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Advanced Dungeons & Dragons  
2nd Edition



Anauroch  
by Ed Greenwood



## BEDINE LANGUAGE AND NAMES

### Names

Bedine do not use surnames; if there is a possibility of confusion between two individuals of the same tribe, who share the same name, nickname, "son of," or "wife of" designation is added to one man's name by the elders, in everyday speech—or, if the two men concerned are of greatly differing ages, "the Young" and "the Old" may also be used. Here follow some sample Bedine names; roll 1d20 to select a name at random. A better practice is to select names from the list, and make up different names that "sound right" (such as Brudrin, Fuulam, and Shariim, for men, and Alasharra, and Tsethli, for women) as often as possible.

### Male

1. Ajaman
2. Al'Aif
3. Assam
4. Bhadla
5. Dahalzel
6. Dawasir
7. Didaji
8. Farim
9. Haushi
10. Kabina
11. Kadumi
12. Musalim
13. Nata
14. Rahid
15. Rata
16. Sa'ar
17. Sabkhat
18. Utaiba
19. Yatagan
20. Zarud

### Female

1. Abala
2. Aglavia
3. Alethra
4. Bujauna
5. Dajala
6. Dizsa
7. Duthrala
8. Fiirria
9. Ilyouma
10. Kalastiira
11. Lajarama
12. Nathla
13. Qoha'dar
14. Rahalat
15. Ruha
16. Saalariira
17. Shalira
18. Tuibaila
19. Vayess
20. Yamala

### Known Bedine Tribes

Alaii  
Artinn Ruabi  
Bai Kabor  
Bait Mahwa

Binwabi  
Bordjia  
Clelarra  
Dakawa  
Dursalai  
Felfaarin  
Goldor  
Iriphawa  
Ju'ur Dai  
Kellordrai  
Lalajar  
Mtair Dhafir  
Mahlajai  
Qahtan  
Raz'hadi  
Ruwalidi  
Shremala  
Ulaarjar  
Yethtai  
Zazalaar

### A Few Words In Uloushinn

The Bedine tongue, called "Uloushinn" by sages, though the Bedine themselves seem to have no name for it, is old, and boasts a large vocabulary. A few words are given here, for the use of DMs in "spicing up" the speech of encountered Bedine. This is not a grammatical guide to Uloushinn.

aba— a loose-fitting robe; the basic garment of the Bedine, worn by both sexes. Over it, a dark (usually black), billowing over-robe (called a jellaba or "night cloak") is worn at night, for warmth and concealment

akeud— a blood-oath

akh— brother

akuna— a promise, debt owed through an agreement or obligation to the dead

amarat— a curving horn, hand-carved and worn at the belt. Its brazen tones carry on the desert winds, to cry warning to other Bedine

'ali— high

'amiq— deep

ard— land, territory, hunting-ground

'arif— know

asad— lion

asan— (temporary) shelter or refuge

'atshan— thirsty

'avn— spring (of water)

aziir— scimitar

aziirla— killing, murder (however done)

'azim— great (in power, rank)

ba'id— away, far away

bakia— a wooden cup, used for drinking water or tea

berrani— stranger

bi— prefix, meaning: 'at,' 'in,' or 'with'

bir— well (of water)

dahab— gold

da'if— weak

darab— strike, hit

difa— code of behavior, decree or judgement

djebira— a saddlebag

dukhhkhan— smoke

el— lord (or sir) a title of respect preceding the person's name e.g. "El Zorah," although it actually as something close to "The")

fadda— silver

fagr— dawn, day-break

fahim— understand

fakha— fruit

fulquu— above

gab— bring (a thing)

gazma (plural: gizam)— boot

gedid— new

gemel (plural: gimal)— camel

ghani— rich

ghashim— foolish

ghazal (plural: ghozlan)— gazelle

gooud (plural: goouds)— mature camel (not to be used to describe any other sort of camel; this means a full-grown, trained riding variety, the 'top quality' animal)

gu'an— hungry

habib— bad

habl— rope, tether

haddad— smith

haddir— bring (a person)

hadid— iron, steel (weapons-metal)

hagar— stone

haouadjejs— elaborately decorated box-shaped camel-litters used only by the wealthiest Bedine families, for their women and

baggage to travel in, in (relative) comfort

haram— forbidden

harr— hot (to be)

hat— give (to me)

hawa— air

heya— up (also "get up")

hiram (plural: ihrima)— blanket

ibn awa— jackal

ibn haram— rascal (= son of thieves)

ibriq— jug

ihteres— be careful

ila— to

inzil— dismount get (or go) down (from there)

jambiya— a curved, double-edged dagger, worn in a belt scabbard by both sexes (customarily the only weapon of a woman)

jellaba— a "night cloak," or heavy camel's wool robe, worn by Bedine over their abas

kalam— talk

kasar— break (kesser: broke; kessrin: broken)

kebir— large

keffiyeh (plural: keffiyehs)— a head-cloth, usually white to soak up as little of the sun's heat as possible; worn by Bedine when outside their tents

khabbir— tell

khowwan (plural: khowwans)— tribe;

"people of..."

khreima— home (tent)

kitab (plural: kutub)— book

ksur— fortress

kuerabiche— a shoulder-sack, or carry-



B. R. C. M.



# ANAUROCH

by Ed Greenwood

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### Credits

Design: Ed Greenwood  
 Editing: Karen S. Boomgarden  
 Spell Development by: Jeff Grubb  
 Cover Art: Brom  
 Interior Art: Valerie Valusek  
 Cartography: Diesel  
 Typography: Angelika Lokotz  
 Production: Sarah Feggstad

Thanks to Troy Denning, for exploring Anauroch and finding the Bedine. Even greater thanks, for introducing me to a new Harper I wish I'd gotten to know better: Lander of Sembia.

### Dedication:

For John and Ghislaine  
 That your adventures together be eternal.

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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9320  
 ISBN 1-56076-126-1  
 9320XXX1501



## INTRODUCTION: ANAUROCH, THE GREAT DESERT

*When we learned their aims, it was too late. We could not strike down what had been done without laying waste to all Toril. Too high a price, we judged—and left them the harsh sands they had created. But for humans, memory is a failing thing, and today we see a savage desert that makes men as cruel and keen-sharp as swordblades, or leaves their bones to bleach in the sun. Not even legends remember fair Netheril as it truly was; folk think of us as decadent, idle, wholly evil necromancers.*

*I wonder how, much else of the history we hold to be true is twisted thus?*

—Rhaugilath “the Ageless,”  
Lich-King of Orbedal  
*Of the Fall of Netheril*

To folk in the Realms today, Anauroch (pronounced: “An-OAR-ock-hh”) is a fierce, unconquerable desert, a vast, sundering shield between the Sword Coast North and the Moonsea North. It forces trade and travel into long, torturous overland routes between the westernmost ports on the Sea of Fallen Stars (chiefly Westgate, Suzail, and Teziir) to Amn, Baldur’s Gate, and Waterdeep, mostly by way of Iriaebor and the River Chionthar.

These strategic places are enriched by the endless stream of caravans, but merchants have always sought shorter, cheaper routes, often braving the “flat” but harsh Great Desert.

Always? Not so, say the sages: little more than five hundred years ago, Anauroch held little sand, and several verdant, wealthy human realms—with lakes and merchant ships of their own. At least one of these lands, Netheril, was then the height of human achievement in magic and the arts.

What happened to so suddenly and thoroughly sweep all this away? DMs will find the answer in “The Secret of Anauroch” chapter; players perusing these pages should resist the beckoning temptation to peek at it, so as to fully enjoy the perils that lurk in Anauroch—

and even reach out to those who sneak along the Desertsedge.

Most folk of Faerun see Anauroch as a scorching waste of sand, “The Wall That Near Divides The Heartlands,” a good place never to go near. What can be found in a barren desert, to be worth the dangers of the trip?)

Most folk, as is often the case, are wrong. The first things Elminster said of Anauroch was that it is not a natural desert, and is not all hot sands. Anauroch today is three deserts: the hot, sandy place most imagine it all to be, called “the Sword” by sages because of the fierce human Bedine nomads who dwell there; a higher, wind-scoured land of bare rock, called “the Plain of Standing Stones,” though very little of it is a flat plain: and in the north, a vast, rift-scored ice sheet overlying bedrock, known as “the High Ice.” These three areas were once very different. All held proud, rich cities of elves, men, dwarves, and others; cities that may still stand, buried or merely hidden by the vast desolation, their riches waiting. Elminster says Anauroch is “the largest—and probably wealthiest-treasure-house in all Toril.” Even those who agree can show fell, treasures recovered from it, but when this was pointed out, Elminster merely shrugged and held up an ornate, hand-sized carving of a spired castle. Strolling to the door of his ramshackle tower, he tossed it into the air, whispered a secret word—and in the meadow beyond his pool, a huge castle of black obsidian suddenly stood, tall and splendid and very real.

“When too many guests come calling to sleep here,” the Old Mage of Shadowdale said mildly, “I always have this; one of the least powerful magics of the Netherese, but the only one I’ve found in Anauroch. I haven’t much time to go wandering about there, mind—this was just lying on a table, in an old house half-buried in sand. Where?” He smiled, and waved northwards. “Oh—just out there.” This book explores all three regions of Anauroch, for those who want to go “just out there.”



# A WHIRLWIND TOUR OF ANAUROCH

The accompanying map provides a quick overview of Anauroch. Folk of Faerun have a tendency to think of the Great Desert simply as an empty but impassable place-and explorers interested in it may hear lots of wild tales about its dangers, but will find almost nothing in the way of hard information about an area that is at least as big as the Inner Sea! Hence this guide. At a glance, one can see that Anauroch has been divided into three regions: the Sword, the Plain of Standing Stones, and the High Ice.

These vast areas (which are admittedly artificial divisions, made by human sages for their own convenience) vary widely in their dangers and character, and are detailed in separate chapters of this sourcebook. Their characteristics are summarized here.

## The Sword

The southernmost band of Anauroch is a desert of sand dunes, scorching hot by day, and icy cold at night. Its winters are as harsh as those of the other lands in the North-but in summer, it is a land of killing heat. The most populous part of Anauroch, it is the area most visited by outsiders (usually human merchants trying to find a shorter trade-route from the Moonsea cities to the Sword Coast lands, or adventurers seeking the lost riches of long-buried kingdoms). To them, the hot sands resemble the Dust Desert of Raurin, and other, more southerly deserts of the Realms-and because all most folk elsewhere in the Realms know of Anauroch is what such travelers tell of it, most in the Realms think Anauroch is all one Great Sand Sea.

This sandy region is certainly the area of most interest to outsiders-partly for its strategic importance (to those seeking a trade-route, or a way past a certain realm, or an invasion route into a land), and partly because of The Lost Kingdoms that lie beneath it, whose buried ruins are widely believed to hold great riches and magic. (Something of the

present-day truth of these fallen realms is explored in the chapter entitled "The Lost Kingdoms.")

One might expect, given the ready supply of slaves employed by the goblin races and some human peoples, that The Sand Sea would have been dug up into a succession of mounds of sand between huge quarry-pits, long ago, searching for this lost wealth.

Almost every year, some daring adventurers do venture into the sands to seek their fortunes-but large-scale mining has never succeeded.

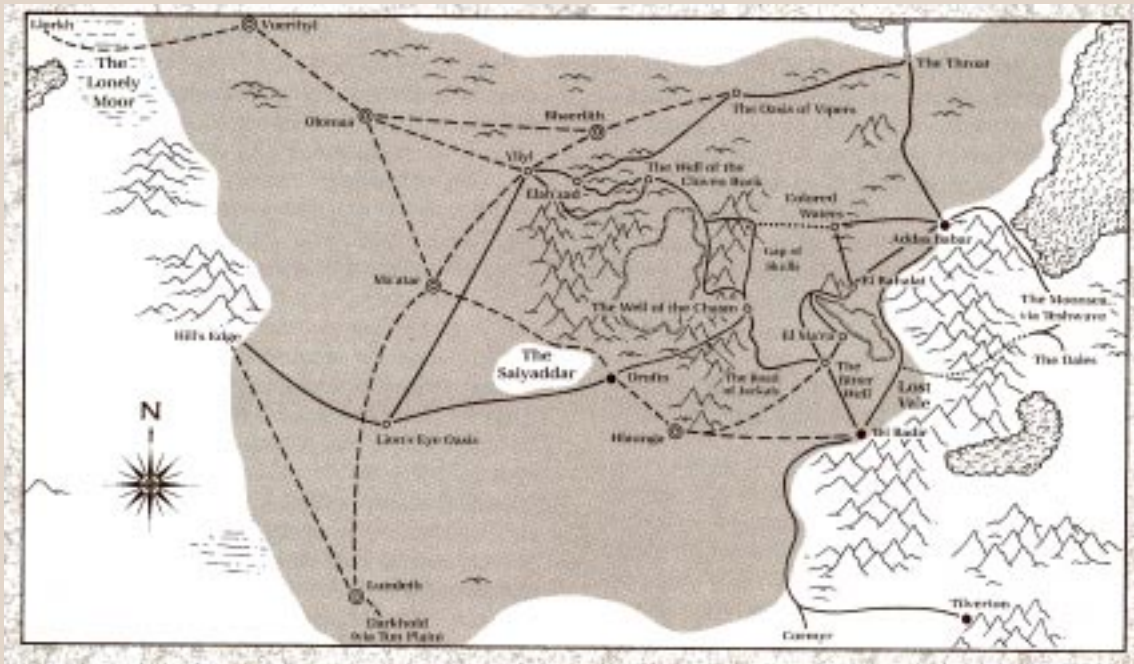
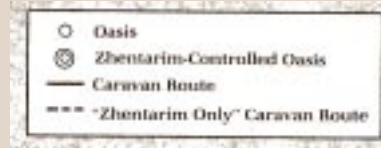
It fails underground because dwarves and others who try to enter by underground ways are never heard from again. Something (or a lot of somethings) slays them. The tunnels known to exist are ancient ways, and come up in the fiercely-defended elven hold of Evereska, the mountains of Tethyamar, and at various hidden places in the Stonelands.

It fails on or above the surface for two reasons: the harsh conditions (both the elements and monsters; the mountains that ring Anauroch are home to many wyverns and dragons, who customarily hunt for prey over the sands), and the Bedine.

The Bedine (described later in this book) are fierce, nomadic human tribes. Although they fear "sorcery," some among them are masters of desert magic, and their fearlessness, warlike nature, and expert knowledge of the desert make them deadly foes, in Anauroch. It is their ways (raiding both each other and any outsiders who venture into the sands they roam) that have given the sandy southernmost region of Anauroch its colloquial name: "The Sword." The Sword stretches from the midst of The Lonely Moor in the west to the northern end of the Border Forest in the east, and from west to south to east (ignoring mountain ranges and the broken Desertsedge borderlands) borders on the Sword Coast "backlands" (once the dwarven realm of Delzoun, in the north, and the human realm of Netheril, south of that), the elven fortress-realm of Evereska,



## Trade Routes of Anauroch



and areas that once made up the dwarven realm of Oghrann: the human settlements of the River Reaching Highlands, the Zhentarim-controlled Sunset Mountains area, and the nomad-roamed Tun Plain.

Then it touches on the kingdom of Cormyr (through the Goblin Marches and the Stonelands, which Cormyr has always claimed but never really ruled), the independent Dalelands (including Lost Vale, the ruins of now-vanished Tarkhaldale), the long-vanished dwarven realm of Tethyamar (now peaks roamed by goblins, orcs, and bugbears), and the Border Forest. The Goblin Marches is an ill-defined area of crags, drumlins, and bogs, cloaked with many thorny thickets-and home to goblins, orcs, and kobolds.

It lies below the heights of the Stonelands, which is a broken region of pine forests, ridges, tors, and tangled ravines that surrounds the Stormhorns mountain range, and runs east of it almost as far as Shadow Gap.

Most merchants reach the dwellers in the desert by means of a narrow, long-dry river valley that divides the broken heights of the Stonelands from Alauthwaerd, "the Watcher," southernmost peak of the Desertsouth Mountains. This valley, Raudilauth (which means "Desertdoor" in an ancient tongue; but the language and its speakers are forgotten, but the meaning has survived) links the overland trade-road through Shadow Gap with the lands of the D'tarig (a race described in the "Other Peoples of Anauroch" chapter).



Let us see the Sword briefly through Bedine eyes. The Bedine know that the sand sea where they live is vast indeed-and although a hard land, it is alive. Many plants, insects, birds, and animals live on or burrow under the endless dunes-and there is a dark, dangerous world lurking below: the catacombs of the Buried Ones. The meager pastures of Anauroch support few men and camels: in a year of riding from pasture to pasture, a Bedine tribe might meet as many as two other tribes. In this harsh land, such meetings are seldom friendly.

Most Bedine know that the desert gives way to a wind-scoured land of barren rock on all sides. In some direction-probably to the south-this must give way to areas settled by men for occasionally non-Bedine "paleskins" or "bonehide" men come into the desert. These intruders (most Bedine use the term "outlanders") seldom live long.

### *The Desertsedge*

In actuality, the edges of the Sword rise into rocky foothills, dotted with scrub plants and marked by caves, breakneck ravines carved out by small, rushing streams (that plunge down into the desert, where they soon vanish, drunk down by the thirsty sands). This uneasy border area is lashed by winds and frequent storms (where hot and cold air clash), and roamed by many fearsome monsters. It is known as the Desertsedge (or "Desert's Edge," depending on the cartographer), and aside from temperature, varies little from the northern- and easternmost explored mountains of the Sword Coast lands, to the infamous Stonelands, to The Glittering Snows.

### *The Plain of Standing Stones*

The middling region of Anauroch begins where the sands of Anauroch give way to bare rock, and rises in a plateau-a plateau broken

by so many rifts, and sculpted into so many spires and fantastic crags that its name of "plain" is a bitter travelers' joke.

The "Plain" is considered to end where the ice begins: the icy cliffs that are the southernmost edge of the massive glacial ice sheets that make up the High Ice.

This wind-lashed, cold, rocky region is known for its mineral wealth and many monsters. Comparatively few folk know that it also holds hidden valleys, many of which have water, rich meadows, and even support large wild herds of crag sheep. The outlaws, dwarven bands, human and hobgoblin barbarian tribes, and ogre, hill giant, and verbeeg groups who dwell here don't welcome intruders—except as food or victims.

The Plain is bordered on the west by the "Frozen Sea" (discussed in the chapter on "The High Ice" in this book), which runs down the Desertsedge as far as the northern Lonely Moor. On the eastern side of Anauroch, there is no real boundary between it and the Tortured Land—except that the latter holds far more moisture, and with it both wind-sculpted ice and many more plants. Where the plants end and bare rock begins, going west, travelers consider Anauroch to have begun. Few stay long enough to map or even get a good look at the border area; it is a cold and savage wilderness of marauding monsters.

### *The High Ice*

Least known of the three regions of Anauroch, this glacial wilderness has no known (as yet) northern border—it is said to stretch on forever. Although a traveler would search in vain for trees, there is a surprising amount of life here, growing scant inches upwards from the ice and rock. Here yeti, remorhaz, white dragons, and other chill horrors reign over a frigid land that few humans have ever seen—and fewer want to.





# THE SECRET OF ANAUROCH

The name “Anauroch” once meant just what now called the High Ice: a rift-scarred glacial ice sheet, that gave way (as one traveled south) to rocky uplands where many wild sheep roamed, and thence to thick forests where stags reigned and dryads dwelt. Those uplands, now scoured to bare rock, are known today as the Plain of Standing Stones.

South of them were rich, verdant human kingdoms and independent cities—small, but governed by long years of peace and plenty and bustling with trade. These, whose very names are forgotten by most in the Realms today, are the Lost Kingdoms (and are described in the chapter of that name, later in these pages).

That was less than five hundred years ago—but since then, the meadows and forests of the wild uplands have been swept away, and the woods, farms, lakes and cities of the Lost Kingdoms all buried in the howling sands of the Sword.

Impossible, sages who know little of magic might say—and have. No desert comes out of nowhere, to cover so much of Faerun, so fast,

True enough; no *natural* desert grows so large, so quickly. A magical change, however, can be as sudden and violent as its maker has the power and will to cause.

## The Phaerimm

In caverns under the rich human kingdoms, in an area of the Underdark known as the Phaerlin, dwelt a race of ancient, fell beings who had long worked at mastering magic to defend themselves against the predators of the Realms Below. This race, known as the Phaerimm (they are fuller detailed in an entry in the “Monsters of Anauroch” chapter of this book), are foul and dangerous to human eyes, but they work magic as dragons do, and in aggressiveness and intelligence are not very different from humans.

The Phaerimm thought of the area as their own realm and ignored those who dwelt on

the surface (in which they had little interest). That changed when the human residents of one of those surface territories rose suddenly in magical strength, to challenge (however unwittingly) the power of the Phaerimm. Phaerimm magics were interfered with, or destroyed. Magic (in the hands of the human wizards of Netheril) was used to slay encountered Phaerimm “monsters” as the humans began to explore, mine, and alter the underways, seeking gems and metal-ores.

They found death. The most powerful Phaerimm worked together to develop a mighty spell that would destroy the things that humans lived on: the *lifedrain*.

## The Lifedrain

This spell was cast, and cast again, by brave Phaerimm venturing onto the surface by night, over all the lands of men that menaced the realm of the Phaerimm. Once it was set in motion, the Phaerimm hurled themselves into a spellwar, attacking Netherese wizards, trying to steal or destroy their spellbooks, and trying above all to disrupt their researches, thin their ranks, and keep them too busy fighting to have time enough to learn the secrets of the mightiest Phaerimm spell—or to have time to act against it.

The Phaerimm prevailed. As the well-protected Phaerimm struck magically at each Netherese wizard and every simple everyday magic practiced by the Netherese, and the realm erupted in ceaseless chaos, the drying effects of thousands of *lifedrain* spells spread. Castles were made uninhabitable by bold Phaerimm casting the spells within their *liralls*—and the folk of Netheril who could not work magic were slaughtered and terrorized by the score in the magical fray. The Phaerimm did not care what happened to the surface, and lashed out with spells or laid them in waiting as traps, freely.

The bewildered Netherese fought back—but they had become a decadent, refined, wealthy



race of self-interested, independent individuals, with interests all over Faerun, and all too little time to spare for anything save what they chose to spend it on. The Netherese had lost the need to stand and fight together, and were given no time to regain it. As the magical onslaught continued, the desolation of the *lifedrain* spells continued, driving folk from their homes and farms. Dust storms lashed Netheril for the first time, and displaced beasts of all sorts, from harmless scurrying things to dangerous monsters, roamed the land that was left, desperate and bewildered, quick to lash out at the disorganized humans.

The Netherese began to flee. First the common folk, with no leadership or salvation from the wizards in sight, little food and water, and the land risen against them, fled with what they could carry, south and west, to Amn, the Sword Coast, Irieabor, Cormyr, and the cities all about the Sea of Fallen Stars.

Then the mages left, deserted by those who fed them and provided for their needs, and in most cases intent on their own researches and aims over everything else. They scattered all over the known North, settling alone in a thousand remote valleys and hidden fastnesses. Large bands of them flew far to the south in the magical flying ships devised a decade earlier, to found the wizards' realm of Halruaa.

The desolation continued; east of Netheril, a desert formed as the Narrow Sea dried up, and winds carried away the dried-out soil. This devastation was viewed with alarm by the elves of Evereska and the Elven Court, who-like the Netherese wizards before them—could find no way to check the advance of the spreading desert.

After this foul magic destroyed the land's flora and fauna, and stripped it of the ability to retain water and grow new things, the winds and the harsh climate did the rest, creating the Great Sand Sea we know now.

## The Sharn Act

Fortunately for all surface life on Faerun, the Phaerimm were not the only magically-powerful race who dwelt in the North. To the west of Phaerimm territory, across a vastness of "wild" Underdark, were the tunnels claimed then by the Sharn (from about Secomber to the Sword Coast, in a narrow region centered on the channel of the lower Delimbiyr, reaching about as far north as Sarcrag). A mysterious, whimsical spellcasting race, the Sharn are sometimes encountered in the great dungeon of UnderMountain today, and are detailed in their own *Monstrous Compendium* entry in *The Ruins of UnderMountain* boxed set.

Most Sharn only dabble in magic; beyond personal abilities (detailed in their monster entry), they command only what magic they can seize in the form of items, potions, and scrolls. A few Sharn, however, study magic, and these can rise to rival the most powerful human wizards in magical might.

Elminster warns that Sharn wizards avoid human contact, and should not be pursued if they are inadvertently discovered. In game terms, most range in power from about the strength of a 19th level wizard to a match for a 26th level mage, most employ magics not known to humans, and some seem able to cast two separate spells in a round! It is certain, however, that the magical efforts of certain Sharn, five hundred years ago, saved Faerun for all surface-dwellers—and that the Sharn have made no move to rule or even influence what they saved since. The Sharn wizards checked the advance of the Phaerimm-invoked devastation with newly devised, awesomely powerful spells of their own.

These unidentified spells halted the advance of *lifedrain* spells, and somehow confined the Phaerimm within the area they had already devastated. The Sharn took no further interest in the Phaerimm, and windswept, desolate Anauroch today remains the prison of this proud, terrible race.



## The Phaerimm, Now

Like all caged beasts, the Phaerimm want out of their underground prison. They are working tirelessly to overcome the Sharn spells that bind them in a certain area of the Underdark, using magically-influenced agents (laertis, Zhentarim who foolishly venture into their reach, and far worse creatures) to reach out beyond their prison. These agents seek out and bring back whatever magic they can seize, and spread rumors of rich treasure, to attract humans to Anauroch. The Phaerimm await the prey that their agents send-waiting to devour, enslave, and interrogate, in hopes of learning ways to defeat the Sharn magic.

More details of current Phaerimm life, aims, and affairs are given in a later chapter of this book, "The Phaerimm,"

## Restoring Anauroch

Beings who want to destroy the desert conditions of Anauroch will find that even the most powerful spells will not prevail against *life-drain* effects until the Phaerimm are gone. Even then, expunging those deadly magics will necessitate great amounts of magical power (perhaps involving the sacrifice of mortal wizards' lives, magical items and artifacts, and perhaps even divine aid).

The result will be large "magic-dead" areas, their effects as described in the *FORGOTTEN REALMS® Adventures* sourcebook. They will make restoration of living things all the more slow and backbreaking: water, grasses, and all must be brought in by hand, with weather magic (to bring rains and stop soil-blowing winds) available only on the borders. Decades—even centuries-of work will be needed to make the desert only a memory.



# BEDINE SOCIETY

*Enslave the Bedine? They would find it easier to cage the wind.*

Bhadla of the D'tarig,  
from *The Parched Sea*

*The Bedine are always more concerned with vengeance than with what is right-and always is far too often for any folk to live long, or live untwisted.*

Elminster of Shadowdale  
(interview for this sourcebook)

*The Bedine do not plan everything out in advance.*

Ruha of the Bedine,  
from *The Parched Sea*

Few in the Realms have even heard of the Bedine of Anauroch. Fewer still know the true nature of Bedine society.

Legends speak of fierce men who dwell in the dry, sun-baked sands of Anauroch, swathed in long robes against the sun. These ruthless men ride camels, force their women to cover their faces, and wage endless war on each other with scimitars, for possession of camels and women (who may change hands hundreds of times in their brief, brutal lives). The Bedine hate magic, and kill all wizards they discover. When they need magical aid, they call on the gods-and often, the gods answer them directly.

More reliable sources (such as sages) tend to believe that the Bedine live in nomadic tribes, ruled by rival sheikhs, and that their male-dominated society is warlike, hardened by the harsh desert life. They are experts on living in conditions that swiftly kill those not used to the perils of Anauroch. These Bedine are cruel, backward people (after all, they choose to live in a harsh desert, and fear and avoid using magic). They dwell in tents, wear loose, flowing robes and cover their heads against the sun, cover the faces of all the women, herd camels, and butcher each other (and, with even more enthusiasm, any intruders unlucky

enough to come within their reach) with scimitars. Except when they are fighting, Bedine move slowly, and are very lazy.

What more can be learned, with the aid of Elminster's library, Harper contacts, and his years of snoop—er, exploring the Realms?

## The Nature of The Bedine

An outsider's view of any people is often distorted. This is especially true of the Bedine, for few folk of Faerun know enough of harsh desert conditions to understand why Bedine are as they are, and do as they do.

Bedine are brown-skinned, proud, warlike humans, who live a nomadic, tribal existence in the Sword, the hot "sand sea" which makes up the southernmost part of Anauroch. They dwell in tribes who will freely share food and water with those in need, but who otherwise carry on endless, deadly rivalries.

The largest known Bedine tribe is about three hundred men, women, and children strong. There are over a hundred Bedine tribes; some of them have never even heard of each other, let alone seen each other in the vastness of the Great Desert.

Most Bedine have brown eyes, and almost everyone has black or brown hair: blonde hair, blue eyes, and white skin are great rarities, marking outsiders, or "outlander blood." The apparent laziness of Bedine is due to a practice of wise desert-dwellers: to avoid excessive water loss (sweating) or "the heat-faints" (sunstroke), never run in the heat of the day. To shield themselves from the baking sun, Bedine of both sexes wear loose robes, known as *abas*, cover their heads, and dwell in tents.

Women of almost all Bedine tribes cover their bodies (except for hands, feet, and eyes), unless they are alone, or with only their husbands, in their tents (see "Customs," later in this chapter).

Most Bedine consider honor more important than life. They see much death, and believe the gods measure Bedine by their behavior in



life. Among the Bedine, ending a man's life is not considered much different than killing any other animal (save that a man's family may avenge his death, so one must be more prudent in killing).

This pride and ruthlessness is balanced by a pragmatism usually voiced by the harsh tongues and long memories of the elder women of a tribe—an attitude reflected by Ruha, heroine of *The Parched Sea*, when she says, "You do what you must to survive, and I will do the same." Bedine live in the Mother Desert by choice, and understand little of other lands, or those who come from them. How could other places be better—or different—than the great Mother Desert? Tales of vast stretches of water, of trees so thickly grown that one cannot see through them, stretching for a day's walk or more—all of these may well be purest fancy. If they do exist, they must be the twisted result of magic, or the work of evil gods, turning the land into an unnatural state. A place without sand and the fierce heat of At'ar (the sun, worshipped by Bedine as a goddess; Bedine religion is discussed in "The Gods of Anauroch" chapter) is a strange place, where things are not as they should be, and men who dwell there become perverted and soft. Bedine dealings with outlanders (see "Bedine Dealings With Others," below) reinforce this belief; the outlanders they encounter tend to be gentle, foolish in judgement and in the ways of the desert, and to trust overmuch in cursed magic (see "Magic and the Bedine," later in this chapter).

Something of the character of Bedine can be gleaned by quoting some of their sayings: "A careful warrior will make a wise elder." "It is honorable to help a stranger, but remember that no friend is ever a stranger" "The enemy of my enemy is a friend." "If strangers speak with the honeyed tongues of bees, beware: their bite may carry the venom of the scorpion." "I would rather die with my enemy's blood on my blade, than live a slave? "With Kozah's wind, we drove the enemy before us

like gazelles before the lion' A Bedine compliment: "You think like a camel thief."

## Rank, Status, and Rule

Bedine live in tribes, ruled by sheikhs. In Bedine society, men rule and dominate. In many tribes, a man may have more than one wife at a time (so long as he can support every woman he claims as his own).

The organization of tribes varies, but most work something like this: the word of the sheikh is law, so long as he stays within fairly strict limits of "tradition," which outline a code of what a Bedine (sheikh or child) can and cannot do.

Important decisions are made by a council of the tribe's elders (in practice, these are almost always exclusively male warriors of the tribe, but older women exert much influence on their mates, and their words are often voiced by their husbands in council). There are typically six or so elders, but in a large tribe there may be twice that many. A council, traditionally held in the sheikh's tent and guarded so that women and strangers camped with the tribe cannot get close enough to hear, is usually one long-drawn-out argument.

If the elders cannot decide on a matter, the sheikh's duty is to decide for all. The sheikh's word is law, so long as he breaks none of the important traditions of the Bedine (these rules by which all live include, for example, the requirements that water must be given to the thirsty, and that oaths must be kept). Non-Bedine guests, at the sheikh's option, may be exempt from some Bedine traditions—such as a warriors' challenge: a fight to the death over possession of a woman.

The sheikh's ultimate threat to secure obedience to his will is banishment from the tribe. If a sheikh uses this unwisely, the tribe will dissolve, as all who disagree with him leave. More than one sheikh has been left alone (or accompanied only by family members or a few loyal retainers) after misjudging the extent of his au-



thority or the wisdom of his judgements. A good sheikh always thinks first of the welfare of the tribe -but that phrase has been the refuge of many a foolish, indecisive, or overcautious sheikh, down the long, dry desert years.

Most sheikhs function as generals in battle, directing their warriors from a vantage point, or from the rear, or in the center of their forces-but many have been known to lead charges (often dying in the process, as every enemy warrior wants to be the first to slay a rival sheikh, and risks all to bring down the enemy).

For men, success in Bedine society is measured in honor (battle-prowess), and wealth is measured in camels-or wives. A woman's status is linked to that of her husband, augmented by any additional influence she may have in the decisions of a tribe due to special regard for her, or for knowledge she possesses. For example, a woman who has fought well as a warrior will be regarded more highly by male warriors than other women; a woman who carries the memories and desert experience of great age is given more respect than even the most desirable young woman of the tribe—and a sheikh facing a beast he has never seen, or a problem he has never faced, will defer to the judgement of any woman of the tribe who knows more about the matter at hand.

## *Bedine Dealings With Others*

The Bedine are concerned with survival; their daily existence is a long struggle with the desert, with a Bedine victory being a chance to see the sun rise over the desert tomorrow.

Most Bedine know that Anauroch is vast indeed, and gives way in the north to a land of hard-baked earth and wind-scoured stone. Used to desert ways and life, they believe that this Stone Sea is more lifeless and desolate than the sands of the Sword. Few Bedine have ever ventured far into it-and even fewer

have seen the world outside the desert: the Lands of Many, Many Men and Savage Beasts. Bedine know that such a place exists, because the various light-skinned and strangely-garbed intruders must come from somewhere-but most Bedine would flatly deny that any land is water-rich enough that people could always dwell in one spot, farm crops from the land as well as pasture animals, have enough water to waste it in ornamental fountains or to bathe freely, live amongst trees so plentiful as to block one's sight-or could be as numerous as the intruders say; if hundreds of Bedine ever lived crowded together in a space as big as a large dune, they would soon all perish for lack of food and water-or slay each other in desperate bids to gain these necessities for themselves.

Bedine tend to judge other lands by the outlanders who have come to Anauroch—who tend to be desperate outlaws or reckless adventurers, schemers with plans of their own for the Bedine (such as the ruthless Zhentarim and the grasping D'tarig), or lost and feeble madmen. Few of these berrani know all that much of desert ways, and few impress the Bedine. It is not surprising that few Bedine think much of the world beyond Anauroch's sands, or want to see more of it.

Among Bedine who have not fought them, or detected their magic yet, the Zhentarim or "Black Robes" are considered rich, polite, very useful merchants: traders who always seem to have just the things that the Bedine need most. More than one Bedine sheikh has acquired a magnificent scimitar as a gift from a Zhentarim "Lord": a magic weapon that will influence him to evil ways, or even allow a Zhentarim mage to directly guide his actions through mind-altering magic.

The Zhentarim have spent much time, and many lives, in pursuit of the goal of establishing a trade route across the desert, either with Bedine aid, or with the Bedine exterminated or serving Zhentarim masters. (They have been countered by a few brave Harpers and the



meddling archmages of Faerun, such as Elminster of Shadowdale, The Simbul of Aglarond, Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun of Waterdeep, Vangerdahast of Cormyr, and the like.) It is a measure of the stubbornness and savage strength of the Bedine that the magically-aided Zhentarim, working against a people largely without magic of their own, have not yet succeeded in making Anauroch their own.

In turn, the Bedine tribes have never gathered enough strength to menace Cormyr, the Dales, Hill's Edge, and other lands and settlements within their reach because they are always fighting among themselves, and because of the harsh desert winters.

Each winter, when the Snowwinds (great, howling fall snowstorms) come, every tribe has to invade one of the subterranean "buried kingdoms," or perish before the fury of winter. Most of these subterranean areas have inhabitants already, or contain predators who are waiting for the expected arrival of mobile food (the Bedines).

Every year, the Bedine must fight these monsters-beholders and worse!-for shelter, or perish. With death at their backs, they succeed more often than not, but the endless warfare saps their strength.

Bedine speak of men they have no respect for as "jackals," and especially despise smooth-tongued, deceitful tricksters or dishonest traders: "jackals with tongues of sugared water." They see enemies among other Bedine tribes as often as among outlanders-and it seems very unlikely that an "oversheikh" or "emir" would ever arise to unite more than a half-dozen tribes. Most tribal army gatherings (as opposed to temporary alliances, or non-aggression-pact friendships) have been made in response to specific "outside" threats, such as Zhentarim-led or lamia attacks, laerti invasions, and the like.

Bedine privately consider outlanders to be strange in their ways, sometimes dangerous, but at heart weaker than Bedine. As a result, they give non-Bedine a chance to surrender

where they would not expect a Bedine to do so; men who have no honor cannot lose it. At the same time, Bedine tend to keep an open mind; an outlander can acquire honor in their eyes by his words and deeds.

## The Nomadic Existence

Very few places in the Sword are verdant enough to support permanent residents-and the few places that are (such as the oasis of Elah'zad) tend to be held sacred by all Bedine, and the property of no single tribe. Safety is another reason for the nomadic Bedine existence: a tribe that is always in one place can easily be attacked by rival tribes or by predators, who always know exactly where to find them.

A Bedine camp at peace is generally a circle of tents, their entrances facing inward. (A few tribes, such as the Ruwaldi, pitch their tents in a series of parallel rows, the mouths facing inward, to confront each other across a narrow corridor. They believe this more orderly arrangement is more secure.) In all cases, a Bedine camp is a guarded stronghold against desert perils, such as predatory monsters and rival tribes.

In a peaceful camp, the youngest children run about between the tents or wrestle within the circle. The older girls watch them, or help their mothers spin camel's wool, repair carpets, boots, and robes, and do other domestic work-such as gathering camel-dung (consisting almost entirely of very dry plant fibers), which is shaped into patties, and later lit with flint and steel and a little tinder, such as torn cloth, to make cooking-fires. Visitors are welcomed by the women whistling from beneath their veils; this sound also serves to alert everyone in the circle that intruders have arrived.

Young boys practice fighting, stalking, or caring for weapons. Older boys hunt for desert game and scout outside the camp, learning landmarks and watching for intruders.



The men take turns keeping watch, posted all around the encampment, well outside. They carry warning horns to signal danger or their need for aid, and need not be within sight of each other or the camp. Warriors not on watch practice with their weapons, attend to the sheikh and elders, and act as go-betweens, running messages, reports, and comments between the sheikh's tent, the tents of waiting warriors, and those keeping watch. The "waiting warriors" (those sleeping after watch, or too sick or wounded to serve on watch, or merely "extras" not needed at present for such duties) may spend their time in gambling, chatter, and tale-spinning, but they are ready to act as needed, to defend the camp, hunt for game, or carry orders.

A typical Bedine tent is conical, made of thick-woven camel hair, and is held up by wooden tentpoles, with (if the owner is wealthy enough) one or more additional "fly" pieces erected over it, to shade and cool the tent as much as possible, and to deflect blown sand from the tent itself. These extra tent sheets are called "flies" by most merchants of Faerun, but are known as *rihba'ids* (= "wind-aways") to Bedine. Tents are usually dyed with henna, rubbed coffee-grounds, or other juices, and may be decorated with patterns or (rarely) with tribal symbols.

