to place. The following chart lists major trade items, along with guidelines for price and demand in each major city. These are only the

most popular trade goods. Many others exist, and trade in these items may be established by the DM and players.

The following table gives a city-by-city breakdown of the availability and prices for many common trade items on Athas (remember that a skilled fast-talker can modify the prices he pays or gets for items). The entries in the table are as follows:

Base Cost: The average cost of a standard amount of the item. To determine the price of an item in a certain city, multiply the base cost by the multiplier given for the appropriate price code.

Price Code: A letter code indicating the trade item's price and availability in each city, as explained below. Note that the price codes listed represent the cities' *current* economic conditions. If the situation changes, the city's entire economic picture and its price codes may change. Such changes are entirely up to the DM.

A: Supply is very low or nonexistent; prices are five to ten times the base cost. This condition exists only as a result of extraordinary circumstances (war, natural disaster, etc.) or market manipulation by major trade houses. It rarely persists for more than a few months at a time.

B: Supply is low, demand and prices are high. Prices are twice the base cost. A definite seller's market exists. Anyone supplying the needed goods stands to make a considerable profit.

C: Supply and demand are balanced. Prices are approximately at the base cost. The chance of making money on these goods is about equal to the chance of losing, but both profit and loss will be moderate.

D: Supply is high, demand and prices are low. These are cities where one can buy large quantities of goods at reasonable prices and, with luck, transport them to a place where demand (and profits) is high.



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TRADE GOODS PRICES

Item	Base Cost	Balic	Draj	Gulg	Nibenay	Raam	Tyr	Urik
Ale	2 bits/gal.	C	B	C	C	D	D	C
Amber	50 sp/oz.	C	B	D	B	C	D	C
Armor	*	B	C	C	D	B	D	B
Beer	5 bits/gal.	C	C	D	C	B	C	C
Bronze	5 gp/lb.	B	B	C	C	C	D	B
Candy	1 bit/lb.	C	C	B	B	D	D	C
Ceramics	1 sp/100 pcs.	B	C	C	B	D	D	C
Chalk	1 bit/lb.	C	B	B	C	D	D	D
Chitin	4 sp/lb.	C	B	B	D	C	C	B
Cider	8 cp/tun	B	C	D	C	B	C	C
Cinnabar	1 sp/oz.	B	C	D	B	C	C	D
Cloth (per 10 sq. yds.)								
Common	7 cp	C	C	D	C	C	B	B
Fine	50 cp	B	D	B	C	C	C	C
Rich	1 sp	C	D	B	B	D	C	D
Clothing	*	B	D	D	B	C	C	C
Coal	3 cp/lb.	C	C	D	C	B	B	D
Copper	2 sp/lb.	B	B	B	D	C	D	B
Cosmetics	1 sp/oz.	B	C	C	C	D	D	D
Cotton	2 cp/lb.	C	B	C	C	D	D	B
Crodlu								
Riding	10 sp ea.	C	B	C	C	C	C	C
War	20 sp ea.	C	C	D	C	B	D	B
Dyes/Pigments	1 sp/oz.	C	B	D	C	D	C	B
Erdlu	10 cp ea.	C	B	B	D	C	D	C
Feathers								
Rare	5 sp ea.	B	B	D	C	D	D	D
Common	3 cp/100	C	B	D	C	C	D	D
Figs	1 bit/lb.	B	C	D	C	B	B	C
Fruit	2 bits/lb.	C	C	D	C	B	B	C
Furs	3 sp/ea.	B	C	B	C	D	C	D
Gems	*	C	C	C	B	D	D	D
Glass	1 sp/lb.	B	C	B	C	C	D	C
Gold	50 gp/lb.	C	D	C	B	D	C	C
Hardwood	1 gp/lb.	C	B	D	D	C	D	B
Herbs	3 bits/lb.	D	C	C	C	B	B	D
Incense	2 sp/oz.	C	B	C	B	D	C	D
Inix	10 sp ea.	C	B	B	D	C	C	C
Ink	8 cp/oz.	C	B	B	C	C	D	D
Iron	1 gp/lb.	B	C	B	C	B	D	B
Jade	1 sp/lb.	C	C	B	C	C	D	C
Jewelry	*	C	B	C	C	D	D	C
Kanks								
Trained	12 sp ea.	D	B	D	B	C	C	C
Untrained	50 sp ea.	D	B	B	D	D	C	D

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Item	Base Cost	Balic	Draj	Gulg	Nibenay	Raam	Tyr	Urik
Kank Nectar	10 cp/lb.	D	D	B	C	B	B	C
Leather	5 cp/sq. yd.	D	D	C	C	B	C	B
Marble	2 sp/lb.	B	D	D	C	C	B	D
Medicines	5 sp/oz.	C	B	C	C	B	D	C
Mekillots	20 sp ea.	C	B	C	C	C	D	B
Mirrors	1 sp ea.	C	C	B	D	C	D	D
Nuts	3 cp/lb.	B	C	D	C	B	B	D
Obsidian	5 cp/lb.	B	B	C	D	B	D	B
Oil								
Flammable	2 sp/gal.	D	B	C	D	D	C	B
Lamp	1 bit/gal.	C	D	C	B	C	C	C
Cooking	8 bits/gal.	C	C	D	D	B	B	C
Paintings	10 sp/ea.	C	C	C	B	C	D	D
Paper	2 sp/ 100 ct	B	B	C	C	D	C	C
Perfume	5 cp/oz.	B	C	C	B	C	D	D
Resins	8 sp/oz.	C	D	C	C	C	B	D
Rice	1 bit/lb.	C	B	C	D	B	B	C
Rope								
Hemp	1 cp/50 ft.	B	D	C	C	C	C	C
Silk	1 sp/50 ft.	B	D	D	B	C	D	C
Rugs	1 gp/ea.	D	B	C	B	C	D	D
Salt	2 bits/lb.	D	C	D	C	B	B	D
Silk, raw	4 sp/oz.	D	C	B	C	D	D	D
Silver	50 sp/lb.	D	C	B	C	D	C	B
Slaves	**	C	B	C	D	B	B	B
Songbirds	1 cp/ea.	D	C	C	B	C	D	D
Spell books	**	C	B	C	D	C	C	B
Spell components	**	C	D	B	D	C	C	B
Spice								
Exotic	15 cp/lb.	D	C	D	D	C	D	B
Rare	2 cp/lb.	C	C	D	D	B	C	B
Uncommon	1 cp/lb.	C	C	D	D	B	C	B
Statues	1 gp/ea.	C	B	C	B	C	D	D
Sugar	4 bits/lb.	C	C	D	C	B	B	D
Tools	1 cp/ea.	D	C	C	D	B	C	C
Vegetables	2 bits/lb.	C	C	C	D	B	B	C
Water	10 cp/tun	B	C	C	D	B	B	C
Wax	7 bits/lb.	C	C	B	C	D	C	C
Weapons	*	C	D	B	D	B	C	B
Wine	2 sp/tun	B	C	D	C	B	B	D
Wheat	1 cp/lb.	C	D	C	C	B	B	C

*Cost varies—see *Player's Handbook*.

**Cost varies greatly. DM makes decisions for final price.



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Weight

Those items not listed by weight in the previous table are included in the following chart, for use when determining the cargo capacity of a caravan.

Item	Weight
1 gallon liquid	5 pounds
1 tun liquid	1250 pounds
Ceramics, 100 pieces	50 pounds
10 square yards cloth	20 pounds
Furs, each	2 pounds
1 square yards leather	2 pounds
Mirror, each	1 pound
100 pages paper	1 pound
50 feet rope	2 pounds
Rug, each	10 pounds
Statue, each	75 pounds
Tools, each	2 pounds

Random Market Fluctuation

Nothing on Athas is ever certain. The price codes listed on the Trade Goods Prices table are only general guidelines. Circumstances may change a city's economic conditions literally overnight. To simulate this, whenever characters attempt to buy or sell a certain item, secretly roll 1d100 on the following table to determine whether the actual demand for the item has changed. Price codes cannot, of course, go higher than D or lower than A.

RANDOM MARKET FLUCTUATION

D100	Result
01-75	No change
76-90	Adjust price code by one letter (50% chance of either up or down)
91-98	Adjust price code by two letters
99-00	Adjust price code by three letters

Trade in Villages

Villages' economies fluctuate even more radically than those in the city-states. When buying or selling in a village, roll 1d6 on the following table to determine the price code for each item being bought or sold.

D6 Roll	Price Code in Village
1	A
2-3	B
4-5	C
6	D

Several villages in the Tyr region are exceptions to the price fluctuations in other villages. These special communities are the source of major commodities and so have relatively fixed price codes. Those villages are listed below, along with the price codes for the items they produce. These codes fluctuate in the same manner as the codes of the city-states.

