

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons  
2nd Edition

FORGOTTEN REALMS

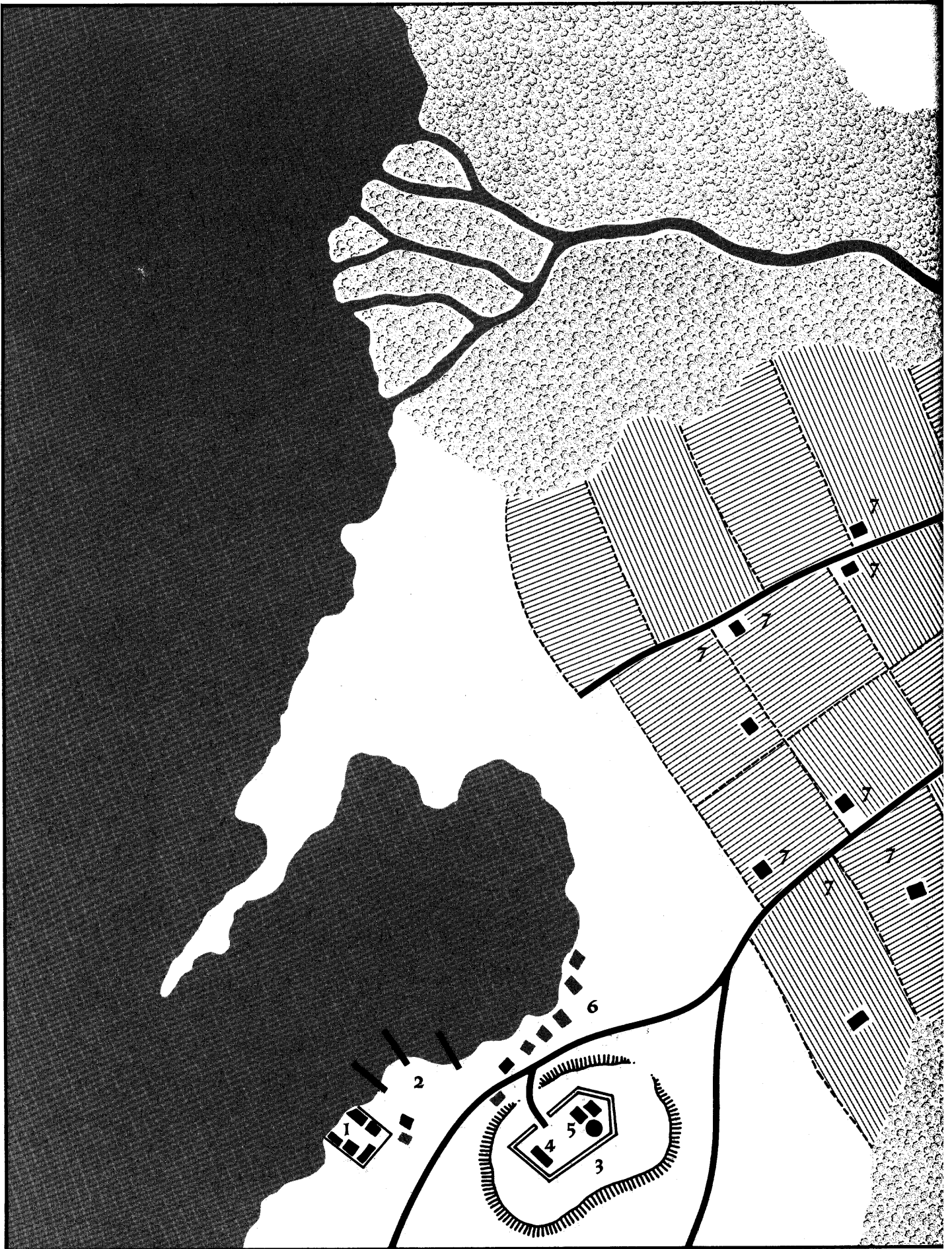
Official Game Adventure



FIRES OF ZATAL

By Jeff Grubb & Tim Beach





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# Fires of Zatal

Jeff Grubb and Tim Beach

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## Arrival In Maztica

This is the first adventure set in the lands of Maztica, the “new world” of the Forgotten Realms. Maztica is very different from the Realms—an alien land, a world in transition, showing the first influences of the mores and culture of the Realmsian cultures. Its ancient nations are giving way to new empires and new threats. Once, monstrous creatures were few and far between; since the Viperhand creatures were introduced, the land becomes ever more like the Realms.

This adventure is intended as an introduction to the world of Maztica, designed for player characters (PCs) of levels 1-3. Higher level characters can survive the adventure easily, but low-level ones should be freely advised that discretion and stealth is the better part of success in this adventure. There are also lesser adventures that can occur along the way, giving players an opportunity to gain further experience or to set aside for future encounters.

Player characters of Maztican or core Realms origin can play this adventure, or mixed groups can participate. The pre-generated characters in the centerspread represent a mixed group of adventurers, and the pages can be removed so the heroes to be used as starting characters.

Maztican characters can be from anywhere in Maztica, although the adventure begins in Helmsport-Ulatos. That coastal city has become one of the primary hubs of activity in Maztica, the meeting place of old Amn and new. An active trade is maintained between Helmsport-Ulatos and the

interior, so adventurous natives may find their way to the city.

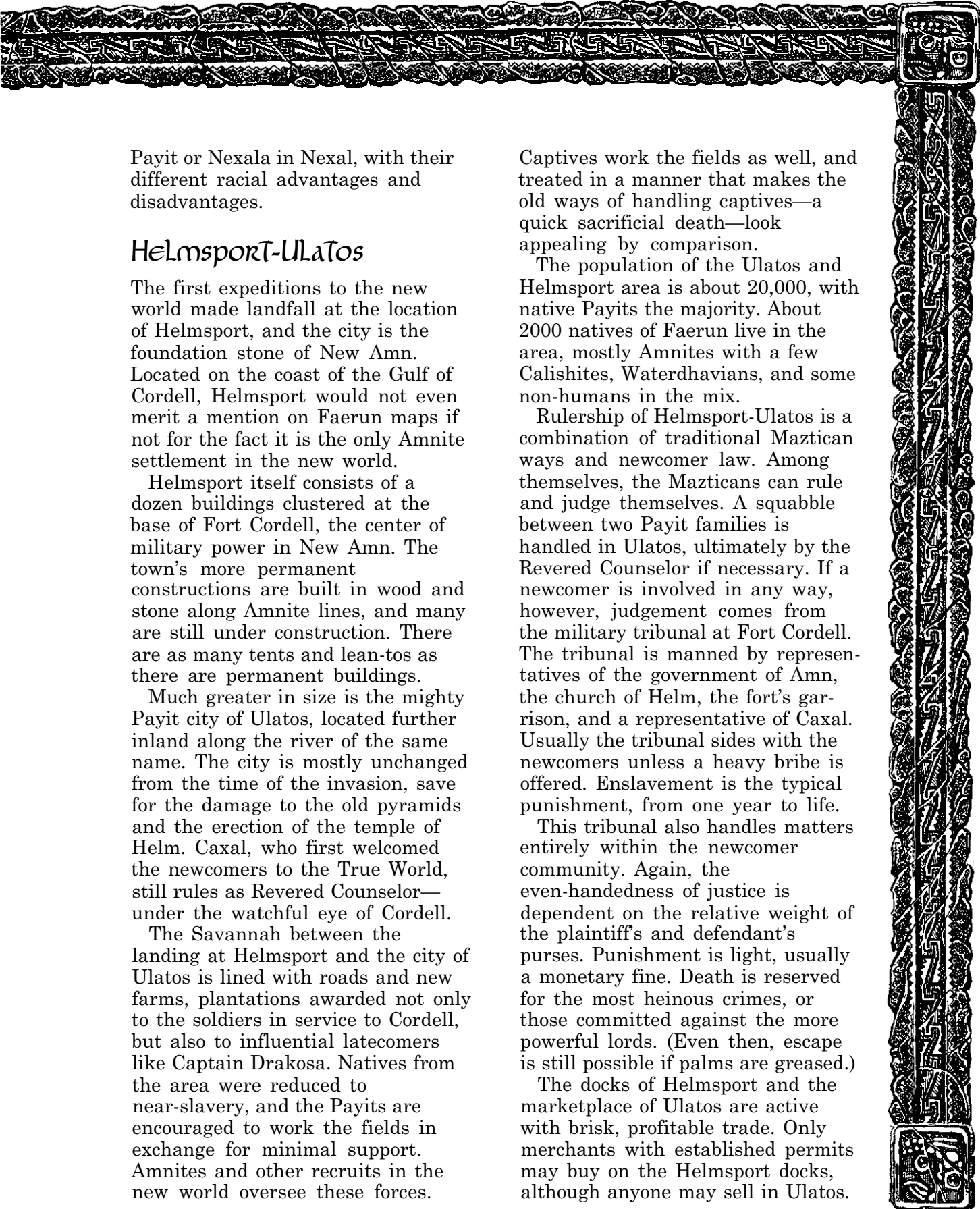
Core Realms characters, whether from Cormyr or Waterdeep, have recently crossed the ocean. As new arrivals, they are apt to be looking for employment, and should not be directly connected with Cordell’s mission or the Amnite government—just adventurers looking for new lands, new creatures, and new treasure.

A mixed group of characters can be handled by having the PCs brought together by Drakosa. Drakosa seeks low-level PCs because they are easily impressed, tend to follow orders, and will not be missed if they disappear.

When running Maztica, keep in mind the strong racial division between native Mazticans and the newly-arrived Faeruns. The Amnites tend to treat the Mazticans as a second-class work force, little better than enslaved orcs. Native Payits are treated best, the Nexala and savage Dog People the worst. Amnites in the new world consider themselves the superior race—after all, they destroyed Nexal.

The Payits and other native races tend to treat the newcomers with respect and/or fear, at least to their faces. The Payits respect the Amnites and have generally benefitted from their rule, while many others fear the newcomers’ power and greed. They will not openly volunteer information to the newcomers, but neither will they turn on the Amnites without reason.

Player characters who join up after the start of the adventure should be natives of the area the party is passing through—Payits in



Payit or Nexala in Nexal, with their different racial advantages and disadvantages.

## Helmsport-Ulatos

The first expeditions to the new world made landfall at the location of Helmsport, and the city is the foundation stone of New Amn. Located on the coast of the Gulf of Cordell, Helmsport would not even merit a mention on Faerun maps if not for the fact it is the only Amnite settlement in the new world.

Helmsport itself consists of a dozen buildings clustered at the base of Fort Cordell, the center of military power in New Amn. The town's more permanent constructions are built in wood and stone along Amnite lines, and many are still under construction. There are as many tents and lean-tos as there are permanent buildings.

Much greater in size is the mighty Payit city of Ulatos, located further inland along the river of the same name. The city is mostly unchanged from the time of the invasion, save for the damage to the old pyramids and the erection of the temple of Helm. Caxal, who first welcomed the newcomers to the True World, still rules as Revered Counselor—under the watchful eye of Cordell.

The Savannah between the landing at Helmsport and the city of Ulatos is lined with roads and new farms, plantations awarded not only to the soldiers in service to Cordell, but also to influential latecomers like Captain Drakosa. Natives from the area were reduced to near-slavery, and the Payits are encouraged to work the fields in exchange for minimal support. Amnites and other recruits in the new world oversee these forces.

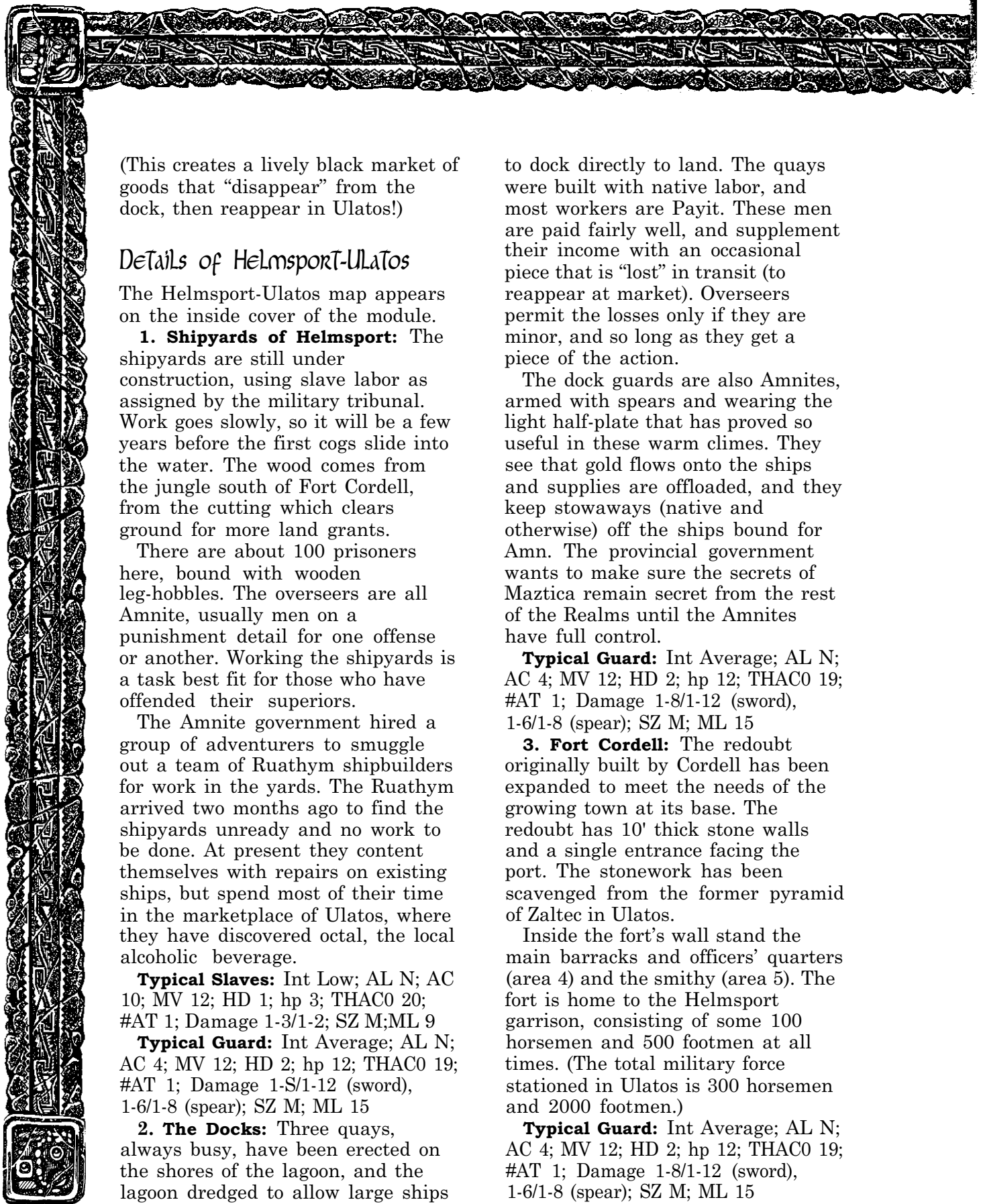
Captives work the fields as well, and treated in a manner that makes the old ways of handling captives—a quick sacrificial death—look appealing by comparison.

The population of the Ulatos and Helmsport area is about 20,000, with native Payits the majority. About 2000 natives of Faerun live in the area, mostly Amnites with a few Calishites, Waterdhavians, and some non-humans in the mix.

Rulership of Helmsport-Ulatos is a combination of traditional Maztican ways and newcomer law. Among themselves, the Mazticans can rule and judge themselves. A squabble between two Payit families is handled in Ulatos, ultimately by the Revered Counselor if necessary. If a newcomer is involved in any way, however, judgement comes from the military tribunal at Fort Cordell. The tribunal is manned by representatives of the government of Amn, the church of Helm, the fort's garrison, and a representative of Caxal. Usually the tribunal sides with the newcomers unless a heavy bribe is offered. Enslavement is the typical punishment, from one year to life.

This tribunal also handles matters entirely within the newcomer community. Again, the even-handedness of justice is dependent on the relative weight of the plaintiff's and defendant's purses. Punishment is light, usually a monetary fine. Death is reserved for the most heinous crimes, or those committed against the more powerful lords. (Even then, escape is still possible if palms are greased.)

The docks of Helmsport and the marketplace of Ulatos are active with brisk, profitable trade. Only merchants with established permits may buy on the Helmsport docks, although anyone may sell in Ulatos.



(This creates a lively black market of goods that “disappear” from the dock, then reappear in Ulatos!)

## Details of Helmsport-Ulatos

The Helmsport-Ulatos map appears on the inside cover of the module.

**1. Shipyards of Helmsport:** The shipyards are still under construction, using slave labor as assigned by the military tribunal. Work goes slowly, so it will be a few years before the first cogs slide into the water. The wood comes from the jungle south of Fort Cordell, from the cutting which clears ground for more land grants.

There are about 100 prisoners here, bound with wooden leg-hobbles. The overseers are all Amnite, usually men on a punishment detail for one offense or another. Working the shipyards is a task best fit for those who have offended their superiors.

The Amnite government hired a group of adventurers to smuggle out a team of Ruathym shipbuilders for work in the yards. The Ruathym arrived two months ago to find the shipyards unready and no work to be done. At present they content themselves with repairs on existing ships, but spend most of their time in the marketplace of Ulatos, where they have discovered octal, the local alcoholic beverage.

**Typical Slaves:** Int Low; AL N; AC 10; MV 12; HD 1; hp 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Damage 1-3/1-2; SZ M; ML 9

**Typical Guard:** Int Average; AL N; AC 4; MV 12; HD 2; hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Damage 1-S/1-12 (sword), 1-6/1-8 (spear); SZ M; ML 15

**2. The Docks:** Three quays, always busy, have been erected on the shores of the lagoon, and the lagoon dredged to allow large ships

to dock directly to land. The quays were built with native labor, and most workers are Payit. These men are paid fairly well, and supplement their income with an occasional piece that is “lost” in transit (to reappear at market). Overseers permit the losses only if they are minor, and so long as they get a piece of the action.

The dock guards are also Amnites, armed with spears and wearing the light half-plate that has proved so useful in these warm climes. They see that gold flows onto the ships and supplies are offloaded, and they keep stowaways (native and otherwise) off the ships bound for Amn. The provincial government wants to make sure the secrets of Maztica remain secret from the rest of the Realms until the Amnites have full control.

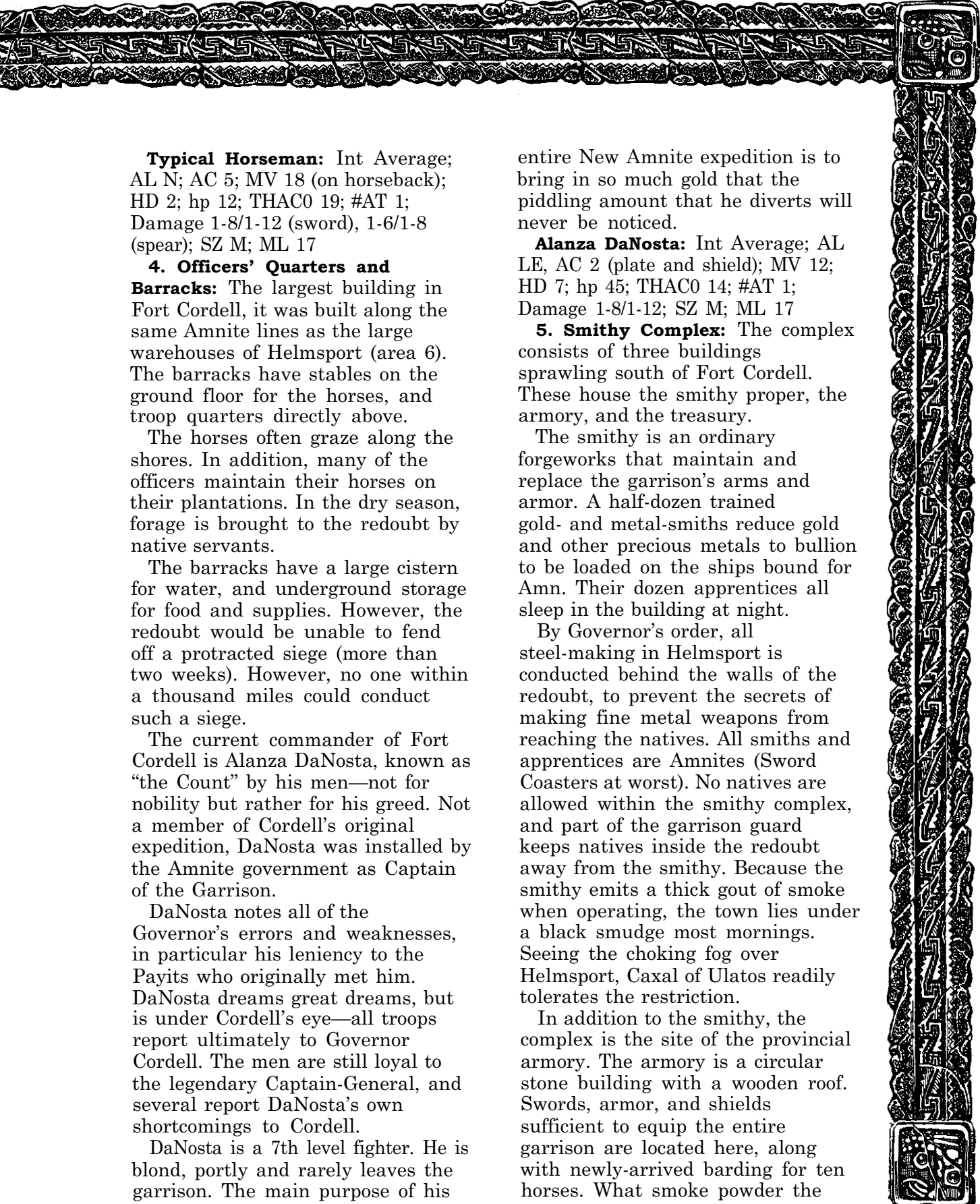
**Typical Guard:** Int Average; AL N; AC 4; MV 12; HD 2; hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Damage 1-8/1-12 (sword), 1-6/1-8 (spear); SZ M; ML 15

**3. Fort Cordell:** The redoubt originally built by Cordell has been expanded to meet the needs of the growing town at its base. The redoubt has 10' thick stone walls and a single entrance facing the port. The stonework has been scavenged from the former pyramid of Zaltec in Ulatos.

Inside the fort's wall stand the main barracks and officers' quarters (area 4) and the smithy (area 5). The fort is home to the Helmsport garrison, consisting of some 100 horsemen and 500 footmen at all times. (The total military force stationed in Ulatos is 300 horsemen and 2000 footmen.)

**Typical Guard:** Int Average; AL N; AC 4; MV 12; HD 2; hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Damage 1-8/1-12 (sword), 1-6/1-8 (spear); SZ M; ML 15





**Typical Horseman:** Int Average; AL N; AC 5; MV 18 (on horseback); HD 2; hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Damage 1-8/1-12 (sword), 1-6/1-8 (spear); SZ M; ML 17

**4. Officers' Quarters and Barracks:** The largest building in Fort Cordell, it was built along the same Amnite lines as the large warehouses of Helmsport (area 6). The barracks have stables on the ground floor for the horses, and troop quarters directly above.

The horses often graze along the shores. In addition, many of the officers maintain their horses on their plantations. In the dry season, forage is brought to the redoubt by native servants.

The barracks have a large cistern for water, and underground storage for food and supplies. However, the redoubt would be unable to fend off a protracted siege (more than two weeks). However, no one within a thousand miles could conduct such a siege.

The current commander of Fort Cordell is Alanza DaNosta, known as "the Count" by his men—not for nobility but rather for his greed. Not a member of Cordell's original expedition, DaNosta was installed by the Amnite government as Captain of the Garrison.

DaNosta notes all of the Governor's errors and weaknesses, in particular his leniency to the Payits who originally met him. DaNosta dreams great dreams, but is under Cordell's eye—all troops report ultimately to Governor Cordell. The men are still loyal to the legendary Captain-General, and several report DaNosta's own shortcomings to Cordell.

DaNosta is a 7th level fighter. He is blond, portly and rarely leaves the garrison. The main purpose of his

entire New Amnite expedition is to bring in so much gold that the piddling amount that he diverts will never be noticed.