A tent has a ground-carpet (a sheikh's is very richly colored), to keep as much sand as possible out of everything. Tents are encircled by *nabat-shef-habls* (= "plant-sword-ropes"), or thorn-girdles. A thorn-girdle is made of thorns, sharp bones, metal scraps too rusty to use, glass shards, sharp twigs, and the like, woven into a string of vines, cloth scraps, or rope. It is put all around the inside of a tent, to keep out scorpions, snakes, and other small desert wanderers.

Inside a Bedine tent, one generally finds cushions to recline and sleep on, blankets, a low table (used while sitting, kneeling, or reclining), and several packs. Most Bedine women set up their ground-loom and get out their

cooking pots at every opportunity. Weapons and garments are hung from hooks on the tentpoles—the garments high up or around the edges of the tent, and the weapons within easy reach and near the center.

Most Bedine sleeping tents are triangular in floorplan, the overlapped and sewn "skins" of each tent held up by three upright cornerpoles, linked by a triangle of floorpoles (to which the ground-carpet is hooked, lashed, or pegged) and another triangle of ceilingpoles.

Blankets and garments are sometimes hung to create viewblock "walls" within a tent, to permit some privacy, or to conceal belongings or disorder from visitors. Folk of more than one family (such as a group of unmarried warriors) who are sharing shelter typically sleep six to a tent, their sleeping-carpets in a rough circle with their heads at the center, using *kuerabiches* as pillows,

The most precious belongings in any tent are the skins of milk and water, hanging from the poles in the center of the tent. When the Bedine are camped at an oasis with a pool or stream of water, as many skins as possible are submerged, to keep them cool and to make the skins themselves thoroughly damp (so as to stay supple, unwithered, and resistant to punctures, a while longer).

Even in summer, nights can be cold. Bedine who lack a tent or time to safely erect one (for example, when raiding another tribe) customarily dig out a little room, walled and roofed with their shields, in a dune. This sleeping-space is known as an *asan-shurr*, or "sand-shelter." In contrast to the simple sand-shelter is the grand tent of a sheikh. A rich sheikh has a large pavilion, usually made of blond camel's wool. It has several "rooms" separated from each other by tapestries, so that a council can be held in one, cooking can go on in another, and women can meet in a third, with yet another used for storage, another for dressing and wardrobe, and another for private one-to-one discussions, separate from the larger council.





When necessary, a tent is illuminated by butter-lamps, which provide a dim, flickering light. Rich Bedine may tint or scent their lamps with oils, perfumes, and the like, or even have tinted, shuttered glass oil lamps, used for special occasions. A sheikh holding a feast may even have a central smoke-hole open in the roof of his tent, and roast the meat for the feast in a hearth under it, inside the tent. This is a common way for one sheikh to entertain another, when tribes meet in friendly circumstances.

A Bedine encampment is lit by campfires by night. Each campfire resembles a “star” of branches, the fire burning at the center; as they burn away, the branches are carefully pushed inward, toward the center. Those planning to sneak up on an encamped Bedine tribe are warned that the sentries are posted well outside the reach of the firelight, where they can be part of the night, and not targets outlined by the light, or blinded by it.

When Bedine are searching for someone after dark, or an attack is underway, they use torches. These are long, resin-coated branches, deliberately placed to project from the star-shaped campfires, to give an easy handhold, and to keep them from burning away too quickly.

Pulled out, they are used to give light, and thrown as weapons against robed attackers. If their light endangers their wielders, torches are quickly smothered by burying the blazing ends in sand.

Bedine campfires must be constantly tended to prevent their going out, but this is better than wasting any more precious wood than is absolutely necessary. If a fire is left untended during a battle, it often burns outward until all that is left is a circle of ash, encircled by a ring of smoldering woody ends.

Bedine keep camels (the most important desert animal to them, detailed in their own section later in this chapter) and splay-footed, sand-running dogs. Bedine dogs fight off jackals and snakes, warn of intruders with their

keen noses and loud barking, and help herd camels; they are not regarded as pets.

Bedine have little medicine (and no magical healing, thanks to their discomfort with magic in general). Their lack of dentistry and hard lives make many of them toothless in middle age and elder years.

## Customs

There are too few pages in this book to explore all the complex, half-remembered Bedine customs, which often vary from tribe to tribe, so this section presents a handful of common Bedine customs likely to be useful or important in play.

The first customs to affect visitors (such as PCs) to a tribe are those surrounding the treatment of guests. Only a sheikh can offer strangers full guest-right, which includes the right to sleep within the tribe’s encampment. Guests are asked to share black tea or (if they are honored, and it is the evening) hot salted coffee. A Bedine typically makes such drinks in a battered, blackened pot (metal is scarce; such a thing might cost as much as two camels), and serves it in a carved wooden cup; a sheikh may serve drinks to honored guests in silver cups.

In early evening, when the sun is down, Bedine men like to sing ballads to the accompaniment of their plucked *rebabas*, sitting outside their tents in small groups, while their wives serve them hot, salted coffee.

Bedine do not express gratitude for food and water. They regard these two essentials as the property of whoever needs them at the time. To “civilized” outlanders, this may seem a strangely charitable custom for a people who think it praiseworthy to kill a man in order to steal his camel.

Honor dictates that the sheikh banish or execute anyone who assaults his guest (unless the assault is justified by another Bedine custom or tradition—such as a warrior attacking a guest who tries to use magic against the sheikh).



Any warrior of a tribe has the right to enter the sheikh's tent without announcement. Women and guests do not, unless bidden to do so by a warrior.

Only men can welcome guests to a tent. The traditional greeting is: "Has somebody come to my *khreima* in need of help?" Wives must remain silent; if they are alone, and another man asks for entry, most women sing one of the traditional Bedine songs, to signal that the husband is not present—and, if they wish (by choice of song and lyrics), to tell the man outside if he is welcome to enter, or not, what is happening within, or where the husband is and what he is doing.

Angry, sly, or hostile Bedine women may comment aloud (pretending that they cannot be heard by the man outside) on what they or their husband are doing, or about strangers or unwelcome guests who come calling, or something of the sort—without ever acknowledging or directly replying to the person outside the tent. If they are unmarried, it is permissible for them to call, "Is there someone at my door?" Bedine women wear the veil from puberty (or in some cases, earlier), and once veiled, are not supposed to come close to men of another family, even when riding camels; such behavior is considered "brazen." Men, however, are free to approach women closely, although an unwelcome advance causes anger on the part of the woman's family. A woman should not speak to a man of another family without either several other men present, or in the hearing of a man of her own family; unrelated men and women should not have secret conversations together.

It is common for cousins and more distant relatives to marry each other. Both women and their fathers have a veto over marriage choices in most Bedine tribes, and women seldom have any chance to get to know men of other families. Families already related by marriage are likely to be friendlier together, giving men more opportunities to court women.

Fathers typically arrange matches for their daughters. Bedine men who court women without the approval of the family are usually challenged by men of the woman's family. The fight is to the death; the winner gets the woman (or retains possession of her as a free woman, in her own family). When a match is made, the husband-to-be (or his father or tribe) pays a bride-price to the father, typically in camels. There is a wedding feast, at which the couple drinks together from a marriage cup filled with honeyed camel milk by the groom's father.

This system often results in stormy marriages, where the husband and wife only really get to know each other after they are wed. There is a "honeymoon" period after marriage known as *pardah*, in which the new bride is confined to her husband's tent. She is forbidden to speak directly to any man except her husband, and must stay in the tent unless brought forth by her husband, or at the orders of the sheikh (conveyed through elder women of the tribe). Some tribes call this "the seven days of bliss" (the actual time period varies from tribe to tribe), but the custom probably arose to stop frightened brides from trying to flee back to their fathers' tribes.

A Bedine man is obligated to care for a dead brother's wife for two years, after which time he has the choice of sending her away or marrying her himself.

Aside from the requirements of both personal and family honor (such as caring for a brother's widow), Bedine men have far more personal freedom than their women—when they aren't scrambling to obey the orders of the sheikh, as warriors must. Although many men resent the orders of sheikhs who are foolish, or confused by age, only veterans dare to question orders—the younger men gain rank within the tribe only through eager obedience and splendid battle-performance, and find hesitating over orders hard, as it goes against their childhood training.

Boys are trained to obey orders, use weap-



ons, and learn the ways of the desert as soon as they are old enough to understand what is happening around them. They are schooled to fight, and fight well. Even young boys are taken on raids, expected to stand watch (with a veteran warrior, as his message-runner), and to help in any fight when the tribe is attacked, usually by protecting the camels and the women. After a boy kills his first man, he undertakes a solitary camel raid on another tribe, the el a'sarad, as a rite of passage.

Bedine are sometimes labelled "superstitious" by outlanders. They ascribe storms, disasters, and all strange happenings, as well as everyday desert conditions, to the whims and stills of the gods.

The Bedine gods are detailed in "The Gods of

Anauroch" chapter, and are worshipped by prayer, ritual sacrifices (usually of camels), and by obedience to what the Bedine know is favored behavior. The Bedine tribes have "holy men," wise in the lore of the gods and at interpreting divine will through natural signs, but there are no Bedine spell-wielding priests (as the rest of the Realms and other AD&D® game worlds know them). The Bedine are so concerned with daily survival that they have no time for divine aims and precepts; their relationship with the gods is generally one of fear and appeasement.

Most Bedine have seen too much hardship and death to be anything other than fatalistic toward the gods-and even if one avoids the wrath of the gods, there are always the djinn.



The djinn (detailed in Volume 1 of the *Monstrous Compendium*, under “Genie”) are feared as evil spirits who roam Anauroch, and who have the power to shape-shift or turn invisible, move with uncanny silence, cast dangerous spells, and devour living men even as jackals will fall on a dead or badly wounded one.

Djinn are evil, but they are not always cruel or predictable; they may aid one person on a whim, or merely cause “impossible” things to occur in a sort of entertaining chaos, to stir things up for their own amusement. This makes appeasing a djinni impossible, and avoiding crossing them in an encounter a matter of luck-and rather short luck, at that.

The Bedine tend to respect, but not fear, most desert predators. Those that they are afraid of include lamia, laertis (whom they call *asabis*, or “The Evil Ones Below,” a fell, magic-using race that most Bedine know only as a name-and the reason why, they are told in childhood, they must never dig too deeply. These are the Phaerimm, but their true name and powers are unknown to all Bedine alive today.

Perhaps through unconsciously resisting the mind-influencing spells of the buried Phaerimm for many generations, Bedine loathe the very thought of slavery, and tend to fight on in helpless situations, preferring to die with honor rather than suffer the shame of defeat. It is not unknown for such bravery to be admired by rivals; an elder warrior of a tribe, or a sheikh, may offer an embattled rival the chance to become one of the tribe-a warrior with the same rights and duties as all others.

It is dishonorable to beg for this-but not at all shameful to agree, if it is offered. The embattled one kisses whatever weapon he or she bears (his open hand, if he has no weapon), and lays it at the feet of the sheikh, who kisses the embattled one’s forehead, offers him wine, and into it introduces a few drops of blood from them both. They share the cup together, and the embattled one is thereby considered a

new member of the tribe. He is now duty-bound to fight those of his former tribe to the death, and is not well regarded by anyone if he changes allegiance again (ways of achieving this with honor include being the last survivor of the new tribe, free to take up with anyone, or in convincing members of the tribe one wishes to rejoin that one was persuaded to join the new tribe through “evil magic”).

Bedine fear magic, and shun or cast out “witches” who wield it. Beyond small, useful or healing effects (“the favor of the gods”), magic is regarded as treacherous against friends and wielders, and a dishonorable weapon to use against enemies. Even the most fearless Bedine are wary of those who can work magic, either by spell or item. A being must be insane, very brave, or very evil to touch or even willingly draw near a magical item.

The Bedine aversion to magic is more fully described in the next section of this chapter.

Most Bedine want to become rich and acquire much honor, have many descendants, and perhaps to discover a rich oasis, found a tribe, or become a sheikh. These aims usually fade into the background in the daily struggle to survive—and the aim of most Bedine, in the end, is to die honorably, or to be respected and cared for, in old age. Few Bedine want to leave the desert, although there is the occasional one who wants to explore to the ends of the earth.

Some Bedine women want more independence, and there are rumored to be all-female, or female-dominated, Bedine tribes (these rumors are true; the Shaara and the Lilithai are tribes of female warriors, who subjugate men and herd camels-but these tribes are small, isolated in the northern Sword, and remain mere talk to most Bedine).

Although love is a luxury in Bedine society, many Bedine are romantics at heart, and dream of the perfect passion between a man and a woman “made for each other by the gods,” who will share a splendid life in the desert together.



Bedine have few days dedicated to the gods, but some tribes hold annual feasts to commemorate great battles, or the founding of the tribe, or the birthday or anniversary of ascension of the current sheikh.

When Bedine die, their relatives bathe them, sacrificing precious water so that the deceased can meet the gods cleansed and at peace. Bodies are stripped of useful gear, and buried deeply, with rocks atop them if possible. Enemies and non-Bedine are simply left for the vultures.

### Food

Everyday Bedine fare consists of camel-milk, a handful of bitterleaf grass, and "sand stew," a slow-cooked broth of palm-leaves, sand-grass-roots, desert lizards and bats. Onionlike root tubers are also dug up from the sand and eaten.

Meat of any sort is a delicacy. Roast hare and figs is a fine meal; a gazelle buck basted in honey and spices is a rare feast. Apricots and milk are another "special meal." Camel-milk and water are carried in skins; butter travels in tubes made of dried lizard skins. Bedine women prize their cooking pots—which they clean by scouring with sand—highly. To give a Bedine woman a new, strong pot is to bestow on her a great gift.

### Garb And Adornment

Burnooses (hooded cloaks) are not unknown in the desert, nor are turbans, but most Bedine cover their heads with flowing head-scarves (*keffiyehs*), held on by brow-bands. Bedine can tell the tribe of another Bedine by the color and pattern of his *keffiyeh*, which may for example have red and white checks, green stripes, blue lightning-flashes, lines of red spots, or be solid brown or black.

There are exceptions to this "norm": some northerly Bedine tribes wear trousers, loose shirts, and vests, not *abas*. There are even Be-

dine tribes (who dwell in the eastern central stretches of the Sword) whose men wear turbans and cover their faces with scarves, and whose women go without veils.

Many Bedines wear their wealth as finger-rings, or jewels adorning their sword-scabbards (to a nomad, wealth that is not portable is worthless).

Bedine have no way to forge or refine metal, and must trade frankincense and myrrh (both tree gums) to get it. Metal is therefore valued highly—even a rusted, useless pot may be fashioned into an ornamental necklace of medallions.

Bedine women of some tribes tattoo their cheeks for personal adornment, or paint their hands and cheeks with henna. Many use frankincense as perfume. Its sweet odor can pervade entire tents on festive occasions when a few grains of powdered frankincense are cast on a fire or lamp-flame.

### Arts

Skilled Bedine dye or paint themselves and the cloth of their clothing and tents; some make "sand-pebble-scenes," usually when telling tales.

Bedine preserve much of their tribal lore in songs that are chanted together. Some of these tunes are eerie and mournful, telling of the dead, lost love, or disaster; there are also war-songs and feast-songs (such as "Tlinlyn, Fool of the Desert") full of jokes and rollicking choruses that all join in on.

### Slaves

Slaves are not kept by the Bedine—to become a slave is regarded as a "fate worse than death" by Bedine. Bedine take pleasure in slaying outlanders whom they know to be slavers. Freed slaves are left to wander in the desert, or—if they fight well—are offered a place in the tribe.

Those who are obviously unhappy, or who are a burden to the tribe, are cast out the next



time the Bedine travel near the edge of Anauroch (for example, to trade with the D'tarig). Such "guests" of the tribe are expected to work for their food by carrying packs of belongings when the tribe is traveling, for example.

## Magic and The Bedine

No tribe of the Bedine has abided magic in all the generations (there have been at least twelve, and probably many more, but the Bedine have lost count) since the Scattering.

Bedine myth holds that there were once Three Ancient Tribes of Bedine. The sheikhs of these three tribes dreamed of ruling all the people, and so they had their sorcerers summon N'asr's djinn to make war upon each other.

The war destroyed the land and gave birth to Anauroch. It took the gods themselves to set the world right again, and some of them died before the carnage could be stopped. The surviving gods scattered the Three Tribes to the corners of the world and forbade them ever to use magic again.

That is why the Bedine think ill of any who use magic. Any member of a tribe caught working magic must leave the tribe; honored guests must leave the tribe's encampment.

Even if a user-of-magic aids a tribe, tradition is clear: witches and sorcerers are to be outcasts. If they are consorted with, the gods will surely deliver the Bedine who do so into defeat and slavery. Magic is for the gods, not men.

Bedine women, in particular, are feared if they wield magic-men rightly see them as a threat to the "peace of the tribe" (i.e., the status quo social order, with men on top). As "witches," they are driven out of the tribe to make their own way in the desert. The desert is expected to kill them; they are not expected to flourish alone, nor to someday return to work vengeance on those who cast them out.

This seemingly unlikely survival happens all too often; many a sheikh sends his best warriors out soon after a witch has been driven

forth, to hunt her down and kill her before her night raids and food thefts cause his fearful tribe to question his decision or his competence to rule. (Typically a witch who is stalking a tribe attacks one tent a night, slaying its inhabitants with magic, and taking what goods can be had.) There many tales of "shunned women" taking revenge on those who harmed them or drove them out-and Bedine always keep watch for the "lurking magic" of bitter, insane, or desperate "witches and wizards of the sand" (Bedine cast out for using magic).

Bedine mages employ a strange mixture of spells gained from intruders and developed for desert needs; these are detailed further in the chapter "Wind and Sand Magic." To avoid being cast out, Bedine mages try to conceal any magical powers they may have, often sewing their written spells (the runes burned or scratched into scraps of hide) into their *abas*, between two layers of cloth.

Most well-made *abas* are reversible, with a darker side, for night concealment, and a lighter, dun-colored side, for use by day. Scraps of hide or cloth are sewn into high-stress areas (elbows, cuffs, and shoulder-yokes) for extra thickness and durability-and all but the finest *abas* have been patched and mended a few times-so a spell or six can be readily hidden by any Bedine skillful with a bone needle in this way.

A Bedine mage openly casts spells only to avoid certain death, or when death seems inevitable. In all other cases, magic is worked "on the sly," so that results can be attributed to the capriciousness of a djinni, the aid of the gods, or some other explanation.

As always with the Bedine, there are exceptions to this abhorrence of magic. There are tribes whose sheikhs have come to tolerate magic; tribes who have found magical weapons and items uncovered by the sands, and see no wrong in using these "gifts of the gods" so long as they don't cast spells and seek to learn magic; and bands of Bedine wizards, such as the Asheira ("Shunned Ones").



## Camels

The most important creature in all the Realms to a Bedine tribesman is the camel.

Camels provide Bedine with emergency food and water, and work as their everyday beast of burden and steed. Camels are fairly common in Anauroch, and plentiful in the far-off deserts of Calimshan and Raurin.

Camels are bad-tempered beasts, given to biting, groaning, breaking wind, kicking, rolling to rid themselves of a rider, and even spitting.

The camel is detailed in Volume 1 of the *Monstrous Compendium*, under "Animal, Herd," and can be summarized as follows: INT 1-4; AL N; AC 7; MV 21; HD 3; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA Spitting: no hp damage, but 25% chance of hit targets being blinded for 1-3 rounds; SZ L (8' tall); ML 3; XP 65.

A well-watered camel has a firm hump and bloated belly; the camel takes a better part of a day to drink its fill-but once "full," it can work for 12 + 1d10 days without getting another drink, if it has to, and isn't injured at some point. If the thirsty camel has regular access to food, roll 3d4 dice instead of 1d10; if the camel is idling or resting and not working, it can go without water for 20 + 1d10 days.

A camel working hard in full sun, without access to water, loses a quarter of its body weight (and Strength, and carrying capacity, and MV rate) every 7 days. It can't drink vast "extra" quantities of water, and only accepts sufficient water to restore its body weight. A full-grown camel weighs around 500 pounds.

A camel ridden to water-exhaustion will collapse, and will die if it doesn't immediately get water and at least three full days of rest (two days will do, if it gets a full meal as well). Camels nearing dehydration begin to stumble, snort and groan constantly (instead of merely most of the time, their normal complaints), and they roar, roll their eyes, and collapse if ridden too far. When water is short, Bedine give it to their camels, and drink camel-milk

themselves (from the she-camels; Bedine drink directly from the teats, to minimize evaporation).

The broad, fleshy pads of a camel's feet allow it to walk on the surface of even loose, shifting sand, sinking in only a few inches, rather than going in deeply (and exhaustingly), the way men on foot, horses, and other non-desert beasts do. (A Bedine fleeing a fight with outlanders sometimes lashes shields he has seized from the fallen to his feet for the same reason-the broad, hard surfaces of the shields allow him to run along the surface of the sand faster than he might walk through it.) In mud, a camel's movement rate drops to 16; deep mud or quicksand will reduce it to 12-note that camels perish in quicksand only if it is so large a bog that they can't swim and thrash across it in 4 rounds; a laden camel can carry a rider and gear through quicksand in this way.

Some camels are gelded when young, which improves their disposition and usually makes them grow larger and stronger, as they burn less energy through nervousness or fighting. The camels of northern tribes have longer "wool." The sheikh's camel, alone of all the camels in a Bedine *khowwan*, is usually adorned with bells. These warn others of his approach, mark the sheikh's camel for precedence in conditions of bad visibility and confusion (dust-clouds, for instance), denote wealth, and have the practical use of concealing whispered words shared by the sheikh with scouts and elders from eavesdroppers riding nearby.

When a tribe is camped, most camel-tending is done by the Bedine children, the "herdboys" (young girls also do this work, but are more often kept busy doing the dirtiest camp jobs, or carrying water, and usually herd camels under the command of a chosen boy).

The camels graze on the best grassland that the Bedine can find by day, and are herded to a guarded area (a waterhole, if there is one) at twilight, and tied up to stakes or large boulders, or hobbled.



A hobble, called a “breakstride” by the Bedine, is a length of rope just long enough to prevent the camel confined by it from taking a full stride. The camel has one or both pairs of opposing ankles tied together with hobbles, which are usually woven with thorns or covered with a bitter paste of crushed insects, to prevent the camel from gnawing them through. The paste is better than the thorns, which can harm herdboys, dogs, other camels, and also cut through the hobbles themselves. Strong camels, or those with a tendency to wander, may have stones bored through with holes threaded onto their hobbles.

The task of the herdboys is to keep a sharp watch out for snakes, scorpions, other digging, flying, or surface predators of the sands (including raiding Bedine from rival tribes, although it is rare for any of these to slip through the adult Bedine sentries that every tribe posts, day and night, whenever the tribe is encamped), and drive these away from the camels, or to cry the alarm and bring the men of the tribe to deal with greater dangers.

The herdboys must also prevent camels from straying, fighting with each other, drinking too deeply, and wandering into areas of rocks and leg-breaking ground fissures. Herdboys (and girls under their direction) gather camel-dung for the making of fuel-patties.

Diseased camels must be kept apart from the others, and in areas where grasses are few, the whole herd must be kept slowly moving (in the same direction, not each camel following its own head in search of better grazing). The need of camels for fresh pasturage, more than anything else, is what forces Bedine tribes to live nomadic lives; rare is the oasis or pasture that can provide enough forage for a tribal camel herd for more than sixty continuous days.

Traveling camels always try to sample any vegetation that looks as if it has any moisture or life left in it at all, as they bellow and grunt their way through the desert.

Camels traveling in the dry sands are watered nightly, by emptying waterskins into large

camel-skin buckets. A typical waterskin holds four gallons of water; two skins is a meager daily water ration for a camel.

Desperate Bedine will ride their camels to death, milk, skin and then butcher the dead and dying, and catch all the blood they can in the skins. Eating meat makes one thirsty for days, so the camel blood, milk, and a little desert salt are mixed together for a drink to go with it.

## Desert Travel

Camels are ridden by means of halters and saddles. An experienced rider can sleep in the saddle as he rides, without falling off (though this would be foolish except in the center of a large Bedine party, traveling in good weather). A trained camel can be tethered for a short time by driving one’s lance deep into a dune, and wrapping the camel’s reins around the lance-shaft.

When warriors travel in the desert, it is the duty of their women to lead the string of baggage camels, by means of long reins.

A Bedine *khowwan* on the move may seem a disorganized herd to inexperienced eyes, but there is a deliberate order to the group. Riding far ahead of and behind the main group, mounted on the fastest camels and well beyond sight, are the youngest and most daring warriors. They are scouts, who will use their *amarats* (warning horns) to alert the tribe of any dangers lurking ahead—or approaching from behind. These horns have distinctive tones; Bedine can tell the horns of their own tribe, and even those of specific individuals (such as the sheikh and prominent warriors).

Ringling the tribe at a distance of about a thousand yards are the rest of the warriors, accompanied by their eldest sons, with well-trained hunting dogs and falcons.

Bedine hunting dogs are generally “Wild Dogs,” detailed in Volume 1 of the *Monstrous Compendium*, under “Dog.” DMs should use the standard statistics for most Bedine dogs,





but switch to modified “War Dog” statistics for the best dogs the Bedine breed: the sleek saluki dogs.

These proud beasts can be summarized as follows: INT 4; AL N; AC 6; MV 17; HD 3; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; SZ M (6' long); ML 12; XP 65.

Bedine falcons are the standard sort covered in Volume 2 of the *Monstrous Compendium*, under “Hawk” and are as follows: INT 1; AL Nil; AC 5; MV Fl 36 (B); HD 1 - 1; THACO 20; #AT 3; Dmg 1/1/1; SA plummeting dive: +2 on attack roll, talons do 2 hp damage each, but no beak attack possible (on later rounds, falcons attack target’s eyes, with a 25% chance of a 1d10-round blinding strike for each successful attack, with a 10% chance of permanent blindness in the eye struck); SD never surprised; SZ S (2' long); ML 6; XP 65.

As they travel, the sons watch the desert around for signs of game. Periodically they release a hound or bird, or burst into a gallop themselves, riding to the hunt. They usually ride back to the center of the caravan with a hare, lizard, or some other meat (such as a gazelle, or plump desert bird) for the evening’s pot, before resuming their places in the watchful ring.

At the center of the caravan ride the mothers and sisters. The wealthiest women ride in elaborately decorated litters (known as *haousdjejs*), but most families cannot afford the extra camel’s wool needed to make one of these box-shaped litters.

Around them, watched and guided by walking children and by women holding long reins, are the baggage camels, tribal belongings lashed to them with leather thongs. The women and children usually walk to avoid tiring the camels, but when a tribe is moving in haste, everyone rides camels, the youngest children clinging to the baggage atop the baggage camels. With everyone doubled up on camels, and the whole group moving at a deliberate, steady rate, a large tribe can cover as much as forty miles a day across the sands.

## Warfare

Bedine use scimitars, daggers, lances and arrows (all of which they may employ from camel-back) in their struggles against each other and other desert predators. Desert wind and heat shimmer (by day) and poor visibility (by night) limit the usefulness of archery at long range; most combat is decided at swords’ points. Most fighting occurs at night—not only does darkness allow attackers some concealment, but the lack of a blazing sun makes it more likely that anyone can survive the exertions of combat. Battle is usually marked by loud battle-cries; raiding is usually silent and deadly. The use of magic is frowned upon, even in battle.

Most fighting between Bedine tribes occurs when one tribe tries to raid another, to seize camels, wives, and food and other goods. This typically occurs in the coolness and concealment of night, and although there is something in the practice of recreation and even (for younger, hurt, or low-status Bedine) of “proving one’s manhood,” it is often a matter of desperate necessity: a tribe must take the food and water it needs, or perish.

“Waterless summers” (droughts) are all too common in the Sword. Settlements outside the desert but near enough to be reached, and weak enough for Bedine tribesmen to successfully raid, are nonexistent. So one Bedine tribe must attack another. Although most Bedine accept raiding as inevitable, years of bitter fighting between certain rival tribes have built up feuds that may cause battle at any time, whenever a tribesman of either side encounters the other.

The only reason that all the Bedine tribes are not constantly at each other’s throats in an unending desert war is because of the custom of paying a blood price for any Bedine slain by friendly or allied tribes—a price, in camels and goods, or in the life of the murderer, given up to the other tribe—too high for most Bedine to want to pay.



Many Bedine have perished in hopeless fights they enter knowing death can be escaped only by some miracle. They go in, and die in vain, because it is a matter of honor for the entire tribe. This bravery makes them deadly foes-but it is also foolishness that allows non-Bedine opponents, such as the Zhen-tarim, to lead the Bedine into disaster and defeat, over and over again, once they have learned how the Bedine think and act.

## *Bedine Names and Language*

For a selection of common Bedine names, see the inside front covers of this book. There the DM will also find a introductory glossary of words in Uloushinn, the Bedine tongue. DMs should remember that outlanders who use magic to understand or communicate with Bedine are likely to be attacked on the spot.



## THE PHAERIMM

These sinister beings (detailed in the “Monsters of Anauroch” chapter) are the present rulers of the Buried Realms, and the creators of Anauroch as we know it today. Their mind-controlling spells hold even illithids in thrall, and influence-in a subtle but all-pervasive rule-all creatures beneath Anauroch. PCs in the Buried Realms must make Intelligence Checks at least once per turn, or fall under a Phaerimm charm or suggestion.

Through controlled minds, the Phaerimm rule an entire nation of beholders who think themselves independent, dwelling in several ruined cities of the Anaurian Underdark. The beholders are mighty, employing Death Tyrants (undead beholders) and orc, hobgoblin, and xorn slaves of their own, as they mine for wealth and scheme to expand their realms southward and up to the surface world. They are, however, loosely ruled by an Elder Orb (a spellcasting beholder of great powers; its type is detailed in *The Ruins of UnderMountain* boxed set)—and that Orb, Rilathdool, is the pawn of the Phaerimm.

So the Phaerimm rule-haughty, scheming always among themselves, but keeping behind a screen of mind-controlled slaves from mind flayers to giants, goblinkin of all sorts to humans. Ever they vie with each other for supremacy in non-violent, subtle confrontations of brinksmanship, one Phaerimm demonstrating the superiority of its strategy, forethought, and influence over that of another; and ever they seek to break the spell-bonds the Sharn have placed on them, and expand their influence over more and more of Faerun. Where the Phaerimm cannot (yet) go, their agents can reach. What agents? The Phaerimm are busily subverting the Red Wizards of Thay, any adventurers who come within reach (i.e., into Anauroch), and the Zhentarim who have intruded into Anauroch, too. Even Elminster must tread warily around these titans of magic and intrigue; he can tell us little of the spells they have developed.

Phaerimm enjoy magic, and exult in wielding its unleashed power. They are fascinated by new spells and effects, and admire those who show genius in the mastery and devising of magic: such as Phaerl, “The First.” Phaerl perished in the War Against the Sharn, but Phaerimm still venerate his memory, and obey Phaerl’s one-time colleague, Ooumraun “The Seeker,” a ancient, huge, wrinkled Phaerimm who developed many of the Phaerimm spells (and, it is whispered, others of awesome power not yet revealed to fellow Phaerimm, with which Ooumraun has defended itself against the challenges and treacheries of ambitious Phaerimm over the years).

Although Phaerimm memorize spells much as human wizards do, they cast spells by effort of will alone, and can also adopt a single spell of each level as “natural.” The spell (which cannot be changed, once chosen) is retained in their brain structure. Phaerimm regain “natural” spells without study every day. Phaerimm are true masters of magic; some sages believe that their meddling may have created most of the magic-using monsters that menace the Realms today (including, perhaps, the beholder races!). Even the least experienced and powerful Phaerimm are capable of developing strange and terrifying new magics (providing DMs ideal opportunities for testing or introducing new spells into a campaign), and the veterans of the race know or can anticipate every nuance and side-effect of magic they observe being wielded. No elder Phaerimm will be caught unawares by a spell’s range, precise effects, the results of its combination with other magics, or the like; but Phaerimm may be slow to unleash magic at intruders, for fear of playing into the plans of a rival Phaerimm.

The moisture-drinking magics of the Phaerimm that created the wastes of Anauroch hold sway over the surface, but rarely stray into the depths beneath.



## THE ZHENTARIM IN ANAUROCH

The most violent, persistent, and numerous group of outlanders active in Anauroch today are the Zhentarim: the evil cabal of wizards and priests who have long ruled Zhentil Keep, and have spread their influence and rule over much of the North. The strength of the Zhentarim is their magic, but one can't eat a spell, or use it (often) to buy things. The wealth of the Zhentarim comes from the caravan-trade they control, carrying valuable goods of all kinds (including stolen goods, slaves, and other illegal, high-priced wares) from place to place.

The Zhentarim merchant reputation is built on their no-questions-asked practices of handling goods (even kidnap victims or stolen temple gold), of using magic and strong armored forces to guard their caravans, and always getting cargo through regardless of the perils of the road. The 'Black Robes' try to get goods where they're going faster than everyone else, and to do this, they have set about sabotaging competitors (an ongoing campaign of local vandalism, murder, and arson spread all over the Realms) and establishing strategic trade-routes under their own control.

The major route planned by the Zhentarim links the Moonsea (from the city of Zhentil Keep) with the Sword Coast, running just south of Anauroch. The map on page 30 shows the ways in which Zhent goods move, and future Zhentarim plans for caravan travel. Through the years, these plans have involved the Zhentarim in battles with Hillsfar (to control Yulash and to lessen Hillsfar's importance as a rival trade-center), and with orcs and brigands throughout the North. There have also been skirmishes with Cormyr (who annexed Tilverton to avoid having Zhentil Keep openly seize it), Shadowdale (which continues to resist Zhent efforts to conquer it, thanks to Elminster, Storm Silverhand and other Harpers, and The Knights of Myth Drannor), and Daggerdale. Local folk in the Corm Orp area, Hill's Edge, Llorkh, Loudwater, and the Dragonspear Castle area are also experienced

Zhent-fighters.

The Zhentarim continue to be enriched by trade with the drow (whose tunnels come to the surface near Shadowdale; only Thay and certain folk in decadent Mulhorand seem willing to compete with the Zhents in trading openly with the dark elves), but must spend a lot of money to maintain their present route, thanks to the aggressions of goblinkin and human brigands in the Stonelands, Cormyrean patrols, and the resistance of locals all along the chosen way. Darkhold, for instance (detailed in the Castles boxed game accessory), exists entirely to protect the trade route; there are many smaller cave strongholds protecting Yellow Snake Pass, that collectively cost more than Darkhold does to staff and provision.

To pile up gold pieces in numbers they love and foresee, over the long run, the Zhentarim need to establish a secure route that is shorter and safer than the present one: one that is less vulnerable to the whims and aggressions of strong nearby realms like Cormyr. Zhent agents work tirelessly to foment unrest in Sembia, Cormyr, the Dales, Hill's Edge, Iriaebor, and strategic Sword Coast communities, both to keep these places busy with their own troubles (and therefore unable to spare the time or arms to menace passing Zhent caravans), and to keep the present route profitable. This is not enough, according to the Zhentarim leaders: a shorter route must be found. That means crossing Anauroch.

The Zhentarim have been trying to do just that for more than twenty winters now, with (so far) decidedly limited success. They haven't stopped trying, however, and a player character who ventures into Anauroch today will almost certainly encounter Zhentarim agents, and (hostile to everyone else) Zhentarim activity.

The Zhentarim face the same harsh, forbidding conditions in Anauroch that have stopped everyone else from using it as a fast traveling route before the Zhents came along. At first, the Zhentarim assumed that they could neu-



tralize these perils with magic or use magic to avoid them, by flying over the desert, or digging a route underneath it.

They failed. Both the skies above Anauroch and the depths beneath its sands are home to magic so strong and complex that the Zhentarim have not yet managed to overcome it (and may never do so). The reasons for this can be found in the chapters on “The Phaeirnm” and “The Secret of Anauroch.” These magics continue to thwart Zhent agents, and in some cases subvert the minds of agents to make them unwittingly work against Zhent plans.

The only part of Anauroch useful for a shorter trade route is the Sword. The Stonelands, the Plain of Standing Stones, and the High Ice are all broken terrain, full of barriers—and with hostile aerial creatures ready to disrupt any regular trade that tries to fly over the natural barriers.

The Zhentarim tried establishing bases in the hidden valleys of the Plain, and flying caravans across. Each and every trip, once their attempts became regular, was imperilled by a gauntlet of wyverns and dragons that actually lined up in midair to await the intruders. Blasting a way through the skies with spells proved too costly in wizards (the Zhentarim are hated throughout the North; to survive at all, they need many healthy wizards active on the ground) for the Zhents to continue it—and a few forays over the Stonelands brought forth both an aerial Cormyrean cavalry, and a number of independent menaces (including flying Harpers, and dracoliches from the Thunder Peaks, alerted by the rival Cult of the Dragon) to endanger the air-way.

So, summing up the costs in magic, personnel, and supplies of all these longer detours by air or over the more northerly parts of Anauroch, the Zhents were left with only one choice for their route: the blazing sands of the Sword.

Crossing the Sword means dealing with the treacherous D'tarig (if there's to be any trade

across Anauroch, the D'tarig aim to control it and grow fat on it) and the fierce Bedine.

The D'tarig are foolish, disorganized, and selfish enough that the Zhentarim can treat them as they did the folk of Melvaunt, Phlan, and other rivals in the Dragonreach lands. They used magic to spy out D'tarig individuals and communities, hired certain D'tarig as their agents, and killed or impoverished (by vandalism, arranged misfortunes, and the like) certain others, to effectively persuade the D'tarig into leaving them alone or helping them. (The D'tarig themselves are detailed in the chapter on “Other Peoples of Anauroch.”) The Bedine, used to fighting each other and almost everything else they encounter, present a tougher obstacle to overcome. Very few of them can be bought, and none of them can be intimidated by threats or magic; the use of hostile magic by an outlander makes them determined to destroy that being, not to surrender or obey him.

The Zhentarim tried their usual bullying methods, and sending “strike teams” of powerful wizards heavily protected by magical items to slay key Bedine leaders; but these had little lasting effect (the new sheikhs were of the same essential nature as the slain ones, the Bedine will not tolerate an outsider as a sheikh, and the Bedine tribes are too small to fool anyone with magic, to install a Zhentarim agent as a sheikh in the magical guise of a Bedine), and even attracted the attention of Harpers, Dragon Cultists, independent meddlers such as The Simbul of Aglarond and Elminster. Some of these acted directly against the Zhents, or sent agents to work against them.

The Zhents then adopted a new, two-pronged strategy (anticipated by Harpers such as Lander of Sembia). This consisted of a velvet-gloved hand of friendship—and a strong, treacherous sword of force.

The Black Robes approach a Bedine sheikh, offer him a friendly trade-treaty (with bribes of steel, rare and valuable in the desert, used for making the best weapons, and gems), and find a pretext to invite the sheikh's family or



other important members of the tribe into their camp. Then they hold these 'guests,' controlled by magic, to guarantee the tribe's submission.

Zhentarim agents are then installed to watch over the tribe: magelings with enough magic to spy for signs of rebellion, and to crush it or call in magic-powerful reinforcements. At the same time, the Black Robes begin to enrich the tribe, introducing coins, gold, gems, wine, and rich food. The most troublesome tribesmen are plied with drink to keep them docile. Should their fighting fury be needed, there are other means to rouse them. By magic, the Zhentarim learn of any famous or respected elders of the tribe who have died, and use their magic again to send images of these dead by night to speak to the tribesmen and convince them that it is right to follow the way of the Black Robes. When the tribe is loyal to them, the Zhentarim move on to the next one.