- Altaruk: Crodlu (D), Inix (D), Cloth, fine (C)
- Ledopolus (both): Weapons (D), Wheat (C)
- Makla: Obsidian (D)
- Ogo: Gems (D), Hardwood (D), Feathers (C)
- Salt View: Salt (D)
- Walis: Gold (D), Copper (C)
- Waverly: Marble (C)

Trade Routes

Trade routes form a vital network across the Tyr region and all of Athas; a web of crucial importance, without which the world would be doomed. Major roads carry much of the caravan traffic between cities, while in the shifting deserts caravans travel from oasis to oasis.

The trade map on page 83 depicts all of the known trade routes of the Tyr region, with solid lines depicting roads (frequently crowded with caravans) and dotted lines showing caravan routes through the trackless wilderness.



Hazards

Like all things on Athas, trade is a hazardous undertaking. Entering a savage wilderness alive with enemies and greedy bandits while loaded down with objects of value may seem like insanity to an outsider, but fortunes have been won and lost in this fashion. Athas is full of foolhardy gamblers who continue to risk their fortunes and safety on trade. Rules on travel times are given in the *DARK SUN™ Rules Book* (page 87). The following guidelines can be used to help enliven travel through the Athasian wilderness.

Note that the hazards described here are part of an exciting DARK SUN campaign. These will be encountered by adventurers as they travel through the Tyr region and should be seen as an opportunity for role-playing. A trading campaign should never merely consist of a series of trips to and from cities, summed up by dry, unimaginative profit-and-loss statements. Athas is a dangerous, challenging

world; trade should be simply a means of getting players involved in adventures.

Raiders

The desert teems with the violent, the outcast, the greedy, and those for whom banditry and theft is a way of life. Should the DM decide to enliven an ordinary encounter and give characters a real challenge, a raiding tribe can be substituted, using the following guidelines.

Many different races engage in raiding. The following information can help a DM generate a raiding party and suggest possible tactics for each race. Note that the numbers given for raiding parties are for the average raiding party encountered in the wilderness. Large trading caravans may be attacked by entire tribes or several tribes banded together, as the DM deems appropriate. Raiders never attack when the odds are against them, thus any attack by raiders will represent a significant threat to a caravan.





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Dwarves: Athasian dwarves do not engage in raiding very often. When they do raid, it is usually in response to extreme conditions, such as famine, water shortage, or severe poverty. On occasion, a group of dwarves whose focus involves obtaining large amounts of income or engaging in combat will band together and go raiding.

Dwarven raiding parties typically consist of 3d10 dwarven warriors under the command of one or more war leaders. For every ten dwarves there is one *uhrakkus*, or sub-leader. Larger groups of raiders band together to attack larger caravans. These individuals typically have the following statistics:

Dwarf Warrior: Int Average; AL LN; AC 10; MV 6; HD 1; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 + 1 (club; 50%) or 1d6 (bow; 50%); SA Nil; SD Special resistances; SZ S; ML 13; XP 175

Uhrakkus: Int Average; AL LN; AC 7; MV 6; HD 3; hp 20; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 + 3 (club); SA Nil; SD Special resistances; SZ S; ML 14; XP 975

Dwarves' limited mobility leads them to favor ambushes and attacks in close terrain, such as rocky barrens and mountains. A dwarven attack usually begins with furious volleys from their missile-armed troops. Foot warriors creep in close under cover of the terrain, then launch a full-scale assault. At this point, the missile troops drop their weapons and join the fray as well. Dwarves have high morale and fight bravely, but they are not stupid—they will retreat if a fight is obviously going against them.

Elves: Elven raiding tribes are the scourge of the Athasian desert. The fierce environment has bred a race of deadly warriors, many of whom live exclusively by raiding caravans or other elven tribes. Often an entire elven tribe descends upon a particularly valuable target in an assault that even the most experienced of warriors are hard-pressed to stop.

A raiding group consists of 3d10 elven warriors, along with one or more champions. For every ten elves there will be one chief; all groups may, at the

DM's discretion, contain wizards or psionicists.

Elf Warrior: Int Average; AL CN; AC 6; MV 12; HD 1 + 1; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 + 1 (long sword; 50%) or 1d6 + 1 (long bow; 50%); SA Nil; SD Surprise foes; SZ M; ML 3; XP 420

Elf Chief: Int Average; AL CN; AC 6; MV 12; HD 4; hp 20; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 + 2 (long sword); SA Nil; SD Surprise foes; SZ M; ML 10; XP 975

The elves of Athas revel in battle and chaos. Their warriors attack suddenly, en masse, shrieking terrifying war-whoops. Bowman are usually mixed in with normal infantry, discharging their weapons as they advance. Scouts circle around on the flanks while footsoldiers keep the enemy occupied. Elven tactics are somewhat chaotic, but the attack is kept together by the elves' awesome morale. Particularly tough targets are subjected to magical or psionic attacks.

Giants: Feared throughout Athas, giants (particularly the quarrelsome and intelligent beast-headed variety) often raid neighboring settlements and caravans that happen to pass through their territory. Giant warriors, numbering 1d20, are led by their most able member. They have no individuals of unusual statistics.

Giant statistics can be found in *MC12, Terrors of the Desert*.

Giants attack as described in the DARK SUN™ *Wanderer's Journal*, often prefacing their attacks by hurling boulders for 2d10 damage, then wading into melee as quickly as possible. Giants have neither the patience nor the intelligence for detailed plans or complex tactics, but their impressive bulk and unbelievable strength more than make up for the deficiency.

Gith: These evil humanoids plague caravans all across Athas. Cunning rather than intelligent, gith attack for profit, especially when rich caravans are nearby. They also apparently attack for fun, enjoying the mayhem and pain they create. As described



in the *Wanderer's Journal*, gith raid in groups of 10d10. For every 25 gith, there is a five-HD leader, for every 50, a six-HD leader, and for every group of 100 or more, a seven-HD leader. These leaders all have psionic powers equal to a psionist of equivalent level.

Gith: Int Average; AL CE; AC 8; MV 9; HD 3; hp 20; THAC0 17; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 1d6-1 (spear) or 1d4x2; SA Spring; SD Nil; SZ M; Morale 12; XP 175

Gith attack in a massive wave, often preceded by a psionic attack from their leaders.

Half-elves: Half-elves almost never engage in raiding as a group, but they are often found in mixed raiding parties as described here. Due to the fact that most half-elves have grown up in human society, half-elves may be found among human raiders. Half-elven warriors have the following average statistics.

Half-elf: Int Average; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 3; hp 16; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6

(spear); SA Nil; SD Nil; SZ M; ML 10; XP 420

Half-giants: These adaptable beings form communities, and launch hunting and raiding parties, often in imitation of the human or elven bands they have had contact with. Half-giant raiding bands number 4d10 warriors with a single high-level leader. These parties have been known to contain psionists and higher-level chieftains on occasion.

Half-giant: Int Low; AL Varies; AC 10; MV 15; HD 3 + 12; hp 30; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+4 (club); SA Nil; SD Nil; SZ H; Morale 11; XP 175

Half-giant Leader: Int Low; AL Varies; AC 8; MV 15; HD 5 + 20; hp 48; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1d6+4 (x 2; club); XP 975

Half-giants have little tactical subtlety; nor do they need it, for their ponderous assault is virtually unstoppable once it gets going. Like their larger cousins, half-giants sometimes precede an assault with a rain of boulders or large rocks (inflicting 1d10 points of damage each), then attack all at



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once in hopes of overwhelming their opponents.

Halflings: While most often found in the mountains and the jungles of the mountain spine, halfling tribes sometimes band together and descend from their lofty homes to raid caravans and villages. These groups are every bit as savage and bloodthirsty as one would expect from Athasian halflings. These parties number 3d10 warriors, led by one hunter chief per ten halflings. Larger raids, sometimes involving entire tribes, are not unknown.

Halflings: Int Very; AL LN; AC 7; MV 6; HD 1; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger), 1d6 (spear), 1d6 (short bow), or 1d4 (blowgun; + poison); XP 35

Halfling Hunter Chief: Int Very; AL LN; AC 7; MV 6; HD 3; hp 18; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (club); XP 270

Halfling raiding tactics are similar to their ambushes and attacks in the jungle. Enemies are allowed to enter a narrow pass, defile, or constricted terrain (sometimes they are lured by the feigned retreat of a small band of raiders). Once there, hidden snipers with bows, spears, and poisoned dart blowguns strike, raining volley after volley on their victims. Hand-to-hand combat is utilized only for the final assault, when the enemy is clearly defeated, or to prevent the opponents from escaping.

Humans: By far the most common type of raiding tribe, humans may be driven together by circumstance—escaped slaves, rootless wanderers, adventurers down on their luck, or outlaws—or they may be a nomadic tribe for whom raiding is a way of life. Either way, human raiders are deadly.

A human raiding party consists of 10d10 warriors and may include 1d6 lieutenants led by one or more captains. Mages and psionics sometimes accompany raiding parties. Any or all of these raiders may be mounted on kank, crodlu, or (in unusual cases) inix.