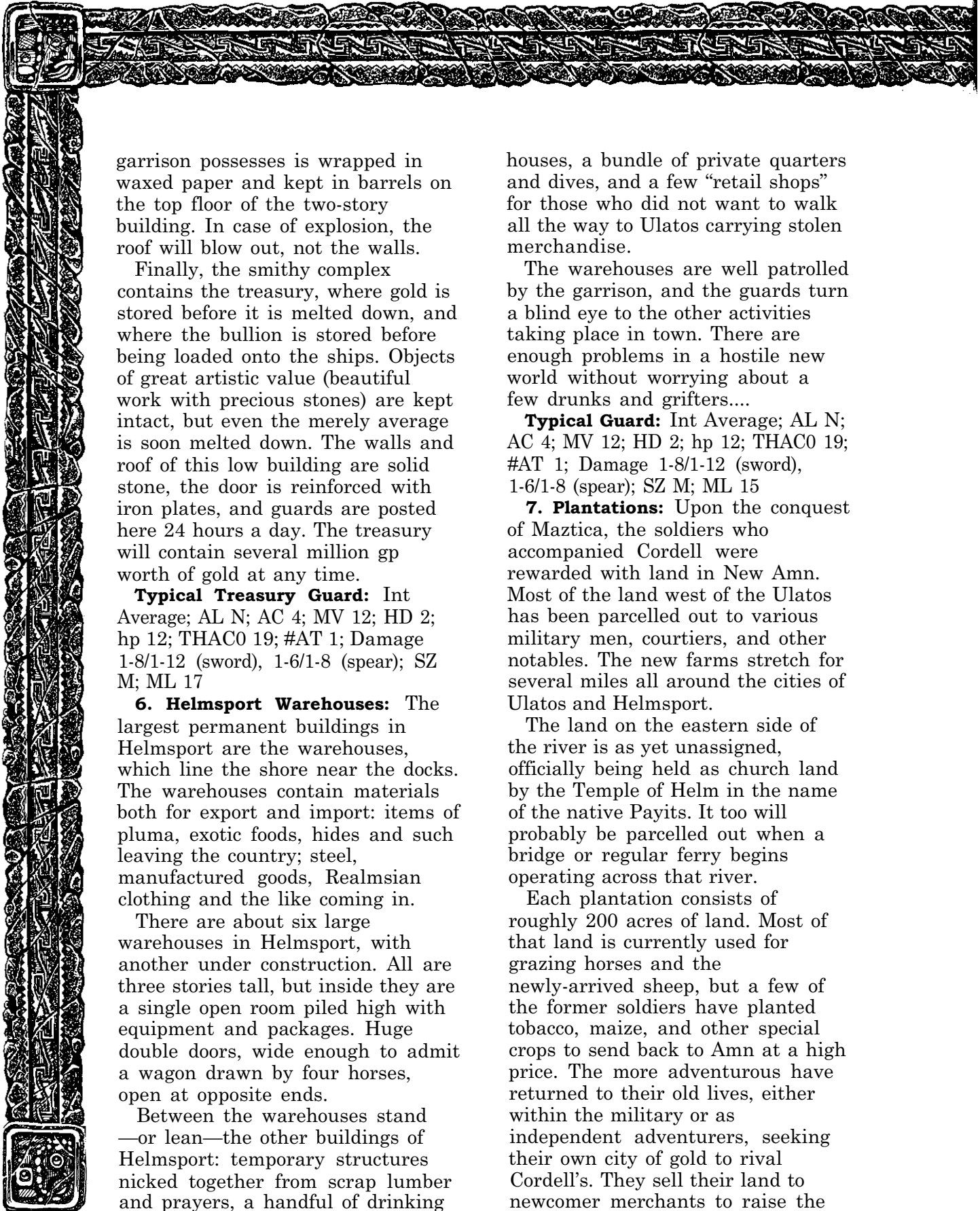
**Alanza DaNosta:** Int Average; AL LE, AC 2 (plate and shield); MV 12; HD 7; hp 45; THAC0 14; #AT 1; Damage 1-8/1-12; SZ M; ML 17

**5. Smithy Complex:** The complex consists of three buildings sprawling south of Fort Cordell. These house the smithy proper, the armory, and the treasury.

The smithy is an ordinary forgeworks that maintain and replace the garrison's arms and armor. A half-dozen trained gold- and metal-smiths reduce gold and other precious metals to bullion to be loaded on the ships bound for Amn. Their dozen apprentices all sleep in the building at night.

By Governor's order, all steel-making in Helmsport is conducted behind the walls of the redoubt, to prevent the secrets of making fine metal weapons from reaching the natives. All smiths and apprentices are Amnites (Sword Coasters at worst). No natives are allowed within the smithy complex, and part of the garrison guard keeps natives inside the redoubt away from the smithy. Because the smithy emits a thick gout of smoke when operating, the town lies under a black smudge most mornings. Seeing the choking fog over Helmsport, Caxal of Ulatos readily tolerates the restriction.

In addition to the smithy, the complex is the site of the provincial armory. The armory is a circular stone building with a wooden roof. Swords, armor, and shields sufficient to equip the entire garrison are located here, along with newly-arrived barding for ten horses. What smoke powder the



garrison possesses is wrapped in waxed paper and kept in barrels on the top floor of the two-story building. In case of explosion, the roof will blow out, not the walls.

Finally, the smithy complex contains the treasury, where gold is stored before it is melted down, and where the bullion is stored before being loaded onto the ships. Objects of great artistic value (beautiful work with precious stones) are kept intact, but even the merely average is soon melted down. The walls and roof of this low building are solid stone, the door is reinforced with iron plates, and guards are posted here 24 hours a day. The treasury will contain several million gp worth of gold at any time.

**Typical Treasury Guard:** Int Average; AL N; AC 4; MV 12; HD 2; hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Damage 1-8/1-12 (sword), 1-6/1-8 (spear); SZ M; ML 17

**6. Helmsport Warehouses:** The largest permanent buildings in Helmsport are the warehouses, which line the shore near the docks. The warehouses contain materials both for export and import: items of pluma, exotic foods, hides and such leaving the country; steel, manufactured goods, Realmsian clothing and the like coming in.

There are about six large warehouses in Helmsport, with another under construction. All are three stories tall, but inside they are a single open room piled high with equipment and packages. Huge double doors, wide enough to admit a wagon drawn by four horses, open at opposite ends.

Between the warehouses stand—or lean—the other buildings of Helmsport: temporary structures nicked together from scrap lumber and prayers, a handful of drinking

houses, a bundle of private quarters and dives, and a few “retail shops” for those who did not want to walk all the way to Ulatos carrying stolen merchandise.

The warehouses are well patrolled by the garrison, and the guards turn a blind eye to the other activities taking place in town. There are enough problems in a hostile new world without worrying about a few drunks and grifters....

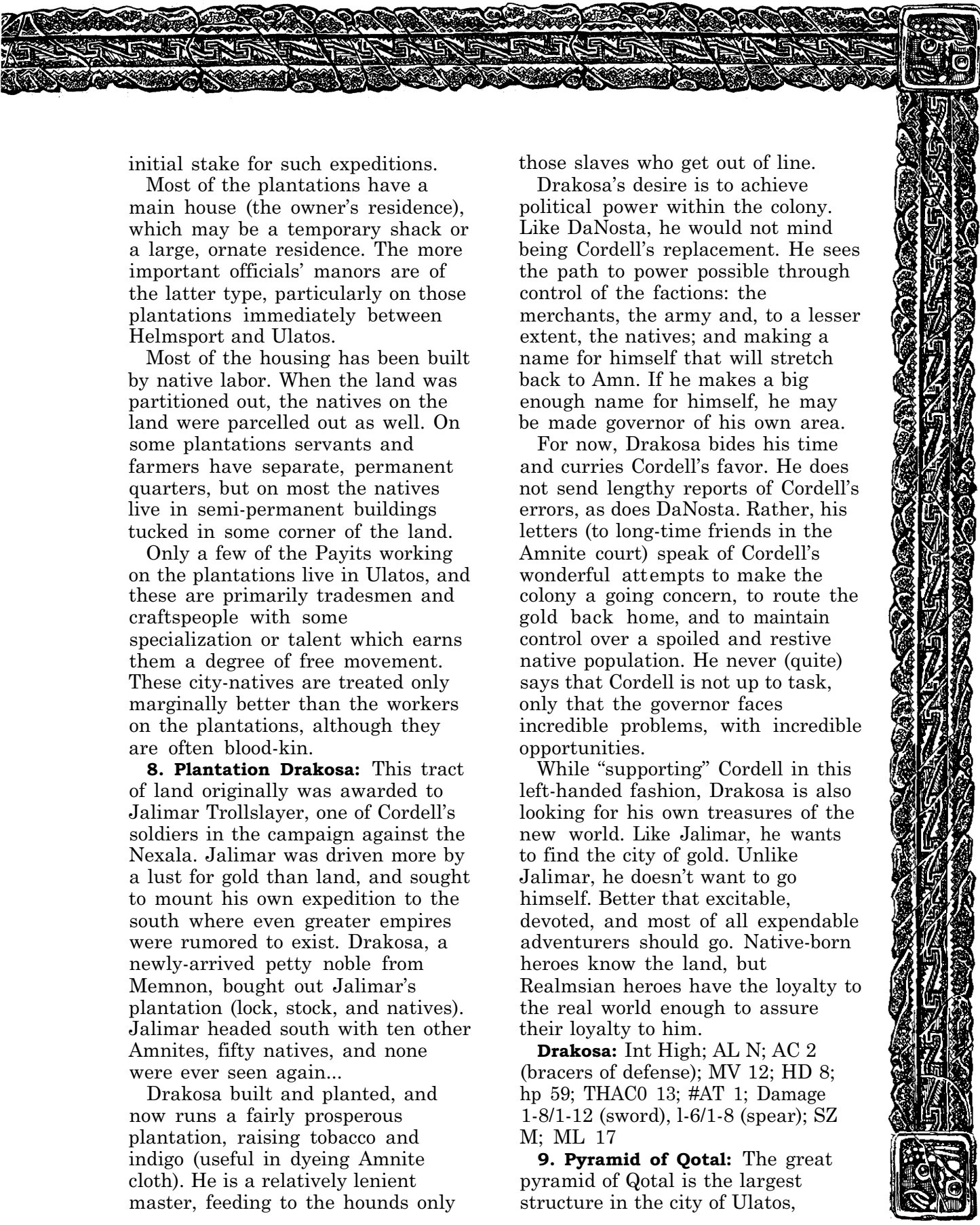
**Typical Guard:** Int Average; AL N; AC 4; MV 12; HD 2; hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Damage 1-8/1-12 (sword), 1-6/1-8 (spear); SZ M; ML 15

**7. Plantations:** Upon the conquest of Maztica, the soldiers who accompanied Cordell were rewarded with land in New Amn. Most of the land west of the Ulatos has been parcelled out to various military men, courtiers, and other notables. The new farms stretch for several miles all around the cities of Ulatos and Helmsport.

The land on the eastern side of the river is as yet unassigned, officially being held as church land by the Temple of Helm in the name of the native Payits. It too will probably be parcelled out when a bridge or regular ferry begins operating across that river.

Each plantation consists of roughly 200 acres of land. Most of that land is currently used for grazing horses and the newly-arrived sheep, but a few of the former soldiers have planted tobacco, maize, and other special crops to send back to Amn at a high price. The more adventurous have returned to their old lives, either within the military or as independent adventurers, seeking their own city of gold to rival Cordell's. They sell their land to newcomer merchants to raise the





initial stake for such expeditions.

Most of the plantations have a main house (the owner's residence), which may be a temporary shack or a large, ornate residence. The more important officials' manors are of the latter type, particularly on those plantations immediately between Helmsport and Ulatos.

Most of the housing has been built by native labor. When the land was partitioned out, the natives on the land were parcelled out as well. On some plantations servants and farmers have separate, permanent quarters, but on most the natives live in semi-permanent buildings tucked in some corner of the land.

Only a few of the Payits working on the plantations live in Ulatos, and these are primarily tradesmen and craftspeople with some specialization or talent which earns them a degree of free movement. These city-natives are treated only marginally better than the workers on the plantations, although they are often blood-kin.

**8. Plantation Drakosa:** This tract of land originally was awarded to Jalimar Trollslayer, one of Cordell's soldiers in the campaign against the Nexala. Jalimar was driven more by a lust for gold than land, and sought to mount his own expedition to the south where even greater empires were rumored to exist. Drakosa, a newly-arrived petty noble from Memnon, bought out Jalimar's plantation (lock, stock, and natives). Jalimar headed south with ten other Amnites, fifty natives, and none were ever seen again...

Drakosa built and planted, and now runs a fairly prosperous plantation, raising tobacco and indigo (useful in dyeing Amnite cloth). He is a relatively lenient master, feeding to the hounds only

those slaves who get out of line.

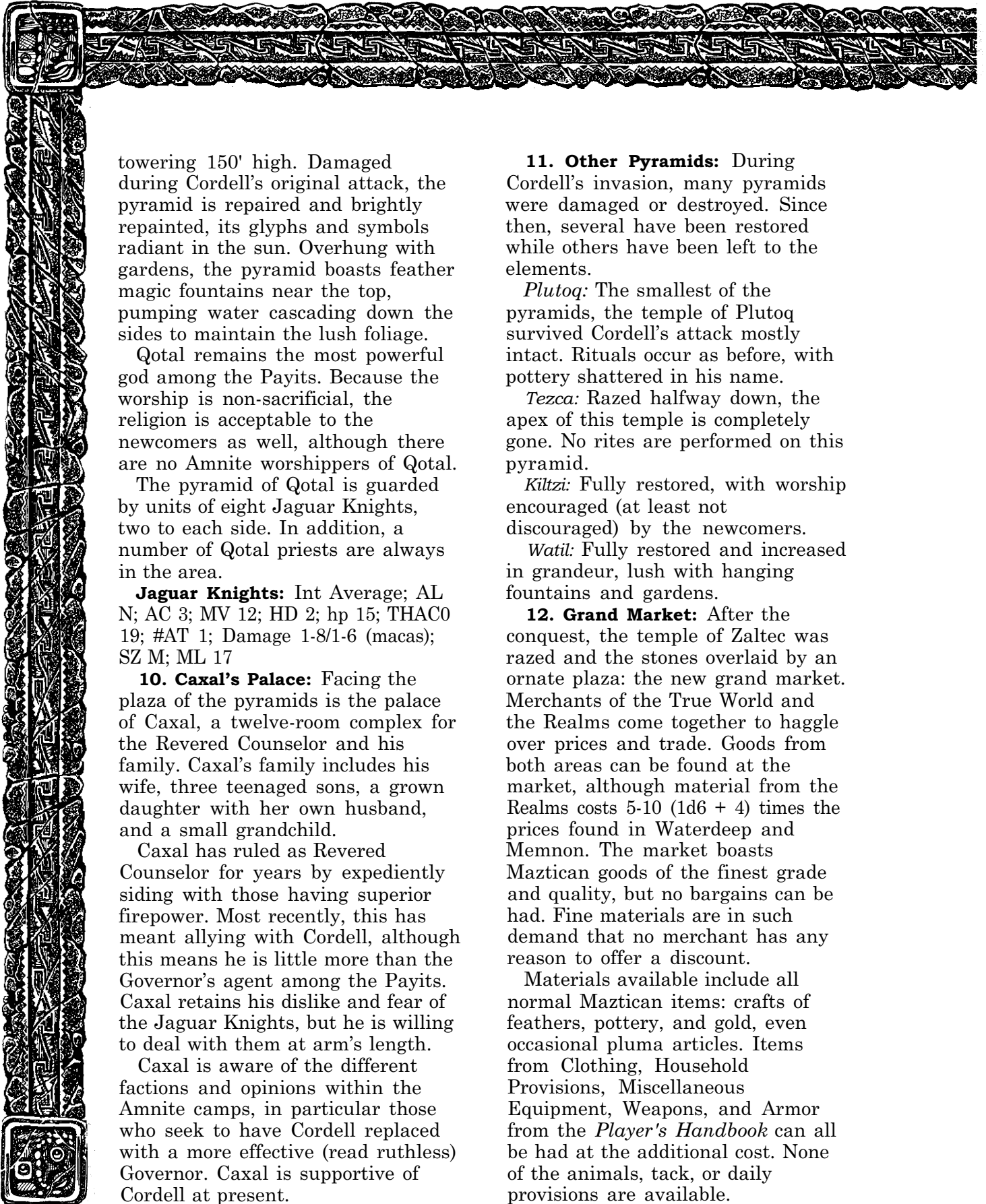
Drakosa's desire is to achieve political power within the colony. Like DaNosta, he would not mind being Cordell's replacement. He sees the path to power possible through control of the factions: the merchants, the army and, to a lesser extent, the natives; and making a name for himself that will stretch back to Amn. If he makes a big enough name for himself, he may be made governor of his own area.

For now, Drakosa bides his time and curries Cordell's favor. He does not send lengthy reports of Cordell's errors, as does DaNosta. Rather, his letters (to long-time friends in the Amnite court) speak of Cordell's wonderful attempts to make the colony a going concern, to route the gold back home, and to maintain control over a spoiled and restive native population. He never (quite) says that Cordell is not up to task, only that the governor faces incredible problems, with incredible opportunities.

While "supporting" Cordell in this left-handed fashion, Drakosa is also looking for his own treasures of the new world. Like Jalimar, he wants to find the city of gold. Unlike Jalimar, he doesn't want to go himself. Better that excitable, devoted, and most of all expendable adventurers should go. Native-born heroes know the land, but Realmsian heroes have the loyalty to the real world enough to assure their loyalty to him.

**Drakosa:** Int High; AL N; AC 2 (bracers of defense); MV 12; HD 8; hp 59; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Damage 1-8/1-12 (sword), 1-6/1-8 (spear); SZ M; ML 17

**9. Pyramid of Qotal:** The great pyramid of Qotal is the largest structure in the city of Ulatos,



towering 150' high. Damaged during Cordell's original attack, the pyramid is repaired and brightly repainted, its glyphs and symbols radiant in the sun. Overhung with gardens, the pyramid boasts feather magic fountains near the top, pumping water cascading down the sides to maintain the lush foliage.

Qotal remains the most powerful god among the Payits. Because the worship is non-sacrificial, the religion is acceptable to the newcomers as well, although there are no Amnite worshippers of Qotal.

The pyramid of Qotal is guarded by units of eight Jaguar Knights, two to each side. In addition, a number of Qotal priests are always in the area.

**Jaguar Knights:** Int Average; AL N; AC 3; MV 12; HD 2; hp 15; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Damage 1-8/1-6 (macas); SZ M; ML 17

**10. Caxal's Palace:** Facing the plaza of the pyramids is the palace of Caxal, a twelve-room complex for the Revered Counselor and his family. Caxal's family includes his wife, three teenaged sons, a grown daughter with her own husband, and a small grandchild.

Caxal has ruled as Revered Counselor for years by expediently siding with those having superior firepower. Most recently, this has meant allying with Cordell, although this means he is little more than the Governor's agent among the Payits. Caxal retains his dislike and fear of the Jaguar Knights, but he is willing to deal with them at arm's length.

Caxal is aware of the different factions and opinions within the Amnite camps, in particular those who seek to have Cordell replaced with a more effective (read ruthless) Governor. Caxal is supportive of Cordell at present.

**11. Other Pyramids:** During Cordell's invasion, many pyramids were damaged or destroyed. Since then, several have been restored while others have been left to the elements.

*Plutoq:* The smallest of the pyramids, the temple of Plutoq survived Cordell's attack mostly intact. Rituals occur as before, with pottery shattered in his name.

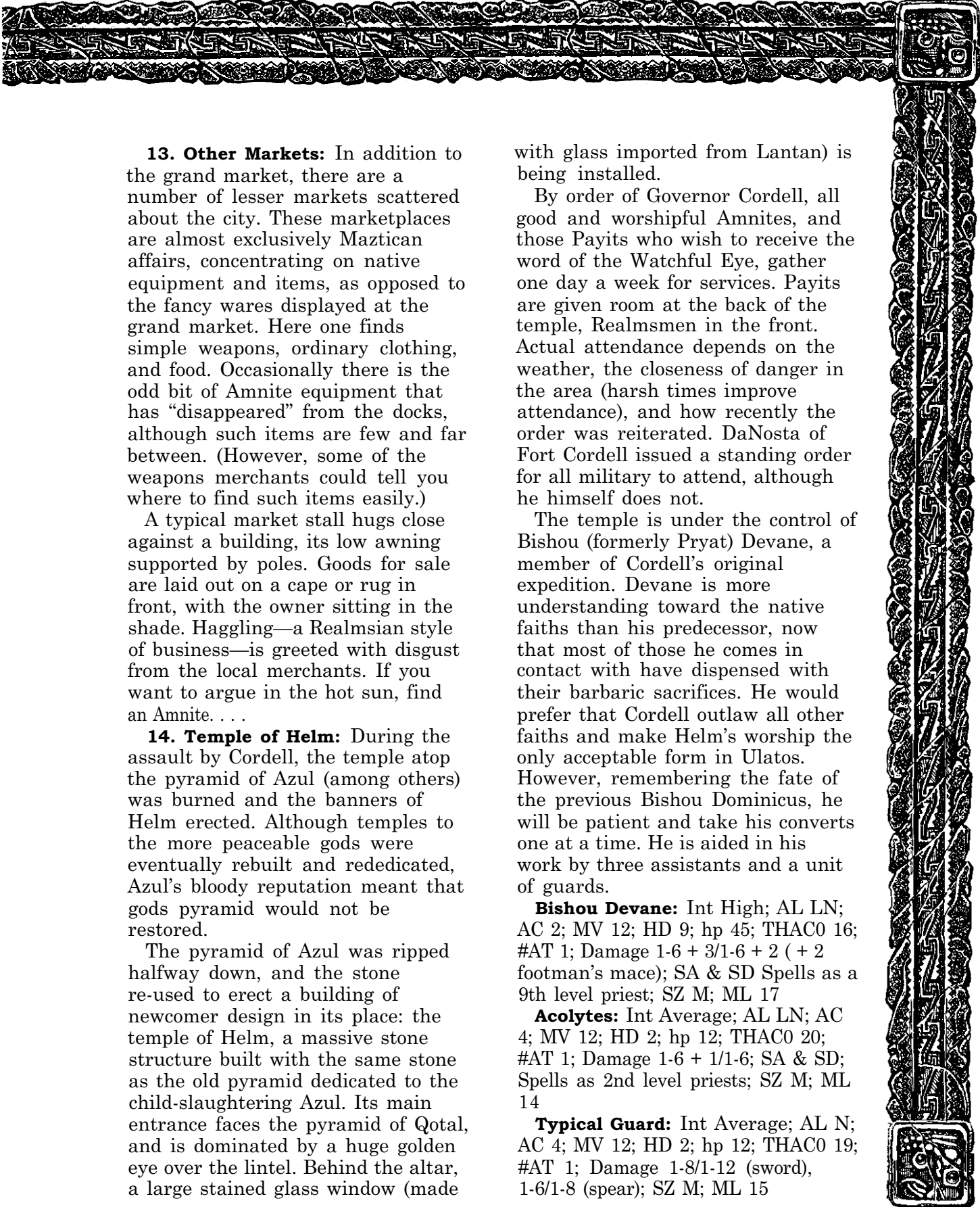
*Tezca:* Razed halfway down, the apex of this temple is completely gone. No rites are performed on this pyramid.

*Kiltzi:* Fully restored, with worship encouraged (at least not discouraged) by the newcomers.

*Watil:* Fully restored and increased in grandeur, lush with hanging fountains and gardens.

**12. Grand Market:** After the conquest, the temple of Zaltec was razed and the stones overlaid by an ornate plaza: the new grand market. Merchants of the True World and the Realms come together to haggle over prices and trade. Goods from both areas can be found at the market, although material from the Realms costs 5-10 (1d6 + 4) times the prices found in Waterdeep and Memnon. The market boasts Maztican goods of the finest grade and quality, but no bargains can be had. Fine materials are in such demand that no merchant has any reason to offer a discount.