At the same time, the Zhentarim hire armies of over three thousand man-eating, desert-dwelling laertis (detailed in the "Monsters of Anauroch" chapter of this book), and promise them protection by day against any Bedine who try to avenge fellows whom the laertis ate or slew at night (the laertis must hide from the sun during the day). This protection is provided by several hundred Zhentilar warriors, accompanied by Zhentarim priests and wizards. This human army goes into the desert carrying all the food and drink they need with them (when they defeat a Bedine tribe, they'll butcher its camels and roast them to gain a "free" feast).

If diplomacy fails or falters, the army is used to subdue a dozen tribes, and then use hostages, bribery, and violence to enslave the others. The controlled tribes are used to overpower the others, the laerti allowed to feed freely on Bedine so long as they leave Zhent caravans alone (if they become a problem later, the laertis can themselves be exterminated with spells) and the Zhentilar army leaves the desert, its task done. The Zhentilar

warriors are highly disciplined fighters, experts at defending fortifications against sieges and at performing "dirty tricks" in overland battles. They are not hampered by the rules and traditions of their Bedine foes, and can quickly acquire desert lore (if not the deep knowledge and instincts of a native Bedine) through magical interrogations and mind-control of captured Bedine.

The FORGOTTEN REALMS® novel *The Parched Sea* describes one Zhentarim campaign to defeat the Bedine. The silky-moustachioed, heavily-scarred warrior El Zarud, a Zhentilar warrior, is the spokesman of the Black Robes among the Bedine until slain. His superior (who posed as his assistant) is the Zhentarim wizard Yhekal, and under their direction, the hired laertis attack tribe after tribe, traveling by night, and accompanied by the human Zhentilar warriors, who establish protective camps (at the oases they have seized from the Bedine) by day.

With the help of magic and Harper agents, the Bedine fight back. Bedine war parties harry the Zhents from all sides with arrows, and scatter at night into small bands camped wide distances apart, so Zhents seeking revenge have to hunt them by night instead of traveling on to the next oasis; the invading army must travel on, or lose its riding and pack-camels to lack of food and water (the Bedine camel herds are limited in size by the available forage in the desert; the huge Zhentarim army needs far more beasts than any one oasis can support). To counterattack means to starve the camels.

The increasingly desperate Zhentarim do not hesitate to poison oases: the ultimate atrocity, in Bedine eyes, but one that may ultimately win the Zhents victory, if they have magic enough to *neutralize poison* for each and every one of their own caravans, once the Bedine have been wiped out.

If the present campaign fails to force a way through the Bedine, across the desert, the Zhentarim will mount another. The Zhentarim



leadership has, as usual, sent ambitious Zhentarim magelings into Anauroch to “prove themselves.” The reward is wealth, magical power (by items and even scrolls of spells, given by superiors) and rank in the Black Network, and to refuse means either instant death, or orders so dangerous as to make an inglorious death inevitable, so mages will continue to risk the perils of the Sword to conquer it for the Zhentarim.

Some of these Zhentarim agents use rings of *invisibility* and *blinking*, and (a Zhentarim specialty) rings that allow them *dimension door*. They always have magic enough to overwhelm and capture individual Bedine, and to interrogate them, and they have coins and metal enough to buy what loyalty they can. A few (such as the wizard Yhekal, who is at least a W9, and has skin and hair as pale as white sand, flashing blue eyes, and wears a hooded purple robe and silver wrist-bracers) are powerful or influential enough to have clones or other magical means of resurrecting themselves, should they be slain in the desert.

The Black Robes have offered D'tarig and some Bedine five hundred gold pieces “per head” for identifying Harpers to them (telling the desert folk that the Harpers are a tribe of meddling fools who stand in the path of free commerce and the growth of kingdoms). They know that Those Who Harp will be their chief foes in their attempt to set up a trade route across Anauroch.

This tendency of Zhent commanders to get things done with a minimum of risk and bother to the main organization by letting (or forcing) underlings to “prove themselves” by doing difficult things in any unsupervised, sloppy, and reckless manner they want to, just to get the job done, allows DMs to freely tailor Zhent forces to challenge PCs. A Zhentarim band can be a dozen warriors led by a W4 or W6, or anything up to an army of several hundred under a dozen wizards, each of up to 12th level.

DMs are also free to have Zhentarim acting personally against PCs in Anauroch, in run-

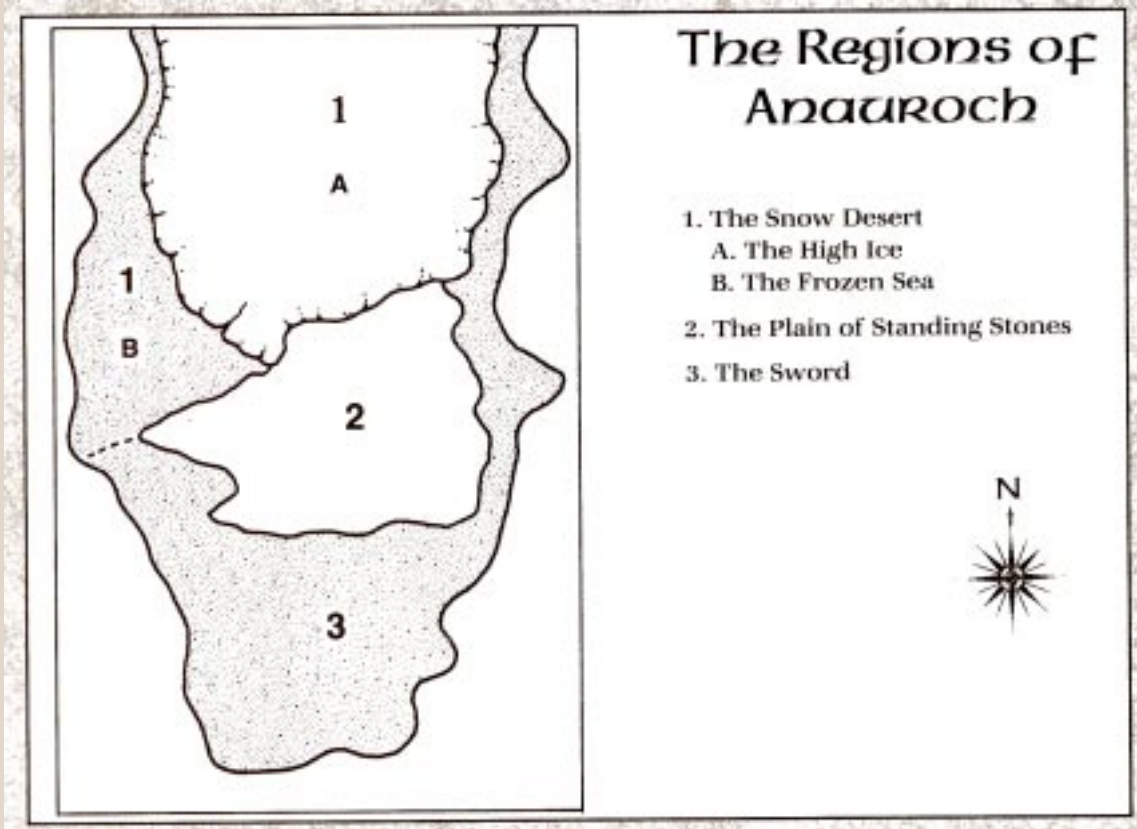
ning fights, without any efficient organization that alerts one group of Zhents when the PCs are fighting with another (necessarily, if the PCs are too weak to survive). Zhentarim can be of any rank or influence the DM wishes; not even Elminster knows what ambitious mages, wizards, priests of Bane, Cyric or the other evil gods, thieves, and warriors have joined the Zhentarim recently.

Please refer to “The Sword” chapter for details of Zhentarim bases established in the desert (including an ingenious practice of “growing” an oasis around a *decanter of endless water*). At least five such bases are known to exist in the desert: Bhaerlith, Haunga, Ma'atar, Olomaa, and Vuerthyl.

The Zhentarim can rely on supplies and reinforcements from a Zhentilar encampment in Arntethyl, the high alpine valley where the River Tesh is formed, and spills out of the mountains (down gorges to the valley of the Tesh, where the main Zhentilar and mercenary encampments are located, around the ruins of Teshwave) and from Darkhold (in emergencies only; the man who calls for these when they are not needed will pay with his head-after suitable torments have been visited upon him).

At least a thousand warriors are in Arntethyl, and at least twenty Zhentarim magelings (W3s to W9s). They are under the command of the wizard Ruatheene, Manshoon's latest favorite. She is only a W6, but maintains order with the help of a beholder of awesome size and powers, Araunglauth, whose abode Arntethyl has been for almost seventy years.

Ruatheene will not enter Anauroch, whatever happens-but she will unleash the eager magelings under her, if the Zhentarim suffer reverses in the desert. They include Mhaumask of Mordulkin (LE hm W9); Ologhyn of Voonlar (NE hm W7; known for his collection of rare and strange wands); Hlartenth of Procampur (LE hm W8, a wizard under a curse that changes him from male to female,



or vice versa, every few hours); Arachhar Sevenstar, of Yhaunn (NE hm W6, a young genius known for devising many new spells and for his frequent, giggling bouts of insanity); Aglast Thimm (NE hm W5, a grim man who has worked for the Zhentarim as a poisoner in many cities around the Inner Sea, until his skills became too widely suspected for continued usefulness); and Orauna Speldarnshar (CE hf W6, a one-time Calishite dancing-girl, who hates men and enjoys magically destroying them at every opportunity).

The Zhentarim intend to enslave the D'tarig even if their attempts to conquer the Bedine fail. When the Desertsouth Mountains are firmly in their control, they intend to gather and breed hill giants to unleash in Shadow Gap

and the Tilverton area, and begin a slow conquering of the desert by building forts and wiping out the Bedine tribe by tribe, advancing across the desert step by step. If this becomes necessary, Manshoon intends to send powerful Zhentarim to capture at least one Bedine sorceress, and learn from her (forcibly, if need be) the desert-related magic of the Bedine (the main spells of which appear in the "Wind and Sand Magic" chapter of this book).

When running Zhentarim forces, the DM should keep in mind two things: the Black Robes did not get as far as they have in Faerun already by being stupid; and, as Lander of the Harpers tells a Bedine sheikh, "Threats are the only truthful words you will ever hear a Zhentarim speak."





## OTHER PEOPLES OF ANAUROCH

Many peoples, monstrous (to human eyes) and otherwise, dwell in or under Anauroch. Here we look briefly at some of them.

### The D'tarig

These diminutive folk (averaging just over four feet tall) may be descended from marriages between humans and dwarves in the Tethyamar area. They are the desert folk most commonly encountered by outlanders.

The D'tarig dwell on the eastern and southeastern fringes of Anauroch, where they herd goats and sheep in the foothills, and make rare trips to Tilverton to trade. (Since the Zhentarim started coming to them, these trips have grown even rarer. Why go to the trouble and expense of travel, when it is easier to let greedy buyers come to you?) D'tarig tend to be self-serving and rather cowardly. They will switch loyalties readily, to those who pay them most highly.

They like to travel in large groups, well-armed with poisoned javelins and bolts for their crossbows. The sticky brown venom they have developed is a secret preparation, known only to a few elders of the people. It causes sleep in humans (save vs. poison to avoid), but tends to be fatal to orcs, goblins, and other related humanoid (save vs. poison at -2: success means 2d4 points of additional damage, failure means death in 1d4 rounds).

D'tarig have their own throaty language, and largely avoid contact with other humans. The exceptions to this are the most adventurous of the tribe, who tend to be younger. They are often hired by outsiders who want guides into the desert, for they typically claim to be experts who know every dune and oasis of great Anauroch. The unwary are warned of the Sembian merchant saying about D'tarig claims: "If you have an infant son, and the son dies when a D'tarig is in town, the D'tarig will show up claiming to be the son of your son, and try to take everything you own." In the desert, D'tarig wear white burnouses and tur-

bans, with splay-footed sandwalking boots,. Only their dark eyes, puggish noses, and leathery brows are exposed.

Older, more greedy D'tarig who are braver than their fellows are known as "desert walkers," for they venture into the desert to trade metal (usually metal weapons, though pots and other vessels are also valued) to the Bedine in return for camel-loads of collected resin from cassia, myrrh, and frankincense trees. Some D'tarig can collect these resins for themselves, from trees growing on the verges of the Sword, on the banks of streams that come down rocky ravines from the Mountains of Tethyamar to meander among the dunes, and ultimately sink into the sand, and vanish). But it is easiest to let Bedine do all the messy, hot, long work of gathering-and the demand for the resin far outstrips the supply provided by the few trees that the D'tarig can reach. The D'tarig sell their jars of gathered resin to merchants sponsored by the Zhentarim. The friendly Black Robes then sell it to temples all over the Realms for the making of incense.

D'tarig have been known to keep slaves, but tend to regard them as too much trouble. Slaves have to be watched constantly, for the D'tarig are a suspicious people. They boast that "no one and nothing can beguile the D'tarig? D'tarig are selfish, brutish folk. They have none of the land-lore and stone-skill of dwarves; most do not even know that lodestones (and therefore, compasses) exist, and must find their way in the desert by learning the oasis-trails and the stars. They tend to keep to themselves out of fear for trouble. More than one D'tarig has said, "Only a fool strays from his path to search out another man's trouble." On the other hand, D'tarig are not humorless or wretchedly craven in their fear of danger; witness this exchange between Bhadla of the D'tarig and Lander, a Harper (from the novel *The Parched Sea*, by Troy Denning):

*Bhadla shook his head. "This is foolish business," he said. "It will probably get you killed."*



"Perhaps," Lander agreed. "I'll try not to take you and Musalim with me." "Good. For that, we would charge extra," Bhadla said . . .

DMs should portray D'tarig as suspicious, taciturn, even sullen folk who are too short to wield long swords or longer and heavier weapons, and whose stature forces them into comical climbs into camel and horse saddles. Otherwise, they should be considered normal humans, save that a few (10%) seem to have inherited the uncanny sense of direction (even in dark, underground, or unfamiliar surroundings) possessed by many dwarves.

Oh, and one other thing—a D'tarig always has six or seven more tricks, double-crosses, escape routes, fallback plans, and poisoned weapons up his sleeves, down his boots, in his hair, or even up his nose. (Short-tempered barbarians of the Savage North have been known to cut down D'tarig on sight, just to avoid all the irritating, wearying intrigue and treachery they know will come.)

Most D'tarig that adventurers will meet with are fighters or thieves of 2nd to 5th (1d4 + 1) level. They tend to guide visitors to the trading villages of Tel Badir and Addas Babar. Most D'tarig have a house or place of business in one or both of these settlements, but keep their families safe in comfortably furnished cave homes higher in the mountains. Orc and goblin attacks have made regular patrols in the heights necessary; adventurers are warned that these patrols tend to employ ambushes, poisoned weapons, trip-wires, and boulder avalanches first, and ask questions of the survivors (if any) later.

## The Laertis

These ruthless, aggressive, desert-dwelling, intelligent lizards are fully detailed in the "Monsters of Anauroch" chapter, but deserve mention here because of their dominance over the desert underways of the eastern Sword. Forced to shelter from the heat of the day, the

laertis can roam the desert surface by night, and over the years have slain many Bedine both for food (they eat the soft organs of humans) and for the pleasure of killing. The Bedine call them *asahis*, which means "The Evil Ones Below." Recently, the laertis have been hired by the Zhentarim as mercenary troops in a war of extermination against the Bedine as the Zhentarim try repeatedly and forcibly to create a trade route across the desert, controlled by themselves, to link the rich Moonsea trade with Waterdeep, Baldur's Gate, and the Sword Coast trade that those cities can reach. The Zhentarim see this "shortest and cheapest" route as the key to achieving supremacy over Amn in trade matters. Only the years will tell if they can forge and hold such a "golden road through the sands."

## The Lamia

The infamous flesh-eating race of lamia are rarer in Anauroch than in more southerly deserts (such as those of Calimshan). Perhaps because flesh to eat is rare and the laertis compete for the same diet, lamia tend to be found in the western end of the Sword, and in the Frozen Sea.

The largest and most powerful lamia community is in the city of Hlaungadath (described in "The High Ice" chapter), but they are also known to roam the desert due east of Hill's Edge (where they often battle expeditions from that city and Zhentarim patrols out of Yellow Snake Pass), and to dwell at Lion's Eye Oasis, the most verdant spot in the western Sword.

The lamia of Lion's Eye are currently led by The Glaendra, a female lamia noble of striking height (9') and beauty. She is said to command both much wealth (in the form of rubies and emeralds looted from sand-covered ruins in the area controlled by the lamia), and a formidable arsenal of magical weapons and items, gathered over the years from Netherese tombs, abandoned towers, and storage-crypts.



## Outsiders

There aren't many sane folk who choose to visit Anauroch more than once (most visitors perish on their first trip into the Great Desert). As might be expected, some of these are desperate outlaws trying to hide from pursuers, and others are adventurers overly convinced of their own heroic invulnerability. The most numerous group, however, are merchants: those who come to make a coin or two.

Some, notably the Zhentarim, come in force, and try to make their way by force. They must be powerful indeed to overmatch the fierce Bedine, the desert beasts, and the claws of the desert itself.

Some dream of the fabled wealth of the Lost Kingdoms, and hire adventurers or even try on their own, to scurry into the desert to scoop up the heaps of gold coins and rivers of gems that they fondly hope must be just lying around, guarded only by a few camels and vultures.

The wisest merchants set their sights on less grand dreams. They come to the desert verges, bringing coins, food, fine cloth, and iron-work such as chains, belt-buckles, drinking cups, buckets, cooking pots, knives, forks and ladles, and the like. They trade these to the D'tarig and others who dwell along the Desertsedge, for resins and the occasional caged desert beast or Lost Kingdom tomb-artifact. These incense traders travel along the Desertsedge, in well-armed groups, and then depart, leaving the dangerous task of trading with the Bedine out on the sands to the D'tarig. These merchants make much smaller heaps of coins than the other sorts, but they make them year after year, and may even live to retire on them (a fate that seldom befalls the other two sorts of merchants).

Prominent among the veteran independent incense traders currently active in the Anauroch trade are Bruithyn Ammacaster, of Selgauni (LN hm F6), and Guldagh Ironfist (NE hm P7) of Westgate.

Bruithyn is known to carry an iron bands of *Bilarro* sphere, to deal with those who threaten him. He is always accompanied by a loyal bodyguard of at least three Sembian mercenary warriors, and a priest of Lathander for healing purposes, hired at the temple in Eveningstar. These priests are always well paid, and Bruithyn is popular at the temple for the extra gifts he makes to the cause, when his trade goes well.

Guldagh is the sort of thug that one prefers never to deal with. He would steal the shroud off a corpse (and has). His band of nine or fewer (the number varies with the number of fatal skirmishes gotten into on the present trip) thieves are drawn from the poisoned-dagger boys of Westgate's dirtier alleys. Guldagh persuades them to take a chance to get rich quick (and usually, to flee certain death if they stay in the city, due to feuds they've gotten themselves drawn into), and then plunges across Cormyr or Sembia in an orgy of petty theft, vandalism, and muggings.

Guldagh then leads his band to D'tarig territory, does the same sort of thing there until he's gained as much incense as possible by illegal means, and then heads west along the Desertsedge, trading for as much more as he can get. If enemies show up, his band darts into the Stonelands. Increasingly, orcs have lain in wait for him. It is whispered that he has a fortified lair somewhere in the Stonelands, but no one has ever found it.

An organized bandit troop is also said to lair in the Stonelands, raiding orc-holds, Bedine encampments, and caravans in northern Cormyr with equal stealth and boldness. Known as The Desert Wind, this band is a myth, or a memory of a desperate band now dead in some misadventure, or able to lie low for years on end—for no one has seen them in recent seasons.



# THE SWORD

This region lies like a broad swordblade across the southern end of Anauroch. Its name does not derive from maps, however; it comes from the chief human (and sometimes orc) activity of the area: carving up others, often and with gusto.

This is the hot, dry, sand-dune desolation that most outsiders think composes all Anauroch. It is the area that sees most outsiders: trying to find riches, escape foes, or shorten caravan costs by venturing into the desert. The Bedine nomadic human tribes dwell here, raiding (or rarely, trading peacefully with) each other and with friendly caravan-masters. Their presence makes this the most heavily populated area of Anauroch; and yet a Bedine riding across the Sword might meet with only three tribes in a year.

## The Landscape

Outlanders see the Sword as an endless sea of crescent-shaped dunes that rise and fall like waves in a sandstorm (hence Anauroch's most popular nickname, "The Great Sand Sea"). It is indeed a hot, sandy region, but is in fact much more varied than that.

Sand dunes do cover most of its surface. All four types of desert dunes can be found in the Sword: "waves" (transverse), "troughs" (longitudinal), "crescents" (barchan), and "star" dunes.

Transverse dunes are wavelike ridges, formed by moderate winds blowing always in the same direction. These winds move only light sand; the heavier grains swirl aside in eddies, forming ridges across the direction of the blowing wind.

Longitudinal dunes form when stronger one-way winds are present. They move heavier sand, cutting long troughs (parallel to the wind direction) through the transverse ridges.

Barchan dunes form where sand is relatively scarce, lying thinly atop rock. A wind blowing in one direction (in the Sword, usually from west to east) blows the sand into ridges, as

with a transverse dune, but is able to move along the ends of the ridge more readily than the humped center. Thus, the ends advance and curve inward, forming a crescent. Novice outlanders should note that the ends of a crescent dune always point opposite the direction of the prevailing wind. (Westerly winds create east-pointing crescents.)

Star dunes, named for their shape, have ridges radiating from a central height, and are relatively stationary (whereas the other three types of dunes "migrate" steadily in the direction of the wind). Star dunes form when winds blow from all quarters, rather than predominantly from one direction.

Many dunes in the Sword are high indeed, but there are few *draa* (sand mountains, of over a hundred feet in height) among them; rocky pinnacles and ridges are the usual heights in this land.

Tall rock outcroppings are rare; far more common are small ridges or piles of weathered rock. Their crevices and shaded ledges give a home to snakes, lizards, nocturnal raptors, and desert bats.

A few of these rocky outcroppings overlie water, reached by crevices and fissures in the rocks. Larger creatures may lair here, deep beneath the hot sands, venturing forth in the chill night. Thorny salt-bushes and other scrub growth on a ridge tell of certain water somewhere beneath.

Even if there is no water to be found in a rockpile, it can provide shade to a creature able to slither through cracks, or dig out a resting-place by shifting rocks.

Distant booming sounds are not uncommon in the Sword. Sometimes these are caused by faraway thunder: the Stonelands, along the southern edge of the unnatural "dry" area in which much of Anauroch lies (see "The Secret of Anauroch" chapter), see many violent storms, fogs, and unsettled conditions. More often, the sounds are made by sand heavier than a castle keep, falling down the slip-face of a high dune. One slip may set off others, in a



chorus that causes the ground to tremble with a repeating beat.

Some superstitious Bedine attribute the rumblings to the knelling alarms of long-buried fortresses, the “ghost-haunted castles of the Buried Lands,” which is the term by which they know the Lost Kingdoms.

Not all of the Sword is sand. Besides the obvious exceptions of oases and mountain ranges, areas of the desert such as At’ar’s Looking Glass are plains (flat sheets) of pebbles or bare rock sheets. These are covered with glistening salt, evaporated from the infrequent rainfalls by the terrific heat of the sun beating on the stone. These salt pans gleam a dazzling white in the sun. Some salt pans, near the southern edges of the Sword, are treacherously thin crusts covering saltwater bogs deep enough to drown in.

In the rare cases where one finds a stream in the desert (almost always when it has sprung up on a mountain and run down into the sands, to soon vanish), it forms a gulch. If the water is sufficient, the gulch will be roofed with the droopy, twiggy branches of ghafr trees, and lined with tasseled sedges of qassis bushes. These crowd together around the water, offering animals down in the draw shaded shelter (and concealment from the eyes of all watchers not actually in the gulch). The tinkling of the stream can be clearly heard from afar when the wind is low, and at other times the wind carries the smell of the water to camels and other desert animals. Doves and quail live around such a watercourse.

Rain is too infrequent to keep streams and rivers flowing continuously in the Sword; where there is no natural spring causing it, the water dries up between rains, leaving dry *wadis* (dusty, open watercourses). These may become raging, muddy torrents when rain does fall-for there is nothing in this parched land to catch or slow the flowing water.

When a spring fails, streams may vanish altogether. The small ponds or lakes fed by such springs then dry up, forming *mamlahahs*, or

“dead waters:’ These appear as small, flat-bottomed valleys, their clay-rich soil cracked into a plain of irregular alabaster pentagons as hard as ceramics baked by humans. A muddy pond surrounded by acacia trees is left, at the last of the deep water; when the water fails entirely, these also die away.

The heated air of any sand desert causes mirages (false images of water, oases, or other phantom things, on the horizon) and heat shimmer.

Heat shimmer is a visual distortion that dwellers in the Sword are quite used to, but by day it still causes even veterans of desert life to fire missile weapons (at medium or long range) at - 2 to hit. This handicap increases to - 4 when the target is a *mirror image* (as caused by the wizardly spell), or a being engaged in *blinking* or wearing a *cloak of displacement*.

## The Desert By Day

By day, the desert is a merciless oven, little suited to human existence. Wise desert dwellers hide in what shade they can find, or move only slowly and carefully, doing only light work (digging back into shelter if disturbed is commonly the only strenuous task most desert life undertakes). The desert winds provide a steady drone, dropping at sunset.

On a clear night, sunset in the Sword looks something like this: At’ar (as Bedine call the sun) sinks steadily towards the western horizon, a great disk of blinding yellow light that turns the sea of dunes ahead into a labyrinth of silhouettes and dazzling yellow reflections. The lowering sun darkens to scarlet, and as it sets behind the dunes, the western sky turns a spectacular amber and ruby. As the light fades, the troughs between the dunes turn velvety shades of ebony and indigo, while the crests of the dunes are tipped with a rosy ethereal glow. More level areas turn purple at dusk. Everything darkens: slowly at first, and then with increasing speed. Deep purple gives way to the blackness of night (unless or until



the moon rises, and the pale greenish-white moonlight lights the tops of the dunes). The temperature drops with the light, lingering in the sand for longer than it does in the air.

## The Desert By Night

In the Sword, the desert is chilly at night, the sky usually clear. The winds die to gentle breezes, or fail altogether. The stars form a brilliant, glittering display overhead.

The constellations are many and varied—or at least, the countless stars visible in the clear desert sky are known by many names throughout the Realms, varying from race to race, realm to realm, and even from Bedine tribe to Bedine tribe. Here we will mention only those most useful for navigating. These “most prominent” stars are visible all over the North, and are used by travelers in many, many places outside the borders of Anauroch.

The west is marked by two “fuzzy” clusters of blue-white stars, which appear as two side-by-side crescents or arcs in the sky, points downward. To most Bedine, these are The Two Jambiyas (and this is mirrored in the Moonsea cities, whose folk generally call them The Double Daggers). To some Bedine, these are the Eyes of Elah (closed, only the lashes visible); in like manner, some barbarian tribes of the Sword Coast North call these the Eyes of the Watching Woman, and men of Hill’s Edge speak of “where Selune looks back.” Whatever one calls, them, true west can be found exactly halfway between the two arcs-heading “straight between the eyes.”

The North is marked by an awesome circle of large, bright stars with utter darkness between them, which is known to most folk today as Mystra’s Star Circle (her floating Castle of Night, in childrens’ fairytales, is said to float in the center of the darkness). Due north is marked by the brightest “Brow Star,” called Alagairtha by the Bedine, after a proud Bedine sorceress who is said to have challenged the gods long, long ago, and been imprisoned in

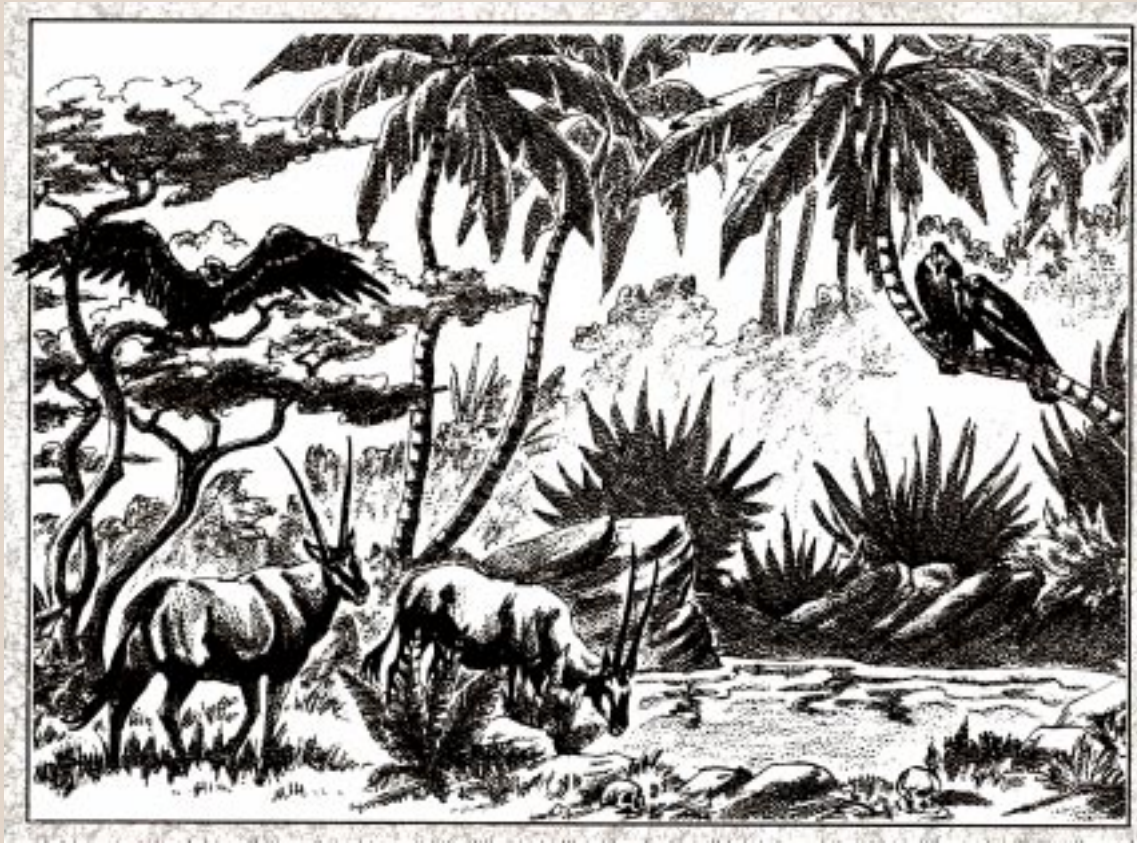
the heavens as a punishment: to preserve her breathtaking beauty, but keep her forever frozen and helpless.

Other folk in the Realms call this constellation the Crown of the North, or just the “Cold Crown.” Some believe it to be the Eye of Evil, or the Hole That Leads To Darkness; some Bedine tribes believe that this place is N’asr’s Tent, the dwelling-place of the Lord of the Dead. Most Bedine call it the Circle of Swords (the shining scimitars of the greatest Bedine gathered by N’asr) or the Circle of Coins (thrown on high by the gods, to taunt poor men).

East in the Sword’s sky is marked by At’ar’s Arrows: three converging lines of stars, each with a cluster of stars at its outward end, or “point.” Where the three lines come together is due east. The Bedine believe that these are three fiery arrows launched by the sun goddess, to clear and mark her way (as the sun rises here). To folk elsewhere in the Realms, these stars are called the Arrows of the Gods, the Sun’s Signpost, or the Caltrop.

South in the desert sky is marked by a zigzag line of stars that ‘crawls’ along the horizon, from west to east, beginning with an upswept “head” or bright starry cluster, and ending with a curving “tail” of stars. To the Bedine, this is the Serpent of the Sands, Urwath, “The Swallower.” The desert nomads believe that this creature is wild and amoral, older than the gods, and that it swallows mountains, trees, and grasses to create the desert, leaving only sand in its wake. Its presence in the southern sky, most Bedine believe, means that the desert will continually expand southward, as it eats its way across the Outlands.

Folk elsewhere in the Realms do not see this line of stars so clearly; not being on their horizon most of the time, it is enmeshed in a tangle of small constellations, and is not thought of as a unit. In Tunland, Cormyr, Iriaebor, and Westgate, however, it is recognized as a star configuration marking the direction “south:” and is known respectively as Faeraula, the



Sword of the South, the Southfires, and the Lightning Bolt.

## *Weather in The Sword*

The Sword desert tends to be very hot and windy by day, and very cold and relatively calm by night.

This part of Anauroch rarely sees rain or snow, even when lands around are lashed by torrential rains, or locked in the grip of howling blizzards. The area is just too dry. Most "weather" consists of differences in wind direction and force, from still "dead air" to windstorms that reshape the desert landscape. Violent winds always catch up and carry along desert sand, and are detailed further in the

"Dangers of the Desert" section, under "Sandstorms" The main visible characteristic of sandstorms (or "duststorms," as they are also called) is that the sky is obliterated: vision is typically reduced to only a few feet.

Rainfall is scarce and variable: one spot gets it, but a mile away, no rain may fall. The rare "wet storms" of the Sword tend to be both short and violent. Lightning strikes are common, thunder rolls, and the rainfall is hard (even battering) and fast. When the storms are small, and travel over hot salt pans, the heat may evaporate the rain before it reaches the ground, creating a "ghost storm" that sweeps across the desert, raining hard, without ever wetting the landscape land thirsty Bedine) below.



More often, the rare rainstorms lash the ground, transforming wadis into raging torrents that can drown camels and even larger creatures in moments. The sparse vegetation of the Sword cannot hold water; rain runs over the land, seeking the lowest elevations, until it sinks into a salt pan or is all evaporated away by the heat of the sun.

All over the desert, as the water falls on the sand, flowers open. Insects rush to them and swarm in the air to mate, lay eggs, and feed, hurrying to take advantage of the fleeting moisture. So too do the reptiles, birds, and mammals of the desert. Perennial plants blossom and set seed, and some plants spring up from seed to dot the desert with brief life; when the water is all gone, they will have grown, flowered, and produced seeds again, to wither and die in the dry heat that follows. Cacti swell up in these wet spells, storing water.

The desert is briefly a place of plenty, and the Bedine rush about, gathering all they can (many desert herbs and fruits can only be found at such times). Rains have even been known to halt battles, as everyone turns to gathering precious foodstuffs. With most of the desert snakes, lizards, and other animals on the move, they are plentiful, easily seen, and are relatively easy prey.

## Desert Wildlife

Although conditions in the Sword are as harsh as those known in Raurin and other, larger hot sand deserts, the Swords' unnatural origins enable it to exist much closer to plentiful water, and very different climates, than other deserts. This allows more intrusions into the Sword than may occur in other deserts, both from so-called intelligent creatures (such as humans and orcs), and from lesser life, such as insects. Swarms of moths are not unknown in Anauroch, coming out of the Stonelands and the backlands of the Sword Coast. Insect swarms can be met with in spring and fall in

the hot region, and at all times except chill winter along the edges of the desert.

**Insect Swarms** These are fully detailed in Volume 4 of the *Monstrous Compendium*. DMs lacking this *DRAGONLANCE*<sup>®</sup> appendix can use the following simplification: Characters with AC 0 or less in contact with a swarm are 80% likely, each round, to be bitten for 1 hp of damage (plus 1% per point of Armor Class; i.e., a being with an AC of 6 has an 86% chance, an unarmored person [AC 10] a 90% chance of being bitten). Vision is reduced to 2d8 feet, and all beings caught in the swarm suffer -2 on attack and damage rolls due to pain, loss of clear vision, and the interference of the countless flying insects. Beings in a swarm are unable to speak (insects will clog their mouths), so most spellcasting is impossible. (For variety, use the effects of the insect *plague* spell.)

Insect swarms eat everything edible (i.e., the meager desert plants, and any available carrion) in their path; this can cause camels to starve, if forced to travel through the same area the swarm did. Smoke or fire scatters swarms, or turns them away. Other attacks totalling 60 points of damage crush enough insects to cause the swarm to move on. (Most insects are edible, and five handfuls can sustain a starving human, but eating them is not pleasant. Their acidity may cause sudden stabbing pains when the eater exerts himself; in combat, AC is reduced by 1, and attack rolls are made at -1.) Rolling in sand or dousing with water temporarily removes insects from a being. (If PCs manage to exterminate an entire swarm, award 2,000 experience points.) Insects are the most numerous desert creatures, but are not the most visible, except when swarming. Most Bedine will tell a questioner that they see the incessantly-tittering, nocturnal desert bats most often of all desert wildlife.

**Desert Bats** These bats wing over the dark desert (Fl 14, MC B) in search of insects of all sorts and sizes. They are AC 7, have 1d4 hp each, and can bite for 1 hp of damage (THAC0 20), but most avoid contact with large crea-





tures if at all possible. Some drink blood, and will bite sleeping camels or humans with needle-sharp fangs, fluttering rapidly away an instant later when their target awakens. Desert bats lair in rock crevices by day, and tend to be dark in hue, leathery and bony (a desperate man might need seven or more to make a meal). Very few (8%) carry diseases.

**Daytime Desert Life** Only a few wild desert creatures are active during the day, such as camels, grasshoppers, beetles, and spiders, which have long legs to hold them away from the hot sand.

Lizards, snakes, antelopes (particularly gazelles), asses (especially onagers), and lions can be found in plenty, if one knows where and when to look, in the Sword. The most common large animals are camels.

**Camels** Camels (also described in the "Bedine Society" chapter) are native to the Sword. Wild camel droves have become very rare, however: Bedine hunters have seen to that, scouring the desert in search of animals to capture and tame.

A wild drove typically consists of one or two males and three to five females, sleeping in the open at night and grazing by day on grasses, brushwood, and shrubs.

The males fight and bite savagely during mating times (right after the rains). Camels have a gestation period of 370 to 440 days, and give birth to single young. Infant camels are suckled for 3 or 4 months, and aren't fully grown until they are 16 or 17. Camels only live to be around 25 years old.

To stay in peak condition (full carrying or pulling capacity), a camel working in the hot desert needs to drink some water at least every third day. In cold winter weather, camels can go without drinking for several months. Contrary to the beliefs of most outlanders, camels do not have water-sac organs, although desperate nomads kill camels and drink both their pea-green, salty rumen-sac fluid, and their blood.

Pack dromedaries can carry 600 pounds,

and a Bactrian camel up to 1000, for around 30 miles a day. Normal walking speed is only 3 miles per hour. A fast walk (both legs on one side stepping forward, then the other side) is 6 miles per hour, but camels can only keep this up for a few hours at a time.

Racing camels can go almost twice as fast as pack animals, but to keep one moving at its fastest pace (the long trot) the rider must create a sore on the camel's neck, and prick it continuously.

**The Strange And The Unknown** Desert wildlife is little known to outlanders, and new forms are being discovered constantly. There are even rumors that a magical *gate* has been opened somewhere in the northern Sword, linking Faerun with the world of Krynn: adventurers have reported meeting with hatori, horax, skrits, and even tylors there. Explorers are warned: just about anything may be met with in the desert! Of interest to outlanders (only due to their odd appearance) are curious "fuzzy crawling brains" (as the adventurer Thayalin of Baldur's Gate aptly described them) seen after rainfalls. These are giant velvet earthmites: vivid, hand-sized, wrinkled, furry, red, crawling things. They are harmless, unintelligent, and inedible, and emerge during the rains to eat termites, mate, and then burrow back down under the sands until the next rains.

Even in "dead" central areas of the Sword, dried windborne vegetation supports a few insects, which in turn are fed upon by arachnids and reptiles. In some areas, the ground is white not with salt, but with the large shells of countless desert snails. The snails themselves slip out of their shells to spend the dry summer in a torpor, deep down in cracks in the ground, or among rocks. Their abandoned shells are sealed up with an exuded membrane, to trap as much moisture inside as possible, but a shell only holds enough moisture to sustain a thirsty human body for a day if that body (by means of magic, perhaps) is four inches tall, or less.