Human Warrior F3; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; hp 19; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (spear); XP 65

Human Lieutenant: F6; AL N; AC 7; MV 12;

hp 38; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (mace); XP 270

Human Captain: F8; AL N; AC 6; MV 12; hp 45; THAC0 13; #AT 3/2 rounds; Dmg 2d4 (flail); XP 650

Human tactics can be varied and subtle, or swift and brutal, depending on the temperament of the commander. Cavalry and missile-armed troops are often used to disorganize enemies while the main body of raiders attacks. Ambushes, direct assaults, and feigned retreats are also common. Human tactics are as different as humans themselves, and describing them all is virtually impossible.

Muls: Bred specifically for gladiatorial combat, muls ever raid as a group. They are only found in mixed groups or occasionally in human parties.

Mul Gladiator: F5; AL N; AC 4; MV 12; hp 35; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 + 2 (scimitar); XP 175

Thri-keen: Leaping wildly over the dunes, sun glinting from polished chitin, whirling weapons or striking with their wicked claws, thri-keen raiders are one of the most fearsome sights a desert traveler can see.

Thri-keen raids are rarely for material gain—most tribes of mantis warriors find little of value in the average caravan. They raid for food; though sentient life is not their favored prey, major races often come under attack when other fodder is in short supply. Elves are considered a delicacy; fights between the two races are brutal and without quarter.

A thri-keen band consists of 2d12 individuals with the following statistics. Most wild thri-keen conform to this profile, but exceptional leaders with more hit dice and greater abilities are not unknown.

Mature Adult Thri-keen: Int High; AL CN; AC 5; MV 18; HD 6+3; hp 36; THAC0 13; #AT 5 or 3; Dmg 1d4 (x 4)/ 1d4 + 1 or 2d4 (x 2)/ 1d4 + 1; SA Paralysis; SD Dodge missiles (9 or better); SZ M; Morale 12; XP 3,000

Adult Thri-keen: Int High; AL CN; AC 5; MV 18; HD 5+3; hp 31; THAC0 15; #AT 5 or



3; Dmg 1d4 (x 4) / 1d4 + 1 or 2d4 (x 2) / 1d4 + 1; SA Paralysis; SD Dodge missiles (9 or better); SZ M; Morale 12; XP 2,000

Young Adult Thri-kreen: Int High; AL CN; AC 5; MV 18; HD 4 + 3; hp 25; THAC0 15; #AT 5 or 3; Dmg 1d4 (x 4) / 1d4 + 1 or 2d4 (x 2) / 1d4 + 1; SA Nil; SD Nil; SZ M; Morale 11; XP 975

Thri-kreen attack in two lines. The first, consisting mostly of mature adults and a few adults, throws deadly crystal chatkcha in order to disrupt opponents. Each chatkcha strikes for 1d6 + 2 points of damage (it returns to its thrower if it misses). Thri-kreen in the second line, consisting of adults and young adults, and armed with either gythka polearms or their own formidable natural weapons, leap over the first line, landing amid their surprised and confused opponents.

Mixed Groups: Many bands of criminals, escaped slaves, or mercenary raiders roam the desert. Desperate and violent, these mixed groups are

made up of every imaginable race, occasionally even including such bizarre members as gith, belgoi, and anakore. These bands typically number 10d10, and can contain any of the above racial types.

Weather

The desert is a place of extremes, one of the harshest environments imaginable. Deadly heat by day is countered by near-freezing conditions at night, while burning winds rage across the sands by day, carving stone and stripping flesh from bones. The effects of these conditions are detailed in this section. More details on adverse weather conditions can be found in the *Wilderness Survival Guide*, but the following information can provide the DM with a quick means of resolving these situations as they arise.

High Temperatures: Most races on Athas are accustomed to high temperatures, reflected by their higher average Constitutions. When encountering





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high temperatures, characters must make a Constitution check once per hour, modified by the temperature as shown on the following table.

Temperature	Unprotected		Protected	
	Con	Dmg	Con	Dmg
85-89	0	1	—	—
90-94	0	1	0	1
95-99	-1	1d2	0	1
100-104	-2	1d3	0	1d2
105-107	-3	1d3	0	1d2
110-114	-4	1d4	0	1d3
115-119	-5	1d4	0	1d3
120 +	-6	1d6	-1	1d4

When encountering high temperatures, locate the appropriate column for the character in question. An unprotected character is one in normal or less clothing who has taken no measures against the heat. A protected character is wearing robes, head-dress, and other wilderness clothing. Then locate the temperature in degrees Fahrenheit on the left-hand column.

Con: This column indicates any penalties to the character's Constitution for the roll. A "—" indicates that no check is necessary.

Dmg: This column lists the damage a character can receive if he fails his Constitution roll.

High Winds: Wind can disrupt travel and combat. It also drives fierce sandstorms that can pit armor, damage equipment, and injure flesh. In high-wind conditions, use the following table to determine the effect on combat and movement.

Wind Speed (mph)	Missile Combat	Melee Combat	Move vs. Wind
0-10	—	—	—
11-20	0/-1/-2/-3	—	—
21-30	-1/-2/-3/xx	-1	2/3
31-45	-2/-4/xx/xx	-2	2/3
46-79	-4/-6/xx/xx	-4	1/3
80+	xx/xx/xx/xx	-8	1/3

Missile Combat: This column gives attack roll penalties for missiles at point blank, short, medium, and long ranges. An entry of "xx" indicates that missile combat at this range is impossible.

Melee Combat: This column lists the penalty that is applied to all melee combat taking place while exposed to the wind. This may be further modified by the effects of blowing sand, etc. (see "Sandstorms").

Move vs. Wind: This represents the fraction of normal movement that is possible while moving against the wind. Movement at right angles to the wind takes place at the next faster rate, while movement with the wind is unchanged.

Sandstorms: Any character whose eyes are unshielded is temporarily blinded on a roll of 1 on a d6. He is partially blinded on a roll of 2 or 3. Attacks against a blinded opponent gain a +4 attack roll bonus, and those against a partially blinded opponent gain a +2 bonus.

A blinded character moves at 1/3 speed and cannot attack. A partially blinded character moves at 2/3 speed and attacks with a -2 penalty. These effects are in addition to any penalties due to wind velocity.

Business Rivals

While the monsters, raiders, and hazards of the desert are terrifying, they pale beside a new house's real enemies—other houses. Small houses cannot afford to allow competitors to prosper, while many dynastic houses like to nip potential rivals before they grow large enough to represent a threat. Several tactics used by other houses to discourage or destroy competition are described here.

Agreements: Favored by less vicious houses, such as Wavir, these are treaties or "gentlemen's agreements" between houses guaranteeing that they will not directly compete with each other. This can mean that the smaller house will not carry specific cargoes, or that it will avoid cities where the larger house has a monopoly or controls most of the trade.

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Small houses usually abide by agreements with larger houses, for the unspoken rule in such matters is that anyone who violates them is fair game. Small houses tend to cheat on agreements with each other, however, and characters in such an arrangement should keep a close watch on their fellow signatories.

Threats: Warnings of dire consequences should a small house continue competing with its betters are a common event. Often these can be ignored, as they come from other houses too small to enforce them. From time to time, however, larger houses will issue such warnings, hoping to dissuade growing rivals. Ignoring these warnings can be hazardous.

Extortion: Many houses, particularly Tsalaxa of Draj, specialize in gathering evidence of embarrassing or illegal activities undertaken by their rivals. They use this to wring concessions. Dealing in contraband, associating with criminal elements, possession of spell books or components—all of these can be used against an enemy house. Threats of exposure to the authorities are used to get the rival house

out of town, to persuade it to stop engaging in a certain type of trade, or to abandon a lucrative caravan route. Extortion is generally used against other dynastic houses or houses too large or influential to take out through direct confrontation.

Infiltration: A particularly nasty trick favored by subtle houses, such as Inika and Wavir, infiltration involves planting guards or drivers in an enemy caravan. These individuals, usually trained agents of elite status, then do everything they can to sabotage the caravan—spoil cargo, cut loose pack or riding animals, wreck or disable vehicles, and even secretly dispose of important caravan members.

Kidnapping: A strong persuader when used against opponents with families or close friends, kidnapping is usually accompanied by a demand for tribute or cessation of objectionable trade activities. Sometimes, kidnapers keep their victims for long periods in order to make sure that their opponents do as they are told. Some houses, such as the militaristic House Stel, see kidnapping and other such





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mayhem as a cost of doing business, and they remain unmoved.

Murder: Assassination of prominent members of a rival house is an extreme move, but one that is not beneath such heartless groups as House Tsalaxa. Murder of a patriarch or matriarch is usually a difficult task, but the removal of a prominent agent or family member is often comparatively simple. Such acts are frequently the opening salvo of major trade wars.

All-Out Assault: Full-scale trade wars are rare, owing mostly to the fact that most trade houses see them as bad for business. In this, they are correct, but wars happen nonetheless. Raid and counter-raid, assaults on outposts, kidnapping, murder, theft, intrigue—all of these occur in trade wars, which can last for years if they are between major houses. Some houses, such as Tsalaxa and Wavir, have fought a low-level war for years, neither able to commit enough resources to destroy the other.