Materials available include all normal Maztican items: crafts of feathers, pottery, and gold, even occasional pluma articles. Items from Clothing, Household Provisions, Miscellaneous Equipment, Weapons, and Armor from the *Player's Handbook* can all be had at the additional cost. None of the animals, tack, or daily provisions are available.



**13. Other Markets:** In addition to the grand market, there are a number of lesser markets scattered about the city. These marketplaces are almost exclusively Maztican affairs, concentrating on native equipment and items, as opposed to the fancy wares displayed at the grand market. Here one finds simple weapons, ordinary clothing, and food. Occasionally there is the odd bit of Amnite equipment that has “disappeared” from the docks, although such items are few and far between. (However, some of the weapons merchants could tell you where to find such items easily.)

A typical market stall hugs close against a building, its low awning supported by poles. Goods for sale are laid out on a cape or rug in front, with the owner sitting in the shade. Haggling—a Realmsian style of business—is greeted with disgust from the local merchants. If you want to argue in the hot sun, find an Amnite. . . .

**14. Temple of Helm:** During the assault by Cordell, the temple atop the pyramid of Azul (among others) was burned and the banners of Helm erected. Although temples to the more peaceable gods were eventually rebuilt and rededicated, Azul’s bloody reputation meant that gods pyramid would not be restored.

The pyramid of Azul was ripped halfway down, and the stone re-used to erect a building of newcomer design in its place: the temple of Helm, a massive stone structure built with the same stone as the old pyramid dedicated to the child-slaughtering Azul. Its main entrance faces the pyramid of Qotal, and is dominated by a huge golden eye over the lintel. Behind the altar, a large stained glass window (made

with glass imported from Lantan) is being installed.

By order of Governor Cordell, all good and worshipful Amnites, and those Payits who wish to receive the word of the Watchful Eye, gather one day a week for services. Payits are given room at the back of the temple, Realmsmen in the front. Actual attendance depends on the weather, the closeness of danger in the area (harsh times improve attendance), and how recently the order was reiterated. DaNosta of Fort Cordell issued a standing order for all military to attend, although he himself does not.

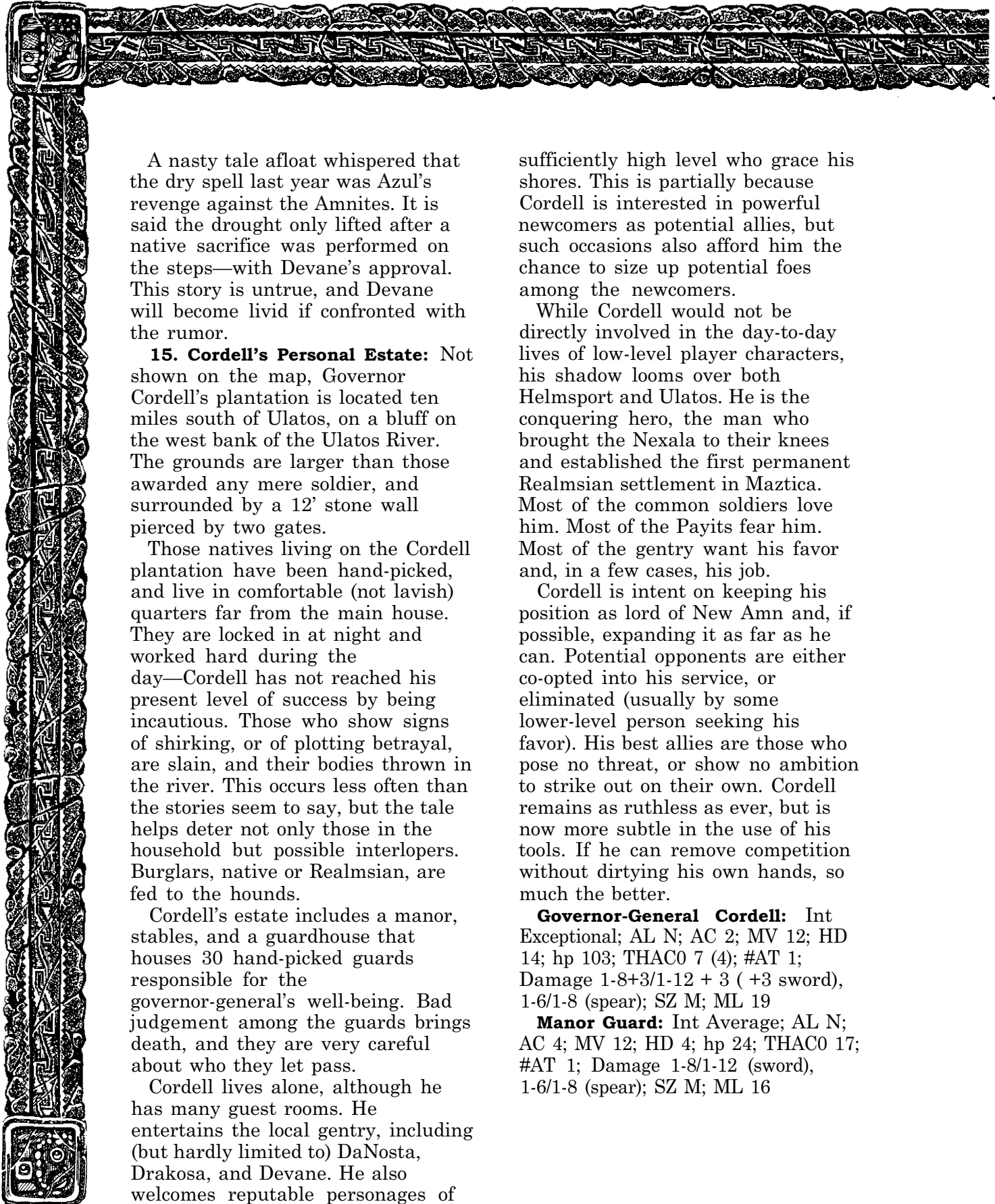
The temple is under the control of Bishou (formerly Pryat) Devane, a member of Cordell’s original expedition. Devane is more understanding toward the native faiths than his predecessor, now that most of those he comes in contact with have dispensed with their barbaric sacrifices. He would prefer that Cordell outlaw all other faiths and make Helm’s worship the only acceptable form in Ulatos. However, remembering the fate of the previous Bishou Dominicus, he will be patient and take his converts one at a time. He is aided in his work by three assistants and a unit of guards.

**Bishou Devane:** Int High; AL LN; AC 2; MV 12; HD 9; hp 45; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Damage 1-6 + 3/1-6 + 2 (+ 2 footman’s mace); SA & SD Spells as a 9th level priest; SZ M; ML 17

**Acolytes:** Int Average; AL LN; AC 4; MV 12; HD 2; hp 12; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Damage 1-6 + 1/1-6; SA & SD; Spells as 2nd level priests; SZ M; ML 14

**Typical Guard:** Int Average; AL N; AC 4; MV 12; HD 2; hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Damage 1-8/1-12 (sword), 1-6/1-8 (spear); SZ M; ML 15





A nasty tale afloat whispered that the dry spell last year was Azul's revenge against the Amnites. It is said the drought only lifted after a native sacrifice was performed on the steps—with Devane's approval. This story is untrue, and Devane will become livid if confronted with the rumor.

**15. Cordell's Personal Estate:** Not shown on the map, Governor Cordell's plantation is located ten miles south of Ulatos, on a bluff on the west bank of the Ulatos River. The grounds are larger than those awarded any mere soldier, and surrounded by a 12' stone wall pierced by two gates.

Those natives living on the Cordell plantation have been hand-picked, and live in comfortable (not lavish) quarters far from the main house. They are locked in at night and worked hard during the day—Cordell has not reached his present level of success by being incautious. Those who show signs of shirking, or of plotting betrayal, are slain, and their bodies thrown in the river. This occurs less often than the stories seem to say, but the tale helps deter not only those in the household but possible interlopers. Burglars, native or Realmsian, are fed to the hounds.

Cordell's estate includes a manor, stables, and a guardhouse that houses 30 hand-picked guards responsible for the governor-general's well-being. Bad judgement among the guards brings death, and they are very careful about who they let pass.

Cordell lives alone, although he has many guest rooms. He entertains the local gentry, including (but hardly limited to) DaNosta, Drakosa, and Devane. He also welcomes reputable personages of

sufficiently high level who grace his shores. This is partially because Cordell is interested in powerful newcomers as potential allies, but such occasions also afford him the chance to size up potential foes among the newcomers.

While Cordell would not be directly involved in the day-to-day lives of low-level player characters, his shadow looms over both Helmsport and Ulatos. He is the conquering hero, the man who brought the Nexala to their knees and established the first permanent Realmsian settlement in Maztica. Most of the common soldiers love him. Most of the Payits fear him. Most of the gentry want his favor and, in a few cases, his job.

Cordell is intent on keeping his position as lord of New Amn and, if possible, expanding it as far as he can. Potential opponents are either co-opted into his service, or eliminated (usually by some lower-level person seeking his favor). His best allies are those who pose no threat, or show no ambition to strike out on their own. Cordell remains as ruthless as ever, but is now more subtle in the use of his tools. If he can remove competition without dirtying his own hands, so much the better.

**Governor-General Cordell:** Int Exceptional; AL N; AC 2; MV 12; HD 14; hp 103; THAC0 7 (4); #AT 1; Damage 1-8+3/1-12 + 3 (+3 sword), 1-6/1-8 (spear); SZ M; ML 19

**Manor Guard:** Int Average; AL N; AC 4; MV 12; HD 4; hp 24; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Damage 1-8/1-12 (sword), 1-6/1-8 (spear); SZ M; ML 16



## Three Meetings

### **Drakosa (all characters)**

The PCs come together on request of Lord Drakosa, a noble of Calimshan recently arrived in Helmsport. The PCs' nationalities affect how the invitation comes.

- Realmsians get the news thus:

An excited young Payit comes up to you holding out a wax-sealed letter (with no address). It reads:

"You are cordially invited to the Drakosa estate this eve, after vesper bells are rung at the temple of Helm. Lord Drakosa has need of your services, and you will be well rewarded for your efforts."

The boy speaks only a little commonspeech, but understands yes, no, and hand signals. He was instructed to wait for the response. If the heroes can make themselves understood, he will gladly point out who hired him—a huge man with a stubbly beard and scarred face, leaning on a nearby wall, watching. If the heroes look, he will calmly nod. This is Kuri Ironspike, Drakosa's aide.

- If the heroes are Mazticans, the offer is not nearly so polite.

You are going about your work when a shadow falls across your way: a giant Amnite with a cropped black beard and scarred face scowls at you. He is armed with a sword, and flanked by two other armed men. One holds the leash of a pair of hounds. A Payit, whose earrings identify him with

the Revered Counselor's household, follows.

"You there!" says the huge man in common. "You're coming to Drakosa's house. He has work!"

The Payit translates. "Lord Drakosa strongly invites you immediately to assist him in a matter of extreme importance."

"Move along, or I'll feed you to the *hounds!*" bellows the huge man, gesturing at the panting dogs.

"Speed is essential, and you will be rewarded for compliance," says the interpreter.

If no characters speak common, then replace the Amnite's lines with gibberish, retaining his tone and gestures. The PCs are expected to follow Ironspike immediately.

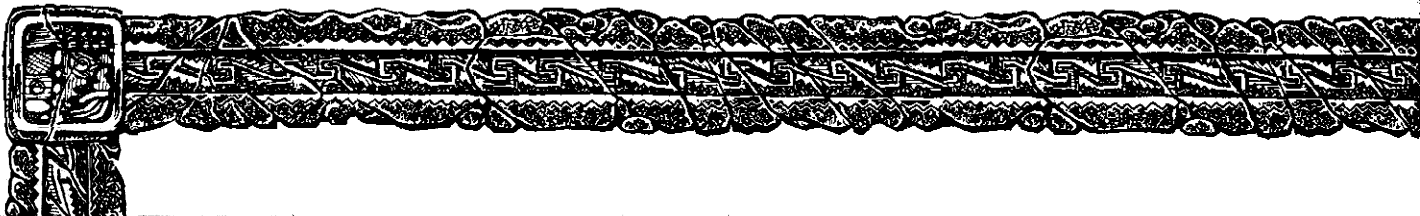
Characters who stand up for their rights and attack will be reduced to zero hit points, dragged off before the tribunal, found guilty of brawling, and sentenced to slavery in Drakosa's service. This is an unfair way to force the PCs to work for Drakosa, but it accurately reflects the nature of the Amnites in Maztica.

**Ironspike:** Int High; AL NE; AC 4; MV 12; HD 5; hp 48; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Damage 1-8/1-12 (sword), 1-6/1-8 (spear); SZ M; ML 15

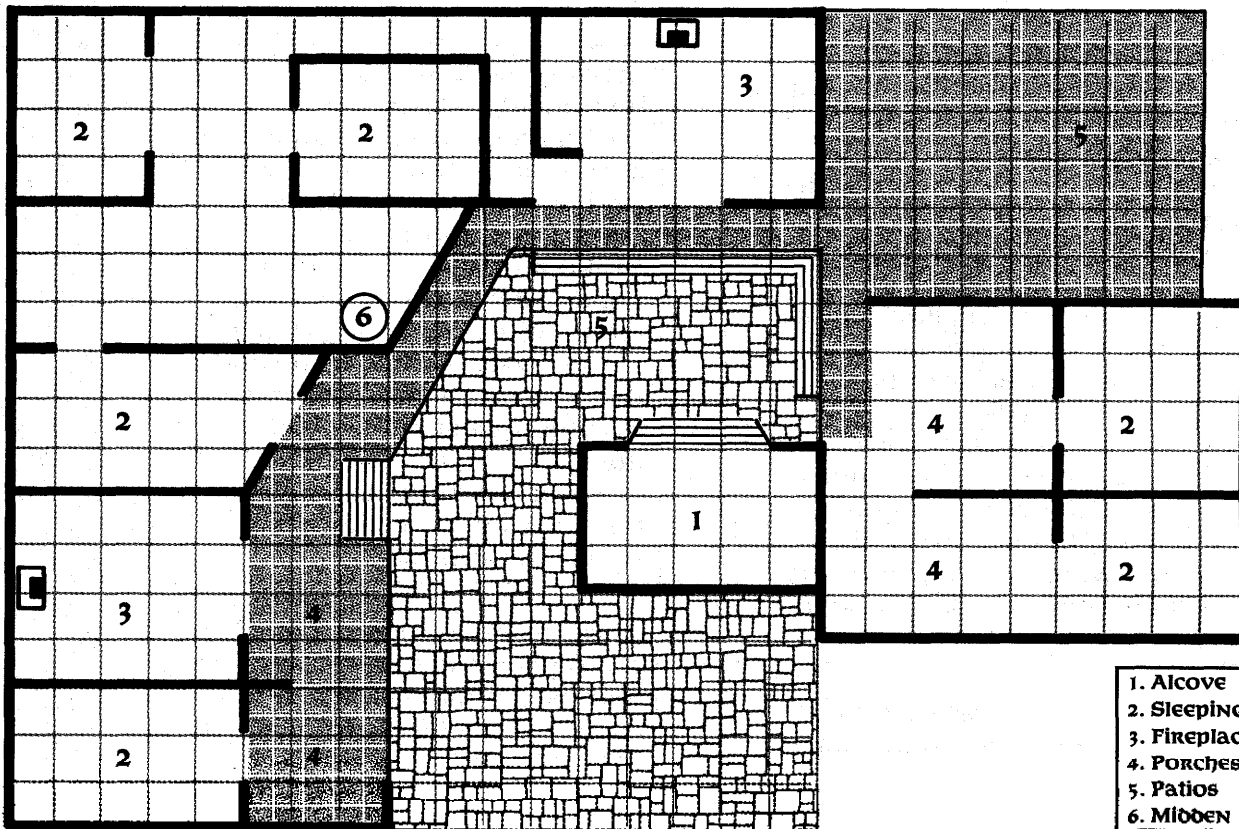
**Guard:** Int Average; AL N; AC 4; MV 12; HD 3; hp 19; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Damage 1-8/1-12 (sword), 1-6/1-8 (spear); SZ M; ML 15

**Hounds:** Int Semi; AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 2 +2; hp 15; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Damage 2-8; SZ M; ML 10

**Hasoctl:** Int High; AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 2; hp 16; THAC0 19; #AT 1;



### Map 1 Caxal's Palace



(Typical Palace)

- 1. Alcove
- 2. Sleeping Rooms
- 3. Fireplace Rooms
- 4. Porches
- 5. Patios
- 6. Midden

1 square = 3'



Damage 1-3/1-2 (fists); SZ M; ML 8

The meeting with Drakosa takes place in the open court in his home (map, above). He appears in normal robes (magic bracers on), with Hasoctl and Ironspike. If trouble breaks out, about ten guards are nearby. Hasoctl can translate into Payit, if need be—he will render Drakosa's words accurately, since he knows Ironspike is listening.

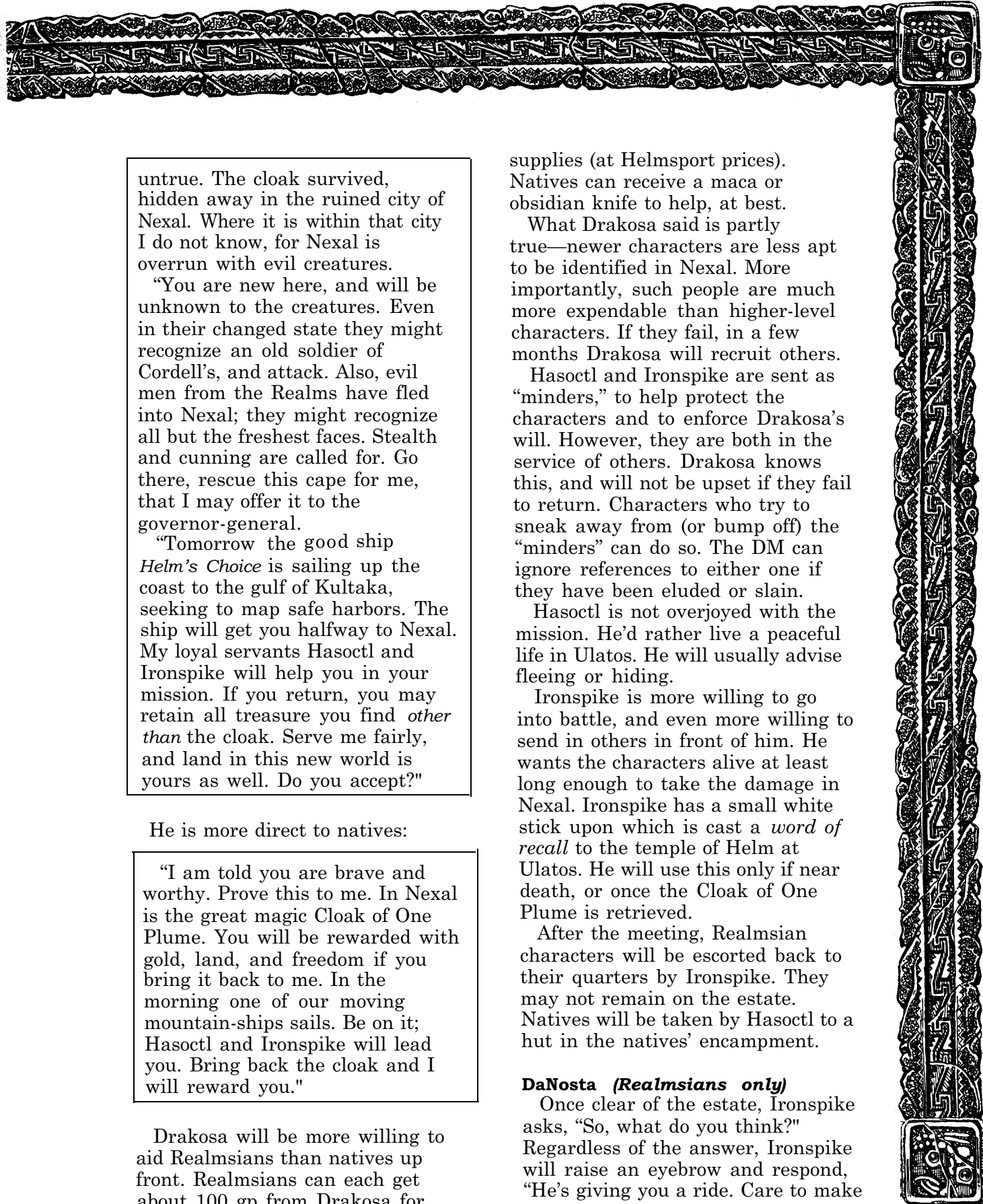
Drakosa will treat other Realmsians with as much respect as would be offered any adventurer back home. Natives will merely be expected to serve. For a mixed group, Drakosa will let Hasoctl

handle the rabble. To Realmsians, his pitch would be courteous:

“Gentlemen, it has come to my attention that you are newcomers, as am I. I have heard wondrous tales of this land at the table of Governor-General Cordell, and I would much like to impress and help His Governorship.

“A flying cape called the Cloak of One Plume was said to have been destroyed in a battle between the savage gods Zaltec and Qotal. I have found this





untrue. The cloak survived, hidden away in the ruined city of Nexal. Where it is within that city I do not know, for Nexal is overrun with evil creatures.

"You are new here, and will be unknown to the creatures. Even in their changed state they might recognize an old soldier of Cordell's, and attack. Also, evil men from the Realms have fled into Nexal; they might recognize all but the freshest faces. Stealth and cunning are called for. Go there, rescue this cape for me, that I may offer it to the governor-general.

"Tomorrow the good ship *Helm's Choice* is sailing up the coast to the gulf of Kultaka, seeking to map safe harbors. The ship will get you halfway to Nexal. My loyal servants Hasoctl and Ironspike will help you in your mission. If you return, you may retain all treasure you find *other than* the cloak. Serve me fairly, and land in this new world is yours as well. Do you accept?"

He is more direct to natives:

"I am told you are brave and worthy. Prove this to me. In Nexal is the great magic Cloak of One Plume. You will be rewarded with gold, land, and freedom if you bring it back to me. In the morning one of our moving mountain-ships sails. Be on it; Hasoctl and Ironspike will lead you. Bring back the cloak and I will reward you."

Drakosa will be more willing to aid Realmsians than natives up front. Realmsians can each get about 100 gp from Drakosa for

supplies (at Helmsport prices). Natives can receive a maca or obsidian knife to help, at best.

What Drakosa said is partly true—newer characters are less apt to be identified in Nexal. More importantly, such people are much more expendable than higher-level characters. If they fail, in a few months Drakosa will recruit others.

Hasoctl and Ironspike are sent as "minders," to help protect the characters and to enforce Drakosa's will. However, they are both in the service of others. Drakosa knows this, and will not be upset if they fail to return. Characters who try to sneak away from (or bump off) the "minders" can do so. The DM can ignore references to either one if they have been eluded or slain.

Hasoctl is not overjoyed with the mission. He'd rather live a peaceful life in Ulatos. He will usually advise fleeing or hiding.

Ironspike is more willing to go into battle, and even more willing to send in others in front of him. He wants the characters alive at least long enough to take the damage in Nexal. Ironspike has a small white stick upon which is cast a *word of recall* to the temple of Helm at Ulatos. He will use this only if near death, or once the Cloak of One Plume is retrieved.

After the meeting, Realmsian characters will be escorted back to their quarters by Ironspike. They may not remain on the estate. Natives will be taken by Hasoctl to a hut in the natives' encampment.

#### **DaNosta (Realmsians only)**

Once clear of the estate, Ironspike asks, "So, what do you think?" Regardless of the answer, Ironspike will raise an eyebrow and respond, "He's giving you a ride. Care to make

some real money?"

If the answer is universally negative, Ironspike will shrug and the opportunity will be lost. Any who respond positively will be directed to a small lean-to in Ulatos (or Helmsport). Ironspike pushes aside a tarp covering the doorway, and ushers the heroes in.