Wizards with pocketfuls of snail-shells and a spellbook with a *reduce* spell in it have walked alive out of the Sword, by moving (in normal size) at night, shrinking, drinking the moisture in a shell, and sheltering in it by day, studying to replace the used *reduce* spell and sleeping).

## Desert Plants

Plants are far fewer in desert areas than elsewhere in the Realms, but they are present in a great variety of types and sizes. Most are thick and fleshy, and have small leaf and surface areas, so as to hold as much moisture as possible. Most also have features to discourage predators, such as thorns, unpleasant odors, or poisonous or laxative juices or secretions.

Desert plants tend to have short life cycles; like the animals, they must take advantage of brief periods of "wet" after rainfall. Some plants can grow, flower, and produce seeds in as little as a ride (10 days).

## Typical Plant Varieties

The more numerous desert plant types are briefly described below for DM use in describing desert landscapes. Those that are especially edible (or dangerous to eat) are noted. The profusion of plant life found in oases is covered later in this chapter, in its own section, as are "desert crops."

*Allium* is an onion-like plant that grows up from a buried "crown" in spears, like asparagus. It is eaten by many desert-dwellers, both human and animal, and is always a good source of water. It is hardy; a dead allium withers but allium rarely rots or carries any mold, fungus, or disease.

*Boojum Trees* may grow to the height of a man's shoulder, but are more often only three feet or less tall. They resemble giant parsnips (or whitish carrots), growing upside-down, on the ground, because they have conical whitish trunks, that taper to their topmost point.

Bare for much of the time, boojum trees

sprout leaves in times of rain. In a few weeks, these leaves drop off; the stems they leave behind are thorns that can scratch humans for 1-2 hp of damage per contact, and which dissuade grazing desert animals from munching on boojum wood. The boojum trees of the Sword are not edible, but a desperate human could chew the woody flesh to get some water from plant juices.

*Bunch Grasses* grow in bunches or tufts, from bulbs buried in the sand. The tops (broad-bladed grass spears, a favorite food of grazing desert animals) wither and die each year, only to come up again from the bulb. The bulbs are edible but unappetizing; a man would have to eat about thirty of them every 24 hours to gain enough water for survival.

*Buried Tubers* are a valuable regular food-source for Bedine and other desert animals intelligent enough (and physically suited) to dig for them. These can grow as large as two men's heads, and hold much water (life-savers in times of drought).

On the surface, these plants are found by their grassy stems (which flower during rains), and tend to grow in a line, following the shape of the buried root beneath. The roots tend to be brown or golden-brown in hue, knobbly, and grow in a long, roughly straight cylindrical shape. They have hairlike roots growing out of them, all over: tough, stringy things that may be as long as seven men are tall, and are best gnawed or cut off, if one wants to take the tuber out of the sand and carry it away.

*Cacti* are the most impressive desert plants. They all tend to be bulbous and prickly, but range in shape from "prickly pear" ground-bud sorts to giant "saguaro" multi-armed upright types.

A staple to some Bedine tribes, cacti can be mashed to yield drinking syrup which will keep for months, or can be fermented into a drink. The cactus flesh can be eaten, the seeds made into a sort of butter, the stems of giant cacti used as tent-poles, the thorns used as



sewing-needles, and the dried husks of long-dead cacti can be burned as fuel.

Few cacti taste nice, and only a few can be cut open to yield plentiful “free” water; most must be mashed, or the flesh chewed, to extract moisture. The thorns dissuade most desert life from disturbing cacti, unless they have swords to cut it apart. No known cacti in the Sword can throw their needles at targets that aren’t touching them, but many have thorns that detach at the slightest brush of a solid body. Cacti thorn-damage ranges from 1 point for a single contact with a small cactus up to 2d12 points for a full-body fall or charge into a giant saguaro. Most contacts (e.g. being hit by a prickly cactus “club” wielded by a human opponent, or stumbling into an upright cactus) deal 2d4 points of damage.

*Cereus* grows from a buried bulb. The variety found in the Sword looks dead by day, its small cluster of leafy stems drooping and shrivelled. At night, the leaves open to reveal floral blooms that gather moisture, and are sticky enough to trap insects that light upon them, which the plant drains for food. Both the flowers and the bulbs are edible, but the gluey floral secretions make most humans who eat them violently ill, costing moisture and food value, rather than bestowing it.

*Chenopods* are grasses that grow in arc-shaped tufts. They are a vivid reddish-purple, and their juices are poisonous tall mammals who eat of this type of plant must save vs. poison or immediately suffer 2d4 hp damage, followed by a 2d12-turn period of nausea and mental confusion). Beings affected by chenopod poison make attack and damage rolls at -2, and suffer an Armor Class penalty of 3 points. At the onset of contact with the poison, the victim must make two successful Intelligence checks. If either or both fail, the victim is *feble-minded* until the poison wears off.

Chenopods have a biting, nose-stinging odor. They grow evenly spaced in the sand, because their efficient roots drink all the water for a

certain distance around them, and no other plants can grow in that space. To eyes not versed in desert ways, this always looks as though the chenopods were deliberately planted by human (or other intelligent) hands.

These hardy plants tend to be found in a ring around the outermost watered fringes of an oasis, spring, or other water source.

*Creosote bushes* found in the Sword are small, gnarled, many-branched things that are russet, rust, or purplish-black in hue; they are tarry, oozing black, sticky liquid whenever their jointed branches are broken. They are burned by Bedine over catchbasins to extract a sticky tar used for sealing water-containers.

*Lichens* are the scabrous, repulsive-looking grey-green growths on rocks. They are edible (but unappealing, and of very low food value), and grow on the sides of rocks closest to large bodies of water. In the westernmost third of the Sword, lichens grow on the western sides of rocks, in response to damp winds blowing in from the Marsh of Chelimber.

*Mesquite trees* provide Bedine with most of their firewood. These unimpressive trees may yield a surprising amount of wood, once uprooted and sun-dried: their roots may go down a hundred feet or more to tap deep water. In doing so, the trees stabilize sand dunes they are growing on, holding them in place against wind migration.

*Ocotillo* are root-based plants with leafless, dead-looking stems (except just after rainfall, when they sprout many tiny leaflets, which soon fall off). As a result, they escape many desert foragers, being dismissed as “dead.” The variety found in the Sword is not edible except as roughage for very hungry, antelopes and camels.

*Puncture-Vines* are thankfully-rare creeper plants that grow in rocky areas where some water is present. They flower in rainfalls, but otherwise look like mottled green ropes tangled upon the ground, marked every foot or so by a ring or “collar” of bristling thorns, which are sharp, sturdy, and almost impossible to



avoid. Contact with any collar of thorns does 1d4 points of damage; a being falling on several collars, or who is bound with a length of thorny vine, suffers damage per collar contacted, for every contact with, or movement to get out of, the vine.

*Saltbush* (or *Saltbrush*) are a variety of withered-looking shrubs that are the most numerous desert plants. They stud dunes all over the Sword, and form the main diet of camels on the move.

Windmills, named for their overall shape, are flowering plants that send out several stems along the ground, radiating out like spokes of a wheel, to gather water, and to send up other tufts. They anchor the sandy surfaces of dunes, and their tough stems can be used to tie things down (until they dry out and fall apart, which takes 3d10 days; add 1d8 days whenever a stem is wetted by rain, blood, or submersion in water).

## Desert "Crops"

In addition to plants harvested for personal survival, Bedine (and others who venture into the Sword) can glean goods from the desert that can be sold for profit: desert "crops." The best-known of these are frankincense, myrrh, and salt (though few village folk in Amn or even the Dragonreach, for instance, know that these things come from the desert). Bedine selling such crops generally trade with D'tarig, but may sell these things to outlanders (if the outlanders have things the Bedine want, and seem too powerful for the Bedine to overpower and slay).

The most important "desert crops" of the Sword are listed here, in alphabetical order. They are the reasons why many merchants venture north from Arabel and Tilverton, and east from Hill's Edge, to meet with the Bedine—and they are spoils that more than one adventuring band has brought back from the hot sands.

First, there is the favorite drink of the Be-

dine: *coffee*. The plants whose beans yield the bitter brew (which increases in popularity across the North, as the years pass) grow wild in certain oases and mountain valleys in the central Sword, and some Bedine tribes have begun to cultivate it.

Certain trees, particularly in mountainous areas of the eastern and northeastern Sword (and westward, in hills along the southern edge of the Plain of Standing Stones, where many small, nameless streams rush down out of the rocks, to sink into the sands and be lost) yield another desert crop: an aromatic, amber-hued resin known as *dragons' blood*.

Its trees mingle with others, those types that produce the more famous frankincense and myrrh, and all three resins are used in similar ways.

It is difficult to put prices on resin crops, because "raw" resin is often bartered away by the Bedine, not sold—and commands far less than buyers must eventually pay for it in far-off cities of the Realms. Roughly, a Bedine sells a fist-sized lump of the finest raw frankincense for 1 gold piece. An identical lump of dragons' blood is worth 5 sp, and an identical lump of myrrh 3 gp.

Frankincense is derived from trees of several related species. All have very short trunks; they split near the ground into a fan of branches. The ideal growing conditions for these trees are a steady, hot sun, pale limestone soil, and heavy dew from a monsoon (wet, onshore coastal) wind, or from abundant mists. (On the watered northeastern edge of the Sword, these occur each morning, as the sun rapidly heats cold, damp ground.) Frankincense is harvested by chipping away bark from tree branches with a spatulalike chisel, scraping clean a patch the size of a man's hand. Milk-white sap "tears" well up in the wound immediately. The harvester moves on to other trees. When he returns, three weeks later, the ooze will have hardened into a translucent golden resin: frankincense.

The first scrapings are worthless; the sec-



and cutting, weeks later, yields low-quality frankincense (typically used by Bedine in their own bodyrub perfumes and aromatic “tent-smokes,” burned in braziers); only the third gives pure, sweet-scented frankincense.

Across the Realms, frankincense is used for rituals and health purposes. Specifically, it sees use in the scenting of incense, which is burned in various religious rituals (for example, to appease a god, to consecrate or cleanse a temple, to mask the odor of cremations, and so on). Its odor also makes it a valued ingredient in cosmetics, from simple Bedine pastes to the most intricate and costly spiced concoctions of Calimshan and Mulhorand.

Frankincense is also thought by many to be useful in curing gout, mental confusion, vision problems, and skin disorders. The almost white variety, known as *shihri*, is chewed by Bedine and some folk of Unther, Mulhorand, Raurin, Thay, Tharsult and Calimshan because it’s “good for the teeth and gums, and helps clear the brain.” (Just how effective frankincense really is in such endeavors varies from person to person, and in game terms, is left up to the DM.)

The desert hills and mountains yield another sort of riches: gold, which in the Sword tends to be found in pure, soft, large nuggets or lump-like inclusions in larger rocks. Many Bedine tribes make their own coins, using the sand as a mold, but more often, nuggets are melted into egg-shaped “trade-balls” or fashioned into heavier bars, called “fists,” that fit into a man’s palm, with a row of fingerholes, rather like a pair of “brass knuckles.” The value of either unit of gold varies with the market (supply), and the particular piece’s size and purity, but a ball tends to be worth around 15 gp, and a fist around 25.

The mountainous areas of the desert, particularly near permanent sources of water, give shelter to many birds. The droppings of these fowl (unlike, say, those splashed on a neglected stone statue in some ruin of the Sword Coast North) are not washed away by the infrequent

desert storms, and over the years may accumulate, on the rocks where birds nest or perch often, into thick concretions. This guano is a rich fertilizer, prized in large cities of the Realms. It is also burned as fuel by those who can stand the heavy, cloying smell. A sack of guano as big as a man’s head might fetch a Bedine the equivalent of 1 sp.

Other desert rocks yield deposits of *gypsum* (used in the making of plaster and alabaster). It is broken off into chunks, although the dust is as valuable and useful, and also sold in head-sized sacks (the D’tarig continually supply the Bedine with empty sacks), which command about the same price as guano.

Certain bushes, which grow here and there in the mountain foothills and knolls of the Sword, yield indigo. This dark blue dye is derived by stirring the crushed leaves of the indigo bush into water, which yields a mixture as thick as porridge. This mixture is used as a clothing dye; sun-baked clay jars of it are traded by the Bedine, who put it to their own use by putting purchased rolls of cotton cloth into the dye jars, soaking them for days, and then rolling the cloth out on a dirt surface and beating it for hours with wooden mallets, to work the dye into the cloth.

In winter, some Bedine tribesmen rub indigo mixed with sesame seeds (for their oil, when crushed in the hands) on their bare chests and legs. They believe it keeps them warm.

*Myrrh* is a resin harvested from a single thorny, squat species of tree that grows deep in the Sword. It is three times as expensive as frankincense, but only one-fifth as popular. When heated, this resin breaks down easily into an aromatic oil of many uses. Oil of myrrh is employed in religious purifying anointings; burned as a fumigant; added in tiny amounts to sauces in cooking; and used in embalming and as a medicine for pregnant Bedine women. The resin can also be formed into beads that are strung into necklaces, releasing the fragrance when warmed by the skin.

Bedine cooking-fires also yield *potash*, sold



“in the rough” and as the valuable Faerunian rarities glass and soap.

The conversion of potash (with other ingredients, such as sand) into glass and soap are processes held secret by certain Bedine tribes, although many in the Realms know them. An outlander who reveals he knows how to make glass, or soap, to such a Bedine tribe will be slain to “protect the secret.” The nomads simply won’t believe the arts of making soap and glass are widely-known.

Bedine signal-glasses (small, curved hand-mirrors) are made by such processes. Some signal-mirrors are curved to fit into a small earthen pot with a lid, for concealment and to prevent accidental flashes when riding in the sun.

Bedine also mine *salt* in the Sword. In some places—especially in the eastern Sword, where the sands cover the ancient, hardened remnants of vanished seas—salt can be cut from the ground in slabs. When working these deposits, Bedine tend to cut slabs as long as a man and that weigh as much as two men, so that one can be strapped to either side of a pack camel.

Salt is valuable in the North both for curing and preserving, and a camel-slab can fetch as much as 30 gp. Humans need extra salt to survive in the hot desert, so Bedine consume a lot of the salt they gather.

Small “veins” of salt can be found in many places in the Sword, in crevices between rocks. Salt can also be derived by evaporating



saline water on hot, bare patches of rock, although few Bedine tribes can safely reach the salt-pans that overlie water, to cut them open. No plants will grow where salt is too plentiful, even when water is abundant; to the experienced desert-dweller's eye, a spot where there is water enough for plants, but which has none, is a telltale sign of salt.

*Sesame seeds* can be gathered only by those Bedine near the Desertsedge, but they are used both as a food (roasted and eaten by the handful) and as a source of sesame oil, which has many uses (chiefly in cooking). It is sold by some Bedine tribes in clay jugs that taper at both ends, as long as a man's leg and as large around in the middle as a man's head, for about 1 sp a jug.

Sesame oil is derived by means of camel-powered mills. A camel is driven around and around in a circle, hauling a wooden beam counterweighted with stones. The hub of the beam turns in a mortar hollowed from a desert acacia, crushing sesame seeds to make the oil.

Desert plants also yield *tanbark* and *turmeric*, used by Bedine women as a makeup and sunscreen, and by many folk of Faerun as a dye and a spice-but supplies of these are intermittent, and they do not command high prices.

## Oases

All creatures of the desert are more numerous where water is more plentiful. The oasis, or *shallah* (a word older than the Bedine tongue, and known in the Moonsea area and Amn, suggesting it came with mankind from the ancient South), is a name given to places where, in this most dry of deserts, there is always water. Oases are "islands of life" in the desert, readily recognizable by the green plants that grow in profusion about them. They are the areas that the Bedine (and in particular, their camels) depend upon, to survive. Almost all oases in the Sword are claimed by a Bedine tribe, or shared

(seldom at the same time) by several tribes.

Oases vary in size and characteristics, and some have become poisoned, so that their water gives aid only to those with magical means of purifying it, or immunity to the taint. There is such a thing as a "false oasis," where the water fails from time to time.

A typical oasis is centered around a pond, usually a spring-fed depression. Streams don't flow far in a sandy desert; the water sinks into the sand and is lost again, and the sun evaporates rainwater quickly from depressions. A lasting pool requires an additional source of water.

Around this watersource wild shrubs and trees spring up; often apricot trees and thornflower bushes, overseen by soaring palm trees. Oases undisturbed by man support more shrubs, oleander and tamarisk trees than date palms, fruit trees, and vegetables. But in the Sword, Bedine hands have worked on almost every oasis, carefully selecting date palms and fruit trees, and tending them so as to cover the maximum possible area. Trees are propped up, where possible, to maximize shade and to raise the nests of birds out of the reach of some predators (fresh eggs are a delicacy on Bedine tables). For the same reason, thorny vines are trained around the trunks of trees low down, but kept carefully cut back to avoid choking the trees.

Whatever artificial means are used to make the oasis larger, or more fertile (all garbage and human refuse, for instance, are buried in crescent-shaped beds located to feed existing trees and to encourage the spread of seedlings), a distance is eventually reached at which the heat and lack of water stop tree growth. The oasis dwindles around its edges to tufts of salty grass and spindly chenopods, before giving way to the endless sea of sand again.

Jackals, hares, gazelles, and even ostriches may be found at oases in the desert-and all desert animals come to oases to drink, when they must. Bedine and others who know how



can gain food in oases where there is apparently none to be had (and in many places along the less-dry sands of the Desertsedge), by digging up a staple diet of edible bulbs and roots. They also eat burrowing worms, insects, and eggs, both avian and reptilian (the empty eggshells are then used as water containers), found in oases.

New oases do occur naturally from time to time, as springs find their way to the surface in a new spot. These occurrences are rare, and the full life of an oasis is slow to develop around the newfound water, although some plants will quickly sprout in the hitherto barren sand.

### Created Oases

The Zhentarim have hit upon an ingenious practice: “growing” an oasis around a decanter of *endless water*. At least five such bases are known to exist in the desert: Bhaerlith, Haunga, Ma’atar, Olomaa, and Vuerthyl.

The chosen sites are often bolsons (natural basins at the foot of mountains or ridges, and shielded by them from the worst of the desert winds). Wadis may already lead down into these sites from the mountains above; it is always easier to establish plants when water-hungry plants are already present.

On the other hand, the Zhentarim want to put oases where Bedine tribes won’t expect to find them (and so won’t come looking), and in strategic locations to create a trade route with abundant water, available often, so that camels are never worked to death. This leads some “created oases” to be founded in unprotected desert, or even on raised, windswept plateaus that overlook the surrounding sands.

The Zhentarim create artificial oases by digging out ponds where bedrock is near the surface, and sheltering rock outcrops are nearby, activating a *decanter of endless water* and dropping it in the excavation, and then bringing in seeds, plants, and the like by means of *teleportation* spells. This takes a lot of time

and gold pieces, so the Zhents do it only when an oasis is critical to the success of a caravan route. The Bedine quickly find such new desert features, and the Zhentarim have to defend them if they want to gain any benefit from all their work.

So such artificial oases are few—and all of them sport magical and physical traps, or even fortifications, and guardians. These are sometimes minor Zhentarim wizards, with a bodyguard of warriors (the Bedine fear of sorcery makes even weak wizards more effective than four times their number of Zhentilar warriors). The guardians may also be summoned or “placed” creatures, such as guardian daemons (detailed in Volume 2 of the *Monstrous Compendium*) or watchghosts (detailed in *The Ruins of Undermountain* boxed set).

### Places In The Sword

Please refer to the color mapsheet provided with this sourcebook for the locations of features mentioned here. The preceding details of desert landscape and plants should help DMs “flesh out” such places, when they are visited in the course of play. Oases or cities that may become battlegrounds should be at least rough-mapped before play therein commences.

### Addas Babar

Population: 2,600

In the foothills west of the northern end of the Tethyamar mountains is the D’tarig village of Addas Babar. Its sprawling mud huts and mud-and-beam inns (the tallest of which has three floors) can hold as many as 2,000 guests, and there is ample camping room in the area; the village sprawls over five or six ridges and the ravines and bowl valleys between them, with an open market area and only four streets that are lined with structures (as most human settlements are).





Addas Babar is the largest D'tarig settlement, and exists to serve them as a trading-center with the rest of the world; all of its D'tarig residents have "real" tunnel or cave-homes in the mountains and higher lands to the east, as well as their "village rooms." The village also serves outlanders as a hiring center for D'tarig, a refuge of sorts (and hiring center) for human outlaws from all over the Dragonreach, and a place where traveling merchants can set up shop to sell large amounts of goods without peddling wares up and down every hill of D'tarig territory.

### **Alagh's Pass**

Named for a lone Bedine warrior who fell here long ago, heroically holding the pass against a rival tribe to allow his own tribe more time to flee, this barren mountain pass allows passage between the Saiyaddar (see below), on one side of the mountains, and the Hills of Scent (see below) on the other. On either side, the pass is entered through winding, rocky canyons whose cliffs are broken by many side-fissures-most of them ideal for ambushes.

Just below the pass, on the Hills of Scent side, is a nameless mamalahah (dried-up lake) no more than two miles across, its onetime floor now a patchwork of hard-baked alabaster pentagons. At its center is a muddy pond surrounded by acacia trees, that a Zhentarim army poisoned when fighting the Bedine.

### **At'ar's Looking Glass**

This distinctive feature of the Sword is a roughly oval sea of burnished stones. It covers an area of about a hundred and forty miles (four and a half days of camel travel), east to west, and about two hundred miles north to south.

Its western edge is marked by a line of obelisklike mountain peaks, known as the Scimitar Spires (see below). Low, dun-colored dunes line the rest of its borders.

At'ar's Looking Glass is a flat, seemingly endless mosaic of coin-sized stones. The pebbles are mostly red, varying in hue from blond to dark brown. All are polished glass-smooth, giving these open flats a fiery, pebbled appearance. It captures the sun's heat, and is too hot for even camels to walk on for long without making them limp. A fallen Bedine, or a roast of meat, will literally cook on the stones if left motionless in the sun long enough.

There is no shade or water in the Looking Glass, and no known treasure, though there are persistent Bedine tables of gemstones scattered among all the other pebbles, polished and free for the taking to those who search diligently enough.

### **Azirrhath**

This series of cloven and rocky spires rises out of dry desert, in the form of several barren ridges that form the shape of a gigantic chicken's foot, its toes pointing northeast.

Its name means "the Slashed Rocks," and comes from the cracked appearance of the peaks. Some Bedine have told of finding rich gold veins here, but few go looking; the deep crevices in these rocks lead down to caverns where laertis dwell (see the "Monsters of Anauroch" chapter). The laertis come each night to hunt, sometimes ranging east as far as merchant encampments around Addas Babar, where they devour the internal organs of camels and men alike.

The Zhentarim contacted the laertis to hire them as mercenary warriors in an attempt to seize control of the surface Sword (see "The Zhentarim in Anauroch"), here. It is a place avoided by the Bedine.

### **Bhaerlith**

A rich oasis of date palms and fruit trees, recently created by the Zhentarim (see "Created Oases," earlier in this chapter). There is said to be a stone-lined underground storehouse and



sleeping-chamber here.

Bhaerlith is also said to be haunted by a guardian daemon, who will attack any not bearing (or drawing) a certain symbol, who try to approach the central oasis pool or the entrances to the underground areas.

The oasis also sports many spring-sword traps, buried in the sand around its perimeter (Zhents know the safe places to enter, by using trees within as landmarks). Triggering one of these by an unlucky step causes the blade to burst forth from the sands, doing its maximum normal damage, and striking at THAC0 6.

The bodies of Bedine and other trespassers are impaled on wooden stakes outside the oasis as warnings; several Bedine trying to steal these long, sturdy wooden poles (something rare in the desert) found out the hard way that these grisly markers are themselves trapped by fell magic and by spring-swords.

## Colored Waters

This large, spectacular oasis fills a bowl-shaped, steep-walled ebony basin ten miles long, eight miles wide, and over a thousand feet deep. It lies in a region of small, yellow, transverse dunes, where the sand is only a few inches deep in the wide troughs between them. As one travels through these golden sands, the land slowly rises, until one reaches the ancient volcanic cauldron wherein Colored Waters lies.

Except for a few star dunes of golden sand, the basin is covered with fine, sable-colored silt. In its center is an amber-hued cone of cinders, nearly as tall as the basin's rim. The Bedine believe this was the site of the battle where the gods destroyed N'asr's servants from the Camp of the Dead, and that the amber cone is the heaped ashes of those servants.

Five lakes, each shaped like a scimitar's crescentiform blade, ring the base of the cone. The waters of each are a different hue: emerald-green, turquoise, silver, sapphire blue, and ruby-red. Bedine legend says the different col-

ors resulted when gods fell in that long-ago battle, and their dried blood was washed or blown into the water, and dissolved.

Around each lake are wild fig trees, tall golden grasses, and leafy green bushes. Over the entire basin floor, salt-brush and hardy lime-green qassis plants poke through the ebony ash. The shape and dark hue of the basin makes it a gigantic trap for the sun's heat; heat shimmer distorts vision above and in the basin, Colored Waters is warmed by volcanic activity from beneath, too: Bedine have brewed tea here simply by setting their pots on steaming rock-fissures. Colored Waters is the favored camp of the Mahwa tribe, under Sheikh Sa'ar.

## El Ma'ra

This small but verdant oasis is named for, and marked by, El Ma'ra Dat-ur Ojhogo ("The tall god who lets men sit upon his head": see "The Gods of Anauroch"), a single, 100'-tall spire of yellow sandstone. El Ma'ra stands a mile outside the oasis that bears its name.

Encamped Bedine use the flat-topped spire as a lookout-place, their guards climbing up and down by means of ropes, and keeping watch armed and with mouth-blown "alarm horns." A fall from the spire will kill most men.

This was the favored oasis of the Qahtan tribe, until they were exterminated by the Zhentarim and their laerti allies.

## El Rahalat

This gray-crowned mountain is referred to as the Shunned Mountain because of Rahalat, its resident goddess. In mortal life, Rahalat was a shunned woman (Bedine sorceress), abandoned here by her tribe. She claimed the oasis at the base of the mountain as her home, and used her magic to prevent any tribe from grazing here.

During a drought, the Dakawa tribe murdered her to gain use of the oasis, Legend



holds that its spring turned to blood, and for the next ten years, anything that drank from it perished. Now, every Bedine tribe that camps at Rahalat must sacrifice a camel to the goddess or the water goes bad (turns to Type J poison, for all drinkers except beings favored by the goddess).

Rahalat's herd of goats still lives high on the mountain slopes. The goddess warns away beings who approach them too closely with the hollow knell of goat bells ringing in the *minds* of those she is warning, not in their ears. When she desires, Rahalat appears directly to living beings at the oasis or on the mountain (see "The Gods of Anauroch").

## Elah'zad

This out-of-the-way oasis is sacred to the Bedine. Its name means "House of the Moon," and that is also the name of the temple it holds.

The oasis well-hidden in a formidable maze of salt flats and rocky hills. It is not an easy place for an invader to reach or to attack.

A seemingly-endless chain of thousand-foot-high knolls slopes at last down into a small basin entirely surrounded by grayish ridges. Over a hundred small springs well up on the basin's sides and trickle down its gentle slopes. Crimson-leaved shrubs with blue stems and twiggy trees with copper and silver sprigs border each stream, forming vividly colored bands of vegetation that are strung about the basin like an immense spider web, each strand following a life-giving stream down the hill to a central lake, encircled by lush grass.

This sapphire-hued lake covers a full mile of the Sacred Grove at the bottom of the basin. In the center of the lake is a small, grassy island, and on the island stands an alabaster palace, built in the shape of a three-quarters moon: the House of the Moon.

The Bedine cross this lake by means of two round boats of their own making. These low, clumsy craft are fashioned of camel hide stretched over wooden frames; their stitched

seams let in streams of water.

The island is a small, grass-covered hill no more than a hundred yards across, topped by the three-quarter circle of the alabaster palace.

The House is made of a chalky, translucent desert rock cut so thin that anyone standing on the island can see the shapes of a throne and chairs inside, through the walls. It is entered through a gracefully curved foyer, carved from a single piece of stone shaped without any visible joints.

The foyer opens into a circular room. A huge throne covered with hammered copper sits at the far side of the room, flanked on either side by a row of stout chairs carved of dark wood. The floor is marble so black that it seems a bottomless pit; the ceiling is a single slab of translucent stone that filters sunlight into the chamber as a warm, creamy radiance. Blood spilled in the room vanishes into the black marble without a trace.

The House of the Moon is as old as the gods, and stood before the Scattering. The goddess Eldath can choose to speak through the mouth of any woman who enters it (the woman falls asleep, and the goddess directly and completely controls her body).

According to the Bedine, Elah'zad was the home of the moon goddess (Elah, or Selune), but At'ar (the sun goddess) drove her away and made it a prison for Eldath, the Mother of the Waters, because she was jealous of Eldath's beauty. Camels are not allowed to drink of the sacred waters (the streams and waters, where the Bedine believe that Eldath dwells); a separate camel well is provided for them.

DMs should consider this a place of power for Eldath, arid treat it as a temple for priests dedicated to her, wherein magical items can be recharged, faithful beings healed and cured of diseases, poisons, and mental or magical afflictions, at the DM's option.

If a DM has access to the module *FA1/Halls of the High King* consider The Sacred Grove to function as a "Major Grove" does, with all nine listed major grove powers, for priests and



faithful of Eldath and Selune. The waters of the lake will have all the powers of a Moonwell except that of corroding metal; powers that are given in that appendix as being exercised by a "druid or other cleric of Chauntea" function only for clergy of Eldath and Selune.

## Haunga

This is a verdant oasis of date palms and fruit trees, recently created by the Zhentarim (see "Created Oases," earlier in this chapter). A tree-cloaked hill at its center hides a stone-lined well chamber.

The well chamber is said to be guarded by a watchghost (detailed in the *Ruins of Under-Mountain* boxed set), and the main oasis pool

outside watched over by a dozen skeletons who lie waiting in the water until an intelligent being tries to drink without muttering the proper password.

A water-bucket by the well and a "forgotten" blanket hung over a tree-branch by the pool are said to bear spell-traps that polymorph unfortunates (who touch them without giving another password) into frogs! More skeletal undead, the whispers run, lurk high up in the palms, waiting to hurl themselves upon intruders and bear them to the ground far below.

## The Hills of Scent

This is a large area of trackless, interlocked stony sand-knolls. They are capped with



gnarled, tangle-branched frankincense trees. A few scrub bushes dot the stony ground, but it is otherwise bare of vegetation.

Bedine of certain tribes, it is said, know where to find four (or even more) small, unadorned watering-holes hidden in the Hills. Others who go looking for these water-sources tend to find the lions who roam this region of knolls first—or rather, the lions find *them*.

### Lion's Eye Oasis

The most verdant spot in the western Sword, this large oasis is home to a community of several hundred lamia, currently ruled by The Glaendra (described under “The Lamia” in the “Other Peoples of Anauroch” chapter).

The western edge of the oasis consists of dunes topped by mesquite trees, which fall away into a forest of acacias and date palms. This belt of trees (which dwindles, as one heads for the sands, into saltbrush and then chenopods) forms the southern boundary of the oasis, running east to a long, bare rock ridge whose highest point is pierced through. The wind whistles and moans constantly through this hole in the rock, which is the Lion's Eye itself.

The Lion's Eye runs north to join a higher, level-topped ridge that forms the northern wall of the oasis. All along the inside flank of this ridge runs a high meadow, a rolling, flowered-speckled stretch of lush grass, the playground of the lamia. (From time to time, the lamia hide in rocks when outlanders approach, waiting for the ignorant intruders to lead their camels up to this rich grazing-land—whereupon it *really* becomes the playground of the lamia!)

This meadow slopes down to meet the palm forest, along a long, narrow lake that lies at the center of the oasis. There the lamia hide their gold and gems in sunken chests that can be drawn up by ropes tied to the roots of certain palms.

Old Bedine tales of a time before the lamia

came also speak of treasure in the depths of the lake—lost, ancient magical treasures, guarded by horrific water-monsters.

### Lundeth

This village of sun-fire clay huts climbs the steep sides of a rock pinnacle within a day's ride of the southwestern edge of the Sword.

Surrounded by salt flats, and boasting its own deep well, it is a formidable, easily-defended stronghold.

Using magic, the Zhentarim seized it to serve as their western base of operations. Almost twenty minor magelings and underpriests of the Brotherhood currently inhabit Lundeth, served by the undead remains of the Goldor, the Bedine tribe who formerly owned and held the village.

### Ma'atar

A rich oasis of nut trees and shaded vegetable plantings, recently created by the Zhentarim (see “Created Oases,” earlier in this chapter). It is encircled by a dry ditch and a stone rampart, and is said to be defended by a man who can hurl fire (a Zhentarim mageling with a *wand of fire*).

Ma'atar also has a guard of three underpriests and sixteen rathered bored Zhentilar warriors. They tend the tree plantations and a carefully-watered, newly-established grazing lawn inside the encircling wall. A tranquil pool fills the center of this small oasis.

Stone buildings house the Zhentarim; secret doors in their thick walls open into ladder-shafts, allowing one down into the tunnels where the Zhentarim are assembling caches of weapons, rows of magically-preserved and jointed skeletons (awaiting use as undead legions), potions and other magical supplies, and so on. The mage currently in charge of the place has also piped water down two of the tunnels, and is growing the finest frill-collar mushrooms there for use



both in the oasis kitchen and in his own alchemical researches.

## The Oasis of Vipers

This ancient, well-watered oasis near the northern edge of the Sword is seldom visited by wandering Bedine, because of its ongoing infestation of extremely poisonous snakes.

The bones of camels and the skulls of humans lie entangled together in the thick, ungrazed underbrush of puncture vines; ocotillos, boojum trees, and dwarf cacti. More vines enshroud the stunted acacia and leaning palm and tamarisk trees alike in a webwork of shady concealment that is the slithering home of hundreds of serpents.

Birds, lizards, and small desert rodents are all absent here; any who do arrive are quickly eaten by the snakes, who prey on each other, on low-flying desert bats and on anything else unwary or desperate enough to venture towards the three small pools of the oasis.

## Olomaa

A rich oasis of fruit trees and young frankincense trees, recently created by the Zhentarim (see "Created Oases," earlier in this chapter). Olomaa sprawls over two large hills and the valley between them, and is guarded by a palisade of giant cacti, inside a dry ditch.

The sand ditch is home to many waiting, buried spring-sword traps. Triggering one of these causes the blade to burst up out of the sands, striking at THAC0 6 for its maximum normal damage.

The ditch is crossed by two stone-slab bridges, leading to man-high gates of iron, bristling with outward-projecting spear-tips,

Within, Olomaa has a small, fenced pasture area, several bathing-pools and even a water-fountain, sheltered by arbors that bear many small hanging and creeping plants. A simple stone house at its center houses the four Zhentilar warrior-gardeners, their supervisor (a

priest of Cyric), and the main guardian of the oasis: a beholder by the name of Xualahuu. It has lost the use of several eyes (DM's choice of which ones), and is recuperating here, relatively safe from the intrigue of Zhentil Keep and the warring rival eye tyrants of the northcoast Moonsea cities. Fiercely loyal to Manshoon of the Zhentarim, it will guard its oasis cunningly and zealously, seeking any chance to destroy intruders, seize magic, and gather treasure and valuable captives for the Brotherhood.

## Orofin

Orofin lies in a broad, grassy valley, overlooked by ridges. Once it was a mighty city, "Orolin" (for more on its glorious past, refer to "The Lost Kingdoms" chapter).

Now, it is just several acres of ruined buildings, with a crumbling fortress at its center. Signs of its lost splendor can still be seen: four canals radiate outwards from the fortress, dividing the city into quarters.

The canals are lined with thick greenbriar hedges, interspersed with acacia and wild apricot trees. These wild tangles were once lush strips of parkland, and more recently home to lions and other desert predators (before a Bedine tribe slew them, and took the city for their own). The Bedine were slain in their turn, by a Zhentarim army that made its last stand here—and fell before the angry Bedine (as described in the novel *The Parched Sea*). The Zhentarim did manage to poison the stagnant canalwaters, in an effort to deprive their besiegers of water; that taint (which was partially caused by the bodies of slain Bedine, and partially by magic) remains, making this onetime oasis a deadly wateringplace except for the still-pure deep well of the central fortress.

Wind-blown sand covers the foundations of long-fallen buildings at the outer edges of the ruined city; crooked lines in the sand mark where alleys and avenues once ran.

The edge of the city is marked by a circular



canal, that connects the four radiating canals together. A grand avenue encircles this canal, and from it four magnificent two-tier bridges leap the canals, to plunge into the center of each quarter of the city.

Each bridge is of granite, its mosaic-adorned pediments lifting two levels of roadway, each in three horseshoe-shaped arches, across the water. Every arch is crowned by a shallow point, and the central arch of each tier is decorated with a diamond-shaped mosaic. Of old, the underside of each bridge contained pumps that took water from the canals out into the surrounding fields; but the pumps are long silent, and the fields are beginning to expire into desert. Sand and bunch grasses can be seen here and there among the field grass.

The central fortress still looks magnificent, but eleven gaps now pierce its crenellated rampart-walls. Most of the buildings that lined the insides of those walls—stables, barracks, and armories—have collapsed into the inner courtyard.

This courtyard, about fifty yards across, holds a raised dais at its center, where a deep, high-pressure artesian well bubbles to the surface in a still-impressive fountain. The water empties through a small spout at the midpoint of each side of the fountain's square basin, into four ducts covered by rusty steel gratings. These ducts run to the inside edges of the walls, to form four shallow watering-pools (for long-vanished cavalry horses). Each pool has a spout at its bottom, that feeds one of the four radiating canals outside the fort. Beside each pool is a staircase up to the fortress ramparts.

There is an ancient escape tunnel from the fortress to the desert outside the city. Bedine lore holds that great treasure, perhaps the largest wealth in all the world, lies hidden somewhere in this ruined city—but so far, beyond a few gold coins, dusty gems, and ancient, cracked ivory inlays, no one has found any of it. In recent times, tales of ghouls haunting the ruins have spread across the Sword;

few Bedine feel the urge to go and see the truth about ruined Orofin for themselves.

## The Quarter of Emptiness

In the center of the Sword is a region known as the Quarter of Emptiness, for its lack of food and water. It is simply mile upon stretching mile of bare crescent dunes, with bedrock exposed by the winds here and there between. Bedine seldom enter it; there is nothing to go in for, and it is expected that fools who do venture in will die of thirst, at about the same time as their camels starve.

In the heart of this region is an abandoned but intact ancient city, called Rasilith by Bedine elders (see below).

## Rasilith

In the depths of the Quarter of Emptiness, an ancient city stands half-buried in a massive dune. Its encircling walls are of gray stone, as thick as a camel is tall. Inside the walls, the buildings stand intact, around a central fortress.

Some sages believe this city was once Tower Hlithal, westernmost of the settlements of Anauria. Others think that it lies too far west to be Hlithal, and is even older, a remnant of a human realm that preceded what are called "The Lost Kingdoms" today.

Few folk have explored Rasilith, to settle the matter. A generation ago, a Bedine tribe did come upon the intact city, and made plans to settle there—before disaster fell upon them.

In the central courtyard of the fortress was a well. Warriors descending to clean it out said it went down five hundred feet, opening into a great labyrinth of underground grottos filled with rivers of cool water.

A fantastic claim, that seemed—but hundreds of buckets of water, as sweet as honey and cool as the night, were drawn up in a single day, and the flow never slowed. The delighted Bedine had little time to enjoy their new home; when night fell, asabis (laertis, de-



tailed in the “Monsters of Anauroch” chapter of this sourcebook) climbed up out of the well, and slaughtered the greater part of the sleeping tribe. Only a few children (who had camped outside the walls because they were afraid to sleep in a place of so much stone) escaped, and the laertis pursued them until the full desert sunlight rose over the sands, savaging and devouring any whose galloping camels slowed or stumbled.