Trade wars are fertile grounds for adventurers, mercenaries, spies, wizards, psionicists, and thieves; virtually every type of player character can find employment with one side or the other.

Sorcerer-Kings

The sorcerer kings and their templars treat traders with a mixture of dislike, tolerance, pragmatism, and resignation. Even the most evil, jaded sorcerer-king realizes that trade is vital to his city's continued existence and that the merchant houses have a complete monopoly on trade. Traders are therefore treated with detached disdain, but they are allowed to go about their business without too much interference.

Members of dynastic merchant houses eschew citizenship, and the Merchants' Code forbids any involvement in politics. For this reason, most sorcerer-kings do not consider traders much of a threat. They have little tolerance, however, for acts of smuggling or other illegal activities. They do not hesitate to arrest or execute anyone—trader or not—who commits these crimes.

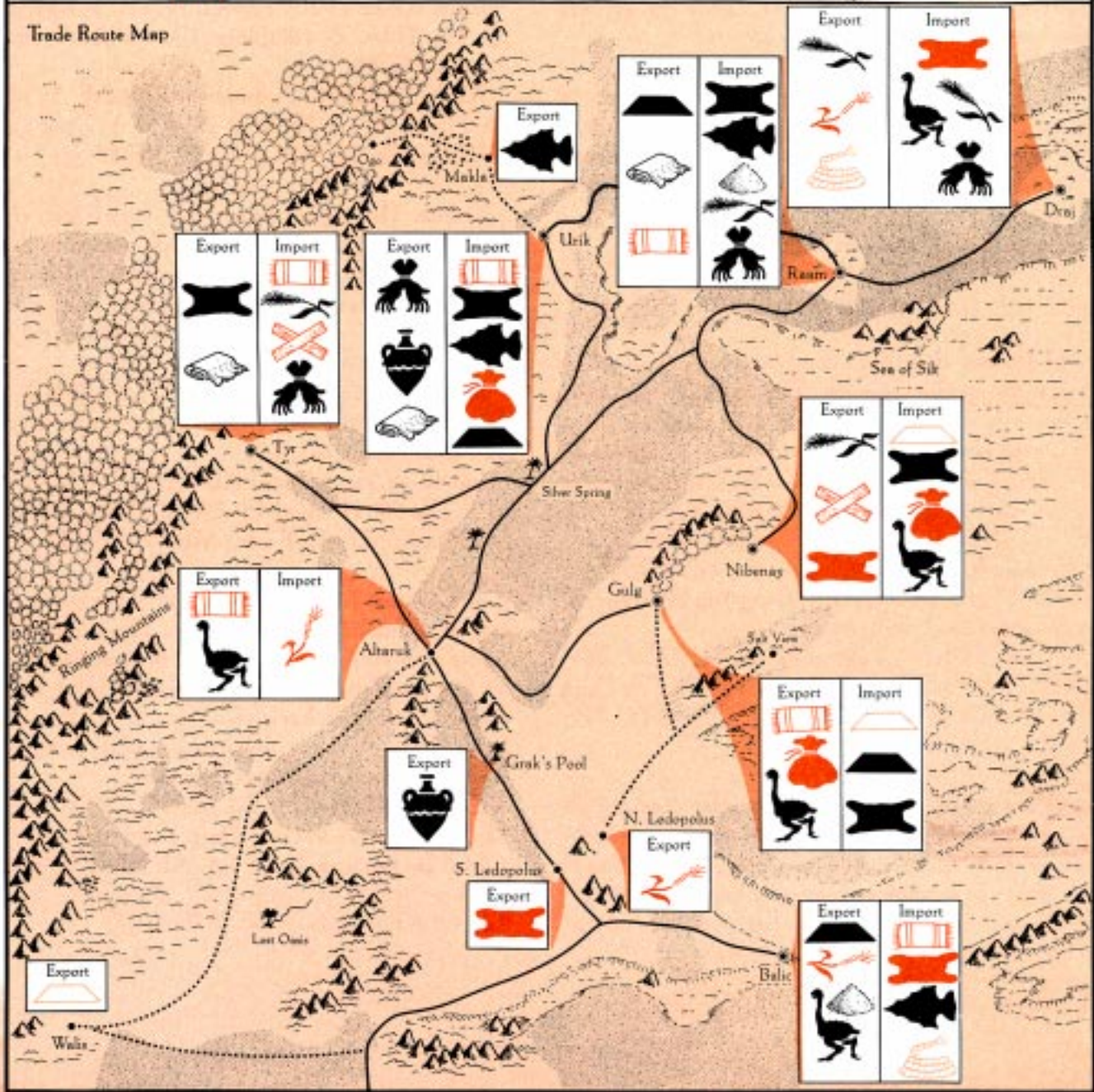
Traders generally obey the laws of the cities they occupy, or at least they are very careful not to get caught. Those who flout the law or flagrantly abuse their status as traders find themselves in serious trouble with the templars.

Many laws can be used to frustrate traders who annoy a sorcerer-king. Most prominent of these is commonly known as the Intent to Sell law. Although many normal trade items (such as feathers, copper, wax, coal, etc.) can also function as spell components, selling them as ordinary trade goods is perfectly legal. Selling them with the intent that they be used in spells is, however, strictly illegal.

Of course, short of psionics there is no way to conclusively prove that trade items were intended for magical use, but the word of a templar on the subject is usually good enough. Traders from small houses can safely be jailed or booted out of the city without fear of reprisal from larger trading houses (who sometimes cooperate in such situations in order to dispose of rivals), but traders of the dynastic houses usually receive only a warning. Such warnings are issued by templars and sorcerer-kings primarily to remind the large houses exactly who is in charge.

A House Inika Caravan





A House Inika Caravan

Inika's reputation is founded on swift delivery of goods, and its caravans are designed in the belief that speed is the best defense. In this, they are typical of the light, fast-moving caravans used to transport small, valuable cargoes, such as spices, feathers, silk, artwork, and so on.

1) Scouts: House Inix employs elven rangers to scout ahead on foot, warning the caravan of potential dangers, and on occasion ambushing enemies. They dress in tan, yellow, orange, and similar desert colors.

Elven Scouts (6-12): R3; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; hp 20; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8-1 (bone long sword), 1d8 (longbow); ML 13

2) Crodlu Riders: A combined scout and strike force, the crodlu riders back up the elven footmen. They help out during combat and check out anything the elves may have missed. These riders prefer to keep their distance from enemy forces, harrying them with long-range missile fire, but they will charge and engage in close combat if necessary.

Crodlu Riders (6-10): F5; AL N; AC 4; MV 12; hp 27; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (light lance), 1d6 (short bow); ML 14

Crodlu (6-10): Int Animal; AL N; AC 4; MV 24; HD 4+4; hp 22; THAC0 15; #AT 5; Dmg 1d8/ 1d4 (x 2)/ 1d6 (x 2); SA Grapple; SD Nil; SZ L; ML 6; XP 420

3) Kank Riders: This slower cavalry does not always accompany caravans. Kanks make poorer cavalry mounts than crodlu because of their limited mobility. Thus they are typically used as pack animals, sometimes hitched together and led by a sin-

gle rider. Should they be threatened, both riders and kanks fight, but they are not considered first-line troops. Particularly light caravans have large numbers of pack kanks, and few or no inix.

Kank Riders (5-10): F3; AL N; AC 8; MV 12; hp 15; THAC0 18; Dmg 1d6 - 1 (bone short sword); ML 12

Kanks (5-10): Int Animal; AL N; AC 5; MV 15; HD 2; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SA Nil; SD Nil; SZ L; ML 14; XP 35

4) Inix: These great beasts carry any large cargo in the caravan. They are loaded with packs and never draw wagons. Their riders are armed, but in a desperate situation they have orders to scatter into the desert and regroup later with the help of the elven scouts and crodlu cavalry.

Inix Riders (6-12): F3; AL N; AC 8; MV 12; hp 15; THAC0 18; Dmg 1d6 - 1 (bone short sword), 1d6 (short bow); ML 13

Inix (2-6): Int Animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 15; HD 6; hp 30; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1d6/ 1d8; SA Crush; SD Nil; SZ H; ML 12; XP 650

5) Caravan Master: The master is the person in overall command of the caravan. He is usually a trader of average or higher level. He operates from an inix howdah or, in cases where speed is of the essence, from the back of an crodlu or kank. In House Inika caravans, the master is often accompanied by two or more mul bodyguards.

Caravan Master: Tr8; AL N; AC 6; MV 12; hp 32; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (scimitar)

Mul Bodyguards (2-8): G8; AL N; AC 5; MV 12; hp 55; THAC0 13; #AT 3/2 rounds; Dmg 1d6 + 1 (bone mace); ML 14



A House Inika Caravan



A Heavy Caravan

These caravans, popular with houses that transport large quantities of cargo or slaves, are vast, slow-moving, and heavily guarded. Heavy caravans are most often found on roads or well-established caravan routes.

1) Outriders: These scouts are mounted on crodlu. They must be swift, alert, and merciless. Usually, they are employed to locate and engage enemies while guards and troops in the wagons behind them can be brought forward.