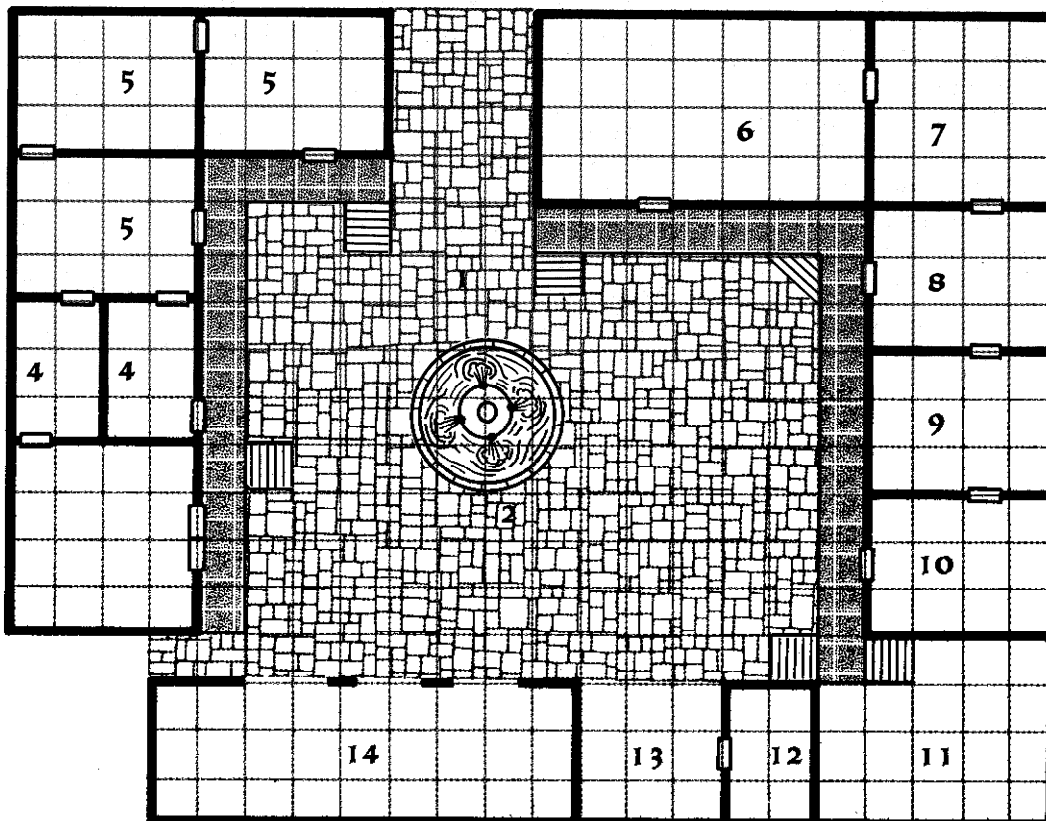
Inside is a simple room, with a single table lit by a lone candle. The candle illuminates a portly man sipping on a mug of octal. He smiles and says, "Ah, these are Drakosa's brave adventurers, out to seek the Cloak of One Plume."

The portly man is DaNosta,

captain of the garrison of Fort Cordell. He wants to hire the adventurers too, for his own advantage. Ironspike has been in his employ for some time, passing information to DaNosta about his potential rival. DaNosta knows about Drakosa's attempt to curry Cordell's favor, and wants the cloak himself. Not only would Drakosa be embarrassed to lose it, but DaNosta would secretly ship the cloak to his Amnite masters as an example of a "treasure" Cordell declared destroyed but which he had really squirreled away for himself.

DaNosta says little of his motives.

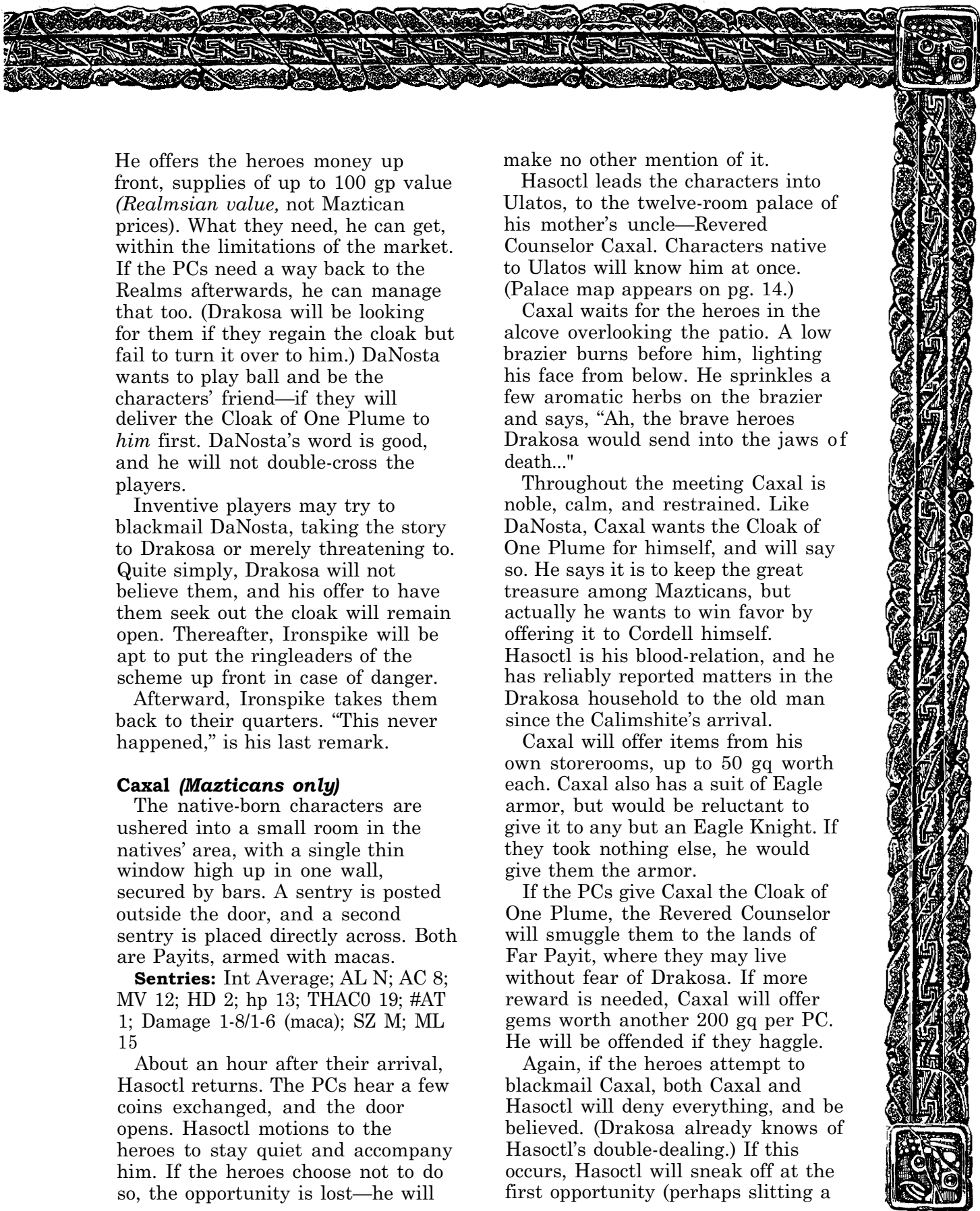
Map 2 Drakosa Estate



1. Courtyard
2. Fountain
3. Chapel
4. Priests' Quarters (empty)
5. Guest Quarters
6. Living Room
7. Study
8. Dressing Room
9. Bedroom
10. Bedroom
11. Herb Garden
12. Smoke House
13. Cooking Yard
14. Stables

(Typical Estate)

1 square = 5'



He offers the heroes money up front, supplies of up to 100 gp value (*Realmsian value*, not Maztican prices). What they need, he can get, within the limitations of the market. If the PCs need a way back to the Realms afterwards, he can manage that too. (Drakosa will be looking for them if they regain the cloak but fail to turn it over to him.) DaNosta wants to play ball and be the characters' friend—if they will deliver the Cloak of One Plume to *him* first. DaNosta's word is good, and he will not double-cross the players.

Inventive players may try to blackmail DaNosta, taking the story to Drakosa or merely threatening to. Quite simply, Drakosa will not believe them, and his offer to have them seek out the cloak will remain open. Thereafter, Ironspike will be apt to put the ringleaders of the scheme up front in case of danger.

Afterward, Ironspike takes them back to their quarters. "This never happened," is his last remark.

### **Caxal (*Mazticans only*)**

The native-born characters are ushered into a small room in the natives' area, with a single thin window high up in one wall, secured by bars. A sentry is posted outside the door, and a second sentry is placed directly across. Both are Payits, armed with macas.

**Sentries:** Int Average; AL N; AC 8; MV 12; HD 2; hp 13; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Damage 1-8/1-6 (maca); SZ M; ML 15

About an hour after their arrival, Hasoctl returns. The PCs hear a few coins exchanged, and the door opens. Hasoctl motions to the heroes to stay quiet and accompany him. If the heroes choose not to do so, the opportunity is lost—he will

make no other mention of it.

Hasoctl leads the characters into Ulatos, to the twelve-room palace of his mother's uncle—Revered Counselor Caxal. Characters native to Ulatos will know him at once. (Palace map appears on pg. 14.)

Caxal waits for the heroes in the alcove overlooking the patio. A low brazier burns before him, lighting his face from below. He sprinkles a few aromatic herbs on the brazier and says, "Ah, the brave heroes Drakosa would send into the jaws of death..."

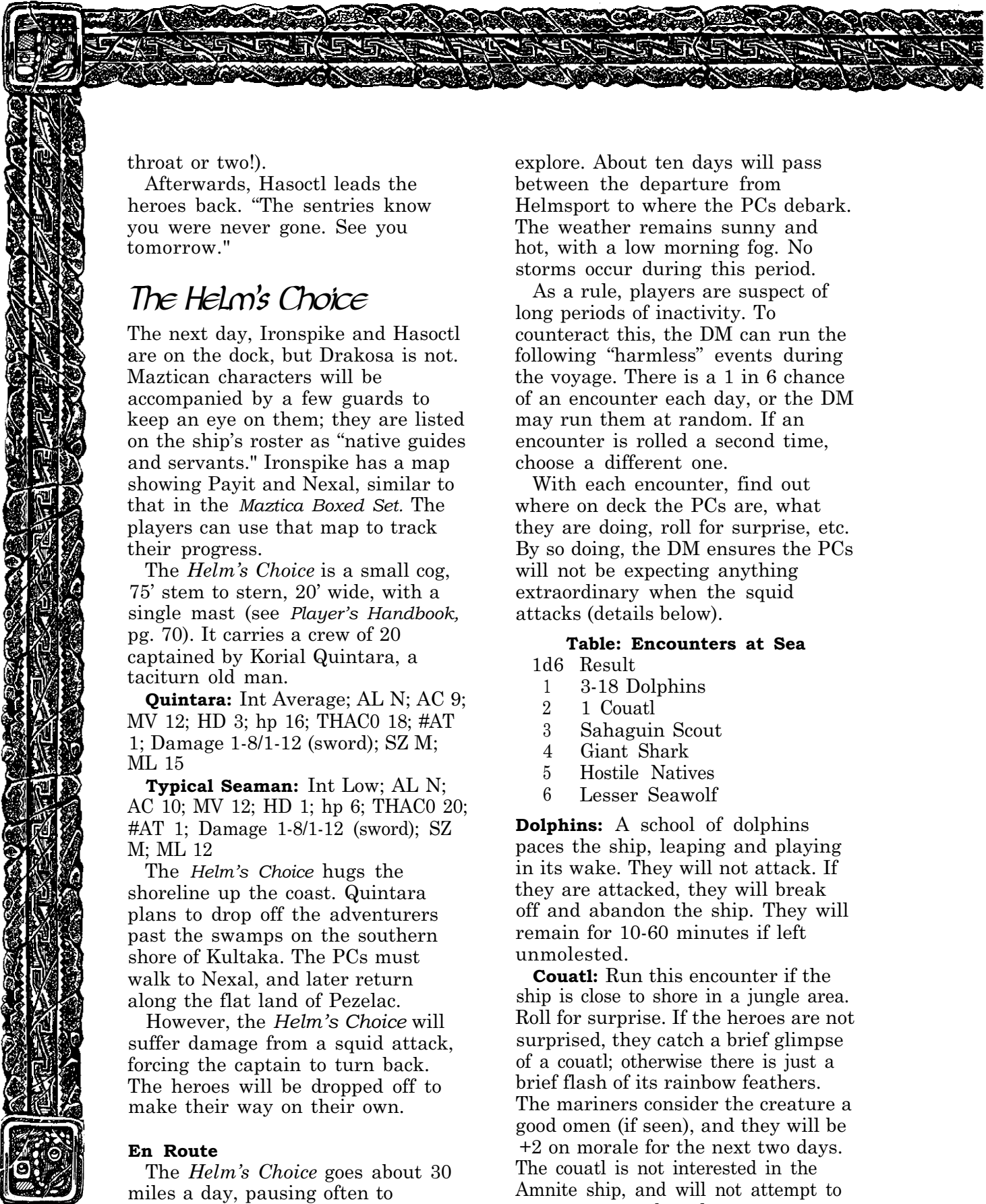
Throughout the meeting Caxal is noble, calm, and restrained. Like DaNosta, Caxal wants the Cloak of One Plume for himself, and will say so. He says it is to keep the great treasure among Mazticans, but actually he wants to win favor by offering it to Cordell himself. Hasoctl is his blood-relation, and he has reliably reported matters in the Drakosa household to the old man since the Calimshite's arrival.

Caxal will offer items from his own storerooms, up to 50 gq worth each. Caxal also has a suit of Eagle armor, but would be reluctant to give it to any but an Eagle Knight. If they took nothing else, he would give them the armor.

If the PCs give Caxal the Cloak of One Plume, the Revered Counselor will smuggle them to the lands of Far Payit, where they may live without fear of Drakosa. If more reward is needed, Caxal will offer gems worth another 200 gq per PC. He will be offended if they haggle.

Again, if the heroes attempt to blackmail Caxal, both Caxal and Hasoctl will deny everything, and be believed. (Drakosa already knows of Hasoctl's double-dealing.) If this occurs, Hasoctl will sneak off at the first opportunity (perhaps slitting a





throat or two!).

Afterwards, Hasoctl leads the heroes back. "The sentries know you were never gone. See you tomorrow."

### *The Helm's Choice*

The next day, Ironspike and Hasoctl are on the dock, but Drakosa is not. Maztican characters will be accompanied by a few guards to keep an eye on them; they are listed on the ship's roster as "native guides and servants." Ironspike has a map showing Payit and Nexal, similar to that in the *Maztica Boxed Set*. The players can use that map to track their progress.

The *Helm's Choice* is a small cog, 75' stem to stern, 20' wide, with a single mast (see *Player's Handbook*, pg. 70). It carries a crew of 20 captained by Korial Quintara, a taciturn old man.

**Quintara:** Int Average; AL N; AC 9; MV 12; HD 3; hp 16; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Damage 1-8/1-12 (sword); SZ M; ML 15

**Typical Seaman:** Int Low; AL N; AC 10; MV 12; HD 1; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Damage 1-8/1-12 (sword); SZ M; ML 12

The *Helm's Choice* hugs the shoreline up the coast. Quintara plans to drop off the adventurers past the swamps on the southern shore of Kultaka. The PCs must walk to Nexal, and later return along the flat land of Pezelac.

However, the *Helm's Choice* will suffer damage from a squid attack, forcing the captain to turn back. The heroes will be dropped off to make their way on their own.

### **En Route**

The *Helm's Choice* goes about 30 miles a day, pausing often to

explore. About ten days will pass between the departure from Helmsport to where the PCs debark. The weather remains sunny and hot, with a low morning fog. No storms occur during this period.

As a rule, players are suspect of long periods of inactivity. To counteract this, the DM can run the following "harmless" events during the voyage. There is a 1 in 6 chance of an encounter each day, or the DM may run them at random. If an encounter is rolled a second time, choose a different one.

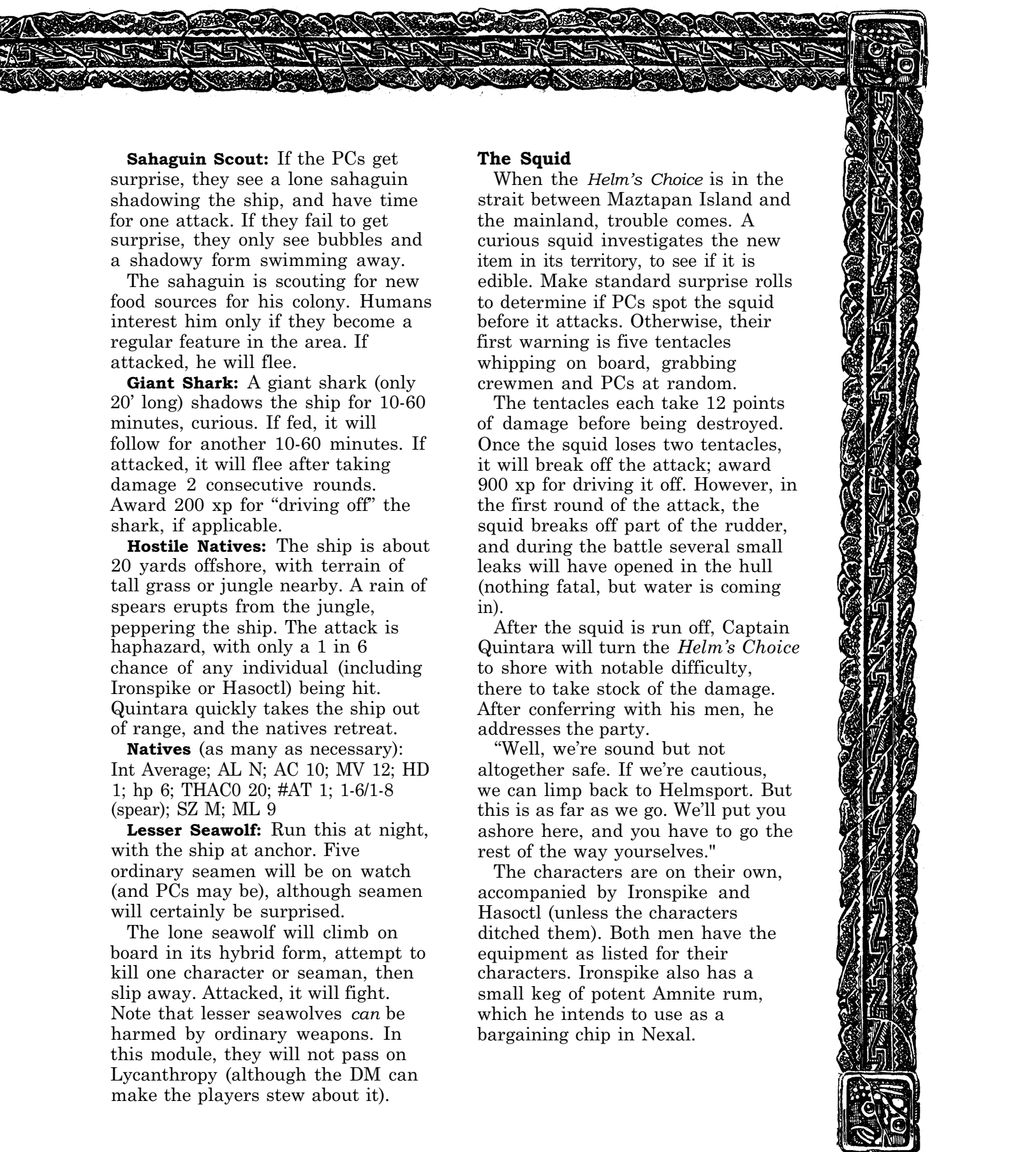
With each encounter, find out where on deck the PCs are, what they are doing, roll for surprise, etc. By so doing, the DM ensures the PCs will not be expecting anything extraordinary when the squid attacks (details below).

**Table: Encounters at Sea**

1d6	Result
1	3-18 Dolphins
2	1 Couatl
3	Sahaguin Scout
4	Giant Shark
5	Hostile Natives
6	Lesser Seawolf

**Dolphins:** A school of dolphins paces the ship, leaping and playing in its wake. They will not attack. If they are attacked, they will break off and abandon the ship. They will remain for 10-60 minutes if left unmolested.

**Couatl:** Run this encounter if the ship is close to shore in a jungle area. Roll for surprise. If the heroes are not surprised, they catch a brief glimpse of a couatl; otherwise there is just a brief flash of its rainbow feathers. The mariners consider the creature a good omen (if seen), and they will be +2 on morale for the next two days. The couatl is not interested in the Amnite ship, and will not attempt to contact any on board.



**Sahaguin Scout:** If the PCs get surprise, they see a lone sahuagin shadowing the ship, and have time for one attack. If they fail to get surprise, they only see bubbles and a shadowy form swimming away.

The sahuagin is scouting for new food sources for his colony. Humans interest him only if they become a regular feature in the area. If attacked, he will flee.

**Giant Shark:** A giant shark (only 20' long) shadows the ship for 10-60 minutes, curious. If fed, it will follow for another 10-60 minutes. If attacked, it will flee after taking damage 2 consecutive rounds. Award 200 xp for "driving off" the shark, if applicable.

**Hostile Natives:** The ship is about 20 yards offshore, with terrain of tall grass or jungle nearby. A rain of spears erupts from the jungle, peppering the ship. The attack is haphazard, with only a 1 in 6 chance of any individual (including Ironspike or Hasoctl) being hit. Quintara quickly takes the ship out of range, and the natives retreat.

**Natives** (as many as necessary): Int Average; AL N; AC 10; MV 12; HD 1; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; 1-6/1-8 (spear); SZ M; ML 9

**Lesser Seawolf:** Run this at night, with the ship at anchor. Five ordinary seamen will be on watch (and PCs may be), although seamen will certainly be surprised.

The lone seawolf will climb on board in its hybrid form, attempt to kill one character or seaman, then slip away. Attacked, it will fight. Note that lesser seawolves *can* be harmed by ordinary weapons. In this module, they will not pass on Lycanthropy (although the DM can make the players stew about it).

## The Squid

When the *Helm's Choice* is in the strait between Maztapan Island and the mainland, trouble comes. A curious squid investigates the new item in its territory, to see if it is edible. Make standard surprise rolls to determine if PCs spot the squid before it attacks. Otherwise, their first warning is five tentacles whipping on board, grabbing crewmen and PCs at random.

The tentacles each take 12 points of damage before being destroyed. Once the squid loses two tentacles, it will break off the attack; award 900 xp for driving it off. However, in the first round of the attack, the squid breaks off part of the rudder, and during the battle several small leaks will have opened in the hull (nothing fatal, but water is coming in).

After the squid is run off, Captain Quintara will turn the *Helm's Choice* to shore with notable difficulty, there to take stock of the damage. After conferring with his men, he addresses the party.

"Well, we're sound but not altogether safe. If we're cautious, we can limp back to Helmsport. But this is as far as we go. We'll put you ashore here, and you have to go the rest of the way yourselves."

The characters are on their own, accompanied by Ironspike and Hasoctl (unless the characters ditched them). Both men have the equipment as listed for their characters. Ironspike also has a small keg of potent Amnite rum, which he intends to use as a bargaining chip in Nexal.



# The Road To Nexal

This section is divided into random and set encounter descriptions. The random encounters are small adventures where the low-level adventurers may fight, yet survive. If these tables are used further in your Maztica campaign, the numbers and savagery of the creatures should be increased to reflect the growing prowess of the PCs.

Three planned encounters are laid out for this part of the journey. The first two encounters should occur in quick succession, before the players leave the jungle of Pulloq. The third encounter can take place in any hilly terrain, either during the trip to Nexal or on the return trip home.

## Random Encounters

Maztica is very different from the Realms; here, monsters do not lurk behind every bush and rock. Creatures found here are more likely to be animals than monsters, and are not apt to be hostile unless hungry. Even those creatures found in both the Heartlands and Maztica may have different attitudes and abilities, having developed in different niches.

Each day, the DM should roll a single six-sided die. On a one, there will be a random encounter. Determine type from the tables below, according to terrain. If the heroes cross through different terrains, the DM may choose which table to roll on. Roll 1d8 plus 1d12 to determine a result.

All creatures are taken from the first two *Monstrous Compendiums* (MC), and the FORGOTTEN REALMS® MC. (Italicized

parenthetical notes indicate where to find that creature in the MCs.) Added notes follow the tables.