Laertis still lair in the caverns beneath the city, caverns ruled by the Phaerimm, who will direct forces of up to seven hundred laertis to pursue and slay anyone who finds this entry to their underground realm.

### The Saiyaddar

These are the prized “Hunting-Lands” of the Bedine, not mentioned to outlanders, and by common agreement not the territory of any one Bedine tribe. These high, rolling grasslands are home to many gazelle, onagers, and a few lions that prey on them.

The Saiyaddar stretches east and west for almost a hundred miles, between a mountain range and the ruins of Orofin (see above). It is only about half as large north to south, but is the finest gazelle country in all Anauroch. Here and there in its depths, all the trees and plants of plenty that can withstand a hot environment grow, and many springs rise throughout the region, to keep its grass lush and tall. (Bedine who travel afoot here risk attack from snakes, who grow large and fat on a diet of many hares and birds.) Around the edges of the Saiyaddar, heaths of saltbrush crown the sand ridges.

### The Scimitar Spires

The western edge of At’ar’s Looking Glass is marked by a line of obelisk-like rocky spires, that look like the teeth of some gigantic earthbound monster—or, as the Bedine name for them implies, like so many swords buried

hilt-deep in the sand, only their upright blades protruding.

The hulking spires rise out of dusty sand in a labyrinthine forest of stone without foothills, ravines, or any visible water and plants. The mountains simply soar sharply up from the sand.

Few Bedine know the ways through this dry barrier of soaring stone; few have explored the Spires. But those who do can find their way through the Spires in at least two places (the Gap of Skulls and the Road of Jackals), and can also find, between two of the Spires, the narrow, unmarked gap that is the upper end of the descending canyon known at its far, lower end as the Chasm (see The Well of the Chasm, below).

A certain wishbone-shaped spire is the landmark for the Chasm entrance. Less than two hundred yards from it is a flat-topped rock outcrop, and at its southern end is a 9’-wide gap: the Mouth of the Abyss, the beginning of the narrow, winding canyon that descends to the Well of the Chasm.

### The Shoal of Thirst

The Shoal is a great basin, stretching for miles in all directions: a waterless, endless salt flat. It sparkles underfoot, “as fiat as a pan and as endless as the sky,” white and cloudlike in full sunlight, pearl-grey when the desert sky is overcast.

The table-flat basin is so scorching that most Bedine cannot survive a trip across it. A rider’s eyes and throat sting with the salt and grit, and no plants grow because of the salt, so camels cannot eat (and must drink more water than usual).

The rare daytime rainfalls appear as purple veils, that do not reach the ground; hot air rising from the salt flats turns the rain to vapor long before it reaches the ground. When the sunlit sky is clear, mirages of blue lakes (reflections of blue sky) are common.





## The Sister of Rains

This ancient oasis is isolated from most Bedine by the dreaded Shoal of Thirst. Here outcasts, such as Bedine wizards, may dwell unmolested. The witch Qoha'dar, for example, raised and trained the witch Ruha here.

The Sister of Rains oasis lies at the base of the largest peak in the mountain range known as the Wall of Fallen Djinn (see below).

It is reached by traveling up a large plant-studded wadi, home to many hares. As one travels upwards, the sand walls rise into rocky cliffs, and grass carpets the sand.

Then one comes to an ancient stone wall, fifteen feet high and stretching across the entire canyon. A rusty gate of iron opens in its center, flanked by several huge breaches broken by rare floods.

The wall is the work of a now-forgotten, long-vanished Bedine tribe who once dwelt here. They also left behind a tower, long since fallen. On the northern side of the canyon is a wide, 30' high ledge where the tower once stood. Most of its stones are scattered and half-buried, but the foundation is still intact.

In one corner of it, a corner usually filled with blown sand, is a stone trapdoor. Beneath it is a spiderweb-shrouded, cramped pit, which opens into a bat-infested corridor. To the left, it runs to a hidden entrance down the canyon, near its northern wall (this is how the bats get in and out). To the right, the corridor ends in an old vault. The Bedine sorceress Ruha hid a spellbook here for years, in a box of sun-fired clay.

On the southern wall of the canyon, across from where the tower stood, a dozen springs spill out of the rock and cascade down the cliff-face, to collect in little pools. These tiny waterfalls are the Sister of Rains. Their water gives life to dozens of fig trees and a wild thicket of fruit-bearing plants (once a tended grove).

Human skeletons and graves are both scattered about the canyon, which rises into a blind end beyond the tower. At one time,

sheep and goats roamed this oasis, but jackals that visit from time to time dragged them down and devoured them, one by one.

## Tel Badir

Population: 1,900

This D'tarig hilltop village stands on the eastern edge of the Sword, overlooked by, the Tethyamar Mountains. Its winding streets run along the tops of ridges in an area of ravines and trees, an arm of plenty that reaches out into the desert. This "arm" of watered ground lies between two large streams, and four smaller ones wind and cascade their ways through the arm. West of the village, the six streams gather into a river that runs out into the desert, but soon vanishes into the hot sands.

Here the Zhentarim trade regularly with the D'tarig, at least once using this place to gather supplies to equip a desert army (purchasing whole herds of camels, for instance). This is the village where most outlander merchants come to buy frankincense and other desert goods, but they are careful to keep a low profile, for Zhentarim magic rules here, behind the scenes.

The wiser D'tarig resent the brutal power of the Black Robes, seeing beyond the gleaming gold coins they offer so profusely, and quietly work against the Zhents, ambushing a lone or drunken mageling when they can, sabotaging equipment when possible, and even setting tents or storechests afire. So far, the Zhentarim have blamed such activities on the hated Harpers, but the D'tarig are walking a dangerous road, and they know it.

They would be only too glad to hire or assist (with hiding places and the occasional healing potion) any adventuring band that would come to Tel Badir and wipe out, or at least humble, the Zhentarim—but quietly, so as not to bring the massed might of the Zhentilar armies down on the D'tarig anytime soon.

D'tarig who are especially resolved to fight



the Zhents (i.e. who would fight to certain death) include Udlara Thaerintauhn (CN hf F4), a camel-breeder whose husband was slain by a casually-cast Zhentarim spell some years ago; Dyulatar Rhaumm (NE hm T7), a young but successful thief, who spent some time as a frog before escaping a Zhent magelings' *polymorph* spell; and the grim, grizzled D'tarig elders Thorn Abbalhar (CG hm F9) and Shandlara Iritymm (NG hf W6), both retired adventurers who have traveled far in the Realms, and know the Zhentarim for what they truly are. Thorn and Shandlara have some minor (healing) magic items, and some gold, hidden away from their adventuring days, and they will not hesitate to use it, to bring down the increasingly oppressive Zhent presence.

The strength and dispositions of Zhentarim in 23 Badir is left to the DM; Zhentarim are moved often by their superiors, and operate in an atmosphere of paranoid secrecy, as they are tested by cruel masters. It is certain that the Zhents have spies in the city posing as independent outlander merchants, and have bought some D'tarig outright. It is likely that in or about the city at all times are at least twenty Zhentilar warriors, and at least eight (usually twice that) low-level (3rd to 6th) Zhentarim magelings, sent here to await the missions in which they hope to prove themselves.

The major export of Tel Badir is good, sturdy, well-trained riding and pack camels. Even Bedine have been known to come shopping here, when they need replacement camels in a hurry. Much of the trade in Tel Badir consists of outfitting merchants with sand-sledges, sacks, waterskins, kegs and barrels, ropes, tents, and the like. Bedine come here often to buy metal cooking implements and (vastly overpriced) weapons.

## VuerThyl

A well-watered oasis of fruit trees and acacias, recently created by the Zhentarim (see "Created Oases," earlier in this chapter). Extensive

underground storage cellars are located here, cut out of the solid interior of a rock mesa that rises to the south of the bolson where the Zhentarim set their decanter of endless water

In their excavations, the Zhentarim cut into a rich beryl gemstone vein, which yields beautifully-hued, clear emeralds of large size (most are about the size of a warrior's fist). They also cut into an ancient tomb, where a mummified body promptly collapsed into dust. Some Zhent agents stole certain items of ancient magic from this place, and hid them from their comrades, elsewhere in the oasis. (DMs note: these items are not specified here; use this as an opportunity to introduce magic of your own choice—perhaps new magic, of your own design—into play.)

The Zhents, who employed magic to do their digging, also unwittingly freed a powerful wizard from *imprisonment*: a very old and evil mind flayer, who is also a 23rd level wizard. This being, Oedachlo, is lurking about the oasis, concealed by his powerful magic, until he can learn more about where he is, and what is going on in the Realms today. He may tag along with a powerful party of adventurers, keeping out of their sight, to reach more civilized and hospitable areas. He will then start searching for the human wizard who imprisoned him—or the wizard's descendants—to take vengeance. (Just who that human wizard is remains up to the DM.) The oasis has a guard of low-level Zhentarim wizards and priests, and twenty-six Zhentilar warriors, all veterans of 4th level or greater, who react instantly to attacks and strange occurrences, and who work well together.

The only trap that the oasis has is a richly-pannelled "wizard's storeroom" at the back of the barracks, which is filled with a crystal ball, powerful-looking wands and rods, and rows of potion flasks. All of these things are dummies: but the entire room will be filled by a blade barrier spell whenever a certain word of activation is spoken in one of the adjacent rooms (where Zhentarim watchers are usually post-



ed, able to look into the storeroom via spy holes).

If a particularly strong foe is in the trap, a second word will cause a 7d6-damage *fireball* to explode halfway down the 60'-long, straight stone corridor that leads down one side of the barracks to the storeroom. This is usually used against a party that is fleeing the *blade barrier*, or standing and watching its effects.

Some of the Zhent wizards have minor "trap" magical items (left up to the DM), which they might place in the storeroom after its traps have been triggered, to catch a foe who returns thinking the place's fangs have now been drawn, and it is safe to plunder.

## The Wall of Fallen Djinn

Bordering the Shoal of Thirst (see above) is a row of foothills cut through by wadis, and studded with sparse saltbrush bushes. They rise into a range of mountains five thousand feet high. The Sister of Rains oasis (see above) is located in a canyon at the base of the largest peak in this range.

From afar, the mountain range looks like a gray or dun-colored wall studded with dark spots (qassis and acacia trees). Its name comes from an ancient battle, in which a Bedine tribe that dwelt on the mountain slopes (then, it is said, well-watered by springs, and covered with a forest) perished to the last child, fighting off some djinn. Other Bedine later found



evidence that the Bedine had slain over twenty djinn, an unheard-of feat.

### The Well of The Chasm

This oasis is habitually used by the Raz'hadi tribe. They are of the few Bedine who know where to find the Chasm, a canyon hidden in the Scimitar Spires mountain range (see above).

The chasm entrance, marked by a distinctive nearby wishbone-shaped spire is only 9' wide, and is known as the Mouth of the Abyss.

From the Mouth, a narrow, winding canyon descends to the Well of the Chasm. Its steeply-descending chute is often barely ten feet wide, but on occasion widens to eighty feet or more, before narrowing and bending again; a place few can defend against many.

Over a distance of several miles, the canyon descends some five hundred feet below the desert, between walls marked by ledges, shelves, and sand-slides, ending in a boulder-strewn hollow: the Chasm.

In the center of this small, sand-floored valley, a deep pit in the bedrock reaches an underground stream of rust-colored water.

### The Well of The Cloven Rock

Amid the Hills of Scent (see above), no more than sixty miles from sacred Elah'zad (see above) is a large, well-known oasis.

A natural bowl-shaped valley amid the countless hills studded with frankincense trees contains a grassy meadow and several thickets of wild trees of all sorts. At the center of this meadow, is the Cloven Rock itself: a large tor, riven in two, out of which gushes a spring. The spring spills out into a long, narrow lake, shaped like a curving swordblade, that cuts across the meadow to its edge, where it drains into a little stream that wanders all around the outside of the grassy bowl.

There is a well here, too: a relic of times before the spring found the surface, when water had to be drawn up laboriously from a deep cave.

Lions make this oasis their home, hunting in the surrounding hills. Bedine arriving here to camp always send in a hunting-party to slay or drive out the lions first, and post doubled guards armed with spears as well as bows and their personal swords, all the time they are encamped.

### Yliyl

This tiny, isolated oasis is little more than a small pool, a few palms and scrub bushes, and the bones of those who made it here too late, and were too weak to carry on before the sun killed them. Jackals and vultures are the most frequent inhabitants of this little hollow. There are persistent Bedine rumors of buried treasure here, but some elders say that those tales are misremembered: the sands around Yliyl really hide many, many graves, of a long-ago Bedine tribe who all died of some disease, and were buried with their belongings (gems, coins, and all) to prevent any spread of infection.

### Making The Sword YOUR OWN

There's not space enough in any sourcebook to mention and describe all the features known to the Bedine who dwell in the Sword; for a "barren" land, it has a lot of landmarks, holds a lot of Bedine tribes not described here, and does so by means of many, many oases not named or described in these pages.

DMs should feel free to add their own oases, particularly in the more remote parts of the Sword, in the northwest and along its border with The Plain of Standing Stones. Most oases are like Yliyl, which can be considered a "typical" waterstop oasis. A few will be larger-and there are even rumors of hidden valleys where trees, grass, and other life is abundant, and some Bedine even fish to catch food! All of these wonders are left to the DM to explore; they will be needed only if the Sword becomes the setting for a long-running campaign.



# THE PLAIN OF STANDING STONES

The central region of the Great Desert is not a sandy waste, but a wind-whipped, almost treeless rocky "plain." That word is a highly fanciful misnomer; although this broad, belt-like area does rise above the sand in a plateau, it is anything but flat, or smooth.

The howling, almost ceaseless winds have shaped and torn the rock of "The Plain" into spikes, pillars, and strange wave-like shapes, making it here into a tossed sea and there into a barbed forest of frozen, endless stone.

At first glance, all appears lifeless, but closer inspection reveals a few shrubs and stunted trees clinging to rock cracks and deep ravines.

Those who can fly will see far more greenery than those who must struggle on foot among the rocks: they can look down on pockets of growth in ravines, gullies, and cragtop basins.

The entire region is rich in minerals, and has lured many greedy prospectors to their doom. The dwarves of the North call it Turlaghh, "The Field of Broken Dreams," for this reason. No accurate maps of the Plain exist; DMs should add whatever features they wish (except human settlements) to the map. The whole area is a succession of spires, spiny ridges, cliffs and rockside rubble.

The larger valleys are splendors of lush grass and vivid flowers, providing forage for large herds of wild crag sheep. These in turn provide milk, wool, and meat for outlaws, renegade dwarven bands, and a few human and hobgoblin barbarian tribes. Handfuls of ogres, hill giants, and verbeeg also dwell in caves here.

The mineral wealth of this tortured land is great, but it boasts no rich ruins or treasure-caches; there were few settlements here even before Anauroch was a desert. Its ravines, pools, and rock pillars or peaks seem endless in numbers, but only a few have been named by outlanders. These few are described here; DMs are reminded that near a named feature there may be dozens more anonymous features very much like it.

## Places on The Plain

Please refer to the color mapsheet provided with this sourcebook for the locations of features mentioned here. The preceding details of desert landscape and plants should help DMs to "flesh out" such places, when they are visited in the course of play. Oases or cities that may become battlegrounds should be at least rough-mapped before play therein commences.

### Aerithae's Rest

Named for the long-ago adventuress who discovered it (and nursed her battered band of adventurers back to health, to sally forth and slay the orcs they'd been fleeing), this verdant valley is about three miles long and a mile wide, and consists of a deep, clearwater central lake (fed by an underground spring that wells up into it), surrounded by a thick, tangled forest that entirely fills the earthen bowl valley, and climbs a good way up the sheer rock walls that enclose it.

Foxes, raccoons, scramble-squirrels, and bears roam this tiny paradise; vultures avoid it because of eagles that lair above the valley.

Aerithae's Rest is hard to find; it lies between two knife-sharp ridges, that join in a three-pointed peak to the south. On this peak's crest the eagles lair, and in its base are at least three caves, one of which is home to the bears. Hard climbing is necessary to get into or out of the Rest, but the ridges and ravines around it hold several known rockfaces where iron-rich ore and nuggets can be mined with only a hammer.

There are persistent rumors of an entrance to the Underdark, hidden somewhere in the Rest and recently, an adventurers' tale of battling gargoyles in the Rest has come to the inns and taverns of the Dragonreach.

### Fallen Giant Rift

This crooked, many-branched crack in the earth runs for almost a dozen miles through the Plain. It is several hundred feet deep, but



Over a mile wide, and its trampled earth is thickly-grown with lush grass. Goats, sheep, and long-horned oryx antelopes graze in this rift, but the giants who dwell here dine on them too regularly for them every to grow so numerous as to denude the grass.

Named for a 40'-tall monster among giants, slain here by dwarves in a bloody, long-ago fight, the rift is still home to many (at least forty, though estimates vary) hill giants, who slay the creatures they hunt by hurling weapons at them with deadly accuracy. Some adventurers have reported seeing burros and riding-ponies, still with rotting wisps of harness lashed to them, roaming the grass amid the herds-and the giants, who seem to wage endless feuds among themselves, are thought to post guards, whose task is to hunt down all intruders, and let none escape to betray the presence of the giants to men who may bring armies to clear them out.

A spring at one end of the rift feeds several pools along its length. Many caves have been dug in the rift walls above these pools, so that the giants who dwell therein can hurl rocks down at creatures coming to drink below. Gold veins can be found in at least one of the caves, for the giants of the rift adorn themselves with necklaces of skulls—human, dwarven, and those of various predators—that have been dipped in gold, and polished.

## Heroes' Helm

At about midpoint in its flow, The River of Gems curls about a rocky pinnacle known as Heroes' Helm because its shape and pair of eyehole-like caverns makes it resemble a gigantic warrior's helm.

The two eye-tunnels lead into a lofty central cavern, home to Ghondalaath, a blue dragon of awesome size and powers, a great wyrm that commands unusual and mighty spells.

The Helm rises four hundred feet above the plain; the river gorge at this point is about another hundred feet deep. Ghondalaath's cavern

is about three hundred feet up the Helm and is known to have traps awaiting intruders, such as wands wedged in place to fire at certain triggers, guardian undead, and pitfall-chutes that drop victims out into a fall of several hundred feet, into the river gorge below.

## The Hidden Valley of Srindin

Named for the elven explorer and adventurer who made it his home when he grew too old and gentle to roam the Realms with weapons to hand any longer, this tranquil spot is a hemispherical hidden vale, roughly two miles across. It is a picturesque combination of alpine forest and grassy meadows, watered by at least three streams that spring from its walls and rush down to the trees in ever-chattering cascades.

The three streams come together in a deep, well-like sinkhole in the center of the vale, and there can be found the two most distinctive features of the vale: Srindin's abandoned home, and a circle of corpses.

Both the home—a curve-walled, beautiful, miniature castle carved from a single great piece of stone—and the corpses are floating upright in midair, above the dark waters of the pool.

Some fell magic, or magic-using being, is present in the castle, which is said to still hold the relics and treasures amassed by Srindin during his adventuring career. The corpses are all skeletal, once-human, and clad in the rusting, disintegrating remnants of plate armor. They face each other in a circle perhaps thirty feet across. Bones and weapons that fall from them do not plunge into the water below, but sink only a few inches, and then hang in midair around the figures. Some unknown and very powerful magic holds them aloft: a magic that is demonstrably resistant to *dispel magic*.

## The Pillar of Tauros

The distinctive crooked, hat-shaped form of this isolated rock pillar makes it a landmark



visible for great distances. It rises out of a steep (50' deep) gulch, to tower some three hundred feet over the surrounding land (which takes the form of smooth rock "swells," or gently undulating mesas).

The Pillar's crest often provides a nesting site for dragons, and there is a legend that these dragons are attracted by something of interest to dragonkind: a gigantic, ancient hoard, perhaps, or draconic spells or magical items. Whatever the truth of the matter, many adventurers have seen dragons flying from the top of the Pillar, to hunt-or to fight other dragons, who come to challenge them. Some spectacular midair battles have been witnessed by terrified adventurers, and the race of the dragons reported to have lairs atop the Pillar varies from year to year, so it

is hard to argue with the conclusion that something is attracting dragons strongly enough to cause fights for possession of this apparently bare, rocky height.

The Cult of the Dragon considers this a sacred place, and has begun to mount annual armed pilgrimages to it largely for the purpose of driving off or slaying adventurers who come too close to the Pillar.

### *The River of Gems*

The fabled River of Gems is a clearwater river that runs from the edge of the Ice Wall (the northern edge of the Plain, and southern edge of the High Ice) to a sinkhole or huge crater on the edge of The Sword, called "The Throat"



(see below). Its route is one long, snaking gorge; the river is a shallow, sluggish flow trickling along the gorge bottom, which is home to many scrub plants and stunted trees.

Both gorge and riverbed are studded with many gemstones. A traveler lucky enough to reach the river can scoop up a fortune in half a day of scrambling around in the gorge (of course, getting it back to buyers is not so easy . . .). Dark cavemouths open here and there along the gorge, leading to the depths of the Underdark, beneath Anauroch. Giant bats lair within, waiting for greedy intruders to come into the gorge.

They are not the worst predators of the gorge. Legends of the River are spread by mind-controlled agents of the Phaerimm, to get the Phaerimm a steady supply of slaves and food. By night, or when intruders enter the caves, servant creatures of the Phaerimm will attack, heedless of their own safety.

At about midpoint in its flow, the river curls around a rocky pinnacle known as “Heroes’ Helm” (see above).

## The Shattered Tower

This famous landmark of the Plain is a cracked stone castle that looks for all the Realms as if someone rammed it into the ground hard, at an angle, from above, breaking it with the impact.

That is indeed what happened. The Shattered Tower is actually a cloud castle that drifted too low, into reach of Phaerimm spells, and was brought crashing to earth, shattering into its present ruin.

Of old, the fabled Cloud Castles of the storm giants hung forever above the heart of Anauroch, well above the reach of the magic-draining spells cast by the Phaerimm. The giants moved their aerial castles elsewhere long ago (chiefly to the remote North, above the Spine of the World, some say), but this ruin was left behind.

Only the magic that constructed it keeps it

from collapsing into rubble. Adventurers would be wise not to use much magic while inside—unless they really want to bring the whole thing crashing down on their heads! This castle has been explored (and looted) by several adventuring companies, over the years, but the mouldering bones of giants who perished in its fall still lie in its rubble-strewn halls, and years of digging await anyone who wants to be sure that they’ve checked every chamber and corner for buried riches. Survivors of the expeditions that have explored the shattered castle warn that various monsters have found the place suitable as a lair, over the years.

## The Swordpoint

This distinctive peak is a useful landmark: its soaring, clean-lined needle shape is unmistakable from afar.

Manticores are known to lair nearby, drinking at several natural wells (water-filled sinkholes) around the base of the Swordpoint. Intruders trying to use one of these water-sources are likely to face a mantichore ambush.

## The Throat

The River of Gems runs from the edge of the Ice Wall to The Throat, a huge, circular crater or sinkhole on the edge of The Sword. The Throat is about three miles across, and is home to thousands of desert birds (such as vultures) who nest on its steep slopes.

The Throat’s deep blue waters are said to hold heaps of gemstones, rounded by their passage down the river, and also said to hide the bones of more than one overeager adventurer, who fell afoul of whatever aquatic monsters lurk in The Throat. These might be water nagas, or freshwater morkoths, or kelpies, or something else . . . the tales of survivors who made it back out to tell of their experiences have been too fearful and garbled to be sure.





## THE HIGH ICE

No human has ever found the northern edge (if there is one) of the seemingly endless expanse of snow, ice, and finally, glacial ice that covers the northern reaches of Anauroch. As desolate and wind-flayed a wilderness as the more southerly and dry areas of Anauroch, the High Ice (sometimes called the "High Land" in old texts) is an ice plain broken by deep crevasses, and roamed by dangerous remorhaz. The remorhaz dine on the fabled yeti, crevasse-dwelling ice toads, packs of winter wolves, and scurrying snow snakes (a local, white-furred, icy-blooded species of "normal constrictor" snake; refer to the "Snake" entry in MC1). These all dine on the "icejacks," plump, hare-like furred herbivores who in turn feed on the abundant, tumbleweed-like "snowflowers," found in vivid purple, yellow-green, and pink hues in crevices in the ice and rock, or blown over the plain by the frigid winds.

Above all of these wing "great soarers" (white-feathered arctic condors, identical to their temperate cousins; refer to the "Vulture" entry in MC3) and smaller scavenger birds, who glide silently above the snow, riding the winds. Most of these winged hunters are harmless to anything larger than a dog, but blue dragons and wyverns are also known to hunt over the frigid waste.

The High Ice holds natural dangers aplenty for intrepid adventurers: falls due to ice, avalanches of ice and snow, suddenly-opening crevasses, and the biting cold.

### The Frozen Sea

On the western edge of the High Ice the ice fails, giving way to frozen sands. Here, in ancient days, the Narrow Sea lay like a sword, running north and south along what is now the Desertsedge. Its basin is now filled with a wind-sculpted, desolate labyrinth of frozen sand dunes, marked here and there by the diggings of bold explorers who come seeking the riches of the lost port cities-and the lairs of those creatures who prey on such fools.

This region, called by some the Frozen Sea (due to its past; the present-day explorer will search in vain for any water or ice), is a breeding-ground for many birds in spring, when ground-hugging plants appear and briefly flourish. Little other life is readily apparent here to untrained eyes.

The Frozen Sea holds certain features of interest to adventurers, including the ruined cities of Ascore, Hlaungadath, and Oreme.

### Ascore

In *FR5/The Savage Frontier*; mention is made of evil-haunted Ascore, once a port (of the dwarven nation of Delzoun, itself little more than a memory) on this now-vanished sea. The half-buried hulks of colossal dwarven stone ships rise out of the sands east of Ascore's abandoned docks.

Even orcs avoid the ruined city. Intrepid adventurers report that hags command legions of undead there. A circle of thirteen tall, five-sided red pyramids rises in Ascore's center, and seems to be used in covey spells of great power and in rituals of worship to some evil deity-or, some whisper, a vast evil creature that lairs *under* the city . . .

### Hlaungadath

Due east of Ascore, perhaps forty miles into the desert, another city rises out of the sands. This one is old but largely intact; long cracks lace its spired towers, and here and there a dome has fallen to winter snowloads or howling windstorms. This onetime independent human city is inhabited, and kept more or less in repair. It is now a community of lamia, who dwell here in warped luxury, amid wines, clothes, apparati, and magics scavenged from Netherese ruins over the years. The city holds great riches, but these are little cared for; one escaped human captive spoke of gems tossed carelessly into corners like so many marbles, and magic armor piled in lightless, spiderweb-shrouded storerooms. Perhaps ninety lamia



dwell here, ruled by over twenty lamia nobles.

Armed with Netherese magical items (such as *ropes of entanglement* and *wands of paralyzation*), these nobles sally forth from the city in human form, whenever lamia patrols report intruders in the area. The nobles attempt to capture the intruders by magic and deception, and bring them to the city.

In the labyrinthine depths of Hlaungadath's lightless cellars and storage caverns, the lamia keep a breeding colony of human slaves, to which all captives are added. Lamia live on the cooked flesh of their slaves, especially prizing babies, but taking care not to "overeat" from the herd (depleting ranks and quality).

Ambitious nobles work on schemes for raids out of the desert, to take food-slaves from orc holds in the nearby mountains, and carry off whatever dwarves and humans they can find.

In the sands just west of Hlaungadath lies a crashed "ship of the skies." (For DMs interested in SPELLJAMMER™ campaigns, this is a galleon, its bow hopelessly smashed, but with an intact minor helm aboard. It cannot sail on water without extensive repairs, but its sturdy frame will serve for aerial voyages as long as major storms and collisions are avoided.) Its crew are long gone (fled or eaten, along with the cargo), and its origin and ownership forgotten.

The lamia know of its past use, and keep a watch over it as they search through all the records they can find, to learn how to make it fly (they simply don't realize the helm is what takes it aloft). They plan to use it for food-slave raids over the Sword Coast lands to the west, and in water-gathering expeditions to the southwest, to the rivers and marshes they know to be there. Adventurers who see the ship may figure out its power if they are familiar with other aerial ships of the Realms; the nose-down galleon, heeled over in the sand, is still tethered to the top of a high tower of the city by its long anchor-chain.

## Spellgard

The Fallen Lands, a tortured, rocky waste of crumbling ruins, dense brush, and lurking, dangerous monsters, is the largest remnant of the vanished kingdom of Netheril. It boasts too many places of interest to adventurers to be detailed here, but one feature must appear in any guide to Anauroch: sinister Spellgard.

Where the southern edge of the high, broken region known as The Fallen Lands meets the western edge of Anauroch, a serpentine, rocky ridge rises from the sands. That ridge is crowned by a vast, grand castle, Spellgard.

Once the abode of Lady Saharel, of the High Mages of Netheril (a ruling elite in that kingdom of sorcery), Spellgard was called Saharelgard, and was a rich storehouse of wealth, mighty magic, and luxuries of dress, decoration, furnishings, and food.

Today it is a ruin, largely stripped of its riches by time, thieves, and abundant mosses, molds, and fungi that grow in its halls. It is a huge place of turrets, archways, balconies, and mile upon mile of interlinked stairs, galleries, and chambers. A few areas, such as the Fountain Hall, are unspoiled and luxurious.

Spellgard sits atop a well, and is cool, dim, and damp inside. This makes it ideal for fungal growth, a popular destination for desperate, parched desert folk, and a strategic "last known water" stopping-place for outsiders about to plunge into dry Anauroch.

Spellgard is said to be haunted by the Sorceress of Saharelgard, now an archlich (a rare, powerful type of undead detailed in the SPELLJAMMER™ accessory *SJR1/Lost Ships*). Saharel is said to be good in nature, but not welcoming to intruders, and not at all pleased to meet Zhentarim or any visitors who attack her on sight or despoil her halls.

A little known, one-way magical gate in a cellar-cavern of the High Castle in the High Dale (which pierces the Thunder Peaks to link Cormyr and Sembia, in the Dragonreach lands) leads to a grand inner hall of Spellgard.



Anyone taking this magical transport must step out over the reeking cesspool of the High Castle at just the right place, and in just the right direction. A misstep means a very unpleasant submersion in the pool; the proper step takes the user instantly into a cold, shadowed hall, lit by glowing mosses: Archmitre Hall, in the center of Spellgard.

The Hall is tall and dark and gloomy. Dark archways gape in walls all around, and moss hangs from stone balconies above. There is no other sign of life. The floor is an uneven tumble of marble, the stones punched upward as if by an angry giant from beneath.

Cold breezes blow from somewhere unseen, and dust is thick in the air. The only furnishings are stone seats, carved into the walls in little curl-ornamented niches.

A surprising number of adventurers have explored Spellgard's ways, in search of the great magic that must lie hidden here. If any have found powerful sorcery, no word has been whispered around the Realms of it. A few adventurers who survived the trip have spoken of large numbers of cunning, stealthy gargoyles hunting them around the castle, as they hunted for treasure.

An explorer today will find mushrooms and luminescent mosses growing here and there about the empty stone chambers. The torn, dusty cobwebs seem spun long ago, by now-vanished spiders. Yet there is a silent, watching feel to the place.

Room after room is empty save for little heaps of collapsed wood, gilt, and stone, where furniture has fallen before relentless passing years. Here and there are the scars of long-ago battle: scorched, blackened areas on the walls and floor, shattered stone panels, and buckled flagstones. Mold, moss, dust and rot overlay everything, and silence reigns.

## Oreme

Another former port on the vanished Narrow Sea now stands isolated in the sands about two

hundred miles east of Weathercote Wood. Oreme of the White Towers was a city of artisans, ruled by proud, independent mages. All are long since fled—except, legend whispers, those who became lichens. The adventurer Steeleye told of fleeing from a demi-lich somewhere in the sand-choked streets and shattered towers of this city. Vultures nest on the towers that still stand. From afar, travelers have seen at least one tall tower still towering above the sands: broader about than many castle keeps, and as tall as thirty tall warriors. Others have fallen, crushing great gaps in the walls in their ruinous descent, and lie like the shattered skeletons of beached whales, broken and white amid the shifting sands.

This far south, the sands thaw in summer, and storms blow inland from time to time, bringing moisture into the desert. From Weathercote Wood in a giant arrowhead pointing northeast, scrub plants and sagebrush grow in scattered clumps, providing abundant forage for camels and other desert dwellers.

This forage not only enticed the Zhentarim (and others before them) into thinking caravans could easily cross the sands, but provided a relatively easy road for explorers bent on plundering abandoned Oreme.

The easy road is still there, but fewer pass that way, these days; Realmslore tells of the lichens of Oreme, and less terrible but no less fatal desert predators, and of many *spell trigger* magical traps left behind by the mages of Oreme, to bring ill on those who might come seeking to plunder. Whether or not anything of worth is left in Oreme remains an open question. Those who might answer it have not returned, or have chosen not to draw attention to themselves by telling tales.

## The High Ice

Most of Anauroch—mile upon trackless mile, a space larger than any six Realms or so that one might combine, in one's mind—is covered by a vast, fissured glacial ice sheet. Its rifts and



heights are innumerable, and few bear names (or hold anything of interest) to any but the savage creatures who dwell there.

Legends whisper of cities locked in the eternal ice, buried forever—cities of great elven magic, and lost dwarven wealth, and proud orc splendor—but if any living being in the Realms has walked the hidden ways of such cities, they have not spoken of it (except, of course, for Elminster, who raised an eyebrow, and said, “Of course they’re there still: An-narath, Bhaulaea, and the rest.” When I asked him where they were, he merely smiled and said, “I do believe my memory is failing. It does that, ye know, after five hundred years or so, and I’m much older than that, now.”) A few landmarks, however, are known to folk of the Realms today, and appear on the maps. These include the Smokeholes, the Rift of Stars, and Llashloch, the Lake of Ice.

## The Smokeholes

These large, round holes are eternally shrouded in cloud-like plumes of steam, created by the hot air that has melted through the ice here meeting the frigid upper air.

The Smokeholes are vents for hot, steaming, moaning air rising from underground caverns where ice meets lava flows. The hellish spaces below the ice here are known as the Caverns of Burning Ice, and particularly bold (or, if you prefer, stupid) gnomes and dwarves have mounted perilous expeditions to reach them, to forge or derive metals for the making of splendid weapons. Scalding jets of steam and noxious underearth gases make descents into the Smokeholes or the Caverns below dangerous indeed: when characters are in these areas, roll 1d12 once every three rounds. On a result of 1 or 2, apply natural effects equal to a *cloudkill* spell to a randomly-determined area.

Salamanders and other heat-loving monsters are said to lurk in the Caverns of Burning Ice, and dragons are known to lair in nearby grottoes warmed by hot gas escaping through tiny

vents in the rock. Just how extensive the Caverns are, and what other creatures may benefit from their warmth, is not known to the surface Realms.

## The Rift of Stars

There are many rifts, or large crevasses, in the surface of the seemingly-endless sheet of High Ice. Many are as large as good-sized river valleys, and all offer some shelter from the howling winds; most are home to something. Several are distinctive enough to deserve special mention.

The Rift of Stars is one such. It is large but narrow, running for many miles northeast and southwest in the ice. The riven ice here reveals a corresponding gash or cleft in the underlying rock, so that ice gives way to rocky walls. These are studded with *beljurils*: those strange, fist-sized gemstones of Faerun that periodically emit a cold “flash” of light. By day, the Rift may seem alive with moving, winking reflections, but at night, it is an awesomely beautiful, evershifting tapestry of glittering lights (from which it gained its name).

Many adventurers embark on the long “Road to the Rift,” made famous by caravan-merchants of Amn, down on their luck, who came up with a ballad about the Road of Gems that would make them all rich. The Rift is studded with a wealth of natural gemstone outcroppings, bristling amid the *beljurils* in a natural, fantastic “lode of lodes” that can make the lucky prospectors who reach it—and make it to far-off gem markets alive—very, very rich. Travelers in the High Ice have even made fortunes coming upon sacks of rough-hewn rubies, sapphires, *bejurils*, and chunks of *amaratha* (both of these last two gemstones are detailed fully in the *FORGOTTEN REALMS® Adventures* hardcover sourcebook) abandoned by dead adventurers—or still grimly held by their dead or undead remains.

There is too little food, warmth, and water for anything to live in the Rift for long, but it is



visited often by High Ice predators, and scavengers of the human sort often lurk amid the icy pinnacles near the Rift, hoping to slay other prospectors for their food, supplies, and gemstones.

The Rift contains many tiny caves and hollows, gouged out by eager miners over the years, and these may provide temporary shelter, and yield meltwater when a sunny day follows a snowfall. Bright sun turns the Rift into a blaze of reflections equal in effects to heat shimmer (see the chapter on “Dangers of the Desert”), and also causes cracking, singing sounds as the gem-laden, crystalline rocks heat up. In prolonged periods of sunlight, it is possible for unclad humans to sunbathe or even roast in the sun, draped in the right areas of the Rift.

### **Uashloch, The Lake of Ice**

Another large glacial rift is shaped like a bent human arm. Its glistening, treacherous ice slopes descend to a lake of ice floes and steamy plumes. Hot springs bubble up from the depths of the earth here, and have melted a rift that almost freezes over, but whose icy crust never quite hardens entirely. Instead, a shifting tangle of canted, wind-sculpted ice floes covers the tepid waters that are home to many large fish and things like white-skinned coldwater octopi. The chance of good meals brings many High Ice predators (and intruders) down into the rift where they feed and are fed upon by denizens of the depths, other hungry visitors, and, some say, ice-dwelling “snow cloaklers”: a species of white-skinned cloaklers (detailed in Volume 3 of the *Monstrous Compendium*, the first FORGOTTEN REALMS® appendix) who dwell in the rift and nearby crevasses, and fly silently out over the lake to hunt.

### **The Taglorlar**

All over the High Ice, rock spurs and the pressures of shifting ice throw up little pinnacles,

or wave-shaped frozen heights. These prominences provide handy lookout-points to see from (and be seen on) for desert-dwellers and visitors alike. Most are claimed as lairs or at least habitual perches by snow owls, great soarers, and other flying creatures, and may serve as windbreaks (or be hollowed out into small caves) for others.

One group of these pinnacles is named, and serve as a road of landmarks for outsiders trying to reach the Rift of Stars (see above). The Taglorlar, or “Beth of Taglo,” are a line of sharp rock tors that rise out of the Plain of Standing Stones below the ice-line, and run steadily northeast for many days of travel.

No one is known to have counted all the Teeth, but many beings have used them as a road across the ice, or as homes. Travelers planning to follow the line of peaks are warned that predators there are expecting them-and waiting hungrily.

### **Untrivvin**

This lonely peak is the abode of many yeti, and is said to be haunted. Its name means “singing rock” in a long-vanished tongue, and the name and the haunted reputation both stem from the fact that this mountain rings like a bell from time to time from the blows of hammers in the depths: hammers wielded by thaalud, or “tomb tappers” (detailed in the “Monsters of Anauroch” chapter).

Tomb tappers dwell in the depths beneath the High Ice, and deeper underground elsewhere in the Realms. This mountain is the only known surface connection with their deep tunnels; it rings because it is honeycombed with smooth-carved, curving chambers and passages. Some sages say there is much treasure to be found in Untrivvin, of gems and rare metals; others say cynically that no explorer has returned laden with such-or, as far as they know, returned at all.