Crodlu Riders (10-20): F6; AL N; AC 4; MV 12; hp 35; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (light lance), 1d6 (mace), 1d6 (short bow); ML 14

Crodlu (10-20): Int Animal; AL N; AC 4; MV 24; HD 4 + 4; hp 21; THAC0 15; #AT 5; Dmg 1d8/ 1d4 (x 2)/ 1d6 (x 2); SA Grapple; SD Nil; SZ L; ML 6; XP 420

2) Guards: Marching ahead of, behind, and on either side of the caravan, these guards may be of any race. They are disciplined and professional.

Caravan Guards (20-40): F5; AL N; AC 4; MV 12; hp 31; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10 (halberd), 1d6 (spear); ML 14

3) Inix: These are used as pack animals or as battle platforms. On particularly dangerous missions, the inix bristle with ballistae and up to a dozen bow-armed soldiers.

Bowmen (24-48): F3; AL N; AC 8; MV 12; hp 17; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (short bow), 1d6 (spear); ML 12

Inix (6-12): Int Animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 15; HD 6; hp 30; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1d6/1d8; SA Crush; SD Nil; SZ H; ML 12; XP 650

4) Mekillots: These largest and most awesome of domestic animals either act as pack animals or pull the caravan's wagons. Like the inix, they are also used as battle platforms, with up to 25 bowmen.

Mekillot (1-4): Int Animal; AL N; AC 7/9 (un-

derside); MV 9; HD 11; hp 63; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SA Swallow or crush; SD Nil; SZ G; ML 14; XP 6,000

5) Wagons: All kinds of wagons are used in this type of caravan. Enclosed wagons are used to transport slaves or perishable cargo, while less expensive open wagons carry barrels, dry goods, precious metals, ores, etc. Up to 100 soldiers can ride in a large wagon. Wagons carry one or two drivers; those with slaves also carry several guards and a mul slave-master.

Drivers (2-12): F1; AL N; AC 8; MV 12; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); ML 11

Soldiers (10-100): F5; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; hp 27; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (short bow), 1d6 (spear); ML 13

Mul Slave Master (1-6): G8; AL N; AC 8; MV 12; hp 60; THAC0 13; #AT 3/2 rounds; Dmg 1d4 (whip), 1d6 - 1 (bone short sword); ML 14

6) Caravan Master: The master in this type of caravan is well guarded, with at least a dozen elite mul or human warriors personally assigned to him. He travels in either a personal wagon or on the back of his own mekillot.

Caravan Master: TrS; AL N; AC 6; MV 12; hp 29; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (scimitar)

Mul Bodyguards (6-12): G8; AL N; AC 5; MV 12; hp 56; THAC0 13; #AT 3/2 rounds; Dmg 1d6 + 1 (bone mace); ML 14

7) Slave Coffle: Stretched out behind a slave caravan, this pathetic trail of unfortunate victims is watched over by numerous guards and mul slave masters (use previously listed statistics). Of course, there is no coffle if the caravan does not carry slaves. Some caravans carry slaves packed into the sweltering interior of an enclosed wagon.

Slaves (20-200): F1; AL N; AC 10; MV 12; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4; ML 9

A Heavy Caravan



An Elven Market

The features listed below are generic details that change depending on the location of the elven market. For example, some cities will have a guardpost and some will not. The DM should make the appropriate adjustments.

1) City Walls: Wall construction varies from city to city. In Gulg, for example, they are made of thick, thorny bushes. Whatever their nature, city walls are constantly patrolled by soldiers, templars, and psionicists. The Clearwaters' own psionicists and wizards are on guard as well, ready to warn their fellow elves on an instant's notice should one of the sorcerer-king's agents approach.

Soldiers (2-20): F1; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (stone spear); ML 11

Templars (1-8): Te3; AL NE; AC 6; MV 12; hp 13; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 - 1 (stone mace); Spells - 1 1st, 1 2nd; ML 13

Psionicists (1-2); Ps5; AL NE; AC 8; MV 12; hp 17; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 - 1 (bone or stone dagger); Psionic Abilities - 2 Disciplines, 3 Sciences, 10 Devotions, 3 Defense Modes; ML 12

2) City Gate: In most cities, the gates are opened each morning at dawn and closed at sunset. Although leaving the city at night is officially forbidden, numerous citizens (and even guards) slip out through the sally ports beside the main gates to sample the evening entertainment in the elven market.

3) Road: Travelers pass along this road on their way into the city. The elven market is situated so as to attract their attention.

4) Guard Post: This small fortress supposedly guards the approaches to the city, but it actually serves little purpose. It is garrisoned by a dozen guards (same statistics as in Area 1), often on punishment duty. These guards often slip away to the elven market for a little entertainment.

5) Elven Encampment: The Clearwater elves' living space consists of a vast expanse of brightly colored silk and linen tents. It is a place of constant activity - everywhere are elves coming and going, the

sounds of conversation, and the smells of cooking.

- 5a) Guards: Dressed inconspicuously, these elite guards are almost impossible to distinguish from normal Clearwater elves. Should trouble arise, however, the guards swiftly appear, engaging any troublemakers-with whatever level of force they consider necessary.

Elite Warriors (2-12): F8; AL CG; AC 7; MV 12; hp 59; THAC0 13; #AT 3/2 rounds; Dmg 1d8 + 2 (bone long sword); ML 16

Elite Wizards (1-2): W8; AL CG; AC 10; MV 12; hp 22; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 - 1 (stone dagger); Spells - 4 1st, 3 2nd, 3 3rd, 2 4th; ML 16

- 5b) Corral: Kank, crodlu, and other beasts are confined and cared for here. The elves care for outsiders' animals for a small price-1 cp per day for kanks or crodlu, 1 sp per day for inix, and 10 sp per day for mekillots. Stablemaster Arien Sandrunner is a rich source of gossip, information, and (for those he trusts) contraband. He supervises eight grooms.

Also in the corral, in a special enclosure forbidden to any save their riders, are the tribe's 12 pterrax. Vicious and quarrelsome, these creatures attack anyone besides their riders who approaches.

Arien Sandrunner: F6; AL CG; AC 10; MV 12; hp 42; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (steel dagger)

Grooms (8): F1; AL NG; AC 10; MV 12; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 - 1 (bone dagger); ML 12

Pterrax (12): Int Animal; AL N; AC 7; MV Fl 12; HD 5; hp 30; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1d8 (x 2)/2d6; SA Psionics; SD Nil; SZ L; ML 9; XP 420

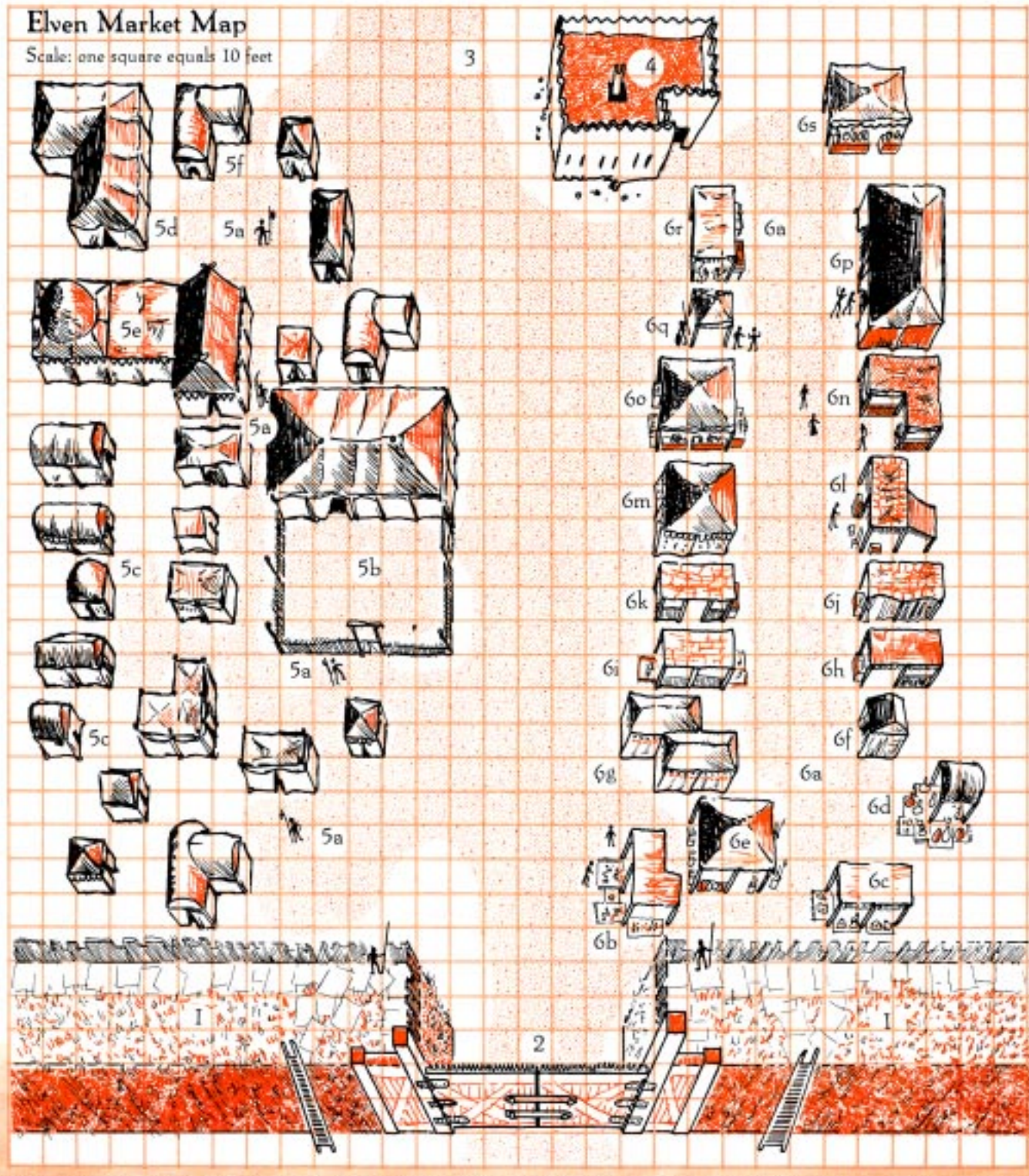
- 5c) Living Tents: Ordinary Clearwater elves live in these tents. They are grouped together by clan, but their occupants mingle freely. Decor and activities in each clan area are commensurate with their occupants. The tents in the Steeljaw section are iron gray and echo with the sounds of armoring, while