Treasure is very rare in random encounters. If the creature has a listed treasure and type, there will be a 5% chance of it being present. For coins, DMs should substitute gold quills, while gems will be uncut jade and turquoise. Any magic will be chosen by the DM from those pluma and hishna artifacts described in the boxed set. No scrolls, books, or other newcomer items would be found in a random monster's lair. Intelligent races have a 10% chance of having 1-4 gold quills worth of valuables, in addition to their weapons.

## Plains

2	1-3 Wild Horses
3	1 Ankheg
4	1-2 Wild Eagles
5	1 Ant Lion
6	2-12 Giant Ants
7	1-3 Large Scorpions
8	1-3 Wolves
9	1-4 Wild Dogs
10	10-30 Buffalo ( <i>Animal, Herd</i> )
11	10-40 Antelope ( <i>Animal, Herd</i> )
12	10-20 Natives
13	1-4 Coyotes ( <i>Jackals</i> )
14	1-2 Wild Cats
15	1-2 Normal Constrictor Snakes
16	1-2 Normal Skunks (Spotted)
17	1-2 Axebeaks
18	1-3 Coyotlweres ( <i>Jackalweres</i> )
19	1 Giant Eagle
20	Two Encounters





## Jungles/Tropical Forest

- 2 1 Werejaguar (*Weretiger*)
- 3 1 Giant Constrictor Snake
- 4 1-3 Normal Porcupines
- 5 1-2 Giant Frogs
- 6 1-3 Giant Spiders
- 7 1-2 Black Bears
- 8 1-4 Tabaxi
- 9 1-3 Tapir (*Warthog*)
- 10 3-18 Savages
- 11 10-20 Natives
- 12 1-3 Jaguars (Cat)
- 13 2-8 Howler Monkeys (*Animal, Small*)
- 14 1-3 Itzamti (*Giant Lizards*)
- 15 1-2 Wild Cats
- 16 1-2 Harpies
- 17 Two Encounters
- 18 1-2 Treants
- 19 1 Giant Porcupine
- 20 1 Strangleweed

## Desert

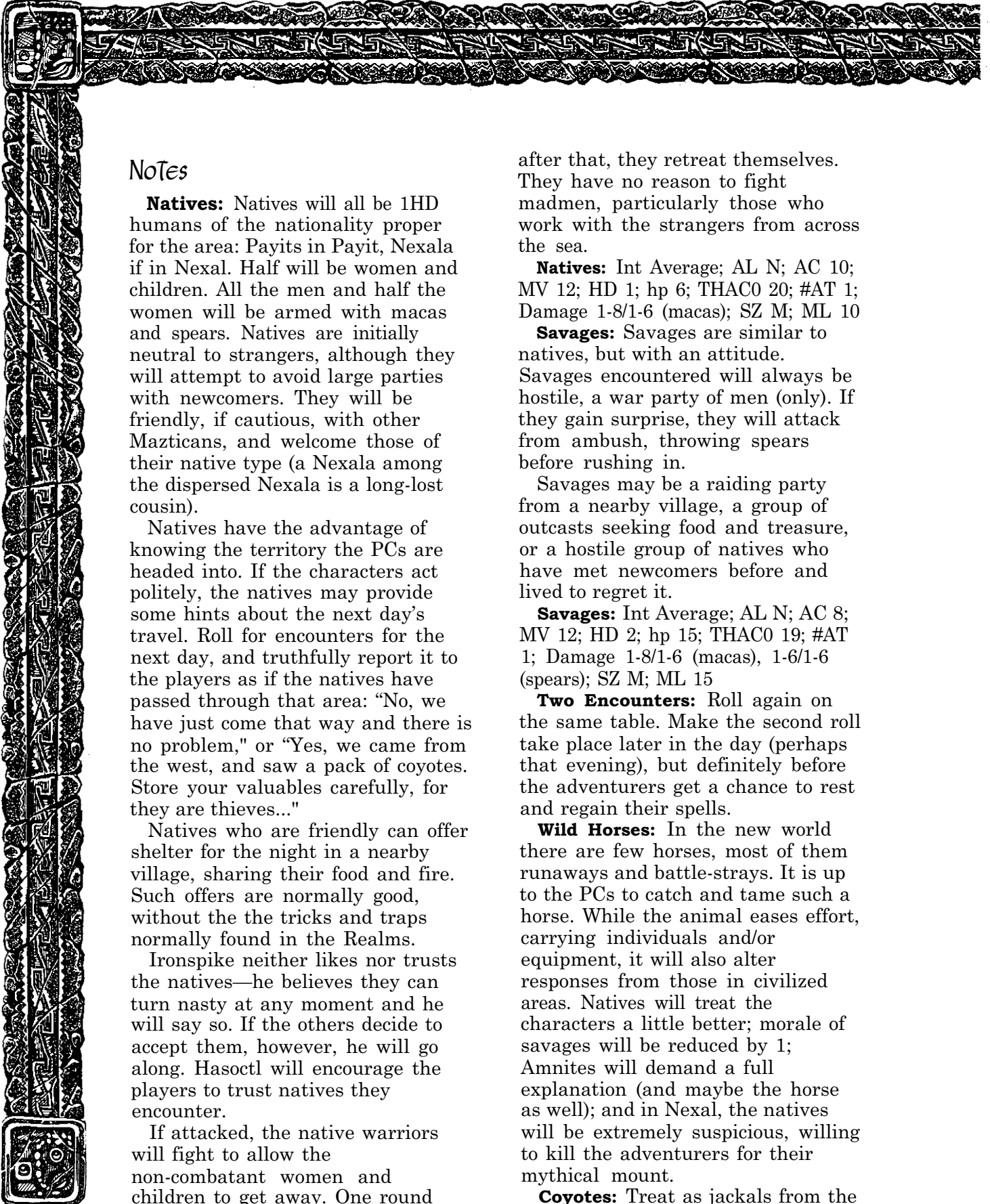
- 2 1-2 Coyotlweres (*Jackalweres*)
- 3 1-3 Giant Scorpions
- 4 1-4 Common Vultures
- 5 2-5 Giant Ants
- 6 1-3 Giant Centipedes
- 7 1-4 Huge Scorpions
- 8 1-2 Poisonous Snakes
- 9 1-6 Large Scorpions
- 10 2-8 Desert Dwarves
- 11 1-10 Natives
- 12 1-3 Large Hawks
- 13 1-4 Coyotes (Jackals)
- 14 1-6 Rhaumbusun
- 15 1-6 Sandlings
- 16 1 Giant Owl
- 17 1 Blood Hawk
- 18 1-2 Giant Lizards
- 19 1 Giant Vulture
- 20 1-2 Coyotlweres (*Jackalweres*)

## Swamp

- 2 1 Dragon Turtle
- 3 1-2 Poisonous Frogs
- 4 1 Giant Constrictor Snake
- 5 1 Giant Crocodile
- 6 2-8 Bullywugs
- 7 1-3 Giant Toads
- 8 1-3 Normal Constrictor Snakes
- 9 1-4 Wild Dogs
- 10 1-4 Crocodiles
- 11 2-8 Savages
- 12 1-3 Giant Frogs
- 13 1 Leech Swarm
- 14 1-4 Capybaras (*Wild Pig*)
- 15 Two Encounters
- 16 1 Giant Leech
- 17 1-2 Poisonous Toads
- 18 1 Giant Slug
- 19 1 Giant Sundew
- 20 2-12 Piranha

## Mountains/Hills

- 2 1 Minotaur Lizard
- 3 2-8 Aaracokra
- 4 1 Giant Cave Bear
- 5 1-2 Giant Scorpions
- 6 1-3 Jaguars (*Cat*)
- 7 10-20 Natives
- 8 1-3 Large Spiders
- 9 1-4 Huge Scorpions
- 10 2-8 Savages
- 11 1-4 Large Hawks
- 12 1-3 Wild Eagles
- 13 1-4 Wild Dogs
- 14 1-3 Wild Cats
- 15 1-4 Giant Hornets
- 16 1-4 Huge Spiders
- 17 1-2 Mountain Lions (*Cat*)
- 18 1-2 Poisonous Snakes
- 19 Two Encounters
- 20 1 Condor (*Vulture*)



## Notes

**Natives:** Natives will all be 1HD humans of the nationality proper for the area: Payits in Payit, Nexala if in Nexal. Half will be women and children. All the men and half the women will be armed with macas and spears. Natives are initially neutral to strangers, although they will attempt to avoid large parties with newcomers. They will be friendly, if cautious, with other Mazticans, and welcome those of their native type (a Nexala among the dispersed Nexala is a long-lost cousin).

Natives have the advantage of knowing the territory the PCs are headed into. If the characters act politely, the natives may provide some hints about the next day's travel. Roll for encounters for the next day, and truthfully report it to the players as if the natives have passed through that area: "No, we have just come that way and there is no problem," or "Yes, we came from the west, and saw a pack of coyotes. Store your valuables carefully, for they are thieves..."

Natives who are friendly can offer shelter for the night in a nearby village, sharing their food and fire. Such offers are normally good, without the the tricks and traps normally found in the Realms.

Ironspike neither likes nor trusts the natives—he believes they can turn nasty at any moment and he will say so. If the others decide to accept them, however, he will go along. Hasoctl will encourage the players to trust natives they encounter.

If attacked, the native warriors will fight to allow the non-combatant women and children to get away. One round

after that, they retreat themselves. They have no reason to fight madmen, particularly those who work with the strangers from across the sea.

**Natives:** Int Average; AL N; AC 10; MV 12; HD 1; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Damage 1-8/1-6 (macas); SZ M; ML 10

**Savages:** Savages are similar to natives, but with an attitude. Savages encountered will always be hostile, a war party of men (only). If they gain surprise, they will attack from ambush, throwing spears before rushing in.

Savages may be a raiding party from a nearby village, a group of outcasts seeking food and treasure, or a hostile group of natives who have met newcomers before and lived to regret it.

**Savages:** Int Average; AL N; AC 8; MV 12; HD 2; hp 15; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Damage 1-8/1-6 (macas), 1-6/1-6 (spears); SZ M; ML 15

**Two Encounters:** Roll again on the same table. Make the second roll take place later in the day (perhaps that evening), but definitely before the adventurers get a chance to rest and regain their spells.

**Wild Horses:** In the new world there are few horses, most of them runaways and battle-strays. It is up to the PCs to catch and tame such a horse. While the animal eases effort, carrying individuals and/or equipment, it will also alter responses from those in civilized areas. Natives will treat the characters a little better; morale of savages will be reduced by 1; Amnites will demand a full explanation (and maybe the horse as well); and in Nexal, the natives will be extremely suspicious, willing to kill the adventurers for their mythical mount.

**Coyotes:** Treat as jackals from the

### *Monstrous Compendium.*

**Coyotlweres:** Use jackalweres from the MC. Coyotlweres tend to be loners in Maztica, occasionally commanding a pack of coyotes.

**Werejaguar:** Similar to the weretiger from the MC. However, the werejaguar *can* be harmed by normal weapons. Werejaguars in human form have distorted, triangular faces with toothy grins and wide almond-shaped eyes.

**Howler Monkeys:** Statistics are as for monkey under the "Animals, Small" entry in the *Compendium*. In addition to the abilities noted, a tribe of howler monkeys will send up a chorus of loud hooting screeches if disturbed or attacked. The hooting is deafening close at hand, and carries for miles. The players can surprise no other encounters that day.

**Treants:** The treants of Maztica look similar to those in the Realms, but behave differently. They ignore non-native creatures unless attacked. They know the Amnites are around, but do not wish to acknowledge them. Maztican treants consider themselves royalty within the forest and expect to be treated accordingly, even to be given gifts. DMs can use treants to direct the characters toward the set encounters.

**Itzmti:** A species of large lizard with a dull-red hide similar to a dragon's. Its flesh is very tasty. Treat as a giant lizard from the MC.

**Tapir:** Use the statistics for the warthog under the "Boar" entry. Tapirs have no tusks.

**Capybara:** Use the statistics for the wild boar under "Boar" in the MC. The capybara is not a pig, but rather a very large rodent at home in the jungle and swamps.

**Desert Dwarf:** Like natives, a party of desert dwarves will treat

the PCs with respect, if also with a certain suspicion. If attacked, they will fight to the last man. They will not offer help unless a dwarf is in the party, in which case they will provide information as do the natives above.

**Desert Dwarves:** Int Average; AL N; AC 8; MV 12; HD 1; hp 8; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Damage 1-8/1-8 (stone axe); SZ S; ML 18

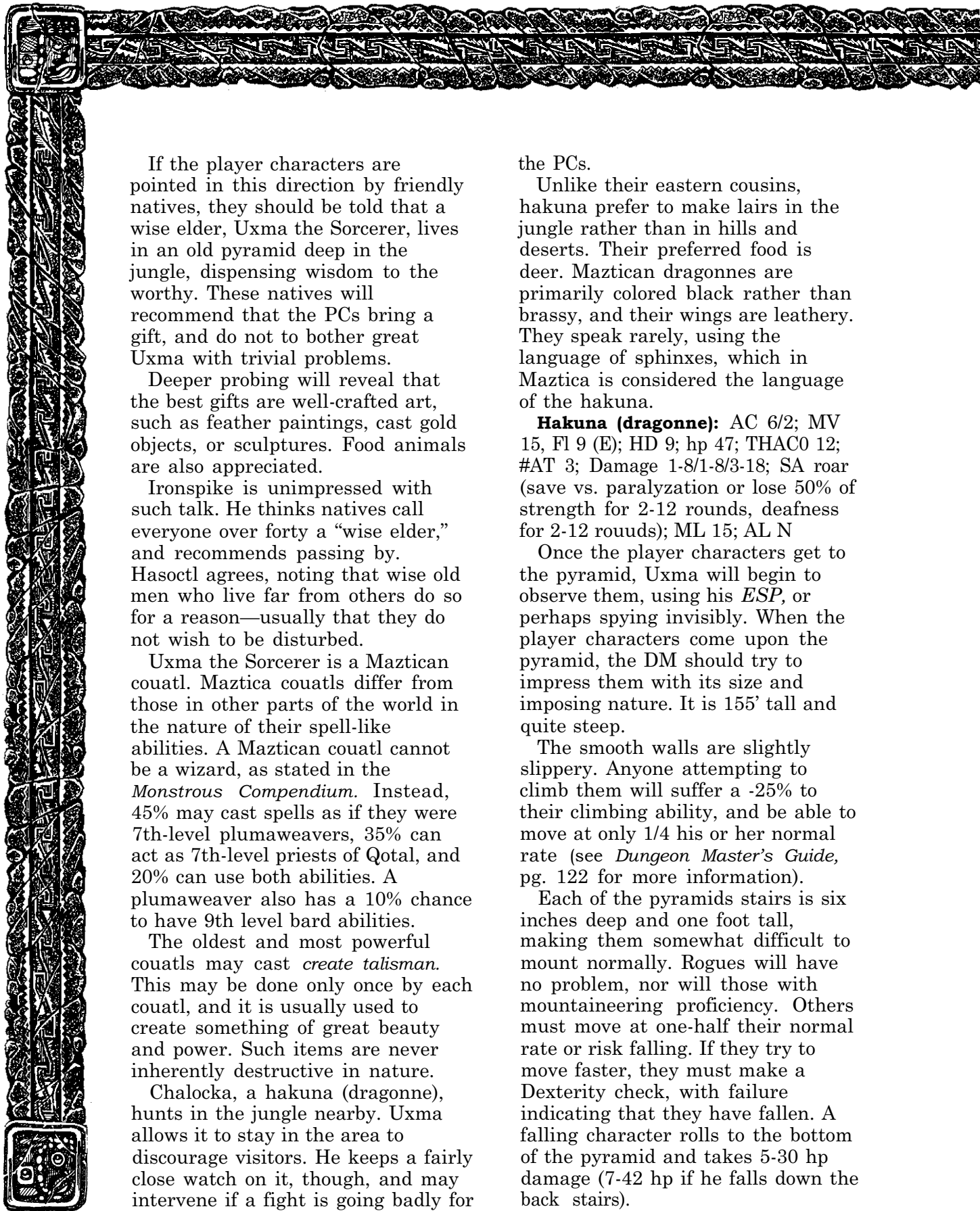
**Leech Swarm and Piranhas:** Both these encounters imply that the ground is marshy enough that attacks from these creatures become possible. The characters will find themselves having to wade into ankle-or knee-deep water.

**Dragon Turtle:** This is incredibly cruel to surprise first level characters with, so *always* give the PCs surprise and let them move off without being attacked (the creature is large and obvious). The valiant one who attempts to attack such a creature will probably die, so at least give them a chance to get away. The dragon turtle is not hostile unless attacked, or if the characters remain within 20 yards for more than three rounds.

## Set Encounters

### ENCOUNTER 1: Couatl Lair

The jungle around you becomes thick and oppressive, each step a battle against vines and overgrown foliage. Suddenly the way becomes clearer, and the undergrowth disappears entirely. Up ahead, you see a large pyramid in good condition. A small trail leads to its base. It is very oddly shaped, with rounded corners. Music and laughter can be heard drifting from the top of the pyramid.



If the player characters are pointed in this direction by friendly natives, they should be told that a wise elder, Uxma the Sorcerer, lives in an old pyramid deep in the jungle, dispensing wisdom to the worthy. These natives will recommend that the PCs bring a gift, and do not to bother great Uxma with trivial problems.

Deeper probing will reveal that the best gifts are well-crafted art, such as feather paintings, cast gold objects, or sculptures. Food animals are also appreciated.

Ironspike is unimpressed with such talk. He thinks natives call everyone over forty a “wise elder,” and recommends passing by. Hasoctl agrees, noting that wise old men who live far from others do so for a reason—usually that they do not wish to be disturbed.

Uxma the Sorcerer is a Maztican couatl. Maztican couatls differ from those in other parts of the world in the nature of their spell-like abilities. A Maztican couatl cannot be a wizard, as stated in the *Monstrous Compendium*. Instead, 45% may cast spells as if they were 7th-level plumaweavers, 35% can act as 7th-level priests of Qotal, and 20% can use both abilities. A plumaweaver also has a 10% chance to have 9th level bard abilities.

The oldest and most powerful couatls may cast *create talisman*. This may be done only once by each couatl, and it is usually used to create something of great beauty and power. Such items are never inherently destructive in nature.

Chalocka, a hakuna (dragonne), hunts in the jungle nearby. Uxma allows it to stay in the area to discourage visitors. He keeps a fairly close watch on it, though, and may intervene if a fight is going badly for

the PCs.

Unlike their eastern cousins, hakuna prefer to make lairs in the jungle rather than in hills and deserts. Their preferred food is deer. Maztican dragonnes are primarily colored black rather than brassy, and their wings are leathery. They speak rarely, using the language of sphinxes, which in Maztica is considered the language of the hakuna.

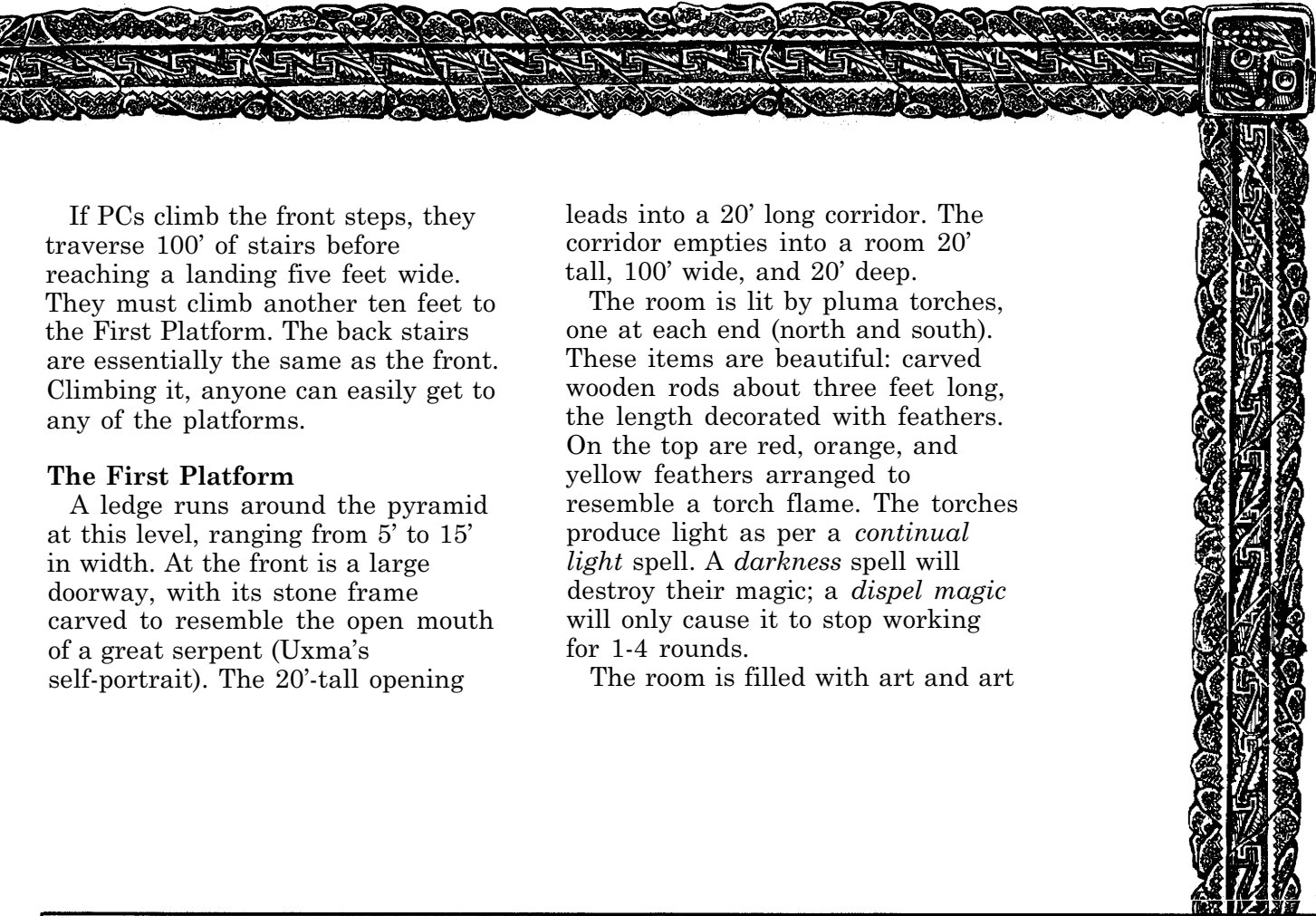
**Hakuna (dragonne):** AC 6/2; MV 15, Fl 9 (E); HD 9; hp 47; THAC0 12; #AT 3; Damage 1-8/1-8/3-18; SA roar (save vs. paralyzation or lose 50% of strength for 2-12 rounds, deafness for 2-12 rounds); ML 15; AL N

Once the player characters get to the pyramid, Uxma will begin to observe them, using his *ESP*, or perhaps spying invisibly. When the player characters come upon the pyramid, the DM should try to impress them with its size and imposing nature. It is 155' tall and quite steep.

The smooth walls are slightly slippery. Anyone attempting to climb them will suffer a -25% to their climbing ability, and be able to move at only 1/4 his or her normal rate (see *Dungeon Master's Guide*, pg. 122 for more information).

Each of the pyramids stairs is six inches deep and one foot tall, making them somewhat difficult to mount normally. Rogues will have no problem, nor will those with mountaineering proficiency. Others must move at one-half their normal rate or risk falling. If they try to move faster, they must make a Dexterity check, with failure indicating that they have fallen. A falling character rolls to the bottom of the pyramid and takes 5-30 hp damage (7-42 hp if he falls down the back stairs).





If PCs climb the front steps, they traverse 100' of stairs before reaching a landing five feet wide. They must climb another ten feet to the First Platform. The back stairs are essentially the same as the front. Climbing it, anyone can easily get to any of the platforms.