# THE LOST KINGDOMS

Many have heard of the Lost Kingdoms, those fabled, rich realms of long ago, that lie buried somewhere beneath the shifting sands of The Sword, in Anauroch. These lands are the source of a lot of fanciful tales, a lure for lots and lots of adventurers who'd like to get rich, and a subterranean home for the sinister Phaerimm (see "The Phaerimm").

The Buried Realms are (correctly) said to be riddled with ancient, unmarked magical gates, allowing passage—often unintentional!—from the Realms to other planes and worlds, and vice versa. Many strange creatures appear hereabouts, and more than one famous (or infamous) being of Faerun has vanished here—such as Gondegal, who stumbled between two mist-shrouded standing stones and found himself in the demiplane of Ravenloft.

Stairs, shafts, ravines, and even broad roads lead down from the Stonelands and the sands of The Sword to the Lost Kingdoms below. The folk of those buried realms have become the nomadic Bedine, fearing and shunning the depths and the magic that was once theirs.

More is said of those dark underlands, the Buried Realms, in the chapter entitled "The Phaerimm." This chapter is a guide for DMs in placing treasures and features in the depths; here we explore the glory that was, surveying the lands that were once proud. Included in this sourcebook is a map from the Year of the Tusk (112 DR), showing these Three Realms—and the beginnings of the desert created by the Phaerimm, known then as the Great Sand Sea ("Anauroch" then meant the glacier to the north, called "the High Ice" today).

Time has stolen many of the hard facts and details of the Three Realms; here we do a "whirlwind tour" to catch a few ideas of what life in the Lost Kingdoms was like, then.

## Anauria

Richest of the Lost Kingdoms, Anauria was a human-ruled land of humans, elves, and half-elves, where nobles hunted boar, stags, and

monstrous game while the farms of the commoners produced food for the Three Realms, and spare grain enough to sell to all the lands about the Inner Sea.

From its glittering capital, Amazandar, the City of Gems, Anauria dominated overland trade to and from the Three Realms. Rich gemmines lay underneath Amazandar, reached by well-guarded deep shafts that were kept as secret as possible by the noble families that owned them.

The most powerful noble families of Anauria were the elven houses of Nyntynel and Olyrnn, and the human lines of Thardresk (the royal house), Nemrin, and Maluradek. Anauria's greatest king was Thausimbel "The Wise" (a.k.a. "Greybeard" and "The Long-Lived"). He had elven blood, and ruled for three hundred and sixty-odd years, arranging alliances, marriages, and business dealings that wove long-lasting peace between elves, the dwarves of Oghrann, and humans in what was to become known as the Dragonreach.

The city of Anauril was noted for the making of fine steel swords, the best human smiths produced in the Moonsea North at that time. Anauria's best forges were here, working plentifully with iron and tin (but lacking much copper and zinc). Helvara was Anauria's main agricultural market and farm outfitting center. The prosperity of the land was guarded by the fortresses of Tower Hlithal (which guarded against the goblins of Araugul, nomadic ore hordes, and occasional outlaw raiders out of Asram) and Tower Ramanath (which patrolled against brigands and monsters out of the Hunters' Hills).

## Asram

Second richest of the Three Realms, Asram was governed from rich Phelajarama, the City of the Serpent, known for its gold-leaf-covered carved serpents, but the most important city of the realm was Orolin, the City of Magicians. In this land, magic was used in everyday



things (not reserved for a ruling elite, as in Netheril). Magicians could be hired on every street of Orolin, and their wealth and works made the city a sprawling place of villas and orchards, clustered around a circular city core with canals, parks, and a fortress.

Spell-guarded expeditions went out from Orolin to secret places in the Great Sand Sea, and brought back much gold, rarer zinc, and the finest copper known in those days. If Anauria was proud, Asram was decadent. Parties went on for days, and every citizen pursued his or her own whims, trusting to the magic of the realm to defend them against foes. Jaded young nobles even invented a sport of "monster-baiting," wherein they wore outlandish costumes and sought out monsters in their lairs, to flee through the night for the excitement of it all, until searching friends laid the pursuing beast low with magic.

The Asramian city of Ulshantir was noted for its coppersmiths and fine brass goods, whereas the port of Miirsar was known for its finely-crafted ships. Many small-net fishermen dwelt in Miirsar, going out in the dawn mists of Lake Miir every day to fish for the blue-scaled brench and the spicy crabfin.

## Hlondath

Least powerful of the Three Realms, northerly Hlondath was a land of loggers and herdsmen (who kept sheep, goats, and shaggy cattle). Its capital was Mhaelos, but its most important city was Rulvadar, a fortified refuge against marauding ogres, orcs, hobgoblins, bugbears, and flind for folk in the Moonsea North. Companies of spearmen made many forays into the Border Forest. Under their protection, Hlundites made sturdy wagons, fine furniture, paper, and lumber to ship to other lands.

## Independent Cities

Port Miir was a lawless, roaring place, the center of commerce for goods entering and leaving

"the West Kingdoms" (as they were called then, being west of the Teshan Mountains, now known as the Desertsouth Mountains). The goods came and went east out of the port on Berothir's Trail (named for the ranger who established it, slain by orcs in doing so).

It was a city of moneylenders, caravan-masters, and "quick money," where a loose band of ruling wizards struggled to keep down the numbers and successes of thieves.

Oum was a crossroads-town, where roads and merchants met. It straddled the border between Hlondath and Asram, belonging to neither (and at times, was a source of tense hostility and confrontation between the two kingdoms). It became a place of bookshops, sages, and proud craft-folk, who made mirrors and glass windows (both rare in those days), fine clothing, jewelry, lamps, pottery and iron-ware.

## Other Features

Mt. Shaddath (westernmost peak of the Desertsouth Mountains) and the Shaddan Hills (now lost in the sands of Anauroch) were both named for Shaddara, the legendary child-queen who was called "the Fair," and grew up to be a proud, keen huntress who often hunted boars and monsters in the Hunters' Hills. She was the greatest Queen of Anauria.

Mt. Shaddath is today known as Rausrawna, which means "westernmost" in the tongue of the D'tarig; its former name survives as "Shadow:" in the name Shadow Gap.

"The Burn" was once a goblin-infested forest, eradicated (with magical fire, that let no trees grow again for many a year) by an Anaurian army led by Olzogath "the Grim." Or-lath Wood, on the border between Anauria and Asram, was named for Olzogath's son, who chose to hunt goblins there, not raze a forest as his father had done. The everpresent goblins had a stronghold at Araugul (pronounced "Ar-ah-gOOL"), also known as Goblin-mount.



## THE GODS OF ANAUROCH

The Phaerimm and the beholders of Toril do not venerate gods, though some of their races who dwell on other planes and worlds do. Some semi-intelligent Anaurian remorhaz worship Augaurath, a gigantic white dragon, who dwells in the High Ice (she in turn worships Task, detailed in the *FOR1/Draconumicon* accessory book). The lamia of Anauroch worship many different gods, both human and others, and are currently searching for a “true faith.” None of these deities are described here.

D'tarig worship the same gods as other humans, and the faith of “The Lord of the Sands” vanished with The Lost Kingdoms. Of old, the Bedine knew and worshipped all the human gods, but after the Scattering (see the “Bedine Society” chapter), they believe most of the gods turned away from the Bedine and in response, the Bedine turned away from them.

The Bedine do not have priests who are granted spells by the gods (although in rare cases, fervent prayers have caused a deity to manifest magically to aid a Bedine supplicant). Bedine are devout, following the dictates and wishes of the gods as interpreted by learned elders (“holy men”) and sheikhs, reading natural signs, but they do not have a priest “class” in the AD&D® game sense.

Recently, some Bedine have joined The Cult of the Sacred Skull, a splinter faith that worships a talking skull. (In reality, the skull is magically animated by a mind flayer High Priest, his nature concealed behind a skull mask; he is a tool of the Phaerimm, and utters what they bid him to). The Sacred Skull faithful are a ragtag band of fanatic Bedine warriors and thieves. This cult is especially active in the eastern Sword, as the Phaerimm try to offset growing Zhentarim influence.

Bedine tend to fear and obey their deities, rather than worshipping them. Chief among them is At'ar the Merciless, the “Yellow Goddess.” She is the sun, seen as a spiteful, faithless woman. Of old, “At'ar” was called “Amaunator” in full, and was the male sun deity of Netheril. At'ar tends to ignore the Bedine

completely; if a DM wishes her to manifest, use the entry for Horus-Re in the *FR10/Old Empires* sourcebook.

Elah is the Bedine moon goddess, and is the same deity known elsewhere in the Realms as Selune. Priesthood details for Selune are given in the *FORGOTTEN REALMS® Adventures* sourcebook; clergy of Selune will be tolerated in Anauroch, but not obeyed.

Kozah is the Bedine god of tempests; he vents his wrath by causing sandstorms (the sand left in the air for days after a major storm, that colors the sky crimson as the sun rises, is known as “Kozah’s mark”). Desert storms show his fury at the faithlessness of his wife At'ar, as the harlot enters N'asr's tent night after night (= the sun goes down). Kozah is the god Talos; priesthood details are given in the *FORGOTTEN REALMS® Adventures* sourcebook. Clergy of Tales who enter Anauroch will be tolerated but not obeyed.

N'asr, the Lord of the Dead, is the Bedine name for Cyric, the god of death, murder, and tyranny (who has taken the place of Myrkul). The great white-bearded vultures of the desert, known as “N'asr's children,” are said to ferry spirits to the camp of the dead, taking the dead to N'asr's tent (which is somewhere westwards, beyond the setting sun), where the Pitiless One awaits.

Djinn serve N'asr; he gives the dead who displease him or who don't measure up to them for sport, and then food. The worst fate of a Bedine is to wind up the slave of N'asr, so Bedine dead are washed to cleanse away the odor of life, to avoid offending N'asr. Clerical details for Cyric appear in the *FORGOTTEN REALMS® Adventures* sourcebook; the Bedine fear such priests, and will attack them.

The Bedine claim N'asr is the sun's lover. The sun, At'ar, forsakes her lawful husband Kozah every night to sleep in N'asr's tent.

Shaundakul, the Treacherous Lurker In The Sands, is the mischievous, malicious trickster of the desert. He appears as a jackal-headed man, but corresponds in powers to the deity





Beshaba. He blinds folk, causes oases to dry out, travelers to lose their way, and so on. Shaundakul is blamed by the Bedine for all misfortune. His servants, the capricious "Windghosts" of the desert, are actually mad watchghosts (detailed fully in *The Ruins of UnderMountain* boxed set, and described in the "Anaurian Adventures" chapter of this book).

Under these "great gods," who are not actively worshipped (and so take little interest in Anauroch) are the "spirits of the earth," or "little gods." These gods the Bedine have daily dealings with: they are the spirits that the Bedine believe to inhabit every place or feature of the desert. The Bedine worship these demigods (largely by the sacrifice of camels or treasure), and they are very real, if seldom seen. Every oasis except those recently created by the Zhentarim, or as yet undiscovered by the Bedine has its Place Spirit, as do most other major desert features.

As demigods, all Place Spirits have the following powers: 70% Magic Resistance (40% vs. other demigods, 20% against deities of greater power; the ability to know what is happening in their territory, be it a single tor, a mountain, or an oasis), and in the area around for up to a mile distant: and the ability to see and attack into those regions of the ethereal plane touching on their place of power. Some Spirits can project a single manifestation. It can do two things at once, but can't leave the place of power. If it is destroyed, the spirit needs a full year to create another.

Place Spirits have a base saving throw of 4, and can never leave their place of power. They can communicate by speech, from a manifestation or from a "focal point" in their place of power (such as a pool at the center of an oasis). Rituals to, and commandments of, these deities vary from one to another-but most Bedine know "the rules," and no place spirit will act vengefully against an intruder who is wholly ignorant of what is right or expected; blasphemy lies only in wilfully and deliber-

ately flouting the wishes of a spirit.

Every Place Spirit can temporarily imbue any being in their territory with spell ability, granting them any spell of 5th level or less (one spell per being, per day).

Through direct contact between the chosen being and a Place Spirit's manifestation or focal point (e.g. the being steps into the pool, or touches a certain standing stone), a spirit can also manifest its powers as follows: once a day, it can grant the *limited wish* of another being; twice a day, it can heal or raise dead (i.e. it can use one power twice, or use both of them once each); and it can also cast one of the following spells, once each day: regenerate, *reincarnate*, *restoration*, or *resurrection*.

In addition, all Place Spirits can by mental contact (within their place of power) guide beings to water, communicate its absence or hide it, and can turn water to poison or make it melt away from the body of a being trying to touch it. If they can appear as a manifestation, the manifestation can always at will emit effects equal to a *rod of terror* (described in the DMG) or a repulsion spell.

All Place Spirits also have an attack power related to their territory (the spirit of a mountain can hurl rocks or shake the entire mountain to cause climbers to fall off; the spirit of an oasis can cause all creatures there to be alert and hostile to an unfavored being, or cause trees to fall on the being), and so on.

These spirits are not given Legends & Lore format descriptions here because they are weak, retiring, and lack clergy; they are of most use to Bedine trying to resist outlanders.

Two sample Place Spirits are described here: El Ma'ra Dat-ur Ojhogo (= "The tall god who lets men sit upon his head") and Rahalat.

El Ma'ra inhabits the sandstone spire that bears his name. This is a lone spire of yellow sandstone (described in "The Sword" chapter of this book), which stands near an oasis, and serves Bedine as a lookout-place. A fall from the spire will kill most men, and El Ma'ra can try to throw an unv\anted being off. The un-



wanted one must make a Dexterity check at -4 every round, or fall from the spire. No companions or nearby beings are affected. Bedine lookouts atop the spire who pray to El Ma'ra and sacrifice a drop of their drinking-water to him (let it fall on him) can see the desert below clearly, even when the sands blow. (This ensures clarity of sight; it does not reveal what is magically concealed or extend one's range of vision.) Rahalat was a Bedine sorceress abandoned at a mountain oasis by her tribe. She used magic to prevent Bedine from using the oasis, until a tribe murdered her to get to the water.

The oasis spring turned to blood, and any who drank from it for ten years perished. Now, every tribe that camps at the oasis

(which bears her name) must sacrifice a camel to her, or the water goes bad (turns to Type J poison, except to beings favored by Rahalat).

Rahalat's herd of goats still lives on the mountain. The goddess warns away those who approach too closely by causing the hollow knell of goat bells to ring in their minds.

Rahalat's manifestation can appear in the oasis or on the mountain. She manifests as a silent, translucent white floating image, looking as she did in life: an unveiled Bedine woman her face young and strong-featured. Her face has a weary, lonely, heartbroken appearance. She cannot be turned or dispelled, and speaks only in the minds of those she meets. If she wishes, non-Bedine who are present cannot see her.



## WIND AND SAND MAGIC

Here are some of the spells used by Bedine “sorcerers” and “witches” (wizards). These rare outcasts are often bitter, secretive, and not very sane. They learn magic from other Bedine, *ulugarr* wizards, ancient Netherese tomes, and experimentation.

Some sages argue the ability to work magic is a genetic trait, and the relatively high numbers of gifted “shunned ones” among the Bedine (given their suspicion and avoidance of magic) is due to Netherese blood.

Other sages argue just as strongly that sensitivity and aptitude for *dweomercraeft* is brought about by exposure to magical *dweomers*—and the strange (Phaerimm) spells that are part of the very existence of Anauroch have brought about the high magical aptitude of the desert-dwellers.

Whatever the truth, it is known that some Bedine, like the witch Ruha, have visions of beings and events (usually “bad” happenings) that will be met with in the future. This erratic ability can’t be learned or controlled.

Another uncontrollable Bedine “gift” is the ability to naturally *detect* magic by smell or feel or some unexplained sensory instinct. Most mature Bedine have this ability to some extent; in any case where a spell is cast within 60’ of a Bedine, roll 1d6 per Bedine; a roll of 5 or 6 indicates that the Bedine was alerted to the presence—somewhere near—of magic. Bedine cannot detect the presence of magical items or already-cast spells (due to the all-pervasive nature of Phaerimm spells in the desert), and cannot guess what powers a spell has, or its likely source, except by the same observation and reasoning that a Zhentilar soldier or Calishite mercenary would employ. Most Bedine have far less experience of magic than folk in the “civilized” Realms, and won’t anticipate even obvious spell attacks or effects.

Bedine spells take the form of incantations (these may be muttered, whispered, or shouted, without affecting spellcasting success) and gestures, and use material components from the desert and the Bedine themselves: spittle

and water; sand, salt, stones, and rock crystals; wind or blown breath, and so on.

“Wind and sand magic,” some sages call this, and Bedine with the proper learning and practice can duplicate the effects of most “standard” wizard spells of 1st through 3rd level. The Bedine versions of these spells use earth and air components (fire and water spells are rare indeed—the former because of the danger to the caster in desert conditions, the latter because of the scarcity and value of water), instead of the material components more familiar to wizards across the Realms—but Bedine casters still study and memorize written spells, as other wizards do.

Bedine magical progress is slow and halting (although a Bedine wizard, skilled at keeping magical aptitude hidden, will hungrily pounce on an unsuspecting *ulugarr* wizard if any good chance occurs, to gain spellbooks). Any equivalents of “standard” wizard spells a DM wishes to use may have been developed by this or that Bedine “shunned one.” Bedine mages are allowed to live, fight, and work magic with Bedine tribesmen only when they are facing a great foe together (such as the fifteen tribes who cooperated with the witch Ruha, against the Zhentarim). This is rare indeed; Bedine wizards are almost always encountered alone, or in the company of a few servitor desert creatures.

### Selected Wind and Sand Magic Spells

#### First-Level Spells

##### Sand Jambiya (Evocation)

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M

Duration: 1d6 rounds + 1 round/level

Casting Time: 1

Area of Effect: 1 item

Saving Throw: None



This spell turns a handful of sand into a keen-edged, metallic blade. It is as hard as steel, but can't be affected by magnetic forces or heat, and is not a good conductor. It cannot be larger than twice the length of the caster's hand, nor weigh more than twice the weight of the hand. It deals 1d4 + 1 damage, and is considered magical for the purposes of what can be struck by it. A sand jambiya crumbles into loose sand if dispelled, on the caster's mental command, or instantly upon the caster's death. This spell can be combined with a *flying jambiya* spell (q.v.)

#### **Sand Whisper (Alteration)**

Range: Touch  
Components: V, S, M  
Duration: 1d4 rounds + 1 round/level  
Casting Time: 1  
Area of Effect: One creature or item  
Saving Throw: Neg.

This spell causes silence to reign about a touched item or creature (who may be the caster). All sounds created by the protected item or being (including sounds caused by other, unprotected items striking the protected item or being) are transmitted far away and emitted in a random, everchanging location (often fooling listeners there into thinking something unseen is present).

Whether willing to be silenced or not, a recipient item or being is allowed a saving throw. If it succeeds, the spell fails and is lost.

This spell does not prevent beings from speaking words of activation (of magical items), or uttering the vocal components of spellcasting (and so cannot hamper or prohibit the use of spells and magical items by "silenced" creatures). Noise-based attacks (such as the wail of a banshee or the roar of an androsphinx) are not prevented, but their effects are turned elsewhere, to random locations (and unsuspecting, unintended targets). These locations can be as far distant from the "si-

lenced" source as 2d6 miles plus 1 mile per level of the caster.

#### **Wind Compass (Alteration)**

Range: Special  
Components: V, S, M  
Duration: 1 hour/level  
Casting Time: 1  
Area of Effect: Special  
Saving Throw: None

By the use of sand and blown spittle, the caster creates a tiny moaning wind that sounds only in his or her ear. Its steady tone rises or falls if the caster turns aside (to the right or left, respectively) of a chosen direction. Returning to the proper course restores the proper wind hum.

This spell is most often used at night or in blinding sandstorms. It allows the caster to travel in an unerring, pre-chosen direction—but cannot guide along a non-straight route, or find features (it can point "northwest," but not "to the blue dragon's cave"). Casting another spell does not end a *wind compass*.

### **Second-Level Spells**

#### **Flying Jambiya (Alteration)**

Range: 1 yard/level  
Components: V, S, M  
Duration: 3 rounds  
Casting Time: 2  
Area of Effect: One item  
Saving Throw: None

This specialized spell works only on short metal-bladed weapons such as a dagger, jambiya, dirk, or knife, and the blade created by a *sand jambiya* spell. The caster whispers an incantation, blows on the chosen weapon (which must be held during casting), and then throws or lets go of the weapon. As long as the caster concentrates on the weapon, the weapon is animated by the caster's will, "flying" about to at-



tack foes at a distance.

The animated weapon strikes once per round, with the caster's normal THAC0, but receives a +2 bonus to its attack rolls, and is considered a magical weapon for purposes of what it can strike (if it is magical, add these benefits to its normal bonuses). Its damage, however, is at - 1 (to a minimum of 1).

While animated, the weapon is AC0, and is considered to have 12 hp. Striking it for more than 12 hp damage ends the spell, but doesn't actually damage the weapon.

A *flying jambiya* must be concentrated on continuously by the caster. The spell ends instantly if the caster dies, begins any spellcasting, falls unconscious, or goes out of range. The caster can move the animated weapon 60' per round. An injury to the caster will ruin casting of a *flying jambiya*, but won't by itself end control over an existing *jambiya*. If control is ever lost, the spell ends, and the weapon falls to the ground.

### Pillar of Sand (Alteration)

Range: Touch  
 Components: L, S, M  
 Duration: 1 turn+ 1 round/level  
 Casting Time: 2  
 Area of Effect: Special  
 Saving Throw: Neg.

This spell causes a 10'-radius circle of sand under the caster's feet (or those of a touched being; only unwilling beings get a saving throw) to rise up. This spell is only useful in a sandy area; the rising level, stable circle of sand draws surrounding sand up underneath it to create a cylindrical pillar. The pillar rises as high as available sand allows, or as high as the caster desires, to a maximum of 10' per level of the caster. Beings atop the pillar can see a long way, reach high things, and possibly escape spells cast at "ground-level." The pillar rises or sinks up to 10' per round, as the caster wills. If physical attacks on the pillar

"kill" it (it has 50 hp at any one spot, and is AC5), or a *dispel magic* or *dig* spell are used on it, it will collapse. Beings atop the pillar can fall if winds are high (and they fail a Dexterity Check) or the pillar collapses; normal failing damage applies.

Beings atop a pillar can leave it and return to it (e.g. stepping onto a castle wall, moving inside the castle, and then returning to the pillar) without affecting its continued existence. The caster can collapse the pillar at any time by deliberate act of will, and it will fall when the spell expires—but even the caster's death won't cause an early collapse, if no mental choice to destroy the pillar is made.

### Sand Shadow (Illusion/Phantasm)

Range: Touch  
 Components: V, S, M  
 Duration: Special  
 Casting Time: 2  
 Area of Effect: One creature  
 Saving Throw: None

This spell renders one living being (usually the caster) invisible to all non-magical detection so long as the being is wholly or partially in any shadow. If the being moves from shadow to shadow across an unshaded area, the "invisibility" will vanish and reappear-and can do this repeatedly, until a *dispel magic* is cast on the protected being, or 3 hours elapse. Attacks do not affect this invisibility; attack rolls against the invisible being are at -4. The protected being's vision is not altered by the spell, which can't be ended prematurely by will of the caster or protected being. The casting of this spell includes tossing a pinch of sand into the air.

## Third-Level Spells

### Find Water (Greater Divination)

Range: 20 miles + 1d8 miles/level  
 Components: V, S, M



Duration: 1d12 turns + 1 turn/level  
Casting Time: 1 round  
Area of Effect: Special  
Saving Throw: None

This magic involves the spittle of the caster, in an involved incantation that empowers the caster (or a touched recipient being) to “feel” the presence of water within range, sensing direction (includes down), approximate distance, and amount.

### **Whispering Sand (Alteration, Phantasm)**

Range: 0  
Components: V, S, M  
Duration: Special  
Casting Time: 3  
Area of Effect: 2-foot radius  
Saving Throw: None

This magic allows a caster to leave a message at a particular desert location, or (choose during casting) on a particular volume of sand (e.g. in an urn). When conditions set during casting are fulfilled (these are identical to those governing a *magic mouth* spell; q.v., DMG), the sand “speaks,” uttering the message to all within hearing (typically, all beings within 20’. The message may be one word long for each year of the caster’s age, and is voiced with the pronunciations and tone used by the caster, during casting.

### **Wind Shadow (Alteration)**

Range: Touch  
Components: V, S, M  
Duration: 9 rounds  
Casting Time: 3  
Area of Effect: One creature  
Saving Throw: None

This spell changes the caster or a touched recipient being (and all worn or carried, non-living items) into a translucent, almost

weightless image. The affected being floats, moving as directed by its will, gliding on a magical wind.

The image flies just above the ground, silent and translucent, leaving no tracks or any magical path. It is 65% undetectable to creatures not expecting or watching for it (75% to creatures lacking an acute sense of smell, such as humans), but is only 40% likely to escape the notice of alert, watchful beings (chance drops to 10% if the image enters a guarded area or opening). This spell is typically used to cross small distances undetected, from “cover” to “cover,” or to cross crevasses or chasms. The wind generated by the spell trails behind the image, sending no betraying breeze or smell ahead. It is strong enough to make headway against strong natural or magical gales (at half move rate).

The image normally “glides” at the being’s usual movement rate afoot, but the being can also ascend or descend 70’ per round, by force of will. The movement is not stable enough to permit spellcasting in transit; aimed magical items and missile weapons are discharged by the gliding being at - 1 to hit. The spell can be ended prematurely by the caster.

## **Fourth-Level Spells**

### **At’ar’s Fire (Evocation)**

Range: 10 yards + 10 yards/level  
Components: V, S, M  
Duration: Instantaneous  
Casting Time: 4  
Area of Effect: 20-foot radius sphere  
Saving Throw: 1/2

By means of an incantation and a ball of sticky gum, this spell creates an explosive ball of flame, equal in effects to a *fireball* (q.v., PHB). Creatures slain by this spell are typically turned to ash, and the spell consumes or melts flammable items in its area of effect-but unlike a *fireball* spell, the caster (and all worn or carried non-living items) are immune to the



spell effects; the spell can even be centered on the caster without the caster suffering any harm.

### **Conjure Sand Lion (Conjuration/Summoning)**

Range: 10 yards  
Components: V, S, M  
Duration: 1d4 rounds + 1 round/level  
Casting Time: 4  
Area of Effect: Special  
Saving Throw: None

This spell transforms a handful of sand into a female spotted lion (detailed in Volume 1 of the *Monstrous Compendium*, under "Cats, Great"). The beast is AC6, MV 12 (and can leap 30'), 6 +2 HD, THAC0 15, and attacks with a 1d12 bite and two 1d3 foreclaws (rear claws rake for 2d4 damage each, only if both foreclaws hit). It roars and attacks only at the caster's direction, and the caster can "see" through its eyes, but need not maintain concentration to keep it in existence. The sand lion fights until slain or dismissed by the caster, and can be ridden as a steed at MV 10) or used as a pack animal. Enchantment/charm and necromancy wizard spells do not affect it; nor do priest spells of the animal, healing, and necromantic spheres. It can, however, be affected by those spells which affect creatures from the Elemental Plane of Earth (such as *phase door*).

### **Sand Healing (Necromancy)**

Range: Touch  
Components: V, S, M  
Duration: Permanent  
Casting Time: 4  
Area of Effect: One creature  
Saving Throw: None

This spell enables the caster to use a handful sand, a drop of water, spittle, or tears, and a drop of blood or sap, to heal wounds. Applied to the wounds, the components cure 2d4

points of damage, but can't heal blindness, disease, insanity, or ongoing poison effects: only physical hurts.

### **Wind Blade (Evocation)**

Range: Touch  
Components: V, S  
Duration: 1 round/level  
Casting Time: 4  
Area of Effect: Special  
Saving Throw: None

This spell creates an invisible "sword" of solidified wind, extending from one of the caster's hands (which need not grasp it, and can hold something else). The blade can be heard as roaring wind (but does not disturb the air around), and is aimed by the caster's wrist. A *wind* blade vanishes if the caster wills it to, or begins spellcasting (not magical item activations). It batters and flays targets instead of cutting, dealing 4d4 points of damage per round-and strikes all visible, non-flying targets as if the caster is attacking a target of armor class 10. (Invisible or flying targets are attacked as if with a normal weapon.)

## **Fifth-Level Spells**

### **Death Smoke (Evocation)**

Range: 30 yards  
Components: V, S, M  
Duration: 1d4 + 1 rounds  
Casting Time: 5  
Area of Effect: 20 foot-radius sphere  
Saving Throw: 1/2

This spell uses a crushed insect or arachnid, a pinch of sand, and a drop of blood to create a billowing, opaque cloud of heavy vapors that can't burn or be blown away (fighting in darkness rules apply). Creatures in the cloud take 6d4 points of damage for each round of contact, unless they have no need to breathe (e.g. undead or non-living things) or are protected



against poisons. When the spell expires, the smoke fades harmlessly away. Cast underwater; this spell causes a harmless "burst" of vapor that rolls water away for 1 round.

### **Fist of Sand (Evocation)**

Range: 20 yards  
 Components: V, S, M  
 Duration: 1 round/level  
 Casting Time: 5  
 Area of Effect: Special  
 Saving Throw: None

This spell causes sand to rise up and strike at a single chosen target, once per round. The "fist" or sandy tentacle smashes for 1 point of damage per level of the caster, and forces struck items to make saving throws against "crushing blows." It smites at THAC0 4, and does not cause any heaving or shifting of the surrounding sand (i.e. it cannot form a barrier, or throw a charging foe off its feet).

### **Flesh Mirage (Necromancy)**

Range: Touch  
 Components: V, S, M  
 Duration: 1 round/level  
 Casting Time: 5  
 Area of Effect: Special  
 Saving Throw: None

This spell allows the caster to "switch faces" with another creature (who need not be alive). The creature to be copied must be touched by the caster, who must also see the features to be copied. An area of the creature equal in surface to the caster's face is perfectly copied. This spell is often used to disguise the caster as another being, or even to wipe out all features by copying a featureless area. In such cases, the caster can only see by magical means (i.e. by an *infravision* spell or link to another creature's vision), but reduces water needs, by eliminating some water-emitting organs (breathing occurs through all exposed skin).

## **Sixth-Level Spells**

### **Sand Shroud (Evocation)**

Range: 10 yards/level  
 Components: V, S, M  
 Duration: Instantaneous  
 Casting Time: 6  
 Area of Effect: 1 creature or object  
 Saving Throw: None

This specialized spell uses a lump of mud, clay, dried dung, or other powdery substance, which is crushed during spellcasting. It causes sand or loose earth that is present (for example, in a desert setting or barren field, but not cultivated land or solid rock) to open up under a target and swallow it up instantly.

The target must be dead, undead, or never living, and of L size or less. It is buried 60' deep, without any mark or trace on the surface of its grave. Intelligent undead, animated magical items, and those creatures able to assume *gaseous form*, are imprisoned for only 2d8 rounds by use of this spell. The spell is typically used to quickly hide treasure or the evidence of a fatal fight.

## **Seventh-Level Spells**

### **Sand Gems (Alteration)**

Range: Touch  
 Components: V, S, M  
 Duration: Permanent  
 Casting Time: 1 round  
 Area of Effect: Special  
 Saving Throw: Special

This rare spell turns a handful of sand into 1d12 real, permanent, cut and polished gems. They are always amber or red in hue, and of any type and size visualized by caster, so long as they are small enough to all fit in caster's closed fist. Their value is equal to 1d6 X 1000 gp, regardless of size. Each time this spell is cast, the caster must make three saving throws against a spell. Each time one of these





saving throws fails, the caster permanently loses 1 hp.

### Sun Stones (Evocation)

Range: 5 yards/level

Components: V, S, M

Duration: 2 round

Casting Time: 7

Area of Effect: One or more creatures within  
10 yd × 10 yd area

Saving Throw: 1/2

This spell uses a handful of small stones, held in sunlight by the caster as he utters an incantation. One stone per three levels of the caster is heated by the magic. These heated *sun stones* glow fiery red, but can be handled by the caster without harm. Thrown at an opponent, they streak through the air to strike at THAC0 9. Each burns its way into whatever it strikes, setting flammable substances afire. Beings take 4d4 damage from each stone (beings who touch "missed" stones in the round after casting take half damage, or 1 hp per stone if they save; after that, the stones become harmless). *Sun stones* can be thrown at multiple targets, and will swoop around corners to follow moving targets.

## Eighth-Level Spells

### Cleanse Water (Abjuration)

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M

Duration: Permanent

Casting Time: 1 round

Area of Effect: 20-foot cube per level

Saving Throw: None

This spell uses a handful of sand and a drop of the caster's spittle, and temporarily drains the caster of 1d6 hp. When the sand is cast into water, it cleanses the water of any poison, saltiness, unpleasant taste, and so on, rendering it safe to drink and refreshing (cool even in full

desert sun). The water is permanently transformed, although future events can poison it or make it salty again. This spell can be used to remove alcohol (and dissolved drugs) from drinks, and to turn magical potions into pure water.

### Sand Worm (Necromancy)

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M

Duration: 6 turns/level

Casting Time: 8

Area of Effect: One creature

Saving Throw: Neg.

This spell turns the caster or another touched creature (only unwilling ones are allowed a saving throw) into the form of a *sand worm*: a mouthless, mute, AC6 mottled thing that is MV 9, Br 15. It can burrow beneath the sands to hide or sleep, can feel temperature changes (i.e. the coming of cooler night, above it), does not need to breathe, drink, eat or eliminate, and is not harmed by temperature extremes.

Transformation into sand worm-form heals a being of 2d4 points of damage (if any exists; the passage of time in sand worm form also allows normal 1-point-a-day healing). A sand worm can carry things up to the size and weight of an armored man, if the burden is tied to it by another being who has the limbs to tie, and the means to tie with. A sand worm can fight only by rolling over or slapping at an opponent with its bulk, doing 3d4 crushing damage per round, and striking at THAC0 17. The spell recipient's intellect and senses are unchanged, but it cannot speak, and can escape worm-form before spell expiration only at the will of the caster, or upon application of a *dispel magic*.



## Ninth-Level Spells

### Create Water (Evocation)

Range: Touch  
Components: V, S, M  
Duration: Permanent  
Casting Time: 1 round  
Area of Effect: 20-foot cube/level  
Saving Throw: None

Using a drop of the caster's spittle or tears, this magic creates pure, cool, safe water: fresh or salt, as the caster desires. The water pours from the caster's hand, and will run away and be lost without available container(s) to hold it (although beings can drink from the hand as if from a spout, or bathe in the flow). Once begun, the spell continues until the caster's maximum volume has been created; the caster cannot "turn off the flow" and then turn it back on again, or save any for later emission. (The caster can move about to fill various containers and water various plants, or to avoid flooding a specific area, without affecting the flow). The flow of water is not powerful enough to disturb the caster's movement or to cause damage as a weapon. Although the water thus created is permanent, it can evaporate as all water does in desert conditions, and sink into the sand and be lost.

### Life Water (Alteration/Necromancy)

Range: Touch  
Components: V, S, M  
Duration: Permanent  
Casting Time: 9  
Area of Effect: 1 cubic foot  
Saving Throw: None

This spell transforms existing liquid (which may have been created by another spell) into a sweet-smelling serum that heals wounds, blindness, disease, *feble-mindedness* (but not insanity), poisoning, rotting (even "mummy rot"), and fungal growth (such as the transfor-

mation of flesh into green slime). Ellen serious wounds (lost limbs and organs) will regenerate at the application of *life water*: a one-foot cube of the serum entirely cures one man-sized being; a waterskin of average size will cure one condition, or restore 3d8 hp of physical damage. Usage actually causes *life water* to vanish; a pool can be left dry by several healings. Immersing even a partial body in *life water* will restore the complete form, but this magic cannot restore life, or change a magically-transformed creature back to a previous form.

### Sandswallow (Evocation)

Range: 1 yard/level  
Components: V, S, M  
Duration: Instantaneous  
Casting Time: 9  
Area of Effect: 20-foot radius  
Saving Throw: Special

This spell can only be used in an area of sand, quicksand, mud, or bog. It causes a circular area of the surface to suddenly collapse 30' downward, so the surrounding sand or mud rushes in to fill the hole. Any creatures in the affected area must save versus spell to "swim" and avoid being buried (they end up atop the morass, reduced to half movement rate and lacking any items they were holding; these are buried).

Buried beings can dig traveling upwards 6' in each round in which they make a successful Dexterity Check. After the second round of imprisonment, any creature without a magical source of air, or the natural ability to exist in rock (e.g. an umber hulk) suffers 1d4 suffocation damage per round. This continues until death occurs or the creature digs its way free. In the round in which they emerge, creatures cannot move from the spot in which they come up, and all attacks against them automatically hit.



## NPCs OF ANAUROCH

This chapter notes a few beings PCs exploring Anauroch may encounter.

The *Black Shadow Band*: A band of adventurers based in a cave in the Tethyamar Mountains, this group is chaotic neutral in general alignment. They will make temporary alliances and non-aggression pacts, but are best described as “always aggressive, always dangerous.” Cold-blooded treachery is not in their nature, but a love of violence and a heedlessness for consequences is. These are true ‘social misfits,’ who can’t abide the rule of any law and order.

The Black Shadows are human unless otherwise noted, and are: Tamaerl (female warrior leader); Jesslinn (female warrior); Barrin (male thief); Thurndas (male priest); Kyllyrd (half-elven male wizard); and Durve (half-elven female mage/thief). Their statistics, current alliances, and treasure are left to the DM, to tailor to best challenge PCs.

The Black Shadows have a powerful magical item (an Orcward Stone?), hidden in their cave, that seems to keep orcs away. It was recovered from one of the ruins of Anauria (and its true nature is left to the DM).

### Individuals

The desert becomes home to many outlaws and loners, but most don’t live long. Here are a handful of exceptions.

**Belarchass the Slaver**, a notorious slave-dealer who captures humans and demi-humans at swordpoint to sell them into slavery in the South. Captives are drugged asleep with treated needles and weapons wielded by Belarchass’s Band (of twelve warriors, three priests, and two mages).

Belarchass keeps his(?) true identity secret, but is known to have powerful magical items. Slaves are taken by an ancient, secret *gate* linking a certain spot in Anauroch with a certain cellar in Westgate, to the holds of ships, which

sail to Chessenta and beyond.

*Mavreen Mawklistyr*, a half-elven female “bounty hunter” active in Anauroch, the Dales, and the Stonelands. She attacks at night, using *wings of flying* (q.v., DMG), snares, sleep-poisoned darts, and smother-hoods. She can call on two trained, fiercely loyal gargoyles: AL CE; AC 5; MV 9, Fl 15; HD 4+4; hp 30, 29; THAC0 17; #AT 4; Dmg 1-3 x 2/1-6/1-4; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; SZ M (6’ tall); ML 11; XP 650; MC2.

**Mavreen Mawklistyr** is AL CN; AC 0; MV 12; F12; hp 76; THAC0 9; #AT 3/2 rounds; Dmg by weapon: long sword 1d8, dagger 1d4, or 16 darts (specialty weapon: 5 dart-throw attacks/round, at +1 to hit); darts do 1d3+2 hp dmg plus save vs. poison at -1 or fall asleep for 1d3 turns, onset time 1d6 rounds); S 14, D 18, C 16, I 14, W 14, Ch 14; ML 18; carries a pouch of 2 pp, 22 gp, 2 ep, 5 sp, and 3 cp; wears leather armor and a *ring of protection +4 on AC, +2 to saving throws*.

“*Tracker*” of the Harpers, who aids “good” travelers and folk against orcs, lamia, and other dangers of the desert, is a mysterious individual much given to disguises, who lives in a cellar in a nameless ruined community south of Ascore. When not in disguise, he (actually, Tracker is a woman, but conceals this from all but close friends by magic and dress) appears as a wild-haired, grim man in the rotting remnants of much-patched armor. Tracker’s wry nature can be summed up by “his” cesspit, near his cellar home, which bears a sign: “Last Dungeon Before Waterdeep.”