An Elven Market

Elven Market Map

Scale: one square equals 10 feet





An Elven Market

the Songweaver tents are soft blue and green, and pleasant melodies fill the air. Each clan possesses several potent magical items, which are kept under heavy guard in the clan chief's tent.

Clearwater Elves (30-300): F1; AL NG or CG; AC 8 or 10; MV 12; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 - 1 (bone dagger) or 1d8 - 1 (stone long sword); ML 14

- 5d) Chieftess's Tent: Chieftess Jentil Steeljaw lives here with her husband, Kamnys Graystar, and their son, Osar. They are guarded by elite warriors and wizards (same statistics as in Area 5a), who mingle freely with and are indistinguishable from Jentil's numerous servants. Jentil's personal quarters are a place of silken luxury, rumored to contain considerable amounts of treasure and several rare magical items. Rumors also claim that stealing any of these items is virtually impossible; vengeance against those who do succeed is swift and terrible.

Jentil Steeljaw: Ps18/W17; AL NG; AC 6; MV 12; hp 49; THAC0 12; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (hand axe); Spells - 5 1st, 5 2nd, 5 3rd, 5 4th, 5 5th, 3 6th, 3 7th, 2 8th; Psionic Abilities - 6 Disciplines, 9 Sciences, 23 Devotions, 5 Defense Modes

Kamnys Graystar: F10; AL NG; AC 8; MV 12; hp 67; THAC0 11; #AT 3/2 rounds; Dmg 1d8 + 3 (bronze long sword)

Osar: F2; AL NG; AC 10; MV 12; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (stone spear)

- 5e) The Silk Palace: This huge, colorful tent, subdivided into numerous individual chambers, is a public house open to elves and nonelves alike. During the day, food and drink are served; at night, liquor flows freely and numerous forms of entertainment abound. Gambling, wrestling, dancing, music, games of skill, and the consummation of illegal deals made during the day all occur within the palace's luxuriant confines.

Mistress Ruhola Fireshaper presides over the palace, assisted by numerous staff and her two Ledopolitan dwarf bouncers, Hai and Kov. Featured entertainment includes the legendary elven bard

Shimian Songweaver, dancer Areela Steeljaw (an unparalleled beauty, specialist in the Dance of Four Swords), and acrobat Miraz Windrider.

Ruhola Fireshaper: W9; AL CN; AC 10; MV 12; hp 22; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 - 1 (bone dirk); Spells - 4 1st, 3 2nd, 3 3rd, 2 4th, 1 5th

Hai: F7; AL N; AC 5; MV 9; hp 42; THAC0 14; #AT 3/2 rounds; Dmg 1d6 + 2 (stone flail)

Kov: F8; AL N; AC 6; MV 9; hp 46; THAC0 13; #AT 3/2 rounds; Dmg 2d4 + 1 (stone morning star)

Shimian Songweaver: B12; AL NG; AC 10; MV 12; hp 48; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (obsidian long sword); Spells - 3 1st, 3 2nd, 3 3rd, 2 4th

Areela Steeljaw: Th11; AL CN; AC 10; MV 12; hp 45; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (steel dirk)

Miraz Windrider: Th10; AL CG; AC 10; MV 12; hp 38; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4-1 (bone dagger)

- 5f) Wizard's Tent: Galadin Lightning, an ancient wizard and leading tribal elder, lives here. He occasionally sees members of the tribe or deserving outsiders. His identity is, of course, kept secret from the templars; the few templars who know who he is let him go his way rather than antagonize the Clearwaters. Although the old preserver seems to live alone, an army of unseen servants and summoned planar creatures sees to Galadin's needs, and he lives in great luxury. Some of these servants are set to the task of guarding the wizard's extensive collection of magical items and mystical apparatus.

Galadin Lightning: W16; AL NG; AC 10; MV 12; hp 31; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+ 1 (bronze dagger); Spells - 5 1st, 5 2nd, 5 3rd, 5 4th, 5 5th, 3 6th, 2 7th, 1 8th

Galadin has several aerial servants bound to his tent, with orders to protect it for a period of 100 years. Most chafe at this servitude and take out their frustration on intruders.

Aerial Servant: Int Semi; AL N; AC 3; MV Fl

An Elven Market



24; HD 16; hp 70; THAC0 5; #AT 1; Dmg 8d4; SA Surprise; SD + 1 or better weapon to hit; SZ L; ML 14; XP 10,000

One or more air elementals always lurk inside Galadin's tent, ready to attack anyone who approaches his treasures without his permission.

Air Elemental: Int Low; AL N; AC 2; MV Fl 36; HD 12; hp 66; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg 2d10; SA Whirlwind; SD + 2 or better weapon to hit; SZ L; ML 15; XP 7,000

A pseudodragon named Talisa is Galadin's beloved pet. She returns his affection by keeping watch on his tent, spying on intruders while using her chameleon power.

Pseudodragon: Int Average; AL N (G); AC 2; MV 6, Fl 24; HD 2; hp 13; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3 + special; SA Poison sting; SD Chameleon power; SZ T; ML 15; XP 975

6) The Elven Market: A carnival atmosphere prevails here, as the citizens move through gaily colored tents, friendly vendors, and exotic sights and

sounds. A wide variety of items may be purchased here, up to and including (to the right customers) items normally forbidden. Such transactions must be arranged in advance, and all take place at night, often in the nearby elven compound.

Templars and agents of the sorcerer-king constantly enter the market, both openly and covertly, hoping to catch the Clearwaters selling contraband or violating laws. So far, they have met with no success, as the alert psionics and wizards of the tribe have detected them every time.

- 6a) The Avenue: This broad street is formed by the double row of stalls and tents. It is constantly crowded with citizens, as well as wandering vendors selling their wares, singing bards, and sellers of various foodstuffs. Less conspicuous are elven warriors and psionics, who keep a constant vigil against templars and spies.

- 6b) Fruits and Vegetables: Produce from numerous faraway lands is sold here. Much of it has been magically preserved, and is quite fresh. Timya





An Elven Market

Graffyon will covertly sell magic potion-fruits.

Timya Graffyon: Th6; AL NG; AC 10; MV 12; hp 25; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (bronze dagger)

- 6c) Fine Clothing: Garments imported from all across Athas, in a bewildering variety of styles and cuts, are available here at bargain prices. Magical clothing items, such as cloaks and boots, are also available, but these are kept well hidden and are dealt in only after-hours. Proprietor Nysia Graystar is a low-level illusionist who keeps his skills secret.

Nysia Graystar: I4; AL CG; AC 10; MV 12; hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 - 1 (stone dagger); Spells - 4 1st, 3 2nd

- 6d) Ceramics and Brassware: Fine flacons, pots, bowls, and other vessels of fired clay and brass may be bought here. From time to time, Jirah Silverleaf sells a magical item, such as a *decanter of endless water*, but this only happens in the safety of the elven encampment under cover of darkness.

Jirah Silverleaf: Th6; AL NG; AC 8; MV 12; hp 26; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (stone spear)

- 6e) Weapons: Gilam Steeljaw crafts weapons of ceramic, stone, obsidian, bone, bronze, and (on occasion) iron. All types are available here, most at extremely reasonable prices. Gilam and two dwarven craftsmen, Gram and Lian, work here during the day, making weapons and accepting commissions for custom work. As usual, a few magical weapons are available.