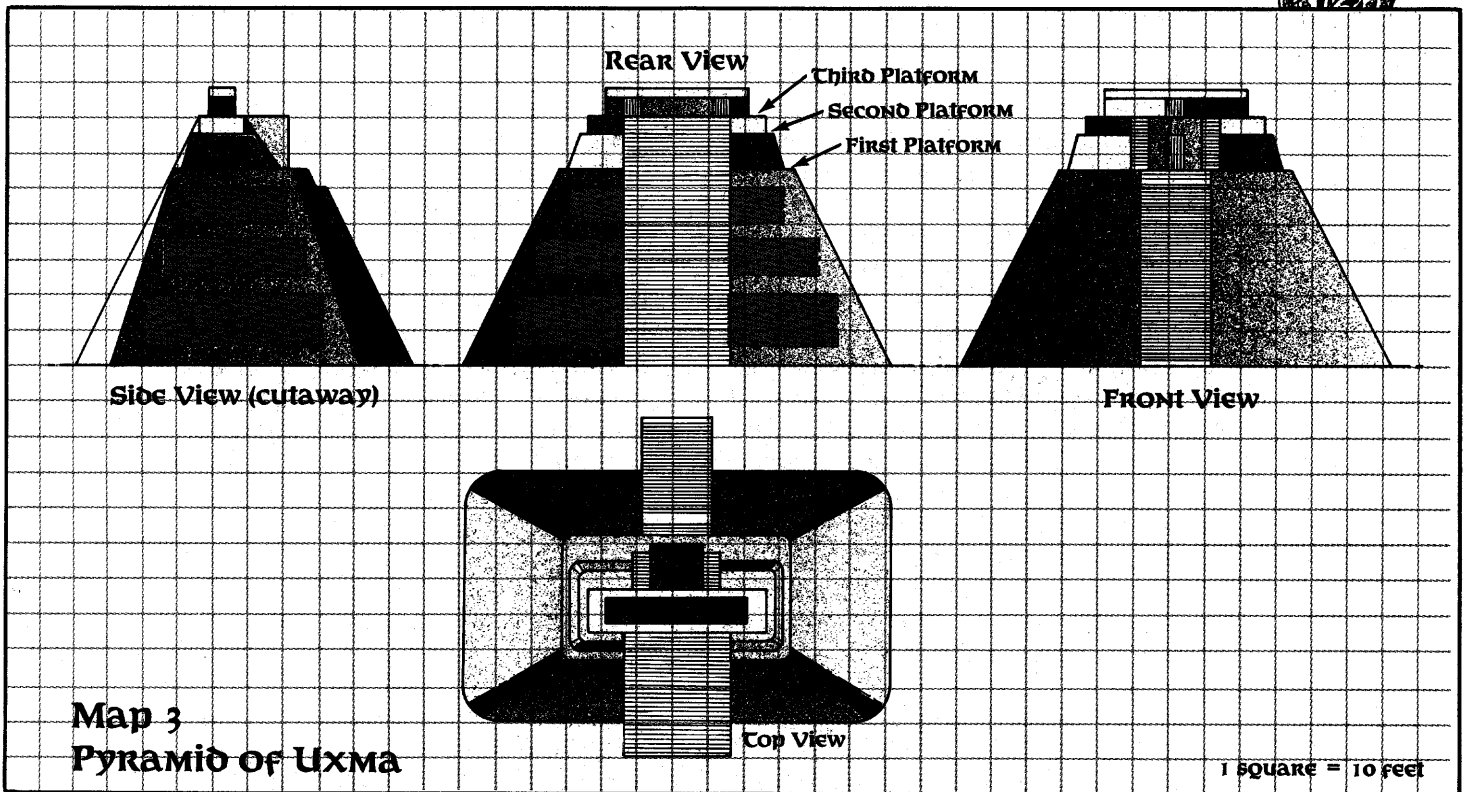
**The First Platform**

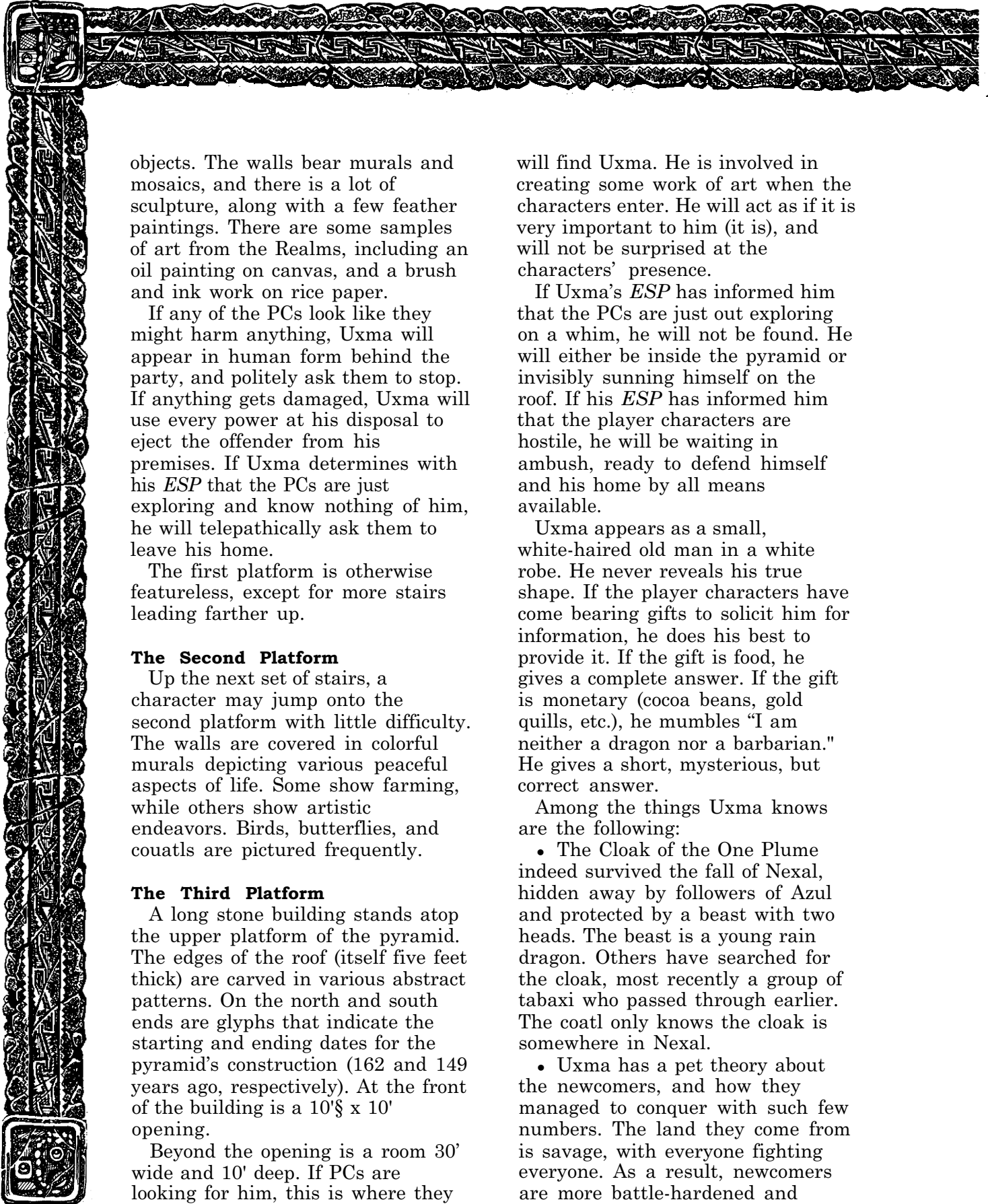
A ledge runs around the pyramid at this level, ranging from 5' to 15' in width. At the front is a large doorway, with its stone frame carved to resemble the open mouth of a great serpent (Uxma's self-portrait). The 20'-tall opening

leads into a 20' long corridor. The corridor empties into a room 20' tall, 100' wide, and 20' deep.

The room is lit by pluma torches, one at each end (north and south). These items are beautiful: carved wooden rods about three feet long, the length decorated with feathers. On the top are red, orange, and yellow feathers arranged to resemble a torch flame. The torches produce light as per a *continual light* spell. A *darkness* spell will destroy their magic; a *dispel magic* will only cause it to stop working for 1-4 rounds.

The room is filled with art and art





objects. The walls bear murals and mosaics, and there is a lot of sculpture, along with a few feather paintings. There are some samples of art from the Realms, including an oil painting on canvas, and a brush and ink work on rice paper.

If any of the PCs look like they might harm anything, Uxma will appear in human form behind the party, and politely ask them to stop. If anything gets damaged, Uxma will use every power at his disposal to eject the offender from his premises. If Uxma determines with his *ESP* that the PCs are just exploring and know nothing of him, he will telepathically ask them to leave his home.

The first platform is otherwise featureless, except for more stairs leading farther up.

### **The Second Platform**

Up the next set of stairs, a character may jump onto the second platform with little difficulty. The walls are covered in colorful murals depicting various peaceful aspects of life. Some show farming, while others show artistic endeavors. Birds, butterflies, and couatls are pictured frequently.

### **The Third Platform**

A long stone building stands atop the upper platform of the pyramid. The edges of the roof (itself five feet thick) are carved in various abstract patterns. On the north and south ends are glyphs that indicate the starting and ending dates for the pyramid's construction (162 and 149 years ago, respectively). At the front of the building is a 10'§ x 10' opening.

Beyond the opening is a room 30' wide and 10' deep. If PCs are looking for him, this is where they

will find Uxma. He is involved in creating some work of art when the characters enter. He will act as if it is very important to him (it is), and will not be surprised at the characters' presence.

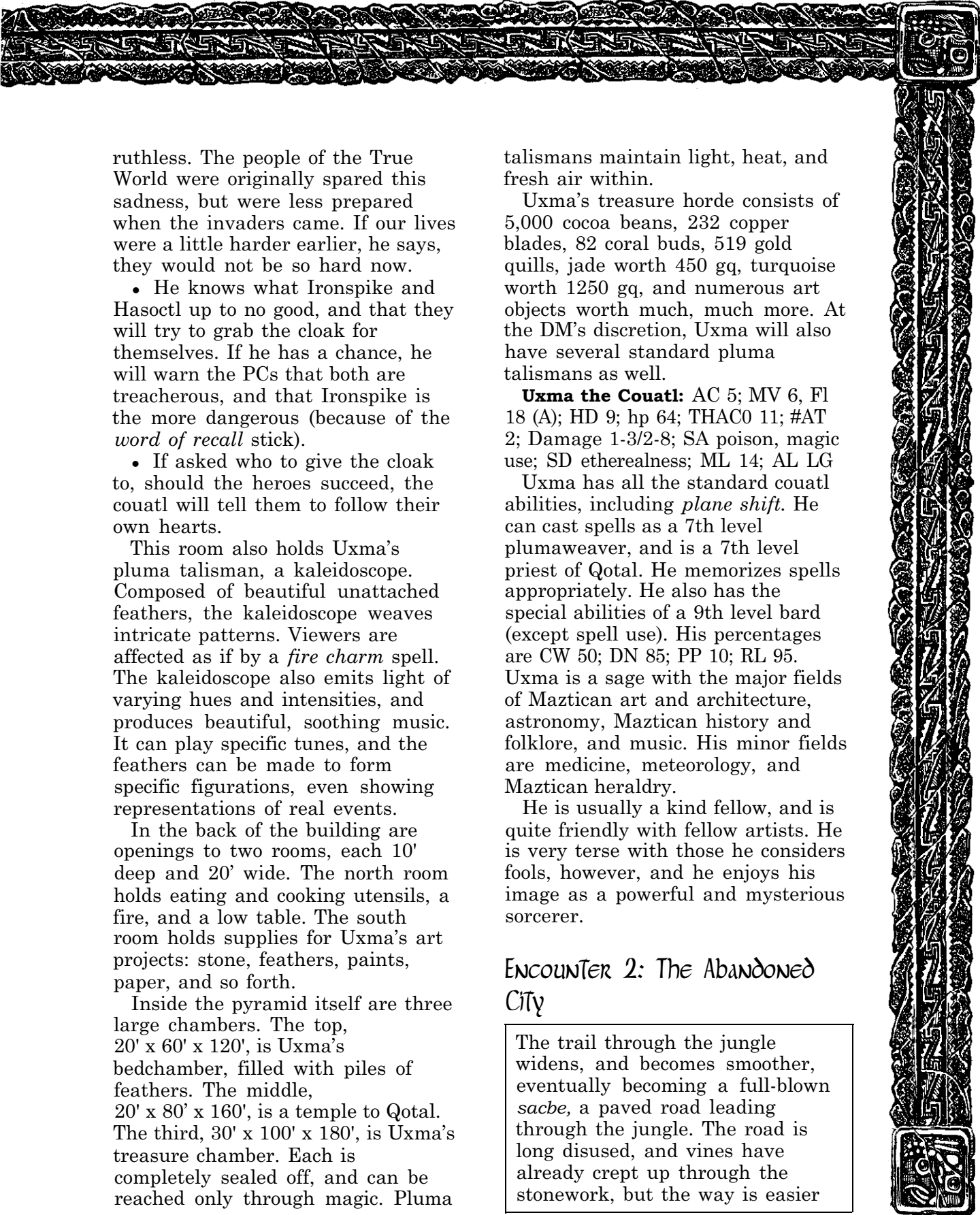
If Uxma's *ESP* has informed him that the PCs are just out exploring on a whim, he will not be found. He will either be inside the pyramid or invisibly sunning himself on the roof. If his *ESP* has informed him that the player characters are hostile, he will be waiting in ambush, ready to defend himself and his home by all means available.

Uxma appears as a small, white-haired old man in a white robe. He never reveals his true shape. If the player characters have come bearing gifts to solicit him for information, he does his best to provide it. If the gift is food, he gives a complete answer. If the gift is monetary (cocoa beans, gold quills, etc.), he mumbles "I am neither a dragon nor a barbarian." He gives a short, mysterious, but correct answer.

Among the things Uxma knows are the following:

- The Cloak of the One Plume indeed survived the fall of Nexal, hidden away by followers of Azul and protected by a beast with two heads. The beast is a young rain dragon. Others have searched for the cloak, most recently a group of tabaxi who passed through earlier. The coatl only knows the cloak is somewhere in Nexal.

- Uxma has a pet theory about the newcomers, and how they managed to conquer with such few numbers. The land they come from is savage, with everyone fighting everyone. As a result, newcomers are more battle-hardened and



ruthless. The people of the True World were originally spared this sadness, but were less prepared when the invaders came. If our lives were a little harder earlier, he says, they would not be so hard now.

- He knows what Ironspike and Hasoctl up to no good, and that they will try to grab the cloak for themselves. If he has a chance, he will warn the PCs that both are treacherous, and that Ironspike is the more dangerous (because of the *word of recall* stick).

- If asked who to give the cloak to, should the heroes succeed, the couatl will tell them to follow their own hearts.

This room also holds Uxma's pluma talisman, a kaleidoscope. Composed of beautiful unattached feathers, the kaleidoscope weaves intricate patterns. Viewers are affected as if by a *fire charm* spell. The kaleidoscope also emits light of varying hues and intensities, and produces beautiful, soothing music. It can play specific tunes, and the feathers can be made to form specific figurations, even showing representations of real events.

In the back of the building are openings to two rooms, each 10' deep and 20' wide. The north room holds eating and cooking utensils, a fire, and a low table. The south room holds supplies for Uxma's art projects: stone, feathers, paints, paper, and so forth.

Inside the pyramid itself are three large chambers. The top, 20' x 60' x 120', is Uxma's bedchamber, filled with piles of feathers. The middle, 20' x 80' x 160', is a temple to Qotal. The third, 30' x 100' x 180', is Uxma's treasure chamber. Each is completely sealed off, and can be reached only through magic. Pluma

talismans maintain light, heat, and fresh air within.

Uxma's treasure horde consists of 5,000 cocoa beans, 232 copper blades, 82 coral buds, 519 gold quills, jade worth 450 gq, turquoise worth 1250 gq, and numerous art objects worth much, much more. At the DM's discretion, Uxma will also have several standard pluma talismans as well.

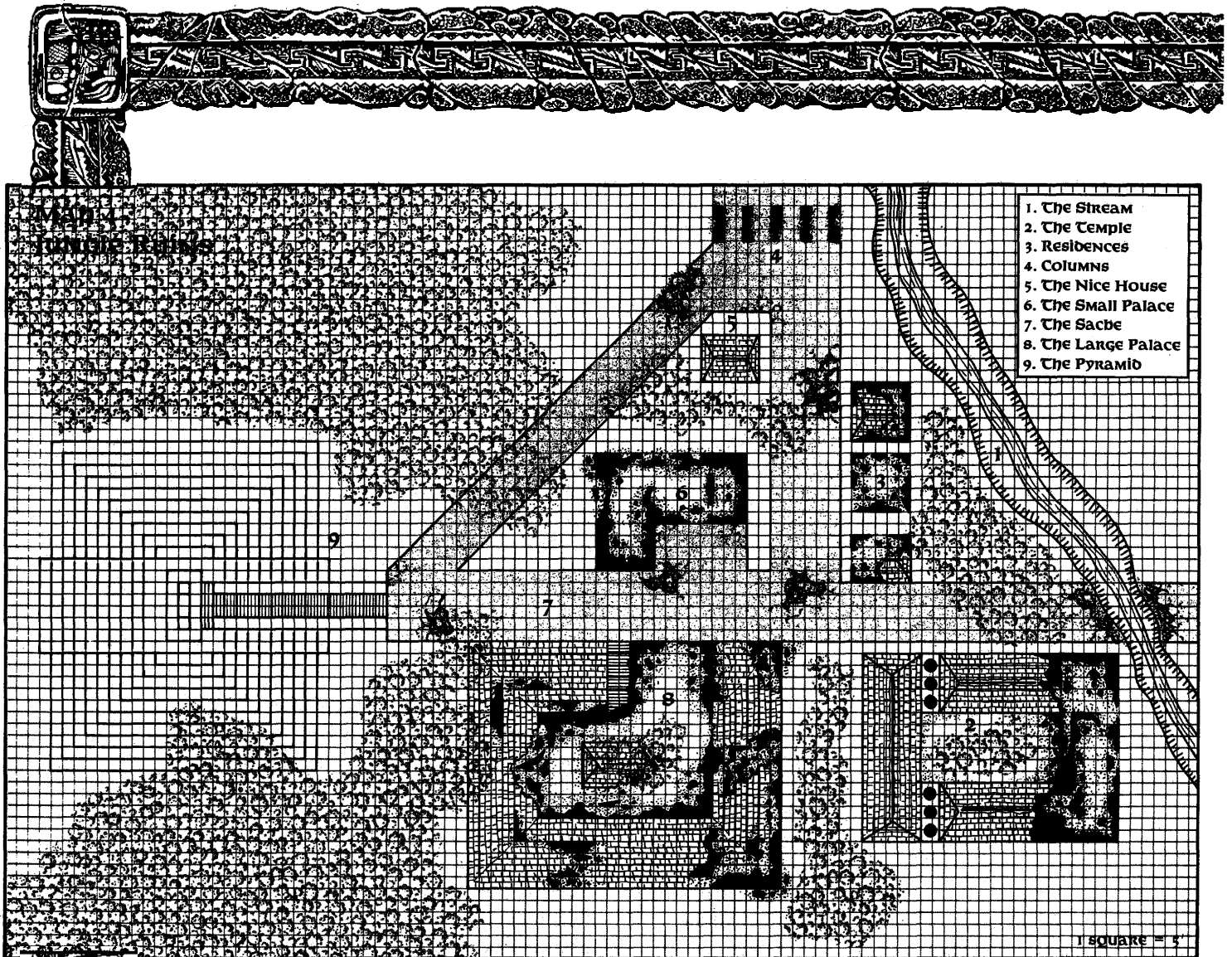
**Uxma the Couatl:** AC 5; MV 6, Fl 18 (A); HD 9; hp 64; THAC0 11; #AT 2; Damage 1-3/2-8; SA poison, magic use; SD etherealness; ML 14; AL LG

Uxma has all the standard couatl abilities, including *plane shift*. He can cast spells as a 7th level plumaweaver, and is a 7th level priest of Qotal. He memorizes spells appropriately. He also has the special abilities of a 9th level bard (except spell use). His percentages are CW 50; DN 85; PP 10; RL 95. Uxma is a sage with the major fields of Maztican art and architecture, astronomy, Maztican history and folklore, and music. His minor fields are medicine, meteorology, and Maztican heraldry.

He is usually a kind fellow, and is quite friendly with fellow artists. He is very terse with those he considers fools, however, and he enjoys his image as a powerful and mysterious sorcerer.

## ENCOUNTER 2: The Abandoned City

The trail through the jungle widens, and becomes smoother, eventually becoming a full-blown *sacbe*, a paved road leading through the jungle. The road is long disused, and vines have already crept up through the stonework, but the way is easier



ahead. In the distance stands a cluster of buildings, dominated by a tall pyramid on the far side of stream.

Ironspike sees nothing wrong with a little recreational looting, but Hasoctl is unsure: such places may be haunted by beings from beyond the dead. Better to press on, he says, and avoid temptation.

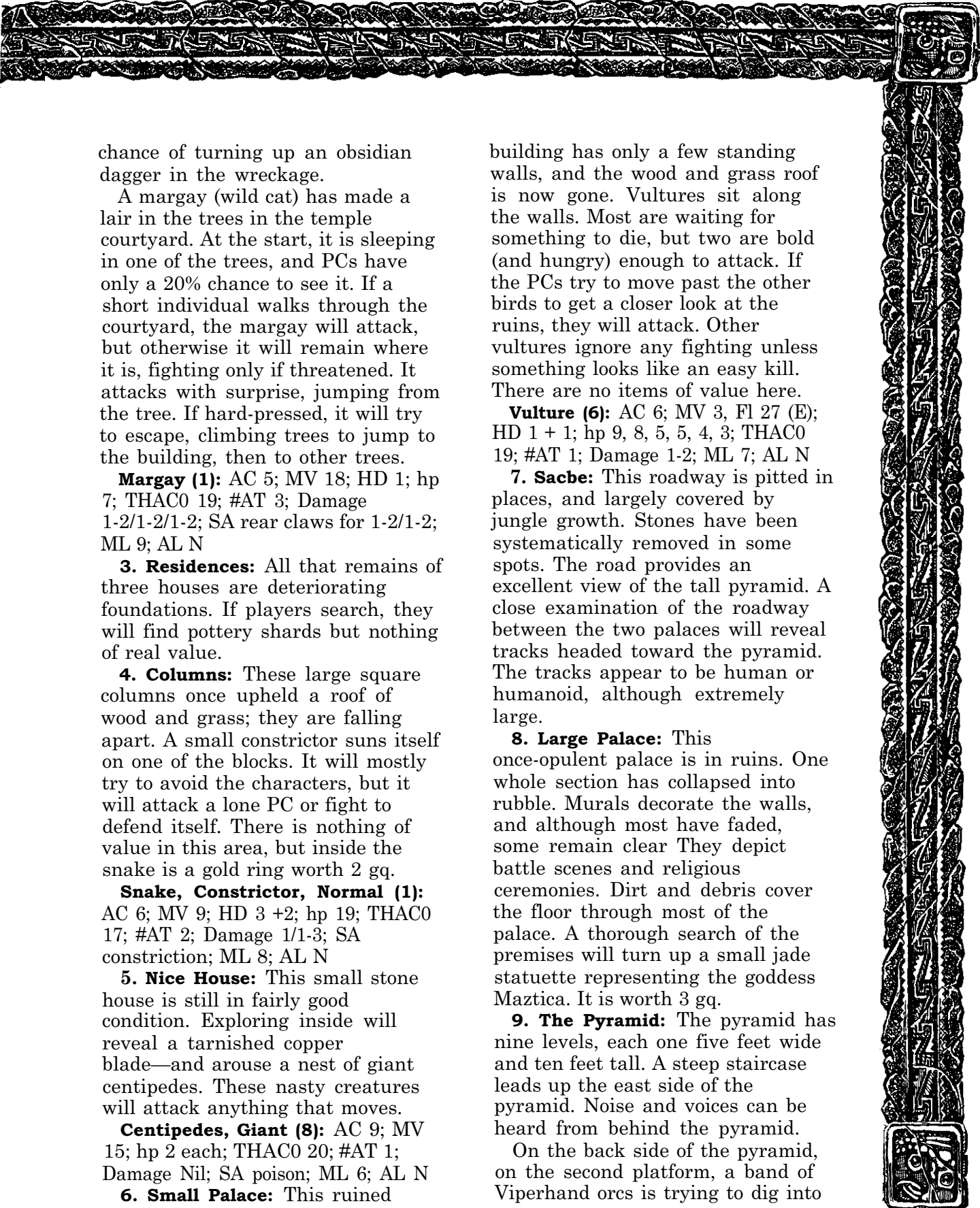
**1. The Stream:** The stream is only about five feet deep, but a school of piranha lives in it. Wading across takes 1d4 rounds because of currents and mud. PCs may try to

cross the stream via the overhanging trees; this requires a dexterity check. A failed roll means a fall in the water; it takes 1-4 rounds to get out. Time spent in the water exposes one to piranha attacks. Ingenious players may also think of other ways to get across.