**Tracker (Alisheen Starnshield)** is AL CG; AC 4; MC 12; R14; hp 99; THAC0 7; #AT 2 (fights with two weapons); Dmg by weapon: 1d8 long sword or 1d4 per dagger, 2 carried: S 14, D 18, C 16, I 14, W 14, Ch 12 (16 when undisguised); ML 18; HIS 93%, MS 99%; Spells: as 7th level priest: 3,2,2 (usually animal *friendship*, *entangle*, *in invisibility to animals* *goodberry speak with animals/hold animal, tree*; carries a pouch of 4 pp, 9 gp, 7 ep, 7 sp, and 4 cp, and wears leather armor.



## NEWS AND RUMORS OF ANAUROCH

News tends to be old and poor in remote Anauroch, with Bedine tribes avoiding each other as much as possible (unless bent on killing each other; which is not likely to present good opportunities for chatter and gossip).

Whenever the PCs have peaceful encounters (e.g. with traveling merchants), the DM may pass on some of the following rumors. Role-playing should be encouraged; NPC merchants won't simply babble all the latest news whenever they see an unfamiliar face. If Bedine are passing on these bits of "news," the DM should alter the wording in light of Bedine knowledge of the Realms outside Anauroch. Some of these rumors could mask DM-prepared adventures: others can be simply wild fancies.

- Belarchass the Slaver, a notorious slave-dealer who captures humans and demi-humans at swordpoint to sell them into slavery in the cruel South, is hunting people again. He is somewhere north and east of Mabel, with "at least twenty" warriors.
- There is powerful magic awake in the desert: beware old stone pillars, and archways that lead to nowhere! Some who step wrongly, near such, have vanished in an instant, stolen away—by magic!
- Strange whirlwinds, seen in calm conditions, not just in storms, are growing more common everywhere on the sands. They are evil things, "Wind Walkers," who serve an evil Elder Race That Dwells Below, under the sands. The ancient evils must be awakening again!
- There is an oasis, somewhere deep in the Quarter of Emptiness, that is hidden by magic. Only women dwell there: cruel women, who use magic and can change their heads to take the forms of fanged, hissing serpents! They are ruled by a queen whose lower body is like that of a huge snake, but whose upper form is that

of a beautiful woman. She eats all men who fall into the hands of her subjects—after they have been forced to breed, to swell the ranks of the women of the hidden Oasis of the Serpent. All male babies are eaten; all females must master magic or be cast out into the desert.

- Certain stone pillars in the northern sands move about by themselves, when the nights are dark! They sometimes move as far in a night as a fast, driven camel does, by day—and they cry out to each other at times; horrible deep, groaning sounds that make one's teeth itch, to hear them! One is moving steadily toward The Oasis of Vipers!
- A great spiralling pit, like a sucking mouth, has been seen somewhere nearby, west of here. It moves along, in the sand, and things that tumble into it vanish, and are never seen again. It must eat them! A gazelle has been seen to disappear into the mouth, and so did a hunting dog that got too close!
- An oasis has been found where there has never been one before! It looks old, and well established, with several trees and a deep pool. It is no mirage—and camels who drank from the pool were well sated. Fresh-gnawed bones were found under one of the trees, though—human bones.
- In the sky, a few nights back, a ghostly camel and rider were seen, white against the velvet blackness, riding east. The rider wore a turban, and waved a naked scimitar. In his other hand, he carried a globe of spinning lights, like tiny stars, that whirled endlessly around. He rode on the air, but quite low down, and soon vanished below the horizon, to the east. No one knows who or what this apparition was; none can recall having seen it before.



# ANAUURIAN ADVENTURES

This chapter presents adventure ideas that use or lead Player Characters into Anauroch.

## OLD BONES, OLD MAGIC

In an Anaurian locale where featureless dunes rise around an unimpressive rocky ridge, PCs find a gleaming, like-new metal door in the side of a dune. No tracks lead to it. It is locked. The door radiates magic (spells to prevent rust and windscur, and under them, a trap activation: a *dispel magic* cast on the door will remove the protective spells first; a second *dispel* must be used to deactivate the trap).

If the trap is not removed, seventy-odd jagged glass shards spray out in all directions when the door is opened. This is a magical effect; the trap only fires once, and leaves no trace or apparatus behind. All beings in a 180° field in front of the door, and within 30', must make two Dexterity Checks.

If both succeed, no damage is taken. If one fails, 2d4 points of damage are taken. If both fail, the being suffers 3d4 damage, and must save against breath weapon or be blinded by the flying glass (this "minor" blindness may repair itself in 1d12 days, and can be cured by a *cure light wounds* spell).

The door opens into a room lined with stone blocks, that is the head of a staircase. The stair descends below the sands, into a room carved out of the solid rock.

This chamber is a cool refuge from the desert heat, but the well it holds is now dry. (If PCs climb or fall down the shaft, it is 112' deep.) There is nothing in the room except dust, a dropped (normal) dagger, and a passage in the far wall, which runs 200 to another stair.

This second stair leads upward, into the interior of the nearby rocky ridge. There it ends in a 20' × 20' chamber, which contains only an ornate, closed stone coffin. The lid bears Thorass runes that read: "Here Sleeps Velror, Sultan of Rhentria." (Where or what Rhentria was is now lost in time; it was most likely one

of the short-lived kingdoms that followed the fall of Anauria before the advancing desert sands.) If the coffin is opened, PCs see the bones of a human stretched out within, hands on a scimitar, lying in a bed of loose, winking gems, including one ruby that's as large as a small man's head! The lid then levitates forcefully to the ceiling, and the bones in the casket rise up slowly, floating individually upwards to form a sitting skeleton. (This is a triggered spell effect, not an undead; PCs can bash the bones apart in all directions, but can't turn or dispel the forming skeleton.) Even if some are missing, or hurled far away, the bones drift back into their correct alignment, and the skeletal figure points a bony finger at the PCs.

A *magic mouth* inside the coffin then says: "Thieves! Vandals! Despoilers of tombs! Go from this place—or perish!" Once this warning is uttered, the bones fall back (if PCs have attacked or scattered them, they fall wherever they have ended up).

In the casket are 56 citrines, 33 amethysts, 244 aquamarines, 9 jacinths, 16 emeralds, and 21 rubies (all of average value; consult the DMG), plus the huge ruby (its apparent value is 95,000 gp). The sword is not magical or adorned with gems.

If any treasure is taken out of the coffin, *something* appears at the exit from the sultan's tomb (where the stair enters). It looks like a black, leathery bat standing upright on clawed, panther-like rear feet. It has a long, barb-ended tail, fangs, barbed forearms, clawed hands, and glowing red eyes that lack pupils. It silently winks into view, and just as silently blocks the way out of the tomb, fighting any PCs who try to leave, unless or until it is destroyed, or the treasure is returned to the tomb.

This horrific apparition is a "Least" Guardian Daemon, which can breathe fire three times a day (30' cone, with a 10' base diameter; it does 3d6 damage, 2d6 if a target saves vs. breath weapon). The barbs on its arms are harmless fleshy adornments.



The Daemon is AL N; AC 3; MV 9; HD 6; 48 hp; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1-411-10 x 2; SA fire breath; SD immune to any sort of fire damage (but not heat or electrical); SZ L (11' tall); ML 14; XP 2,000; MC2. It wears a *brooch of shielding* (detailed in the *DMG*) that can still absorb 92 hp of magic missile damage.

By the use of a now-forgotten magic, the daemon's life force has been placed in the huge ruby (which is AC3 and has 12 hp; destroying it kills the daemon, which will wail and vanish in a shower of sparks, leaving the *brooch* behind).

If the gem is not attacked, the daemon can fight to a loss of all hp, and then vanish-only to reappear a day later, completely healed (it can only emerge from the gem once every 144 turns). The daemon will fight any beings who move any treasure out of the tomb, until it is destroyed, they perish, or the gem is returned to the sultan's tomb.

*Dispel* magic spells cannot harm or hamper the daemon, and will not prevent its appearance from, or vanishing into, the gem. This process is a *blink* up to 90' distant, circumventing physical and magical barriers, and causing the gem to flash and sparkle with temporary light.

## The Oasis of Handless Men

PCs reaching an oasis (guided by hastening vultures, perhaps) discover it strewn with the bodies of twenty recently-slain male Bedine warriors; a war-party of some sort. Some of these bodies hang from trees, some lie huddled half-buried in the sands, some have been torn apart by jackals and reduced to gnawed bones, and desert snakes slither through the eyesockets of the picked-clean skulls of others.

There are no camels, weapons, food, coins, or waterskins to be found anywhere in the oasis. There has also been a more grisly theft: ever; corpse has had both its hands cut off, and none of them are to be found, either.



PCs who search the area will come upon a trail (or see a glowing light over the dunes, by night, which can lead them in the same direction), and eventually reach an old stone tower, hidden among tall dunes.

The tower is half-buried in sand, and observant PCs will see that it has tiny slit-windows in its upper regions, and out of these come intermittent puffs of sand, for all the Realms as if someone was repeatedly throwing out handfuls of sand.

That is, of course, exactly what's happening. Inside the tower is an adventuring party of agents of The Cult of the Dragon, led by a wizard who's trying to find a lost, ancient magical item that he believes (from reading an old wizard's diary) to be there: a rod that can "heal" or regenerate undead, and can therefore be used to knit broken dracolich bones, or even replace bones that have been destroyed or gone missing! The strength of the wizard, Elphraun, and those who accompany him, and



even the presence of the coveted rod, are matters left to the DM. If the PCs are fairly powerful, the Cult party can be too, perhaps armed with poisoned weapons, magical rings of spell *turning* and *the ram*, and potions of *healing* and *invisibility*.

Elphraun's spells and equipage should also be tailored to challenge the party; a suggested item for him to wield is an *eye of shooting stars*. This has powers identical to the ring, except that it works in daylight, and has the form of a single large, dark cabochon-cut gem (the "Eye") worn as a pendant. When Elphraun releases it, it can float by itself, turning to emit its powers from the gem, under his "remote control" silent mental direction—something he can do in any round in which he uses a spell that doesn't require the entire round to cast, or does something else. One must be magically attuned to an eye; PCs who seize it won't be able to turn it on its master during the fray.

The Cult party has more practical treasure, too: all of the captured food, water, and camels. The latter will be recognizable to other Bedine, and PCs using them later may be attacked merely for possessing them (on the mistaken belief that the PCs slew the handless men).

Elphraun seized the hand so that he could create crawling claws to dig sand out of the buried tower. The Bedine yielded forty claws, and he can direct these to attack intruding PCs. These 40 Crawling Claws are AL N; AC 7; MV 9 (leap: 15'); HD 1/2; 4 hp each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 vs. armored foes, 1-6 vs. unarmored; SD undead spell immunities, cannot be turned, edged weapons do them only half damage; SZ T (human hand); ML 20; XP 35; MC3.

## The Weeping Maiden

The Stushan, an influential D'tarig trader, contacts PCs with a business proposition. He has learned (from an old wizard's letter that has fallen into his hands) of a valuable statuette,

The Weeping Maiden, that is hidden beneath a certain oasis (of the DM's choice).

This statuette is in a spider-haunted tunnel complex, with "considerable other treasure"—and as long as the Maiden is brought back to the Stushan intact, the PCs can keep all that other treasure. In addition, the Stushan will pay each PC a 2,000 gold piece fee for their trouble (200 in advance), and give each two *potions of healing*.

If the PCs agree, the Stushan reveals which oasis, and provides a rough map to there, which also shows how to get into the tunnels. (If the PC party is strong, the DM may want to locate this adventure in a dangerous oasis, with lamia or Zhentarim inhabitants.) He warns them of the spiders, and not to touch, remove, or look into the tears of the Maiden, or they may be trapped by the deadly curse the tears carry! (He will not elaborate further.) The tunnels are in the form of three linked squares, with a side-tunnel branching off at right angles from the center of each side of every square. One of these branches is the entry; others form the linkages between the squares. The seven remaining branches are all dead-ends, with identical treasure-chests sitting in each.

One chest contains 600 gp; another holds ivory tusks, worth about 7,000 gp in all if sold in the right market; a third holds the Maiden.

All of the other chests are trapped. Touching two of the chests triggers falling block traps, and the last two contain poisoned darts that spring forth when the chest is opened.

*Traps:* Falling blocks come down just in front of the chests, to be drawn back up later on massive chains. They are large enough to strike down two PCs, hitting at THAC0 8 for 4d6 crushing damage. PCs who are hit are allowed a Dexterity Check; success means only "glancing blow" damage of 1d8 points is taken. These traps can be detected, but not deactivated: to avoid them, one must shift the chest with ropes or polearms, let the block fall, and then examine the (empty, locked) chest.



Poisoned dart traps can be detected and jammed, but if the chest is then unlocked, PCs will find only the darts inside. Trying to move them, or take one, will cause them to fire (even if earlier “deactivated”). The darts strike at THAC0 10, spraying out in random directions because their firing-springs are equipped with bent wooden “whips” whose recoils can slap the emerging darts in odd directions (such as down over the lip of the chest, at someone crouching below). They can reach up to 20’ distant, and do 1d4 damage plus Type C poison effects (refer to the DMG). The poison lasts for only one strike; if the dart misses, PCs may salvage it, but the poison will dry out and become forever ineffective in 2d12 rounds.

The tunnels, too, are also trapped. For every 10’ x 10’ floor-area explored by the PCs, roll 1d4. A result of 3 means that a “Kissing Maiden” trap springs up when the area is stepped into. The stone block tilts up and slides down with lighting speed, to reveal a stone bar that smites the PCs, driving the iron points it is studded with into the unfortunate victims. These Maidens do 2d8 damage, and strike once per entry of their trigger area. PCs expecting a Maiden attack are allowed a Dexterity Check, to take only 2d4 damage. Leaping over a known trigger area will avoid the Maiden-but can land one right on top of the next Maiden!

The tunnels also have, as advertised, spider inhabitants: 16 **Huge Spiders** in all. They are AL LN; AC 6; MV 18 (leap 30’); HD 2 + 2; 14 hp each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (bite); SA leap, bite poison (Type A, + 1 bonus allowed on saving throw); SZ M (6’ diameter); ML 8; XP 270; MC1. These cannot surprise PCs unless an unsuspecting character rounds a corner and gets leaped on. They will swarm; if one fights PCs, others will leap to join in, scattering only if fire or lightning are unleashed.

The Stushan is planning to double-cross the PCs. One of each pair of healing potions he gave them is actually a delayed-action poison (Type A, its effects detailed in the DMG), and

one coin of the 200 gp given to each PC is equipped with a *Shandaril’s* tracer spell. (This magic, detailed in the sourcebook *FR4/The Magister*, allows him to know the distance and direction of each coin from him, when concentrated on, and also the race, alignment, and presence of magical ability of any creature touching the coin.) This allows the Stushan to follow PCs’ movements.

He hopes the PCs will get The Weeping Maiden out of the complex and then all perish, somewhere in the desert-or that only a few will survive, and bring the Maiden to him. They should be weak and easily dealt with; the first thing the Stushan (who is a 10th level wizard, though he won’t advertise this to the PCs) will do is to *telekinese* the Maiden into an underground area guarded by a **Death Tyrant** (an undead beholder that serves him with absolute loyalty). It is AL LE; AC 0/2/7; MV Fl 2 (C); 75 hp; THAC0 5; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8 (bite); SA eye powers (nine eyestalks, but three have lost their powers): *telekinese* 250 pound weight, *flesh to stone* ray (30 yard range), *fear* (as wand), *slow*, *cause serious wounds* (50 yard range), *death* ray (40 yard range); SD *anti-magic* ray (140 yard range, 90° arc, from central eye), “standard” undead spell immunities; SZ M (6’ diameter); ML 18; XP 13,000; *SJR1/Lost Ships*. This awesome foe appears as a rotting, mold-encrusted beholder. White film covers its three dead eyes, and here and there it has body plates missing (and is AC7 in those areas).

The Stushan will then *dimension door* to The Weeping Maiden, leaving D’tarig servants (some armed with one-shot magical wands) and the Death Tyrant to slay or drive off the PCs.

The Weeping Maiden is a beautifully-sculpted statuette about a foot high, of a long-haired, weeping maiden. From between her hands, which cover her face, spills a line of tears. The statuette is of solid jet, and is worth around 2,400 gp. The seven tears are not cursed (that was merely the Stushan’s deception, to keep the PCs from taking any), and are





clear, crystal-like teardrop-shaped stones: king's tears (detailed fully in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® *Adventures* hardcover source-book).

These tears are worth 7,000 gp each, for captured in the depths of every one is a clear, detailed image. These scenes show rich treasures, hidden long ago, in their resting-places. PCs who examine the scenes and do a bit of guesswork can learn where the riches lie (for example: one scene may show treasure lying in the interior of a hollowed-out stone block of a merlon (the upthrust "block" of parapet between two embrasures) on the crenellated battlements of the East Torchtower, on the walls of the City of Waterdeep).

The locations, type and amount of treasures is left to the DM; it is suggested that magical items be some of them. They need not be unguarded, and the DM can use these scenes to lead PCs into as many side-adventures as desired (or that the PCs decide to follow up on). In some cases, of course, the treasures can be gone-swept away by the ravages of time, or taken already the hand of another.

## Spindleskull's Tomb

When PCs climb up or over a dune, they discover a hole in its top. The hole is the top of a shaft descending into the earth, filled by a spiral stair. Some magical force field keeps sand out (and warns those below of the arrival of intruders), but lets the PCs through.

The stair leads down into a large cavern, where PCs will see 2d4 mind flayers, clad in rich robes. They advance soundlessly as a voice from the darkness beyond asks, "Who comes to Spindleskull's Tomb? Speak, or join the great adventurer in his eternal rest!" The voice is that of Spindleskull, who has become a **Watchghost**: AL LN; AC 1; MV 9, Fl 9 (C); HD 7 + 2; 46 hp; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 2-16 (chill touch); SA chill ray (12 times/day: 90' range, passes 4th level or less magical barriers, target must save vs. death magic or take 2d12 dam-

age, and save vs. petrification or be *slowed* for 2d12 rounds); SD cannot be turned, has undead spell immunities plus proof against poison, insubstantial, can pass through stone; MR 25%; SZ M (6' tall); ML 20; XP 4,000; detailed fully in *The Ruins of Undermountain*.

Spindleskull appears as a scimitar-wielding, bearded man with a bald, pointed head. His weapon is a *scimitar* + 1 with a special power: once a day it can bring forth 2d4 illusory images of mind flayers, which remain for 1 turn, and are silent but very lifelike (they levitate, and have flowing robes and undulating mouth-tentacles). Only *dispel magic* spells will destroy these illusions, not physical contact.

Spindleskull will fight if attacked, but is not hostile to intruders. Rather, he is lonely and curious, and warns PCs sternly away from the door at the back of the cavern: "Please-don't go in there! Great evil lurks beyond!" Spindleskull will not leave the room; his task is to guard the door, not allowing what is inside to break *out*. (If PCs go in after his warning, that's their decision.) If questioned about what's beyond the door, Spindleskull says, "The well" (of drinking water), "my gold, and something with many eyes, that swings a shining axe-it came by magic. There're traps, too. Don't go in!" If the PCs don't, Spindleskull is chatty, and proves a friendly source of information about Anauroch and the rest of the Realms (the DM can use him to point the way to other adventures), but can't remember anything more about his treasure, the traps, or the dangerous "something." Whoever made him a watchghost (he can't remember who, either) blocked his memories of these things.

The door opens into a 10'-wide, 10'-high corridor, its floor solid stone but the walls and ceiling made of stone blocks. Whenever the walls or ceiling are touched, rusty scimitar blades appear from the nearest seam between stones, thrusting out suddenly (make a Dexterity Check per weapon to avoid being struck; normal weapon damages apply).

Once the door closes, it cannot be opened



from the corridor side, and must be shattered (it is AC4, has 146 hp, and will reflect any spells cast at it back at the caster, completely and without fail).

After PCs have advanced 90' down the corridor, they notice that the floor, from this point onward, is covered with a slick, clear liquid. The liquid is tasteless, won't burn, and is very slippery.

If the PCs continue to advance, nothing occurs until they have traversed 60' of slippery corridor-whereupon the entire slippery area begins to tilt under their weight, dipping down to propel them helplessly forward in a slide, down and forward another 60', into a 10' drop into a room whose walls and floor are a rusty forest of old spear-points, swords, and other edged weapons, wired into place.

PCs unable to *fly* or *levitate* take damage as follows. Roll 1d12 for each PC; the result is the number of blades struck, each doing 2d4 damage in this initial fall.

Thereafter, as PCs clamber about in the forest of sharp blades, they must make a successful Dexterity Check each round or suffer 1d6 additional damage.

Anyone ending up in this forest of rusty steel is attacked immediately, from above. The ceiling of the room, 14' above the blade-adorned floor, is of stone tiles, held up on a massive iron grating. Two tiles are missing, and down through the gap will reach two fang-mouthed tentacles, one mouth wielding a battle axe (1d8 damage), and the other a halberd (1d10).

The pseudopods belong to an **Argos**: AL NE; AC 0; MV 9, Fl 3 (B); HD 10; 77 hp; THAC0 11; #AT 3 (weapons), or 3 per victim (pseudopods); Dmg by weapon or 1-4 (pseudopod mouth); SA eyes, swallows whole on a 20 attack roll (2d8 digestive damage/round), do 8 points to cut free; MR 25%; SZ G; ML 16; XP 6,000; MC7.

It has 96 eyes, and can bring 1d10 of them to bear on a single target (while attacking through the ceiling, it will hide its central eye

and only expose 1d10 eyes at a time). All of the eyes cast magic, as a 10th level wizard.

The large central eye can alter self cast a *color spray*, or cast a *ray of enfeeblement* each round. For all the other eyes, roll d20: 1: *blindness*; 2: *burning hands* (by eye gaze); 3: *charm monster*; 4: *clairvoyance*; 5: *confusion*; 6: *darkness*, 15' radius; 7: *dispel magic*; 8: *emotion*; 9: *ESP*; 10: *fumble*; 11: *gaze reflection*; 12: *heat metal*; 13: *hold monster*; 14: *improved phantasmal force*; 15: *irritation*; 16: *light*; 17: *slow*; 18: *suggestion*; 19: *tongues*; 20: *turn flesh to stone*.

This awesome monster is a huge, amorphous mass studded with many eyes and mouths. It can exude up to three pseudopods ending in fanged maws that can grasp items and wield weapons.

The argos was brought here by the magic of Baergil (CE hm W12), a deranged Zhentarim who plans treachery against his fellows. He set Spindleskull up as a guardian, to keep the argos free from molestation, and is quietly working his way here and there among the Zhentarim, trying to catch fellow wizards alone. When he manages it, he contrives to brush against them-and whispers the casting word of a special *teleport* variant spell he has devised. The spell hurls the unsuspecting wizard across the Realms to here: into the corridor, with Spindleskull's door closed behind them.

The argos provides the death-trap; it is up to the DM how much magic it has gained from Zhentarim victims already (and secreted inside its body). After initial annoyance at its imprisonment, the creature has come to enjoy slaying wizards, but is beginning to get restless again, and will co-operate in any PC breakout attempt-after trying to kill most of them, of course.

The argos can readily slide aside more ceiling tiles to gaze down at PCs, who must climb up to reach it. It can crash down on PCs who get up into its upper chamber, and even fly back above the corridor, to tear off its roof and



exude itself downward to block off any attempted retreat.

The “upper room” that the argos occupies overlies most of the corridor, and has a side-alcove that contains a few broken ceiling tiles and a well of good drinking water. The well’s bucket-rope currently holds a heavy cargo suspended in the well: Spindleskull’s treasure chest (which holds whatever treasure the DM desires).

## Adventure Hooks

These are small encounters or intriguing events that can lead into larger adventures, as follows:

- PCs find a body in the sand—or rather, they find a pair of sprawled boots, leather armor, an empty helm, a sword and belt, gauntlets, and all-laid out as if a warrior had fallen on his face. There is no trace of the man who wore this gear: not a scrap of flesh or bone fragment, only the empty clothing. If PCs examine the belt-pouch, they find several gems DM’s choice of type and value), two brass keys (to unknown locks), and two scraps of parchment, bearing writing (in Thorass):

The Brotherhood will send a woman to meet you at the Lion’s Rest festhall in Mirabar. Go late; ask for the Emerald Whip. The words are ‘five black moons.’ Do not tell her of Taura’s death.

Ulbara is my daughter; she you may trust. Beware all others; both the shape-shifters and the Harpers seek the scepter, and they know it has been taken from Gauntulgrym to the Secret Place in the Sands. Most dangerous of those who seek it is the witch Elsura, who often walks in the shape of a mincing black cat with eyes of

gold-green hue. She knows the scepter by sight, and visited Gauntulgrym when it was a living city, at least once. There is also a man called Baelam, who has a metal hand. He commands strange magics; fight him from afar if you must face him. The Wizard of Waterdeep knows the way. Blood Creek is the place where Nerim is most often found. Let no one see you go.

- PCs come upon a snake (a giant cobra, perhaps) in the sand, striking repeatedly at something small and thin: a sword that moves by itself! The sword is animated by a glyptar (a gem-monster detailed in Volume 3 of the *Monstrous Compendium*, under “Maedar”), and if the PCs seize the sword, it will try (subtly) to manipulate one PC against another.

Alternatively, PCs reaching a tranquil oasis could come upon a scimitar floating motionless above the oasis pool. It does nothing until touched, whereupon it will “go with” the PC touching it until it has been carried into a good position to slay many PCs (in a tent with sleeping PCs is a “good position,” for example). This scimitar was magical before the glyptar possessed it, and has the following powers (which the glyptar can use): it is a +1 weapon and can fly (MC’ Fl 16 (A)), and can also *charm person* by touch, once a day; *dimension door* (self and if it wishes, one creature touching it, thrice per day); *invisibility* (self only, thrice per day).

- Any time the PCs use a spell of 5th level or greater while in the Sword that is not instantaneous, and does not duplicate a natural desert effect, they risk attracting the attention of a Phaerimm.

An alerted Phaerimm may send a servant creature to investigate. It will arrive in 2d12 turns, and may be anything that the Phaerimm has mentally controlled (usually a laerti, stingtail, or illithid). It will try to destroy PCs, or capture them and bring them underground



for Phaerimm examination. An intelligent creature will try to seize and carry below a valuable PC, knowing the others will follow in attempts to rescue their companion.

- A dying camel comes staggering into view over the dunes-exhausted, emaciated, swollen-tongued and unsteady. It is dragging heavy, battered packsacks, still strapped to it.

If they investigate, PCs discover (the hard way) that the “camel” is really a doppelganger, and the “packsacks” are another one. There is a real cargo carried by the “packsack,” however: that doppelganger will let fall an ivory coffer.

Inside the coffer is a wand, coated with some sort of paralyzing poison. Both doppelgangers wear tiny vials of the antidote, hanging from rings that pierce their ears.

- PCs come upon a slaughtered Bedine tribe, amid flapping vultures. If they examine the bodies closely, they see that all valuables have been taken, and that the nomads were all slain by magic.

Shortly afterwards (probably when they are next encamped), they meet a mysterious, black-robed, severe woman, who walks alone out of the desert to confront them, offering them water (if they seem in need of it) or gems and gold (which she is carrying large amounts of, hidden in her robes or in a *Leomund's secret chest*) in return for spell scrolls (or magical items . . .).

This woman is a desert witch, Shiluan, of some power (adjust her actual level, above or below 9th, to best challenge PCs). Her spells are almost exclusively those given in the “Wind and Sand Magic” chapter of this book. She battles PCs who attack or try to capture her, but need not be aggressive or evil. If rebuffed, she may stealthily follow the PC party, hoping to find a way out of the desert or to win their aid through gratitude by rescuing them from foes, later.

It is up to the DM whether Shiluan slew the tribe (and if so, why), or used her magic to flee from Zhentarim or other wizardly attackers who slaughtered her people (or perhaps she has no connection with the slain Bedine at all). If the PCs are already engaged in running fights with Zhentarim agents, Shiluan could prove a temporary PC ally against the Brotherhood.

- Vultures begin to follow the PCs, nearer attacking or even dropping down within reach, but always there. Their escort begins to draw the attention of desert predators (such as lions, laerti, or if this occurs in the Plain, even giants).

Most of the vultures are simply vultures, but at least two of them, the leaders of the flock, are *polymorphed* Zhentarim magelings, spying on the PCs and hoping to see them destroyed, so that they can rob the PCs of any magic or valuables they carry, and claim the defeat of “dangerous foes of the Brotherhood” for their own advancement.

The “false vultures” may abandon their disguises if directly attacked, or if the PCs are beset by powerful foes, and the Zhentarim think that their spells can bring certain defeat to the PCs.



	Laerti	Stingtail
CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any temperate, dry	
FREQUENCY:	Rare	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Tribal	Tribal
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Nocturnal (subterranean: Any)	
DIET:		Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Very (11-12)	Low (5-7)
TREASURE:	D	Q, R, U
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful evil	Neutral evil
NO. APPEARING:	6-48 (6d8)	2-13 (1d12 + 1)
ARMOR CLASS:	5	3
MOVEMENT:	18, Br 8	14, Br 10
HIT DICE:	3 + 3	7
THAC0:	17	13
NO. OF ATTACKS:	3	4
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-2 (or by weapon) × 2 (claws)/1-6 (bite)	2-5 (or by weapon) × 2/2-7/2-8 (tail)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Nil	Tail Poison
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil	spell immunities
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil	Nil
SIZE:	M (7' tall, 9' tail)	L (12'tall, 14' tail)
MORALE:	Champion (15)	Fanatic (18)
XP VALUE:	120	1,400

Called "asabis" by the Bedine, these desert-dwelling reptiles are superficially similar to the "lizard men" of the swamplands. Laertis tend to be brown or grey in hue, with dun or light green underbellies; their larger cousins, stingtails, tend to be brown or dark reddish-brown.

Laertis and stingtails both have yellow, egg-shaped eyes so bright that they flash in darkness, with horizontal slit pupils. They wear only leather armor, speak their own sharp, chattering language, and their sexes appear identical to human eyes. Laertis can run on all fours or stand upright, but their tails are not prehensile; those of stingtails are prehensile. Both laertis and stingtails closely resemble the tiny lizards of the sands: unlike "lizard men," their limbs protrude from their sinuous bodies at right angles, and they move with quick, ungainly gestures.

Their narrow skulls have sloping foreheads that end in a protruding brow, and swing from side to side atop a thin, awkward neck. They touch and smell partially with their flicking tongues, and have rough, pebbly skin, with gashes for ears and noses.

**Combat:** Laertis hire themselves out as mercenaries to surface beings, or hunt surface-dwelling Bedine and less intelligent creatures on their own, using any sort of one-handed sword they can fashion or capture, and crude crossbows (equal to "light crossbows") which they carry slung on their backs. Laertis are quite cunning, and enjoy ambushing prey. By strict rule, they do not fight among themselves.

Laertis can readily burrow into and out of the sand, rising silently from buried concealment to strike down foes. They can run swiftly on all fours, their serpentine tails twitching behind (increasing their effective armor class to 4 vs. opponents who are using missile weapons against them). At will they can rise upright on their rear legs to fight, or leap up to 20' horizontally or 16' upwards.

**Habitat/Society:** On the surface of desert lands, laertis are only encountered at night. They must spend the day hiding from the sun, either burrowed a few feet beneath the sand, or in a cave, or huddled in a rock crevice. Their body temperatures pro-



hibit them from activity in the hot sun: more than 2-5 turns of enforced marching or carrying in the sun will cause a laerti to collapse.

Left to themselves, laertis dwell in tribes, under the rule of a council of elders and a war-leader. They may ally themselves with dark nagas and other co-operative evil creatures for mutual gain, or even adopt these as members of the tribe. Every laerti tribe has at least 2d8 stingtail members. They have tunnels everywhere under the desert, and often emerge by night to raid surface locales.

Most laertis of Anauroch are controlled by the Phaerimm, and live in war-bands or other groups at the whim of their masters.

**Ecology:** Laertis eat the internal organs ("soft parts") of humans, camels, and other prey, tearing open the bodies and leaving the rest for vultures. They also eat certain subterranean fungi, such as lichens, mushrooms, and myconids, and certain taproofs that enter the depths from the surface world, above.

The same poisons affect laerti and stingtails as affect humans, except that both are immune to stingtail tail poison.

**Stingtail:** A rarer, related laerti variety, stingtails live peacefully with laerti brethren: the two species are cross-fertile, 10% of the young being stingtails and the rest laertis. Stingtails are less intelligent than laertis, but larger and stronger, and are usually content to follow the orders and aims of laertis.

Stingtails employ the same sorts of weapons in battle as laertis, but can also use their tails for 2d4 damage slaps or coil them around melee weapons, wielding them for normal damage. At will (to a maximum of six times/day), a stingtail making a successful hit with its tail (when not holding a weapon or using the tail to hang onto a ledge or branch) on an opponent can elect to release a spray of liquid poison through skin pores. This caustic, vinegar-scented secretion causes victims hit by it to be *confused* for the round of striking and the round that follows, and forces a save vs. poison to avoid Type M contact poison effects (see *DMG*).

Stingtails are of little use to Phaerimm and wizards seeking slaves, because they are immune to the effects of all known magics of the enchantment/charm school.

# Naga, Dark

FR13

**CLIMATE/TERRAIN:** Any except arctic/any land  
**FREQUENCY:** Very rare  
**ORGANIZATION:** Trios, pairs, alone or work with other lawful evil creatures

**ACTIVITY CYCLE:** Any  
**DIET:** Carnivore  
**INTELLIGENCE:** Exceptional (16)

**TREASURE:** S, T,W  
**ALIGNMENT:** Lawful evil  
**NO. APPEARING:** 1-3 (usually 1)

**ARMOR CLASS:** 6  
**MOVEMENT:** 13  
**HIT DICE:** 9

**THACO:** 13 (11 if 9-HD)  
**NO. OF ATTACKS:** 2  
**DAMAGE/ATTACK:** 1-4/2-8

**SPECIAL ATTACKS:** See below  
**SPECIAL DEFENSES:** Nil  
**MAGIC RESISTANCE:** Nil

**SIZE:** L (up to 12' long)  
**MORALE:** Champion (15)  
**X.P. VALUE:** 4,000

Dark nagas are fey creatures who have human-like faces (with fanged mouths) on leathery, snake-like bodies. They usually work with other evil beings for mutual gain or survival. Dark nagas tend to be black, purplish-black, or very dark blue in hue, and their crested heads and smooth, almost invisible scales make them look like gigantic eels more than snakes.

**Combat:** Dark nagas have natural *ESP* powers (80' range), and use this ability constantly.

Dark nagas have a (non-poisonous) bite and a poisonous tail-sting; the barbed stinger does physical damage, and any struck being must save vs. poison or take 1-2 hp additional damage and fall into a drugged sleep (onset time 1 round, sleep lasts 2d4 rounds).

The most feared ability of dark nagas is their power to wield magic. A dark naga casts spells as a 6th level wizard (4,2,2), and employs verbal-only spells. It may learn these spells from dragons, Phaerimm, or other creatures who can cast spells with but a word or thought (act-of-will spells, as opposed to spell-like natural powers, can easily be altered into verbal-release magics . . . but the devising of a verbal-only version of a spell that normally has somatic and material components is not nearly so simple a matter). It may devise new spells, or verbal-only spell versions, itself by means of experimentation. Either means of acquiring new magics is slow and expensive, and this can often force dark nagas into servitude to a stronger evil creature or anyone who hires them, or into the life of an adventurer.

Dark nagas are immune to the effects of all known (normal and magical) acids, venoms, and poisons. Some have been known to swallow poisons and act as a courier, spitting up the dangerous liquid when they deliver it to its destination. They can spit poison that they are so carrying up to 10' distant at any opponent; this requires a successful attack roll, and takes the place of their bite, though a naga can elect to bite and then release the poison as it does so, combining the damage.

In battle, a dark naga may use its sting and either a spell or a bite in the same round. If space permits, the naga can direct its sting and bite against the same foe, but it is quite intelligent enough to direct attacks at multiple opponents, even attacking foes in front of and behind it, simultaneously, if caught between them in a narrow passage.



Dark nagas cannot be mind-read; their *ESP* ability somehow renders them immune to the *ESP*-like probes of others. They are subject but resistant to *charm*, *sleep*, *hold* and similar enchantment/charm spells, receiving a +2 bonus to all saving throws against this school of magic.

**Habitat/Society:** Dark nagas lair in rocky places, such as caverns or ruins; they like to have a home where they can hide things (such as treasures and spellbooks), that has more than one entry or exit, and at least one place narrow enough that they can block it with their body, and singlehandedly fight off intruders. Dark nagas are fond of traps, and will devise these (or hire other creatures to install them) whenever possible.

Dark nagas tend to be loners, but can form stable family groups of two or three; they are bisexual, and give birth to a squirming mass of many wormlike young which they promptly abandon to fend for themselves. Intelligent enough to know they can prevail against few creatures in the Realms alone, dark nagas work with other evil creatures, such as orcs, hobgoblins, drow, phaerimm, beholders, and the like. They like to fill a "commander and magical strike force" role, perhaps in a sergeant-like intermediary rank, under a more powerful ruler—but they are wise enough to adopt the faith, beliefs, and rules of whatever group they join.

**Ecology:** Dark nagas do not willingly eat other dark nagas, but they will eat just about anything else, both alive and dead. They eat a few lichens and the occasional green plant, but their main diet is meat. They especially prize hot, still-fresh blood.

Dark nagas spend their lives outwardly working with, or serving, others. Whenever possible, however, they also pursue private goals, which may be as whimsical and odd as some human goals ("cover this desert valley with trees," for instance), but always include increasing their personal power by acquiring new spells and magical items. Dark nagas are quick to plunder fallen foe, swallowing items, scrolls, and spellbooks to spit forth later—for all dark nagas have a bag-like internal organ that they can use to carry things. This organ has thick, rubbery air-sac walls to protect the naga against harp points and the like, but it also protects the cargo against digestive juices, and has the unusual side-effect of shielding magic from all detection spells.

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Temperate/any dry
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Hunting swarms
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Nocturnal (subterranean: any)
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Low (5-7)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral evil
NO. APPEARING:	4-12 (usually 6 or 7)

ARMOR CLASS:	7
MOVEMENT:	2, Fl 14 0
HIT DICE:	1+6
THACO:	19
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	4-7/1-3

SPECIAL ATTACKS:	See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil

SIZE:	S (up to 2' "hornspan," 3' length)
MORALE:	Elite (13)
X.P. VALUE:	420

Orpsu, also known as "night stirges," are flying predators who feed on fresh blood. They are unrelated to the more common stirge, and do not grip victims to feed. An orpsu is a hairless, rat-tailed flying beast equipped with raking fangs and four bony, wing-like projecting "horns." Orpsu are mottled crimson, purple, mauve, or cinnamon-brown in hue, and have veined, leathery skin.

Orpsu are common in Kara-Tur and the steppes, plains, and deserts that lie west of the Eastern Realms.

**Combat:** Orpsu have 150 infravision, and hunt in darkness to avoid attacks from larger predators when flying in the open. Once per day, an orpsu can use a weak form of hold monster (as the fifth-level wizard spell, except that only a single living being within 60' can be attacked). If the target successfully saves (at +2) against this power, it is affected as if by a slow spell. Orpsu catch and overcome most of their prey by this means. They are relatively clumsy in flight, and usually swoop down on prey only after it has been *held* or *slowed*.