Gilam Steeljaw: F10; AL CG; AC 8; MV 12; hp 53; THAC0 11; #AT 3/2 rounds; Dmg 1d8 + 2 (steel long sword)

Gram: F6; AL N; AC 8; MV 9; hp 41; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+2 (stone warhammer)

Lian: F7; AL NG; AC 8; MV 9; hp 44; THAC0 14; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 + 2 (wood club)

- 6f) Shoes: Finely crafted shoes of leather are fitted, designed, crafted, and sold here by Barak Windrider. Footwear gathered on tribal raids is also

sold. Barak rarely sells magical items. He is a generally quiet and unassuming elf. He is a cleric of elemental air.

Barak Windrider: P4; AL CG; AC 10; MV 12; hp 19; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (stone club); Spells - 3 1st, 2 2nd

- 6g) Pets: Kirga Wavediver sells a variety of small household animals here, such as great cats, lizards, hurrum, critic, ock'n, and even pseudodragons. It is said that Kirga can help favored customers obtain particularly rare or exotic creatures, if they are willing to pay.

Kirga Wavediver: W4; AL CG; AC 10; MV 12; hp 11; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-2 (whip); Spells - 3 1st, 2 2nd

- 6h) Candles: Tamana Songweaver sings, plays the harp, and sells candles of every size and color. Some are said to be enchanted; buyers are sometimes surprised at the results obtained from their seemingly innocent candles. When asked about such things, Tamana simply smiles.

Tamana Songweaver: P6; AL NG; AC 10; MV 12; hp 28; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (steel dagger); Spells— 3 1st, 3 2nd, 2 3rd

- 6i) Leather Goods: Ikan Seafoam is a friendly, outgoing elf with a quick, hearty laugh. He will regale those he trusts with tales of war and adventure from his long and eventful life. He sells leather goods of all kinds, up to and including leather armor. Some of his items—bracers, boots, and gauntlets—may be enchanted. He is said to be a good source of spell components.

Ikan Seafoam: F9; AL CG; AC 8; MV 12; hp 66; THAC0 12; #AT 3/2 rounds; Dmg 1d8 + 2 (bronze long sword)

- 6j) Tattoos: Birgaz is a Ledopolitan dwarf who specializes in exotic tattoos. He is surly and not terribly talkative, but his tattoos are startling in their realism and beauty.

Birgaz: F8; AL NG; AC 10; MV 9; hp 57; THAC0 13; #AT 3/2 rounds; Dmg 1d8 + 1 (bone battle axe)

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- 6k) Confections: Candies of all sorts—normally not widely available in the city-states—are sold here. Nobles sometimes visit master candymaker Tayo Songweaver to commission elaborate works of spun sugar and meringue for fancy parties. Tayo is a cleric of elemental earth.

Tayo Songweaver: P2; AL CG; AC 10; MV 12; hp 9; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3 (silver knife); Spells – 2 1st

- 6l) Carpenter: Wood is a rare commodity on Athas, so good carpenters can achieve a high degree of status. Jiras Onyx works wood into elaborate sculptures and elegant furniture. With the supply of raw timber extremely limited, Jiras uses old wood or salvage from broken items. The results are usually amalgams of many different grains, colors, and shades of wood, blended together in a pleasant, harmonious whole.

Jiras Onyx: F3; AL NG; AC 10; MV 12; hp 21; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (flint spear)

- 6m) Fortune Teller: Lady Elas Fireshaper claims that her methods of divination are simply a form of diversionary entertainment. She thus manages to dissuade the templars from arresting her for illegal spellcasting. Most of her fortune telling includes the usual trappings—crystal balls, tea leaves, cards, etc.—and they guarantee long, happy lives full of joy and prosperity.

Of course, Elas is not what she seems. She is actually a skilled diviner who will cast genuine spells for those who pass scrutiny. As usual, these things are done at night, in the privacy of her tent in the Fireshaper compound.

Lady Elas Fireshaper: W12; AL CG; AC 10; MV 12; hp 32; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (bone dagger); Spells—5 1st, 5 2nd, 5 3rd, 5 4th, 5 5th, 2 6th

- 6n) Liquor: Alcoholic drinks from throughout the Tyr region are on display here, varying from virtually undrinkable Ledopolitan beer (nonetheless a favorite of dwarves traveling with the Clearwaters) to nearly ethereal spirits said to come from the lair of

the dragon itself. Owner Kleys Onyx can obtain enchanted potions; he sells them after taking the usual precautions.

One secret is known only to the Clearwater elves—Kleys is actually an agent of the Shadow tribe. He undertakes missions of espionage or assassination for those who know how to contact him. Those needing such services are contacted by a representative of the Shadows and, if they can prove their needs are genuine, are given a secret password and told to contact Kleys. Kleys interviews the customer and makes a final decision as to his sincerity. Impostors, or those who seek to betray the Shadows, never survive this stage of the process.

Kleys carries an enchanted steel *long sword* +2. Called *Oathbinder*, the sword also has a permanent *continual light* spell that can be activated at will.

Kleys Onyx: Th12; AL N; AC 8; MV 12; hp 46; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 + 2 (steel *long sword* +2)

- 6o) Weaver: Yaynil Sandrunner spends most of his day in quiet labor, weaving cloth on an elaborate elven loom. He sells the cloth that he weaves, as well as textiles and fabrics obtained in his adventures with the tribe.

Yaynil Sandrunner: Th5; AL NG; AC 10; MV 12; hp 22; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (wooden quarterstaff)

- 6p) The Wild Kank: This tavern is open to the public. It serves the tired, thirsty, and footsore after a day of shopping. Food varies from day to day, but it is mostly good, along with beer and ale of passable quality. Traders sometimes meet with their clients here to discuss the fine points of any deals they wish to make. The Kank is often the mid-way point of any deals for illegal items. Thus it is full of Clearwater wizards and psionicists who scan potential buyers to make sure they are honest.

Proprietor Alvys Wavediver is served by a staff of young elves and two mul bouncers. Kk'tkk, a thri-kreen who sometimes travels with the Clearwater tribe, occasionally works as bartender, serving two or



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even three drinks at a time with his multiple arms.

Alvys Wavediver: Th8; AL NG; AC 10; MV 12; hp 34; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3 (steel knife)

Mul Bouncers (2): F8; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; hp 60; THAC0 13; #AT 3/2 rounds; Dmg 1d6 (stone mace)

Kk'tkk: F9; AL CN; AC 5; MV 18; hp 71; THAC0 12; #AT 5; Dmg 1d4 (x 4)/ 1d4 + 1; SA Poison

• 6q) Mercenaries: Kama Graffyon, who also serves the tribe as an elite scout, operates this small booth. Here caravan masters, nobles, and other customers can make arrangements to hire guards, warriors, scouts, and specialized hirelings of a military nature. Kama will also discuss hiring spies, assassins, and other less savoury characters, but only with those he trusts.

Kama Graffyon: R12; AL CG; AC 6; MV 12; hp 84; THAC0 9; #AT 2; Dmg 1d8 + 1 (steel long sword)

• 6r) Fine Art: Art from all over the Tyr region, much of it obtained under questionable circumstances, is sold here by broker Enala Graystar. There are paintings, statues, miniatures, and even a small amount of jewelry. There are also magical items, such as figurines of wondrous power, that are shown only to trusted customers.

Enala Graystar: Th7; AL N; AC 10; MV 12; hp 32; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 - 1 (bone short sword)

• 6s) Glassware: Glassblower Poros Windrider creates exotic bottles, jars, and stoppered vessels, recycling broken glass found in the tribe's wanderings. Intact vessels are also sold here. Pores's wares come in every conceivable color and shape. All are of the highest quality. Poros also serves the Swiftwings as a pterrax rider; he is skilled in the operation of cliff-gliders.

Poros Windrider: F8; AL NG; AC 10; MV 12; hp 54; THAC0 13; #AT 3/2 rounds; Dmg 1d4 (bronze dagger)



Fort Prosper

1) Caravan Trail: This route is traveled by massive spice caravans and is constantly patrolled by the fort's kank cavalry. Human bandits, gith, belgoi, and even an occasional giant have been known to attack caravans here.

2) Settlement: Home to 50-60 humans who help manage the fort and trade with caravans, this tiny village clings protectively to the outer walls of the fortress. When the fort comes under attack, villagers take shelter inside the fortress.

3) Walls: These walls are ten feet thick and 15 feet high, built of stone quarried nearby. Crossbow-armed warriors patrol the battlements.

Wavir Warriors (10): F5; AL N; AC 6; MV 12; hp 30; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (flint spear), 1d4 (light crossbow); ML 12

4) Towers: Each 25-foot-high tower has two floors and a ballista mounted on the roof.

5) Main Gates: Crafted of expensive iron and imported hardwood, the gates are a vital part of the fort's defense.

6) Keep: The inner keep serves as the quarters for

the fort's commander, Yalana Wavir. She spends most of her time overseeing inventory, leaving day-to-day operations to Borto.