**Piranha, Normal (22):** AC 8; MV SW 9; HD 1/2; hp 3 each; THACO 20; #AT 1; Damage 1-2; SA swarm; ML 6; AL N

**2. Temple Complex:** Now fallen in at the east end, this building once housed priests. There are several rooms within, some with small altars. A thorough search has a 40%





chance of turning up an obsidian dagger in the wreckage.

A margay (wild cat) has made a lair in the trees in the temple courtyard. At the start, it is sleeping in one of the trees, and PCs have only a 20% chance to see it. If a short individual walks through the courtyard, the margay will attack, but otherwise it will remain where it is, fighting only if threatened. It attacks with surprise, jumping from the tree. If hard-pressed, it will try to escape, climbing trees to jump to the building, then to other trees.

**Margay (1):** AC 5; MV 18; HD 1; hp 7; THACO 19; #AT 3; Damage 1-2/1-2/1-2; SA rear claws for 1-2/1-2; ML 9; AL N

**3. Residences:** All that remains of three houses are deteriorating foundations. If players search, they will find pottery shards but nothing of real value.

**4. Columns:** These large square columns once upheld a roof of wood and grass; they are falling apart. A small constrictor suns itself on one of the blocks. It will mostly try to avoid the characters, but it will attack a lone PC or fight to defend itself. There is nothing of value in this area, but inside the snake is a gold ring worth 2 gp.

**Snake, Constrictor, Normal (1):** AC 6; MV 9; HD 3 +2; hp 19; THACO 17; #AT 2; Damage 1/1-3; SA constriction; ML 8; AL N

**5. Nice House:** This small stone house is still in fairly good condition. Exploring inside will reveal a tarnished copper blade—and arouse a nest of giant centipedes. These nasty creatures will attack anything that moves.

**Centipedes, Giant (8):** AC 9; MV 15; hp 2 each; THACO 20; #AT 1; Damage Nil; SA poison; ML 6; AL N

**6. Small Palace:** This ruined

building has only a few standing walls, and the wood and grass roof is now gone. Vultures sit along the walls. Most are waiting for something to die, but two are bold (and hungry) enough to attack. If the PCs try to move past the other birds to get a closer look at the ruins, they will attack. Other vultures ignore any fighting unless something looks like an easy kill. There are no items of value here.

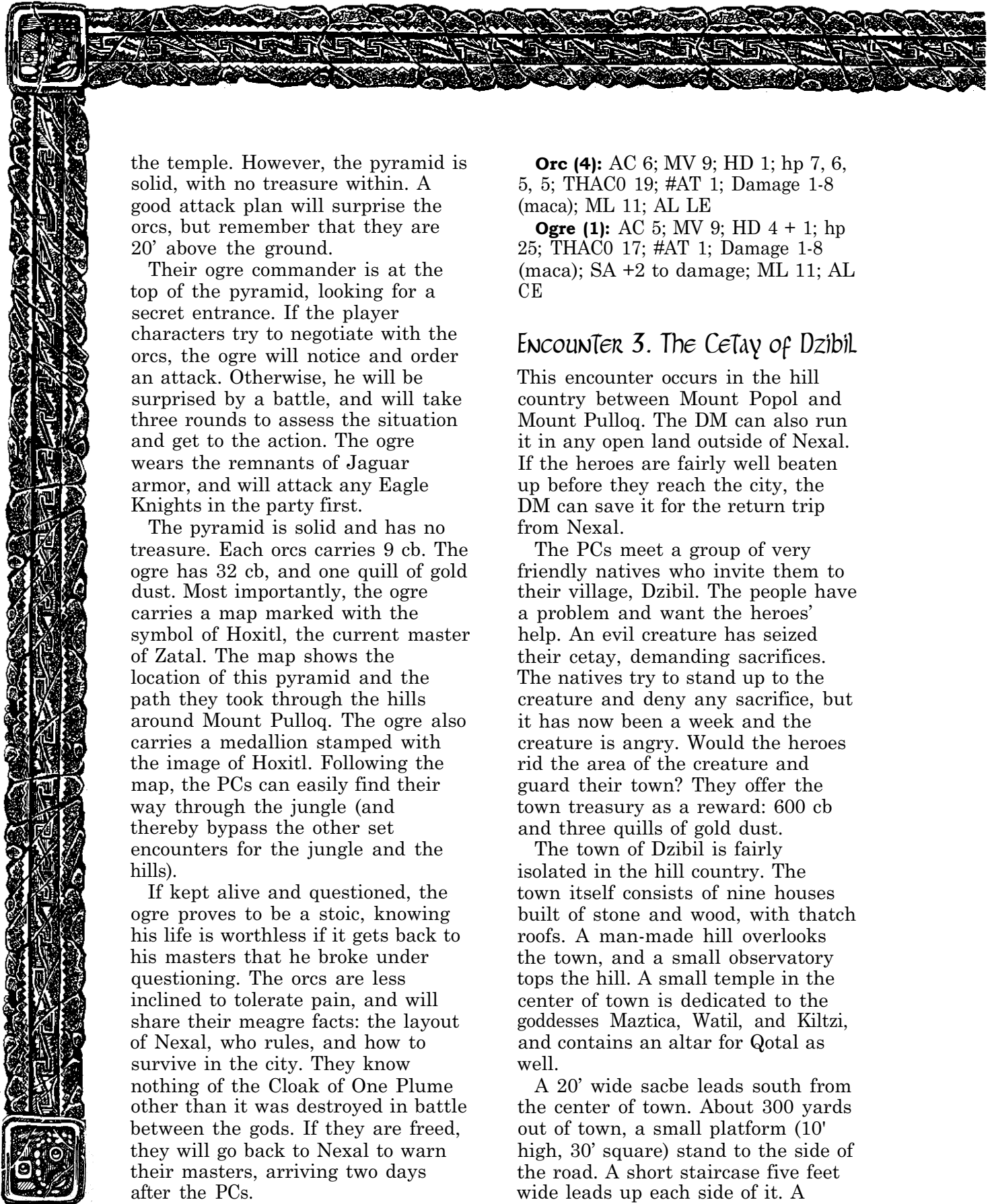
**Vulture (6):** AC 6; MV 3, Fl 27 (E); HD 1 + 1; hp 9, 8, 5, 5, 4, 3; THACO 19; #AT 1; Damage 1-2; ML 7; AL N

**7. Sacbe:** This roadway is pitted in places, and largely covered by jungle growth. Stones have been systematically removed in some spots. The road provides an excellent view of the tall pyramid. A close examination of the roadway between the two palaces will reveal tracks headed toward the pyramid. The tracks appear to be human or humanoid, although extremely large.

**8. Large Palace:** This once-opulent palace is in ruins. One whole section has collapsed into rubble. Murals decorate the walls, and although most have faded, some remain clear. They depict battle scenes and religious ceremonies. Dirt and debris cover the floor through most of the palace. A thorough search of the premises will turn up a small jade statuette representing the goddess Maztica. It is worth 3 gp.

**9. The Pyramid:** The pyramid has nine levels, each one five feet wide and ten feet tall. A steep staircase leads up the east side of the pyramid. Noise and voices can be heard from behind the pyramid.

On the back side of the pyramid, on the second platform, a band of Viperhand orcs is trying to dig into



the temple. However, the pyramid is solid, with no treasure within. A good attack plan will surprise the orcs, but remember that they are 20' above the ground.

Their ogre commander is at the top of the pyramid, looking for a secret entrance. If the player characters try to negotiate with the orcs, the ogre will notice and order an attack. Otherwise, he will be surprised by a battle, and will take three rounds to assess the situation and get to the action. The ogre wears the remnants of Jaguar armor, and will attack any Eagle Knights in the party first.

The pyramid is solid and has no treasure. Each orcs carries 9 cb. The ogre has 32 cb, and one quill of gold dust. Most importantly, the ogre carries a map marked with the symbol of Hoxitl, the current master of Zatal. The map shows the location of this pyramid and the path they took through the hills around Mount Pulloq. The ogre also carries a medallion stamped with the image of Hoxitl. Following the map, the PCs can easily find their way through the jungle (and thereby bypass the other set encounters for the jungle and the hills).

If kept alive and questioned, the ogre proves to be a stoic, knowing his life is worthless if it gets back to his masters that he broke under questioning. The orcs are less inclined to tolerate pain, and will share their meagre facts: the layout of Nexal, who rules, and how to survive in the city. They know nothing of the Cloak of One Plume other than it was destroyed in battle between the gods. If they are freed, they will go back to Nexal to warn their masters, arriving two days after the PCs.

**Orc (4):** AC 6; MV 9; HD 1; hp 7, 6, 5, 5; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Damage 1-8 (maca); ML 11; AL LE

**Ogre (1):** AC 5; MV 9; HD 4 + 1; hp 25; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Damage 1-8 (maca); SA +2 to damage; ML 11; AL CE

### ENCOUNTER 3. The Cestay of Dzibil

This encounter occurs in the hill country between Mount Popol and Mount Pulloq. The DM can also run it in any open land outside of Nexal. If the heroes are fairly well beaten up before they reach the city, the DM can save it for the return trip from Nexal.

The PCs meet a group of very friendly natives who invite them to their village, Dzibil. The people have a problem and want the heroes' help. An evil creature has seized their cestay, demanding sacrifices. The natives try to stand up to the creature and deny any sacrifice, but it has now been a week and the creature is angry. Would the heroes rid the area of the creature and guard their town? They offer the town treasury as a reward: 600 cb and three quills of gold dust.

The town of Dzibil is fairly isolated in the hill country. The town itself consists of nine houses built of stone and wood, with thatch roofs. A man-made hill overlooks the town, and a small observatory tops the hill. A small temple in the center of town is dedicated to the goddesses Maztica, Watil, and Kiltzi, and contains an altar for Qotal as well.

A 20' wide sacbe leads south from the center of town. About 300 yards out of town, a small platform (10' high, 30' square) stand to the side of the road. A short staircase five feet wide leads up each side of it. A

# Chuhotl "Cloud-Seven"

*Maztican Eagle Knight*

*Human Male*

*Level 3*

**STR** 14

**DEX** 13

**CON** 15

**INT** 10

**WIS** 15

**CHA** 13

**HP:** 15

**AC:** 7 (Stiffened fiber and shield)

**#AT** 1

**AL:** Lawful Good

**Pluma Spell:** 1/day  
*Cool*

**Proficiencies:**

Weapon Proficiencies: Maca, short bow, spear, spear-caster

Non-weapon Proficiencies: Animal Lore, Direction Sense, Dancing, Mosaic

Languages: Payit, Nexalan

**Equipment:**

Maca (1-8/1-6); short bow with 20 obsidian-tipped arrows (1-6/1-6); spear (1-6/1-8); stiffened fiber armor; wooden shield; plain tunic; plain mantle; moccasins; earrings (gold) in shape of eagle (worth 20 gq each); waterskin, food for 5 meals.

**Background:**

Chuhotl is the son of Kichemel, a great Eagle Knight crippled in the ambush at Palul. Chuhotl's family fled the city of Nexal during the attack of the Viperhand. They retreated south, but Kichemel gave his equipment to Chuhotl (except for his Eagle Knight armor), and told him to press on east. Kichemel said that the armor would be his when Chuhotl has proven himself worthy. The nature of that worthiness was unspecified, and Chuhotl tried several times to prove himself worthy of his father's armor and his blessing.

Because he was sent east, toward Helmsport, Chuhotl's latest effort to prove himself worthy is by serving the invaders, the Amnite Faerun who

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## Jarekos

*Payit Plumaweaver*

*Human Female*

*Level 3*

**STR** 12

**DEX** 17

**CON** 14

**INT** 13

**WIS** 13

**CHA** 16

**HP:** 15

**AC:** 5 (Padded cotton, dexterity bonus)

**#AT:** 1

**AL:** N

**Pluma Spell:** 2 First Level

Spells/day

*Arrowflight*

*Bird Charm I*

*Cool*

*Elevate I*

*Featherweaving*

*Spearflight*

*Stoneflight*

*Warmth*

**Proficiencies:** Weapon Proficiencies: Short bow (+4 to hit, Dex + Plumashaper benefit), club, sling

Non-weapon Proficiencies: Healing (+2 bonus because of Payit race), Weaving, Local History, Religion

Languages: Payit, Faerun, Common

**Equipment:**

Bow and 20 stone-tipped arrows (1-6/1-6); feathered tunic; ornate mantle; earrings (worth 20 gq); sandals; waterskin; blanket; bag of pluma material and tools.

**Background:**

Jarekos is a native of Ulatos, and was among those who first witnessed Cordell's arrival. Since then, with the the influx of easterners and the founding of Helmsport, the world has changed. As far as Jarekos is concerned, it has been for the better.

The easterners have brought wonderful gifts from their lands—horses, smoke powder, and strange magical items.

humbled their mighty empire. He feels that the newcomers are the only ones capable of removing the dark bane that has descended upon the valley of Nexal, destroying the evil that has nested there. Chuhotl believes his people's weakness, not the superiority of the newcomers' weapons, caused the loss of empire and the destruction of their city.

The city of Nexal, in Chuhotl's memory, was a beautifully magical place, with glorious ball games, sacrifices, and feather magic everywhere. Now it is said to be a den of every sort of evil creature, and Chuhotl feels it must end now.

Chuhotl is a proud young warrior used to being treated with respect by his comrades. The newcomers do not treat him with respect because they cannot see the purity of his vision, and the clarity of his soul. Newcomers are to be pitied for that blindness, but treated with the respect due any heavily-armed guest in one's land. All native non-Mazticans are treated with a disdain bordering on arrogance—they, at least, should remember that the Mazticans once ruled the True world.

Chuhotl is currently in Ulatos, looking for a way

to mobilize the newcomers to look beyond lust for gold, and into liberating Nexal once and for all. He bears a message from his father declaring him a brave and valiant warrior, and trustworthy. His father's word should be good enough for anyone.

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At the same time, their sages and clerics have been interested in her own modest craft.

She has a stall in the village, officially owned by Lord Drakosa who takes some of the beads and quills paid for her work as "rent." She finds this idea "a quaint idea, typical of these foreigners..." As if she could not ply her trade from a rock by the riverside as from a shady stall near the marketplace. Still, the location is pleasant, and everyone knows where to find her, so she remains.

Lady Jarekos understands that many Payits have suffered under the Lord Governor Cordell's rule, but they have lived their lives wrong and so deserve their fate. Revered Counselor Caxal ruled before Cordell arrived, and he rules still! The Payits have survived much better than the Nexala, who brought on their own disaster with that barbaric Viperhand society.

The newcomers' attitude toward women is almost Payitian in nature, admitting that they are more than just secondary adjuncts to the male nature. Before the newcomers' arrival, Jarekos

had seen enough Nexalan bravos strutting like they were Qotal's gift to female-kind to appreciate the difference.

So Jarekos remains and supports the newcomers, and will be willing to aid them in quests for gold and knowledge. If they are polite, perhaps she will travel to their homelands to see what is there.

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# Kixitiloc ("Wolf-Boy")

*Payit Warrior (Savage Kit)*  
*Human Male*  
Level 2

**STR** 17  
**DEX** 12  
**CON** 17  
**INT** 9  
**WIS** 12  
**CHA** 10  
**HP:** 16  
**AC:** 10 (none)  
**# AT:** 1  
**AL:** Neutral

**Special Ability:** Alarm

When resting or sleeping, Kixitiloc can detect others within ten feet of him. This ability will alert him in to the presence of others if he is awake, and quietly awaken him if asleep.

**Proficiencies:**

Weapon Proficiencies: Maca, short bow, spear, knife

Non-weapon Proficiencies: Survival (jungle); Running; Healing (+2 due to Payit background); Tracking

Language: Payit, Nexalan

**Equipment:**

Maca (1-8/1-6); knife (1-3/1-2); plain tunic; moccasins; blanket; waterskin.

**Background:**

Kixitiloc has been a slave before, and now is a slave again. Oh, they do not call it that, but long hours working under harsh taskmasters, under threat of being fed to the dogs for shirking—that is nothing more than slavery.

Kixitiloc is from a small Payit village destroyed in a battle with a neighboring village. Kixitiloc was taken as a child and enslaved, doing the lowliest tasks. Frequent punishments for attempted escapes did not deter him, and at last he managed to get away to Ulatos. He arrived on the same day as the future Lord Governor, Cordell.

After that, things improved only marginally.

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# Stonekiller

*Warrior (Wilderness Warrior Kit)*  
*Male Dwarf*  
Level 2

**STR** 16  
**DEX** 13  
**CON** 17  
**INT** 9  
**WIS** 10  
**CHA** 13  
**HP:** 13  
**AC:** 7 (Stiffened fiber and shield)  
**#AT:** 1  
**AL:** Neutral Chaotic

**Racial Abilities:**

+4 saving throw versus magic and poison, +1 to hit orcs, half-orcs, goblins, and hobgoblins. -4 to be hit by ogres, trolls, ogre magi, giants, and titans. Ability to detect grade or slope (5 in 6), new tunnel (5 in 6), shifting walls or room (4 in 6), stonework, traps, & pits (3 in 6), and approximate depth (3 in 6). Infravision 60'.

**Proficiencies:**

Weapon Proficiencies: Maca, short bow, stone axe

Non-weapon Proficiencies: Stonemasonry, Weaponsmithing (stone weapons only), Survival (+5)

Languages: Payit, Dwarf, Nexalan

**Equipment:** Maca (1-8/1-6); short bow with 20 stone-tipped arrows (1-6/1-6); stone axe (1-8 + 1/1-8+ 1); stiffened fiber armor; wooden shield; plain tunic; plain mantle; sandals; nose ring (gold with jade insets (worth 50 gp); waterskin, food for 5 meals.

**Background:**

Stonekiller has always believed humans are crazy, but newcomers even go beyond the insanity of the murderous Nexala. They are driven by a greed for gold that excels even that of his own people, and a blinding curiosity which seems to indicate that if you can learn of something, you possess it.

Stonekiller's arrival in Ulatos happened through

Instead of working for other Payits, he toils in the fields for the new overlords. Add to that the fact that the newcomers have a tendency to kill shirkers, not merely torturing them as might his former owners. Kixitiloc is relatively unhappy in his position.

Kixitiloc has been moved from one plantation to another, labeled a “problem worker.” He is currently working on Captain Drakosa’s land. He has impressed his masters both with his rebellious temper and his ability to handle himself in a fight. His reputation has been further enhanced by his own tales of survival in the jungle. Drakosa’s men have given him the nickname Wolf-Boy for his savagery.

Kixitiloc is moody and taciturn, with a well-deserved reputation for being bad-tempered and hard to deal with. He also is known to be savvy, and dangerous to have as an enemy. He has saved lives in the past, protecting other workers from poisonous snakes and the like. He has also taken lives of Maztican bullies who thought they could push him around. He prefers

to fight without armor, but uses any weapon or tactic at hand.

Kixitiloc thinks in terms of escape and revenge, but still he wishes to become one of the masters himself, with land and a collection of other Payits to do his bidding. He already has a reputation for bravery. Should he be able to prove it to these newcomers, then he may be on the road to a better life.

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human curiosity. While on his own business, he was snatched by a cadre of riders and dragged back to Ulatos. After this initial rudeness (when he lost most of his weapons), he was treated well, and spent most of his time with a very talkative human who worshipped helmets. The hat-lover spent days asking questions and scribbling answers: legends, folk remedies, population, how his people worked stone, and how they survived in the desert.

After a few weeks of questions, Stonekiller was put out on the street without so much as a thank-you (although his weapons were returned). Now he’s been abandoned among the humans, and he’s caught a bad case of curiosity as well.

Why are the humans interested in Zatal? How did this easterner come to know bits of the Patertongue of the dwarves and the dwarven deities? And what about the fact the helmet-worshipper mentioned that his people were long-standing enemies of the Viperhand who now live in Zatal, even although the creatures did not exist until a few seasons ago?

These questions gnaw at the dwarf like rats at greasy leather. These new humans not only have the disease of curiosity, they pass it on to others without permission to do so! Stonekiller feels his answers lie in the ruins of the Nexalan capital, and he wants to find others (particularly the hat-lover) to go learn more.

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# Captain Balismo Dey Canna

Warrior  
Human Male  
Level 3

**STR** 16  
**DEX** 12  
**CON** 15  
**INT** 12  
**WIS** 10  
**CHA** 17  
**HP:** 14  
**AC:** 3 (Plate, no shield)  
**#AT:** 1  
**AL:** Lawful Neutral

**Proficiencies:**

Weapon Proficiencies: Long sword, crossbow, dagger, spear

Non-weapon Proficiencies: Etiquette, Heraldry, Riding (land-based), Swimming

Languages: Payit (smattering, enough to make himself clear), Common, Orcish

**Equipment:**

Long sword (1-8/1-12); three daggers (1-4/1-3); light crossbow with 20 quarrels (1-4/1-4); plate armor; Amnite helmet; riding boots, silk jacket; breeches; fine silk cloak; backpack; beacon lantern; 50' hemp rope; 3 flasks oil; food for 5 meals; signal whistle.

**Background:**

The new world beckons! The lands of Maztica lies open to the brave! The adventurous! Those who can take up their future in both hands, and explore the new lands!

What rubbish!

It sounded so exciting in the courts of Amn, where the pretty young women *oohed* and *ahhed* over the latest pile of treasure, then flung themselves at the heroes who sailed with Cordell. But to a latecomer seeking fame and fortune in this new world, the doors were already closed. As a minor noble, Dey Canna could command the title of Captain, but after he arrived, he was put to work as just an overseer, minding lazy

---

# Julia Ravensblood

Wizard  
Human Female  
Level 2

**STR** 10  
**DEX** 15  
**CON** 15  
**INT** 17  
**WIS** 10  
**CHA** 15  
**HP:** 9  
**AC:** 6 (Bracers of defense)  
**#AT:** 1  
**AL:** Lawful Good  
Spells: 2 first level Spells

*Charm Person*  
*Detect Magic*  
*Feather Fall*  
*Hold Portal*  
*Light*  
*Magic Missile*  
*Phantasmal Force*  
*Read Magic*  
*Shield*

*Sleep*  
*Wall of Fog*

**Proficiencies:**

Weapon Proficiencies: Dagger

Non-weapon Proficiencies: Spellcraft, Navigation, Seamanship, Direction-sense

Languages: Payit, Common, Orcish, Dwarvish

**Equipment:**

Three daggers (1-4/1-3); bracers of defense (AC 6); embroidered robe; soft boots; silk jacket; breeches; backpack; beacon lantern; 50' hemp rope; 3 flasks oil; food for 5 meals; spyglass; material components for spells in several pouches, spell books.

**Background:**

It began as a lovers' spat. Allon wanted to go adventuring while she wanted to finish research on a *sleep* spell. He stormed off, and by the time she had finished, he had booked passage to the new world. By the time she arrived at Helmsport, he had been slain by Viperhand orcs deep in the jungle.

natives try to avoid an, honest day's work. So much for "conquering hero." So much for a life of adventure!

Helmsport has been overrun with would-be adventurers, all seeking horses (a laugh!), smoke powder (a bellow!) and native guides (what a jest!). All want to press into the jungle, to find their own lost cities filled with treasure. The Lord Governor (supported by Lord Drakosa) has proclaimed that individual looting will be punished (although wide-scale looting by an army is evidently another matter). Those who sneak out after their fortune will not be welcomed back.

Even so, the less-scrupulous leave Helmsport, some evidently getting to Nexal itself. Tales come back that monsters have set up their own domain there, gathering forces to overthrow the true owners of the new world—the Amnites and the followers of Helm!