Orpsu have stout, razor-sharp fangs, but no lower jaws, and cannot bite, using their fangs instead to slash or rake. Orpsu also have prehensile tails, too weak to hold struggling prey or a weapon, but able to drag small objects or coil around a tree limb when the creature is at rest. Orpsu have no legs or feet, and can only move on the ground by clumsily undulating their bodies.

The most distinctive features of an orpsu are its razor-sharp, blade-like bone "horns," which project out of its body like two back-to-back crescents, the ends of one pair of horns curling forward on either side of the raking fangs, and the other two projecting backwards like wings on either side of the tail. An orpsu is at a disadvantage if knocked out of the air, and therefore instinctively swoops down to strike targets at an angle, as it passes—so only one side of its body menaces prey, and only one horn (either the front horn—or, if it misses, the angled, dragging rear horn) can strike an intended target per swoop (in addition to the orpsu's fangs). A horn attack does 1d4 + 3 damage.

Any wound caused by one continues to bleed (the victim losing 1 hp/round thereafter) until the wound is bound up (and the victim refrains from combat or other strenuous activity for at least 1 turn), or curative magic is applied.

Orpsu only attempt to drain blood from victims who are *held*, *asleep*, or who have collapsed. Up to a dozen soft, flexible white



tentacles emerge from slits in an orpsu's belly (into which they retract when not needed). Orpsu have no barbs or claws to grip victims, and instead glide down to a flapping halt above chosen prey, onto which they settle heavily. The tentacles penetrate the victim's skin, providing some holding power, and the orpsu usually wraps its tail around the victim's body, limb or extremity. On the round after settling, the orpsu's blood drain begins. It takes 1-2 hit points of blood per round, until the victim dies or the orpsu is knocked off (this is not difficult if the victim is conscious and able to move). A physical attack by another being usually causes a draining orpsu to bound into the air with a powerful coiling and whipping of its tail, and fly away). Orpsu have no known blood-satiation point. They remain alert when draining, and will abandon a victim rather than face certain death by remaining.

Orpsu fly by natural *levitation*, propelling themselves forward by flailing and wriggling their tails, and steering by angling the membrane "wings" of their horns as they tilt their bodies.

**Habitat/Society:** Orpsu lair in rocky places, such as caverns or ruins, and hunt in open, rolling scrubland or plains—or dwell and hunt entirely beneath the surface, in the endless caverns of the Underdark.

Orpsu emit no calls or noises, and can communicate only with others of their kind, employing a limited, 20'-range telepathy that is incomprehensible to other beings employing magic or natural powers to mentally eavesdrop. Their peculiar mental activity renders them immune to *charm*, *suggestion*, *domination*, and *hold* magic and similar mental powers and spells.

Orpsu live in mated pairs, producing litters of 1-4 live, instantly-active and hungry young (1-1 HD, attacks: 2-5/1-2) every three summers. Offspring remain with their parents to form a family "swarm," which grows with the passing years and litters until the swarm numbers more than a dozen—whereupon 1-4 of the oldest, original offspring form mated pairs and fly off to find new (orpsu-less) hunting territory, and there found a swarm of their own.

**Ecology:** Surface-dwelling orpsu prey on sheep, cattle, many small creatures (having a particular fondness for badgers, foxes, and otters), large birds, and men. Subterranean orpsu prefer the blood of drow and duergar to all else.

# Phaerimm

FR13

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any (in Faerun, confined to subterranean Anauroch)
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Supra-genius (19-20)
TREASURE:	A11 possible
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral evil
NO. APPEARING:	1-3 (usually 1)
ARMOR CLASS:	2
MOVEMENT:	Fl 9 (A)
HIT DICE:	9
THACO:	11
NO. OF ATTACKS:	6
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-4 (or by weapon) × 4/3-12/2-8
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Tail sting, spell use
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	44%
SIZE:	L (up to 12' long)
MORALE:	Fanatic (17)
X.P. VALUE:	10,000



Phaerimm are powerful magic-using beings that move by natural levitation. They resemble upright cones, the widest part uppermost, and the point ending in a barbed stinger-tail.

**Combat:** Phaerimm have 160'-range infravision, and can see into the astral and ethereal planes up to 90' distant. Their normal vision also operates to this range, and functions as a constant detect magic. Phaerimm also have natural magic resistance: 44% vs. all magic except petrification and polymorph attacks (to which they are 77% resistant). Any magical attack on them that their resistance overcomes can be used by Phaerimm as healing (the hp damage the spell would have done are gained as "replacement" hp; excess gained points can be carried for 12 rounds as energy, and used to offset later damage) or reflected back 100% at the source. (Spells that do no damage absorbed by a Phaerimm as healing yield 1 hp per spell level.) Spell reflections are a defensive reflex and do not take the place of a Phaerimm's spell attack in the round they occur. No upward limit to the number of magical attacks a Phaerimm can reflect or absorb in a single round has yet been found.

Phaerimm also command more magic than most human mages. For every fifty years of life, a Phaerimm increases one level as a wizard; most of this long-lived race are the equivalents of 22nd to 27th level mages. Phaerimm experiment with, research, and memorize spells much as human wizards do, but can also adopt a single chosen spell of each level as "natural." The spell (which can never be changed, once chosen) is retained in their brain structure. Phaerimm regain chosen "natural" spells innately, without study, every day.

Most Phaerimm have devised some unique spells. All Phaerimm spells are cast by silent act of will—most Phaerimm magical study is time spent altering captured human spells into will-force magical energy manipulations.

In addition to a spell attack (and any reflected magics) in a round, a Phaerimm can make up to six physical attacks, if targets are within reach. Its powerful jaws, located in the open "top" of its cone, bite for 3d4 damage. The rim of the cone contains four evenly-spaced, fully-retractable arms. These arms look startlingly human, but the hands have three central fingers and two outside, opposed thumbs. They can punch for 1d4 damage, wield weapons (up to and including polearms) for normal weapon

damage, or grasp opponents to hold them for automatically-striking bites (each round, roll a d20 each for Phaerimm and grasped victim; higher total prevails: either the grasp holds for the round, or the victim breaks free).

Phaerimm also have powerful tails that can smite for 2d4 damage; if a tail attack roll is 16 or better on a d20, its sting impales the victim: the victim takes the usual 2d4 damage, plus 1d6 more as the hollow bone sting stabs deep into them, injecting a milky fluid. The victim must save against poison three times: to see if the injected venom *paralyzes* the victim; to determine if it causes the victim to levitate (rising above any "floor" surface, and hanging a few feet off the ground, powerless to move except by grasping or pushing against solid objects within reach); and to see if the Phaerimm egg injected into the victim is fertile. If it isn't, it dissolves harmlessly. If it is, it begins to grow in 1d6 days, eating the victim internally for a loss of 1 hp/day thereafter, until death occurs or a *cure disease* spell kills the Phaerimm larva. During this time, the victim's attack, armor class, and ability scores are all penalized by 4 points, due to debilitating, gnawing pain. An egg or larva can be cut out of a victim, who must survive a system shock roll, and typically suffers 2d4 points of damage during the process.

**Habitat/Society:** The Phaerimm like to live near others of their own kind (for mutual protection, and for the social satisfaction of vying with each other in devious plans), but operate alone or surround themselves with magically-controlled slave creatures to carry out their bidding. In Faerun, the mightiest magic of the Sharn presently limits Phaerimm to under Anauroch, but they work through agents to affect the world beyond the desert, using certain Bedine tribesmen and some Red Wizards who came to Anauroch long ago to try to establish a base or recover the fabled magic of The Lost Kingdoms. They have also subverted a few Zhentarim, but are being very careful not to reveal themselves to the Brotherhood—yet.

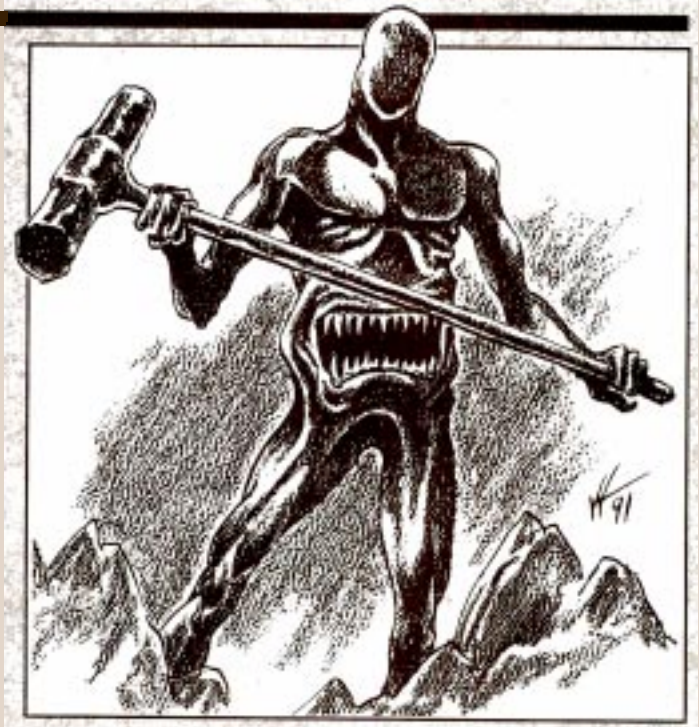
**Ecology:** Phaerimm eat all reptiles and mammals, keeping them as slaves until their turn as dinner. They especially hate tomb tappers, who seem immune to Phaerimm mind-controlling magics.



# Tomb Tapper (Thaalud)

FR13

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any subterranean
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Clan
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Minerals (see below)
INTELLIGENCE:	High (13-14)
TREASURE:	Q × 4 (special)
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1-12
<hr/>	
ARMOR CLASS:	- 2
MOVEMENT:	10, Br 1-4
HIT DICE:	8 + 8
THACO:	13
NO. OF ATTACKS:	3 or 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	4-24/4-24/10-21 or 7-18
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	H (15-21' tall)
MORALE:	Elite (16)
X.P. VALUE:	8,000



Thaalud appear as tall, naked, sexless and hairless humanoids with very hard, smooth blue-gray skin, claws that can dig through solid rock, and great toothed mouths in their bellies. Their smooth, featureless heads have earned them the nickname “the Faceless.”

**Combat:** Thaalud attack with iron-hard, long-fingered hands (4d6 damage each), and bend over or hurl themselves atop opponents to bite with their abdominal mouths (which crush and tear armor, rock, flesh and bone alike, one bite doing 1d12 + 9 damage). If they lack the room for such maneuvers, or don’t want to close with opponents, they swing great hammers (see below) for 1d12 + 6 damage. Tappers can wield these weapons one-handed (- 2 on attack rolls), and throw them with great accuracy (+ 2 to hit).

Thaalud “see” by sonar (they emit inaudibly high sound waves, which bounce back) accurate up to 440’, and require no light. This sense enables them to locate invisible creatures and objects, and makes them immune to illusions and other vision-related spells (such as *color spray* and *hypnotic pattern*). They communicate by means of humming sounds created by skin vibration (this language is partially understood by mind flayers), and by a limited (120’-range, no mind-reading or attacks possible from either end) *telepathy*. Tappers can *detect magic* at will, and can animate rock (as the seventh-level priest spell, affecting up to 9 cubic feet of rock, for 1d4 + 2 rounds; determine duration randomly each time used) once every 12 turns.

Tomb tappers are immune to enchantment/charm spells and fire- and cold-based attacks of all sorts. Electrical attacks do them half (or, if save is made, no) damage. They save versus petrification at -2, and when killed, turn to stone in 1-2 rounds.

**Habitat/Society:** Tomb tappers get their name from their habit of burrowing up from the depths to plunder tombs, temples, and wizards’ towers, in search of magical items, which they bear off. They usually try to seize magical items from encountered beings.

Magic is sacred to thaalud; they never use any magical items gained, but protect and venerate them. Tappers spend their long lives in an eternal search for the Source of All Magic, which they believe lies hidden somewhere deep in the earth. They are somewhat in awe of earth elementals, believing them to be created at this mysterious source, and are reluctant to attack them,

Thaalud keep as common treasure (owned by the clan as a

whole) all magical items, and guard these watchfully. As personal treasure, they keep pretty rocks (i.e. not gems that are dull when uncut), such as quartz, jade, agate, and amethyst. These are stored in caverns of glowrock, in the utter depths. (Glowrock is a stone that gives off a natural amber or lime-green *faerie fire*. It is harmless, and useful as a light source, but too soft to carve. It is often present in radiation-strong areas of the IJnderdark, glowing brightly when exposed to such radiation-but is not itself a radiation source.)

**Ecology:** Several prominent sages believe thaalud are created beings, originally humans altered by magic in fallen Netheril. This view is supported by their faceless heads (arguing they have been changed from a humanoid norm), and by their spell immunities (suggesting they were created to fight the Phaerimm). Tapper beliefs indicate they know magic has power over them. Some, including Elminster, think thaalud were originally made from rock, animated in human form. This view is supported by their turning to stone at death.

Thaalud skin varies in porosity at will; through it, tappers take in needed water. Their gigantic jaws can crush rock, from which thaalud extract mineral sustenance. They also digest iron from blood and bone marrow, if such become available—but do not hunt to eat.

Thaalud customarily wield great hammers of arenite, an alloy (exact composition secret) derived from magma. These hammers are 10’ long or more, heavy, harder than most rock, and very durable. Tappers can dig through rock with their claws, but use their hammers to split rock when a smooth surface is desired.

Thaalud are naturally long-lived, and form regional clans. It is not known if they have young or give birth; no children or pregnant thaalud have ever been seen. Even who leads a clan is not known, although thaalud make and keep deals with other beings, and hence are assumed to respect rules and authority.

Thaalud will aid *svirfnebli* and dwarves, whose magic they leave unmolested. They have no interest in drow clothing and other items that act magical due to Underdark radiations and not true dweomers. Thaalud hate umber hulks (sometimes enslaving them from birth), mutually ignore xorn, dislike duergar and drow, and are bitter foes of illithids and Phaerimm, who have slain more than a few thaalud.

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The Parched Sea



Elfshadow



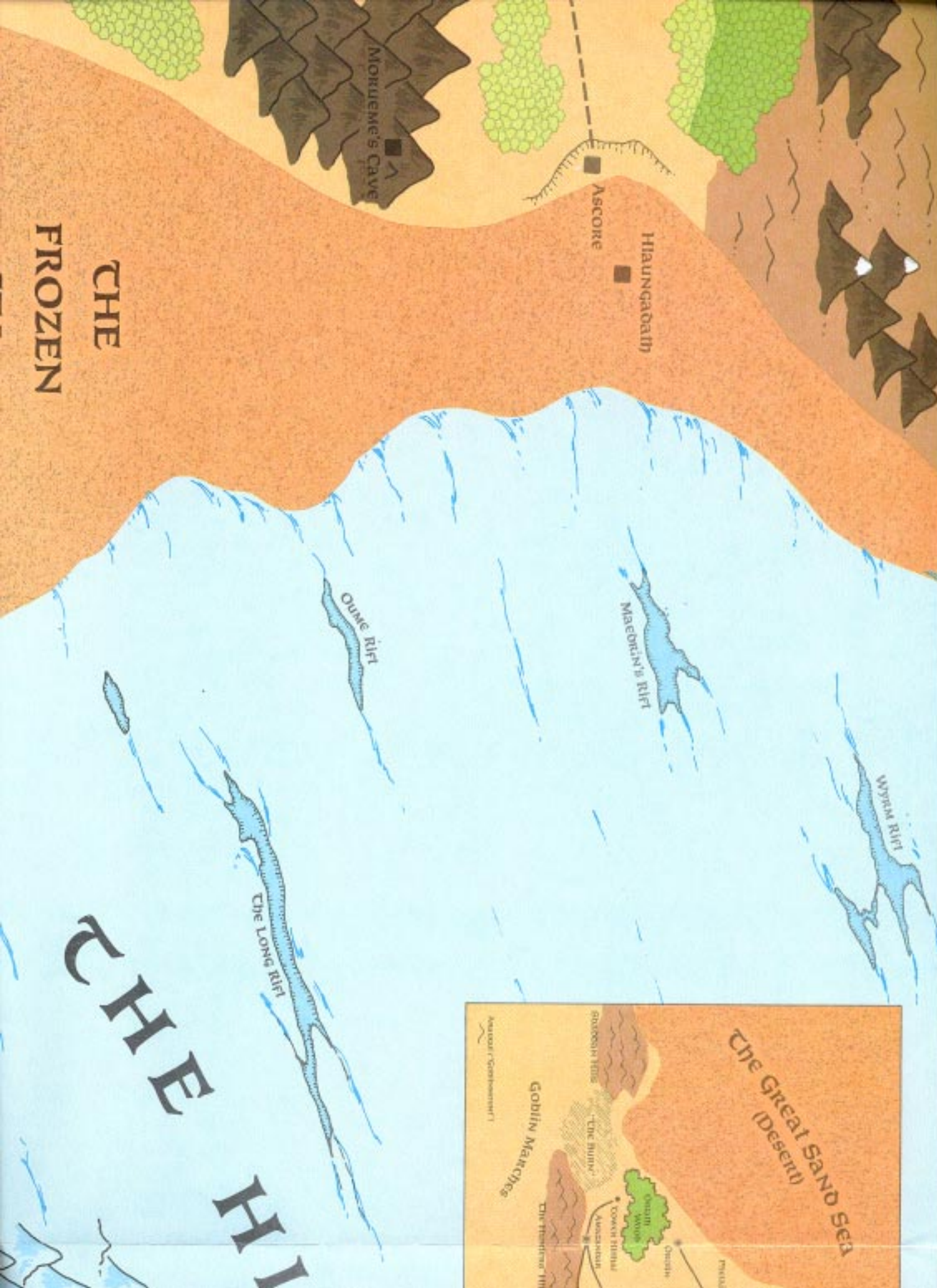
Red Magic



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# THE FROZEN



Morkueme's Cave

Ascokre

Haungabath

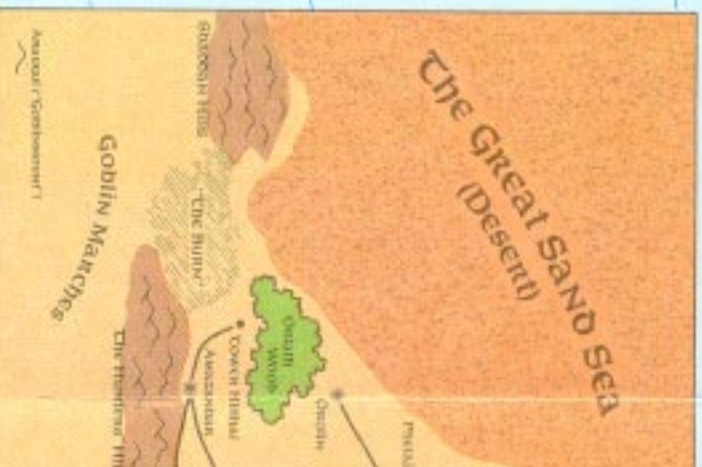
Oume Rift

Maedrin's Rift

Wyrak Rift

The Long Rift

# THE HILL



The Great Sand Sea  
(Desert)

Goblin Marches

The Bunn

COACH RIDGE

Ascokre

The Thunder Hill

Ouchin

Asokre (Goshonner?)

GROGGISH TIDE

FROZEN

SEA

# FORGOTTEN REALMS

## ANAUROCH

Scale: 1 inch = 30 miles

	MOUNTAIN RANGE		FOREST (THICK)		TOWN
	MOUNTAIN (MEDIUM)		FOREST (MEDIUM)		STRONGHOLD
	MOUNTAIN (LOW)		FOREST (THIN)		CAMP
	HILLS		MARSH		SPECIAL ENCOUNTER
	ROLLING HILLS		CLEAR		ROAD
	PLAINS (GRASSLAND)		RIVER		CHANNEL
	MARSH		CLIFF		
	DESERT (ROCKY)		SNOW (ICE)		

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Malikyn's Rift

BIND RIFT

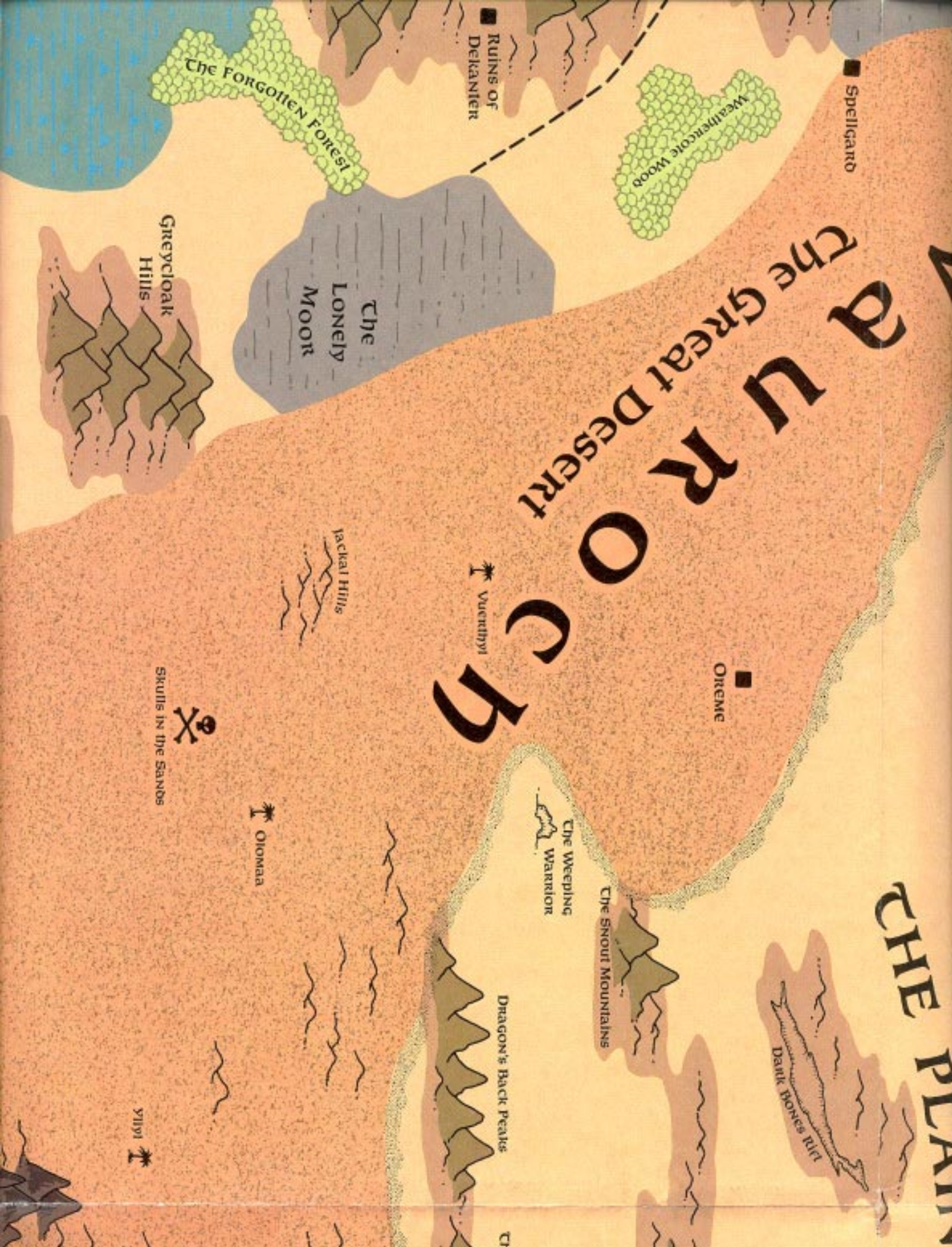
The Can...

Quarry of the  
Clans

The Pillar of  
Caunos

# THE PLAIN

# Y V



# URUCH

The Great Desert

The Lonely Moor

The Forgiven Forest

Weathercore Wood

Greycloak Hills

Ruins of Dekanter

Spellgarb

Jackal Hills

Vuerthyl

Orem

The Weeping Warrior

The Snout Mountains

Dragon's Back Peaks

Dark Bone's Riv

Skulls in the Sands

Oiomaa

Silp



Evereska

Hill of Lost Souls

The Battle  
Of Bones

Skull Gorge

# THE SWORD

Lundeth

Lion's Eye  
Oasis

Ma'atar

The Quarter  
Of  
Emptiness

Rasitih

The Secret Place  
In the Sands

The Wall of  
Fallen Djinn

The Salvado



# IN OF SCANDING



Cagorlar

Fallen Giant Rift

The Ice Wall

The River of Gems

Aerith's Rest

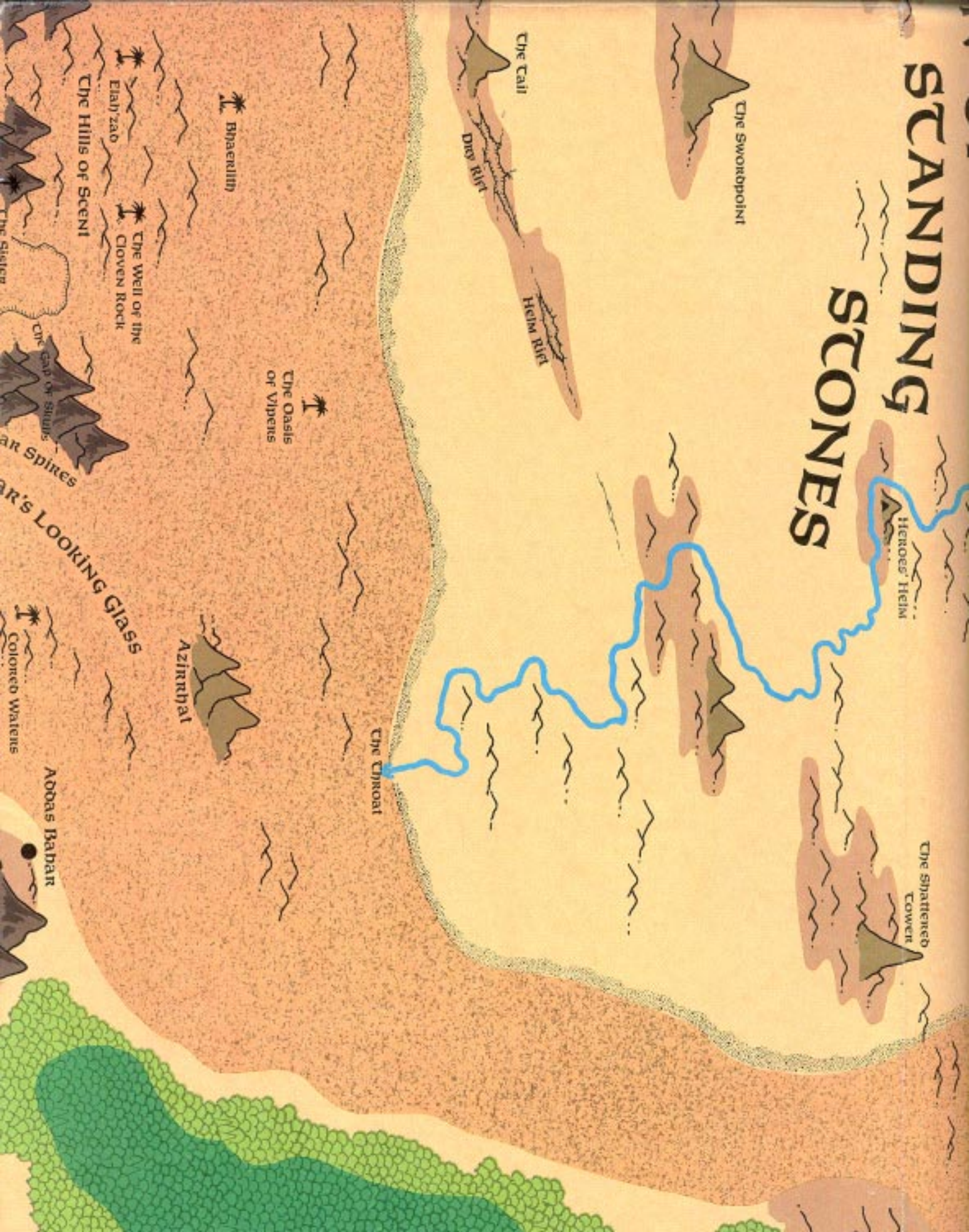
The Hidden Valley  
of Skindin

The Shattered  
Tower

Black Wing



# SCANDINAVIAN STONES



The Sworokpoint

Heroes' Heim

The Shattered Tower

The Tall

Dry Hill

Heim Hill

The Dipnoat

The Oasis of Vipers

Rhaerlith

Elaizao

The Well of the Cloven Rock

The Hills of Sceni

The Gap of Skulls

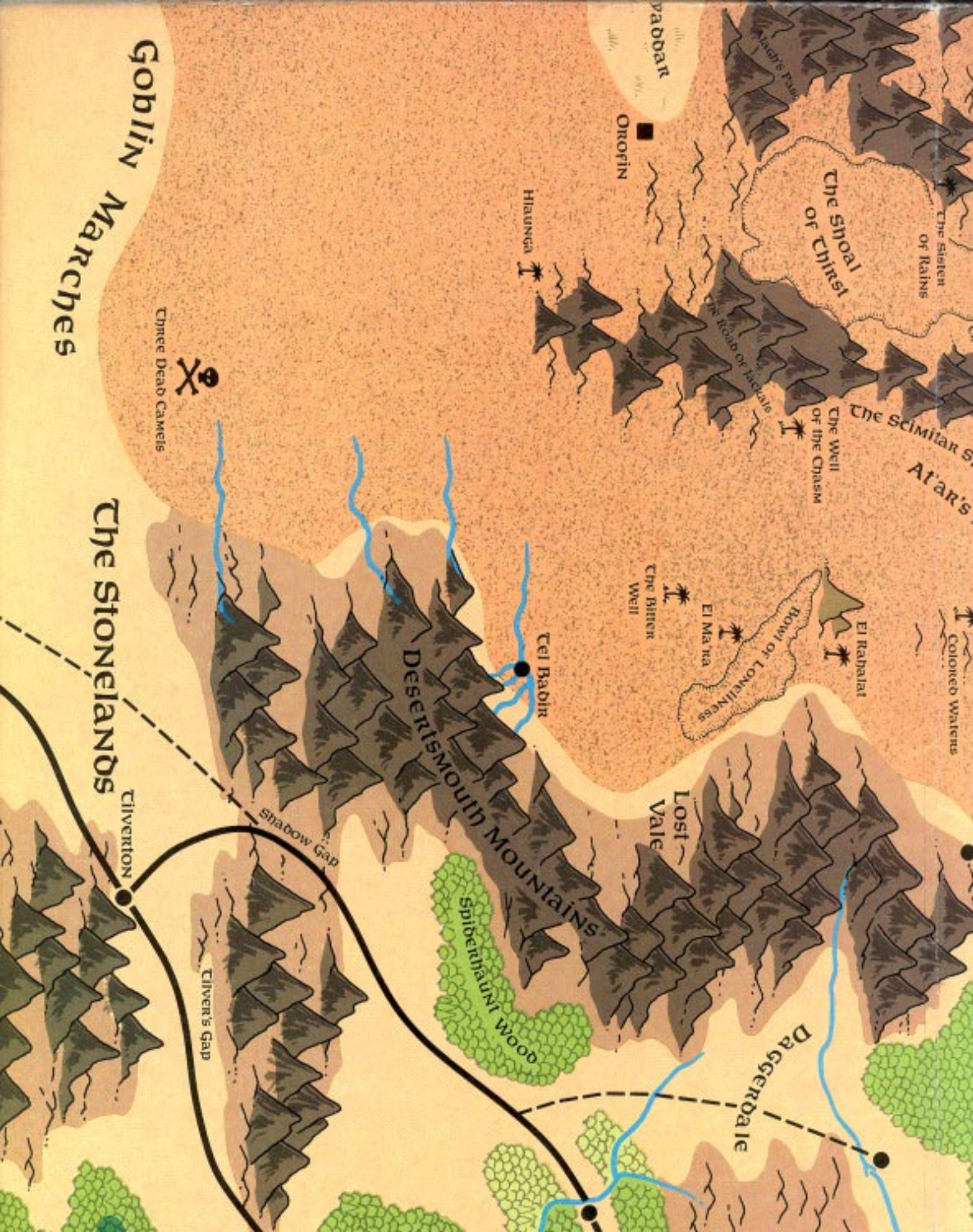
Star Spires

Star's Looking Glass

Colored Waters

Abbas Bahar

The Glacier



Goblin Marches

Three Dead Camels



The Stonelands

Cliverton

Cliver's Gap

Shadow Gap

Desertmound Mountains

Spidekhaunt Wood

Cel Babir

Lost Vale

Daggerdale

The Bitter Well

El Mar'ia

Rowl of Loneliness

El Rabalal

Colored Waters

The Shoal of Thirst

The Well of the Chasm

The Scimitar S  
Atar's

Orofin

Hlaung

Rabbat

Laugh's Pass

The Sister of Rains

sack of hide or heavy woven camel hair, large enough to carry a skin of water and some food  
 lahaq—overtake, catch  
 laqa—meet  
 leben—camel milk  
 leben-gemel—milk-camel (she-camel)  
 lebenla—milk not from a camel (e.g. sheep)  
 lel—night  
 ma'—go  
 mamlahah—a small, flat-bottomed valley left when a lake dries up  
 maessa—evening  
 marid—ill  
 ma—die  
 matar—ram  
 meyit—dead  
 min—from  
 misik—seize  
 mot—death  
 mova—water  
 nabat—plant  
 nar—fire, light  
 nebit—wine  
 negm—star  
 osbur—stop  
 qadim—old  
 qafal—shut  
 qahwa—coffee  
 qam—begin  
 qarib—near  
 qasir—short  
 qawi—strong  
 rasal—send  
 rebaba (plural: rebabas)—plucked (stringed) Bedine musical instrument, resembling a lute, with a long, thin, triangular-shaped body  
 rih—wind  
 sa'al—ask (a question)  
 safr—copper  
 saham—friend  
 salam—safe (to be)  
 salla—basket, container  
 sanduq—box  
 saraf—waste  
 s e d—hunt, hunting  
 shef—sword (other than scimitar: e.g. a broadsword or other ulugarr's weapon)  
 shemal—to the left, on your left  
 sheta—winter  
 shugl—task, business  
 shurr—(shifting or loose) sand  
 sirrag—lamp  
 tabbakh—cook  
 ta'ala—come  
 talab—seek, search, ask for  
 tariq—road, path, or known route  
 tayyib-kher—good  
 tefaddal—please (teffadil: pleased)  
 tu'ban—snake  
 turab—dust  
 ulugarr—outlander, intruder, elf or other being from outside the desert  
 ulutarr—banished or outcast one  
 uskut—be silent  
 wadi—dry wash or gulch  
 wuish—face  
 yalla—go quickly

yed—hand  
 yemin—on the right, to your right  
 zaba—grave  
 zad—house (temple of a god or goddess), or an inhabited building (rare to the tent-dwelling Bedine)  
 zahg—husband  
 zahgat—wife  
 zoba'a—storm

### A Few Handy Phrases

Betefattish ala ey? = What are you looking for?  
 Betifattish ala ev? = What are you arguing about?  
 El-moya kulle yom betin-qas = The water gets less every day  
 Esh el-kalam da? = What is the meaning of this?  
 Esh te'mal? = What are you doing?  
 Fahimtush entu kelami? = Do you understand what I said?  
 Hatuh hena = Bring him here.  
 Ibqu tesduqu = Speak the truth.  
 Ma tes'alnish = Do not ask.  
 Ma teshrab min el-moya da = Do not drink of this water.  
 Sallim nefsek irmi silabeck = Surrender.  
 Lay down your arms.

(A reminder to DMs: PCs who cast *comprehend languages*, *tongues* or other obvious spells in order to converse with Bedine are likely to be attacked on the spot—or, if the PCs appear to be a strong party, fled from instantly.)

### DANGERS OF THE DESERT

The worst hazard to visitors in the Sword of Anauroch is lack of water. Travelers often carry in or magically create it; seeking it at rare oases, by digging, or by melting ice in cold regions all lure predators.

Winds carry scent a long way. This can confuse both hunter and hunted, but hunters are alerted to edible life, and its direction. In the Sword, sand can cloak scent (e.g. a being buried to the neck in a dune), this can aid lurking predators as well as fleeing prey. Whenever one can see a long way, one can also be seen from afar. Standing on a dune puts one on display and causes a patter of sand down its slip-face, to alert those below.

Anauroch is a land of extreme conditions that can harm beings attempting things that are simple and harmless elsewhere in Faerun. DMs with access to the *Wilderness Survival Guide* can treat desert hazards in detail, beyond the suggestions given here.

Anauroch is either very cold or very hot, and almost always windy. When rare rain does fall, flooding results, and wild electrical storms (with many stray lightning bolts).

Most storms bring not rain, but blown sand. A storm begins as a gray haze on the horizon. It streaks the sky with finger-like gray tendrils as it sweeps nearer. A hot wind blows before it, coating everything

with gray dust.

When the storm hits, roaring wind carries a pale cloud of blowing sand streaming along only a few feet above the dunes. The sand shoots from dune crests in great plumes that roll down leeward slopes in roiling billows. In the troughs between dunes, creeps along a whitish stream that scours bare flesh raw, but only fills the bottom six feet or so of air (the heads of a camel and a rider—even one as short as a dwarf—will project above the streaming sand). The sky—and everything else—is obliterated in thick darkness, and vision is reduced to only feet (“darkness” fighting rules apply). Blown sand can blind travelers, hide approaching predators, even bury gear or travelers who can't move fast or often enough. To keep sand out, tents should be pitched with entry openings downwind. (Winter sleet storms and blizzards bring the same dangers—plus ice buildup, slipping, and the possibility of being soaked and then freezing to death.) By day, the hot sun is the greatest hazard in the Sword. For humans, minimizing water loss to avoid dehydration must be paramount. The best way to travel is at night, sitting quietly in shade by day—but most animals (both those that a man might eat, and those that might eat him), are also active at night.

Dehydrated humans collapse. Salt imbalance also causes circulatory failure, fatigue, and severe arm, leg, and abdominal cramps. Sunburn and longterm sweating may make sweat glands fail, bringing fever and delirium.

A man stranded in full, shadeless desert heat can survive for a day if he does not do any heavy work. By nightfall, his mouth will be dry and bitter, and his lips, tongue, and throat swollen. He will live through the night and into daybreak—but without shade or water, he will surely die the next day. Death may come from choking, as the through swells shut, or may be “explosive heat death”: as water is lost, blood becomes more viscous, straining the heart. When blood cannot move fast enough to carry metabolic heat away to the skin, internal body heat rises suddenly, and death occurs (“blood boils”).

In random areas of the Sword, ever-present spells of the Phaerimm “drink” water carried by travelers, and make *detect magic* spells useless (magic is “all around”).

Non-sandy Anaurian landscapes also offer hazards: the northern ice glaciers have suddenly-opening crevasses, many chances to slip and silde helplessly into jagged spears of ice or rock, avalanches of ice and snow, and exposure to the biting cold. The rocky central “Plain” is a land of rockslides, with little cover on the heights, but all too much cover in the ravines, pinnacles, and rock scree.



Official Game Accessory

## Anauroch

by Ed Greenwood

The Great Desert. Where The Winds Wail. Grave of The Lost Princes. The Great Sand Sea. Not a place many sane folk in the Forgotten Realms want to visit. But there are plenty of the other sort, who come hence to find wonders both beautiful and dangerous.

The deadly, shifting sands of Anauroch hide—and occasionally, tantalizingly reveal—the riches and strange treasures of The Lost Kingdoms, swallowed long ago. The legendary wealth of The Cities of Gold lies somewhere in its sandy depths.

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POB 756  
Lake Geneva,  
WI 53147  
USA



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

ISBN 1-56076-126-1



9320XXX1401

\$10.95 U.S. £6.99 U.K.