Yalana Wavir: Tr8; AL NG; AC 10; MV 12; hp 30; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (bronze dagger)

7) Barracks: This structure is occupied by the 50-100 warriors who man Fort Prosper (see Area 3 for their statistics). Of these, 20-40 are cavalry, who ride the kanks kept in the stables nearby.

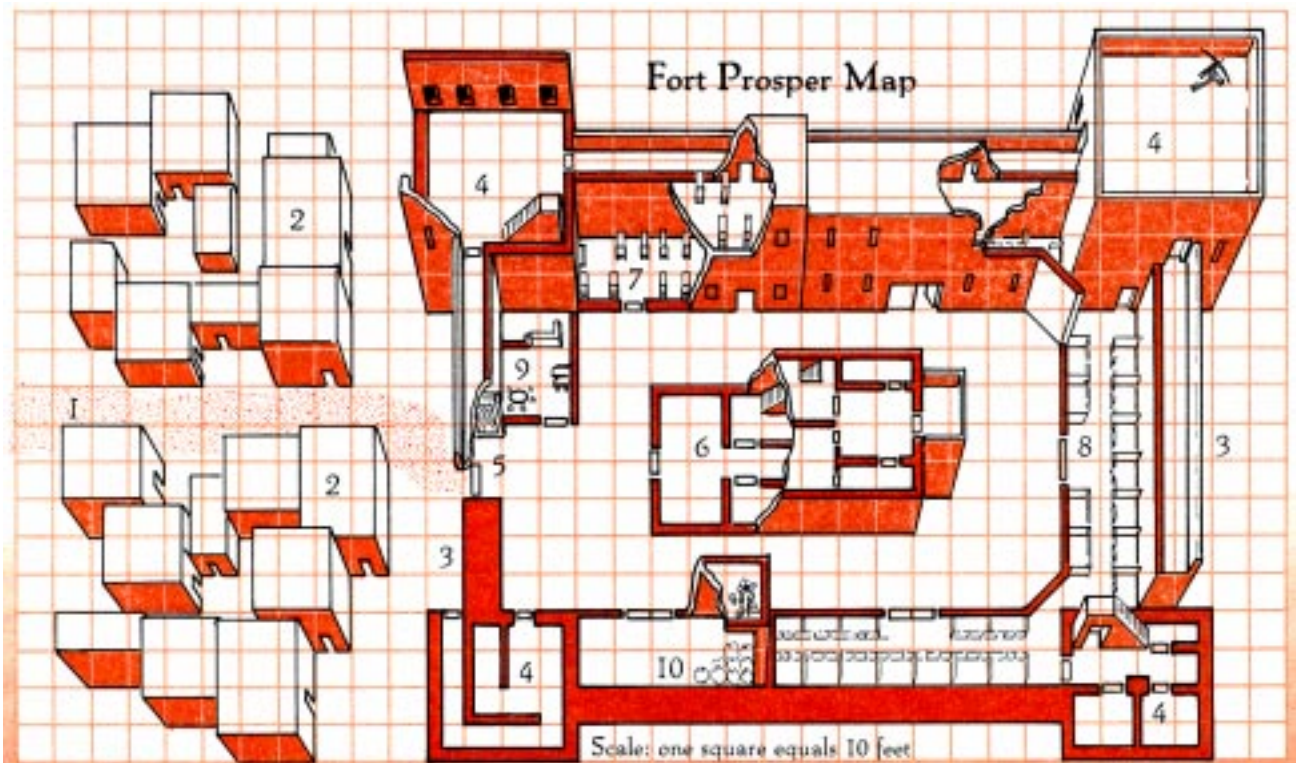
Borto: F10; AL NG; AC 5; MV 6; hp 61; THAC0 11; #AT 3/2 rounds; Dmg 1d6 + 3 (stone footman's mace)

Borto is Fort Prosper's garrison commander. He is known as a tough and uncompromising dwarf.

8) Stables: The fort's mounts, 40-80 kanks, are kept here.

9) Inn: This small establishment provides food and drink and beds.

10) Warehouse: Although the fort is primarily used as a stopover for caravans, goods are sometimes stored in this long, low structure.



Crodlu



CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Desert, scrub plains
FREQUENCY:	Common
ORGANIZATION:	Herd
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Day
DIET:	Herbivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Animal (1)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	5-30 (5d6)
ARMOR CLASS:	4
MOVEMENT:	24
HIT DICE:	4 + 4
THACO:	15
NO. OF ATTACKS:	5
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d8/1d4/1d4/1d6/1d6
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Grapple
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	L
MORALE:	Unsteady (5-7)
XP VALUE:	420



Crodlu are large, reptilian animals that roam the deserts and scrublands of Athas in herds. Easily domesticated, they are widely used for transportation or as beasts of burden, particularly by merchant houses.

Crodlu resemble enormous, scaled ostriches with long arms that end in wicked claws. They vary in color from dusty yellow to brick red, with splotches or rosettes of contrasting color along their dorsal sides and lighter colored scales along the belly. Their tough, scaly hide gives them an Armor Class of 4. Powerful muscles enable them to run across the sands at high speed. While their eyesight is poor, their sense of smell is acute, more than making up for their visual impairment.

Combat: Since they can survive in Athas's merciless environment, crodlu are well able to take care of themselves. The beast's two powerful hind legs kick for 1d6 each, while each hand can claw for 1d4, while the wicked beak bites for 1d8. If both claws hit, the crodlu has grappled with its foe, allowing the beak to hit automatically for double damage.

Habitat/Society: Crodlu travel in herds of 5 to 30. Of these, one-fifth are chicks (1d8 hit points, a single 1d4 bite attack) and the remainder are adults. Each herd is led by a single adult male with AC 3 and 6 Hit Dice. If attacked, adult crodlu form a defensive ring around the young and, if necessary, die to defend them.

If taken from the herd as chicks, crodlu may be trained to

serve as mounts. Only 10% of adult crodlu may be so trained, while male leaders can never be trained.

Ecology: Each female crodlu may give birth to a single young each year. The chicks are able to run and fight within a few minutes of birth. Crodlu are omnivorous, feeding off anything edible they find, sometimes even resorting to pack hunting techniques against smaller animals.

When used as riding beasts, crodlu are unparalleled, carrying their riders with great speed and endurance. While crodlu normally flee rather than fight if carrying a rider or cargo, war crodlu may be trained to use their substantial combat abilities in battle. Also valuable as beasts of burden, crodlu can carry substantial loads, although larger amounts reduce their movement, as shown in the following table.

Weight Carried	Maximum Movement
0-90 lbs.	24
91-180 lbs.	18
181-270 lbs.	12
271-360 lbs.	6
361 + lbs.	0 *

*Crodlu refuse to move if loaded down with more than 360 pounds.



Dune Trader

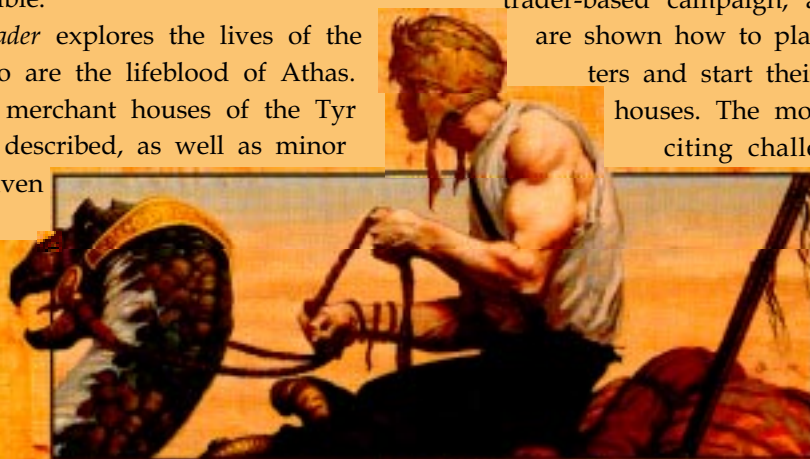
by Anthony Pryor

In the harsh lands of Athas, even the bare necessities of life are hard to come by. The caravans of the traders ply the shifting sands, daring raiders and the elements to bring goods and hope to both the teeming hordes of the city-states and the isolated villagers in the trackless wastelands. Without the traders, life on Athas would be impossible.

Dune Trader explores the lives of the people who are the lifeblood of Athas. The major merchant houses of the Tyr region are described, as well as minor houses, elven merchant

and raiding tribes, and the mercantile tendencies of all the races of Athas. The personalities who drive these houses and tribes are detailed fully within these pages.

A new character class is introduced here—the trader class. The DM receives complete instructions on how to run a trader-based campaign, and the players are shown how to play trader characters and start their own merchant houses. The most vital and exciting challenges on Athas await within this book!



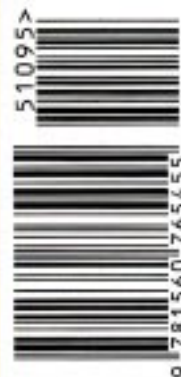
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TSR, Inc.
POB 756
Lake Geneva
WI 53147
U.S.A.



TSR Ltd.
120 Church End,
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United Kingdom

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