Given half a chance, Balismo would join them, but a responsible nature holds him back—that, plus the fact that he wants to return to

Calimport, preferably with several chests of gold, and fabulous tales. He has petitioned Lord Drakosa more than once with his desire to lead an expedition into the heartlands, but he has no reply yet.

Balismo does not hate the natives. They annoy him, and they stand between him and immortality. It's nothing personal, and he hates them no more than he hates Cormytes or Waterdhavians. If they would just learn to speak common and to follow orders!

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Now, Julia is on a strange shore with a vehement hatred for the creatures of Viperhand, her primary reason to remain. Another reason, though, is her own uniqueness. Back in Murann, she is just another spellcaster, one of many seeking the same treasures, the same spells. This continent has no native wizards, most of the natives have never seen a *fireball*, and she competes with only a double-handful of foreign-born spellcasters.

Such opportunity she could not pass up. There is a wilderness beyond the walls of Helmsport, with both monetary riches and new types of magic, magic inaccessible by normal mages. The *pluma* and *hishna* spells are not wielded by wizards but by artisans. Julia has already talked with a local *plumaweaver* to try to convert her *pluma* spell-system to her own, but so far their efforts have failed. She doesn't know if this is due to her own limitations or an incompatibility between the systems.

There is one great disadvantage in this new world: native folk do not understand the

importance of protecting the wizard at all times. She is not a warrior, and should not be treated as one. Fortunately, the other Faerun natives understand this, at least.

Julia Ravensblood would like to increase her power and the range of spells, in particular spells that no one else can manage back in the Realms. If this means she slays a few of the accursed Viperhands, so much the better.

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# GONTONIA of Helm

*Specialty Priest of Helm*

*Human Male*

*Level 2*

**STR** 13

**DEX** 10

**CON** 15

**INT** 10

**WIS** 17

**CHA** 15

**HP:** 13

**AC:** 2 (Plate and shield)

**#AT:** 1

**AL:** Lawful Neutral

**Proficiencies:**

Weapon Proficiencies: Footman's mace, club

Non-weapon Proficiencies: Local History (Payit), Religion, Spellcraft, Cooking

Languages: Payit, Nexalan, Common, Dwarvish

**Spells:** 4 first level spells

*Combine*

*Create Water*

*Cure Light Wounds*

*Detect Evil*

*Detect Magic*

*Detect Poison*

*Detect Snares & Pits*

*Endure Cold/Hear*

*Light*

*Locate Animals or Plants*

*Magical Stone*

*Protection from Evil*

*Purify Food & Water*

*Sanctuary*

*Shillelagh*

**Other Abilities As a Specialty Priest**

Can use crystal balls

Can turn but not command undead

Can cast *glyph of warding* lasting 2 days

Is +2 on surprise when alone, +1 otherwise

**Equipment:**

Footman's mace (1-6/1-4); plate armor marked with the symbol of Helm; open-visored helmet; soft boots; breeches; cloak; backpack; 50' hemp rope; food for 5 meals; holy symbol; material

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# LANCILON SEENABUCK

*Thief (well, acquisitions agent)*

*Halfling Male*

*Level 2*

**STR** 9

**DEX** 18

**CON** 15

**INT** 10

**WIS** 13

**CHA** 12

**HP:** 12

**AC:** 4 (Leather and dex bonus)

**#AT:** 1

**AL:** Chaotic Good

**Proficiencies:**

Weapon Proficiencies: Short sword, short bow

Non-weapon Proficiencies: Tumbling, Jumping, Juggling

Languages: Payit (enough to make himself clear), Common

**Thief Proficiencies:**

Pick Pockets: 30%

Open Locks: 30%

Find/Remove Traps: 15%

Move Silently: 45%

Hide in Shadows: 60%

Detect Noise: 35%

Climb Walls: 60%

Read Languages: 10%

**Equipment:**

Short sword (1-6/1-8); short bow and 20 arrows (1-6/1-6); cap; breeches; good cloth cloak; tunic; vest; backpack; thieves' tools; paper; ink; starwheel pistol (1-4/1-4); smoke powder for 6 shots.

**Background:**

It was an unwise move. Okay, it was a *stupid* move. Getting the Lantanese dander up with an attempted theft in the temple of Gond was one thing. Getting out with only one of their holy-of-holy halfling-sized arquebuses was another. Lancilon has lived through that kind a pressure before. He just made his way to the docks and stowed away on an outbound ship.

The *stupid* thing was the ship wasn't heading



components for spells; leather-bound journals.

**Background:**

Gontonia of Helm is one of the Watchers of Helm, also called Godseyes (but not to their faces). Dispatched to research the ways of this new world, and to convert the heathen, Gontonia is excited by the first mission, apathetic to the second. For centuries the Realms have gotten by with a plethora of deities squabbling over their own; why should it be different here? Better that Helm be incorporated into the local pantheon.

Gontonia excels at research. He has already taught himself Payit and a smattering of Nexalan. He has interviewed both natives and new arrivals to Helmsport, including a desert dwarf named Stonekiller. The similarities between the dwarf's legends and those from the Realms excite Gontonia, and understanding those links is one of his goals.

For that, Gontonia has to get into the field. It's a feeling that he shares with Captain Balismo, but the priest's desire is to win understanding and

knowledge over glory and gold. By understanding these outcast branches of Realmsian humanity, civilized folk may lift up the natives to the real world.

Gontonia takes copious notes of his meetings, and keeps a diary in his mission house. He is open with his information, feeling that the more people know about each other, the more likely they will realize that Helm's is the one true way.

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for safety in Memnon or Calimport or Waterdeep. No, it had to be bound for Helmsport, on another bloody continent!

Lancilon is a good thief but not a great thief, and it was only a matter of time before he was caught. Very fast verbal tapdancing kept him from being fed to the sharks of the Shining Sea, but now he is trapped on another world, with no way of getting back.

Lancilon has heard that a lot of adventuring types have "drifted off" into the jungle looking for adventure, and the more evil ones have gathered at Nexal itself, where a mighty and malevolent empire is growing. Such evil empires usually have a stockpile of gold, which would interest the halfling since gold can provide him a way of for him to get back to civilization.

Lancilon is homesick for a world where doors have locks, traps are common, and monsters hang out with tons of treasure in old dwarven mines, just waiting to be robbed. These savages of the new world—particularly the bestial halflings!—are not his cup of tea. But gold is gold,

and if someone has it, it is up to Lancilon to relieve them of it.

At least of enough gold so he can buy passage home.

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small altar stone stands in the middle of the platform. When the villagers serve the monster, an ahuitzotl, sacrifices are left here. The creature always checks here for food and, if disappointed, moves into the village for revenge.

The sacbe continues another 50 yards to the cetay. This cetay is a water-filled sinkhole, almost round and about 40' in diameter. The water usually reaches about 20' below the edge, and runs 30' deep. Around it is a rim of stone.

The ahuitzotl has a lair in the western side of the bottom of the cetay. Villagers frequently throw pottery and valuables into the water to appease the beast. Its accumulated treasure includes 12 pieces of worked gold, 13 polished pieces of turquoise, and 21 jade statuettes. These items are worth a total of 550 gp. There is also a great deal of pottery. The treasure rests under a pile of bones except when the creature is admiring it.

The ahuitzotl has brought several piranha from a nearby stream to help guard its lair.

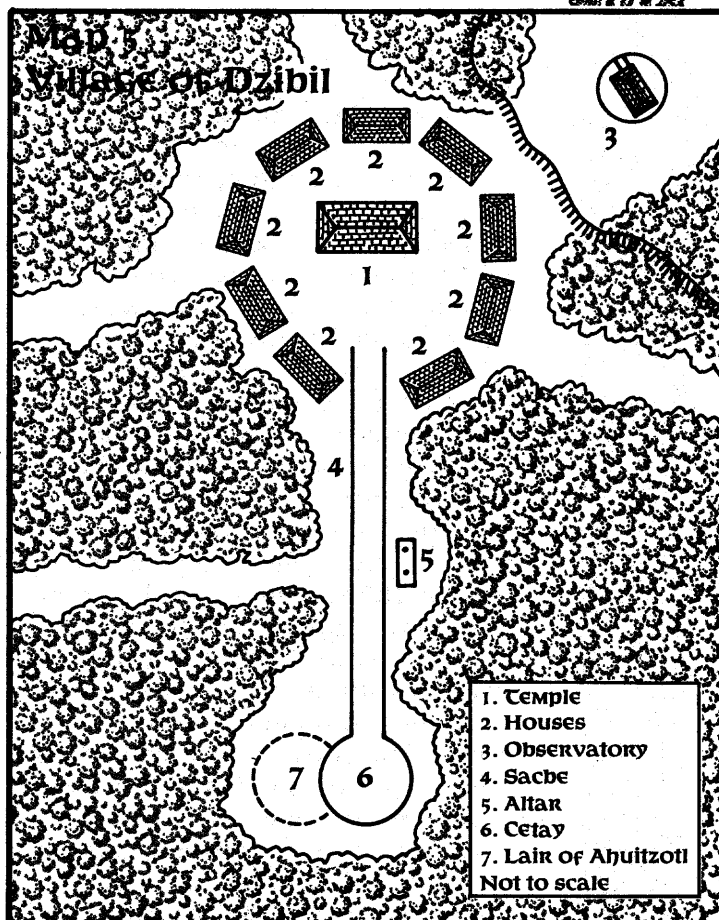
**Piranha, Normal (6):** AC 8; MV Sw 9; HD 1/2; hp 3 each; THACO 20; #AT 1; Damage 1-2; SA swarm; ML 6; AL N

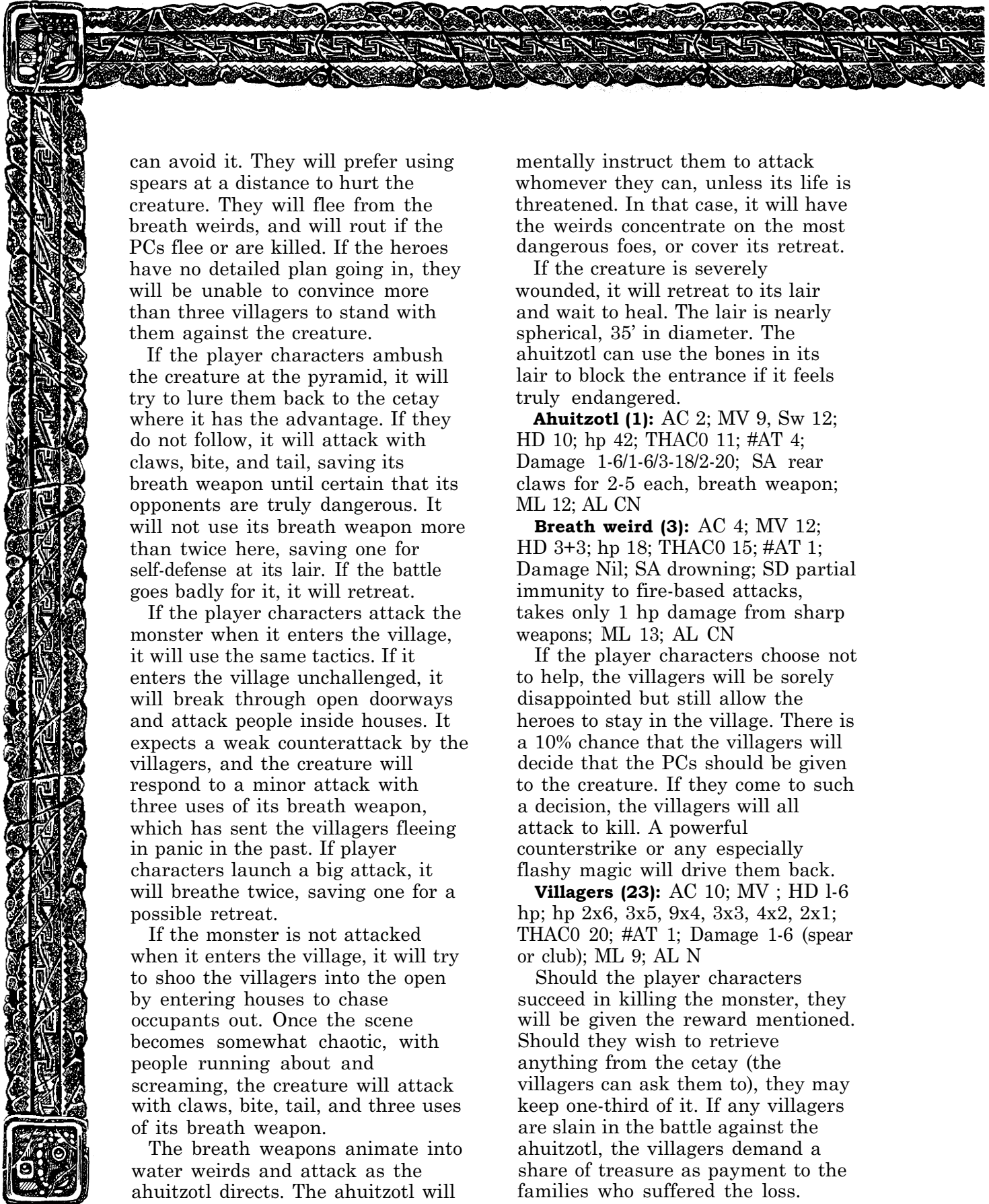
If anyone jumps into the cetay, they will be attacked by the piranha. The ahuitzotl will wait until the fish have killed the intruder (or vice versa) and then leave its lair for victims. If the characters attack the ahuitzotl here, it will use one shot of its breath weapon (more if hard-pressed) and its rear claws.

To be kept happy, the ahuitzotl must be given treasure of some sort every day, even pottery. Further, a substantial portion of meat (a deer, a human, or any equal amount) must be given every two weeks. If these

requirements are not met, it will attack the town, killing people. The village has dealt with the thing for a period of time, so when victims must be had, they are chosen by lot from the old and infirm. Most victims willingly wait at the small pyramid, knowing their sacrifice will protect others.

The heroes may convince the villagers to help them remove the beast. The villagers know what the creature can do, but as long as the PCs are doing most of the fighting, they will assist. They will not enter the cetay themselves, nor will they attack the creature in melee if they





can avoid it. They will prefer using spears at a distance to hurt the creature. They will flee from the breath weirds, and will rout if the PCs flee or are killed. If the heroes have no detailed plan going in, they will be unable to convince more than three villagers to stand with them against the creature.

If the player characters ambush the creature at the pyramid, it will try to lure them back to the ceta where it has the advantage. If they do not follow, it will attack with claws, bite, and tail, saving its breath weapon until certain that its opponents are truly dangerous. It will not use its breath weapon more than twice here, saving one for self-defense at its lair. If the battle goes badly for it, it will retreat.

If the player characters attack the monster when it enters the village, it will use the same tactics. If it enters the village unchallenged, it will break through open doorways and attack people inside houses. It expects a weak counterattack by the villagers, and the creature will respond to a minor attack with three uses of its breath weapon, which has sent the villagers fleeing in panic in the past. If player characters launch a big attack, it will breathe twice, saving one for a possible retreat.

If the monster is not attacked when it enters the village, it will try to shoo the villagers into the open by entering houses to chase occupants out. Once the scene becomes somewhat chaotic, with people running about and screaming, the creature will attack with claws, bite, tail, and three uses of its breath weapon.

The breath weapons animate into water weirds and attack as the ahuitzotl directs. The ahuitzotl will

mentally instruct them to attack whomever they can, unless its life is threatened. In that case, it will have the weirds concentrate on the most dangerous foes, or cover its retreat.

If the creature is severely wounded, it will retreat to its lair and wait to heal. The lair is nearly spherical, 35' in diameter. The ahuitzotl can use the bones in its lair to block the entrance if it feels truly endangered.

**Ahuitzotl (1):** AC 2; MV 9, Sw 12; HD 10; hp 42; THAC0 11; #AT 4; Damage 1-6/1-6/3-18/2-20; SA rear claws for 2-5 each, breath weapon; ML 12; AL CN

**Breath weird (3):** AC 4; MV 12; HD 3+3; hp 18; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Damage Nil; SA drowning; SD partial immunity to fire-based attacks, takes only 1 hp damage from sharp weapons; ML 13; AL CN

If the player characters choose not to help, the villagers will be sorely disappointed but still allow the heroes to stay in the village. There is a 10% chance that the villagers will decide that the PCs should be given to the creature. If they come to such a decision, the villagers will all attack to kill. A powerful counterstrike or any especially flashy magic will drive them back.

**Villagers (23):** AC 10; MV ; HD 1-6 hp; hp 2x6, 3x5, 9x4, 3x3, 4x2, 2x1; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Damage 1-6 (spear or club); ML 9; AL N

Should the player characters succeed in killing the monster, they will be given the reward mentioned. Should they wish to retrieve anything from the ceta (the villagers can ask them to), they may keep one-third of it. If any villagers are slain in the battle against the ahuitzotl, the villagers demand a share of treasure as payment to the families who suffered the loss.



## The Valley of Nexal

When the player characters get about ten miles from the Lake of the Gods, they top a rise and see the valley before them.

The valley of Nexal spreads out before you like rotting wares displayed on a cheap blanket in the market. Mount Zatal dominates the horizon, a mighty cone of cinder and lava, its peak lost in clouds of its own making. Those clouds create a deathly grey pall over the valley, as if it were still in mourning for the wonders lost.

The smokes of Zatal are joined by other smokes, cooking fires and sacrificial flames rising from the three surviving cities: Azatl, Tezat, and Nexal itself. Azatl and Tezat lie nearly in ruins at the eastern and western shores of the great Lake of the Gods.

The Lake of the Gods is a fetid pool of brown water, choked with wreckage of the floating gardens of the capital city of Maztica. A single road still spans the water between Tezat and the city; from your vantage point, you can make out movement along that road.

Nexal stands on an island in the center of the lake, and much of the smoke comes from there. Only the bloody sides of the city's tallest pyramid rise above the black fog. That pyramid is home to Hoxitl the Beastlord, the hellish master of Nexal.

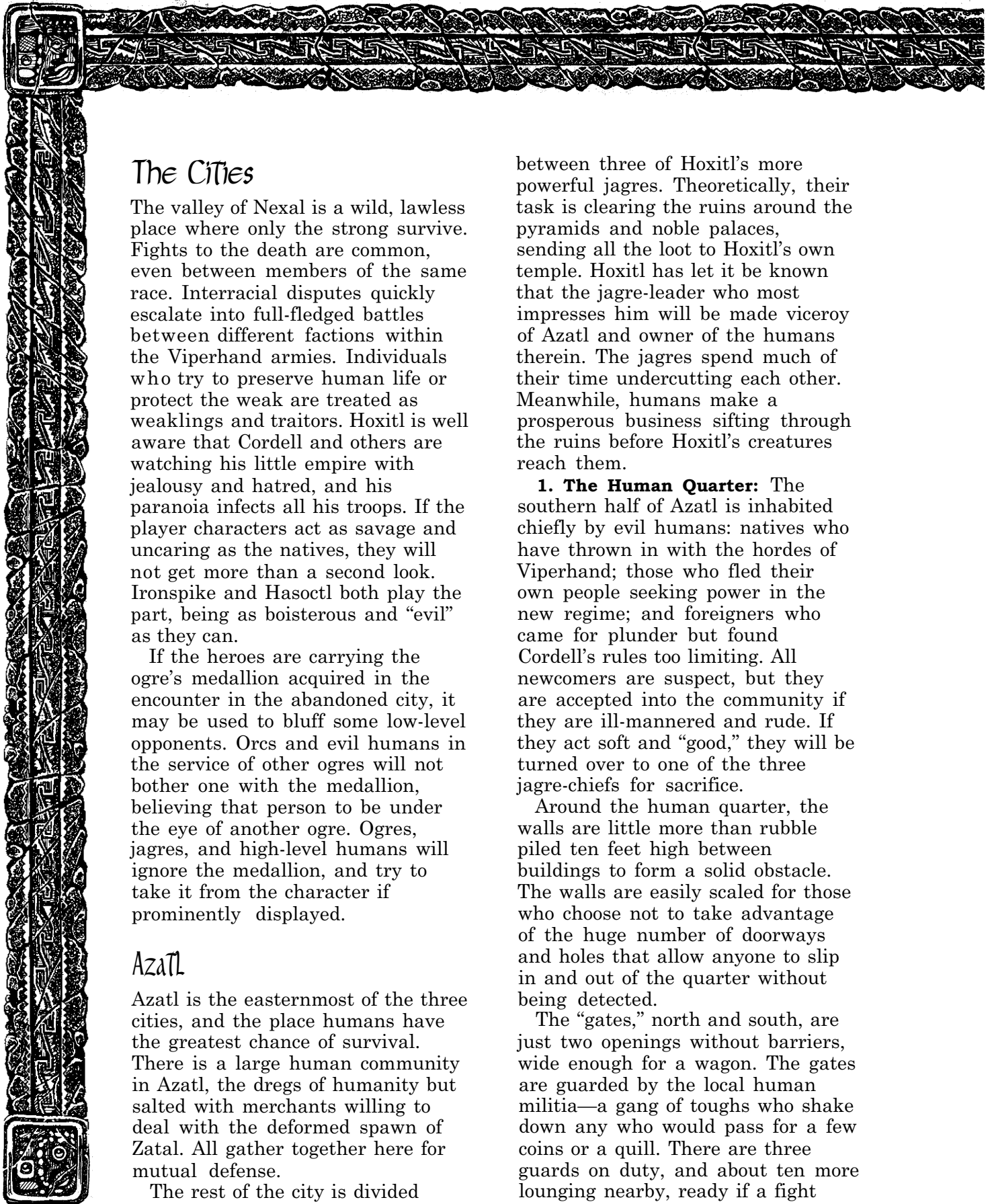
Like Cordell in Helmsport, Hoxitl will probably not be seen by the PCs, although his influence will be felt in all they see and do. Hoxitl's full description is given in the

*Maztica* Boxed Set, should other (higher-level) adventurers seek to dethrone him.

Below begins a brief tour of the valley, followed by a series of events which should point the PCs to their final encounters on the flanks of Mount Zatal. If Ironspike is still with them, the DM should run Encounter 1. If Hasoctl is present, and Ironspike is dead or missing, the PCs should get Encounter 2. If both are gone, then the PCs will have Encounter 3. Any one of these encounters puts the characters in touch with Chioptl the Tabaxi, who knows how to find the Cloak of One Plume.

If they remain, both Ironspike and Hasoctl will caution the player characters that they are not in a normal city, but in an area ruled by dark powers. Acting "good" makes one suspect; it is likely to get everyone killed. They declare that the good gods will understand a little lying to save one's life. If PCs are on their own, the DM must make clear to the players that there are *a lot* of orcs and evil humans around, more than they could fight in a full month.

Time begins pressing the characters, although they may not know it. Four days after the PCs' arrival, merchants from Ulatos arrive in the valley. In addition to their wares, they bring a rumor from Caxal's court: the Cloak of One Plume survives and Cordell has sent human spies to recover it. The merchants have a good description of both Ironspike and Hasoctl, but not of the player characters. After this, the DM should double the likelihood and number of any random encounters.



## The Cities

The valley of Nexal is a wild, lawless place where only the strong survive. Fights to the death are common, even between members of the same race. Interracial disputes quickly escalate into full-fledged battles between different factions within the Viperhand armies. Individuals who try to preserve human life or protect the weak are treated as weaklings and traitors. Hoxitl is well aware that Cordell and others are watching his little empire with jealousy and hatred, and his paranoia infects all his troops. If the player characters act as savage and uncaring as the natives, they will not get more than a second look. Ironspike and Hasoctl both play the part, being as boisterous and “evil” as they can.

If the heroes are carrying the ogre’s medallion acquired in the encounter in the abandoned city, it may be used to bluff some low-level opponents. Orcs and evil humans in the service of other ogres will not bother one with the medallion, believing that person to be under the eye of another ogre. Ogres, jagres, and high-level humans will ignore the medallion, and try to take it from the character if prominently displayed.

## Azatl

Azatl is the easternmost of the three cities, and the place humans have the greatest chance of survival. There is a large human community in Azatl, the dregs of humanity but salted with merchants willing to deal with the deformed spawn of Zatl. All gather together here for mutual defense.

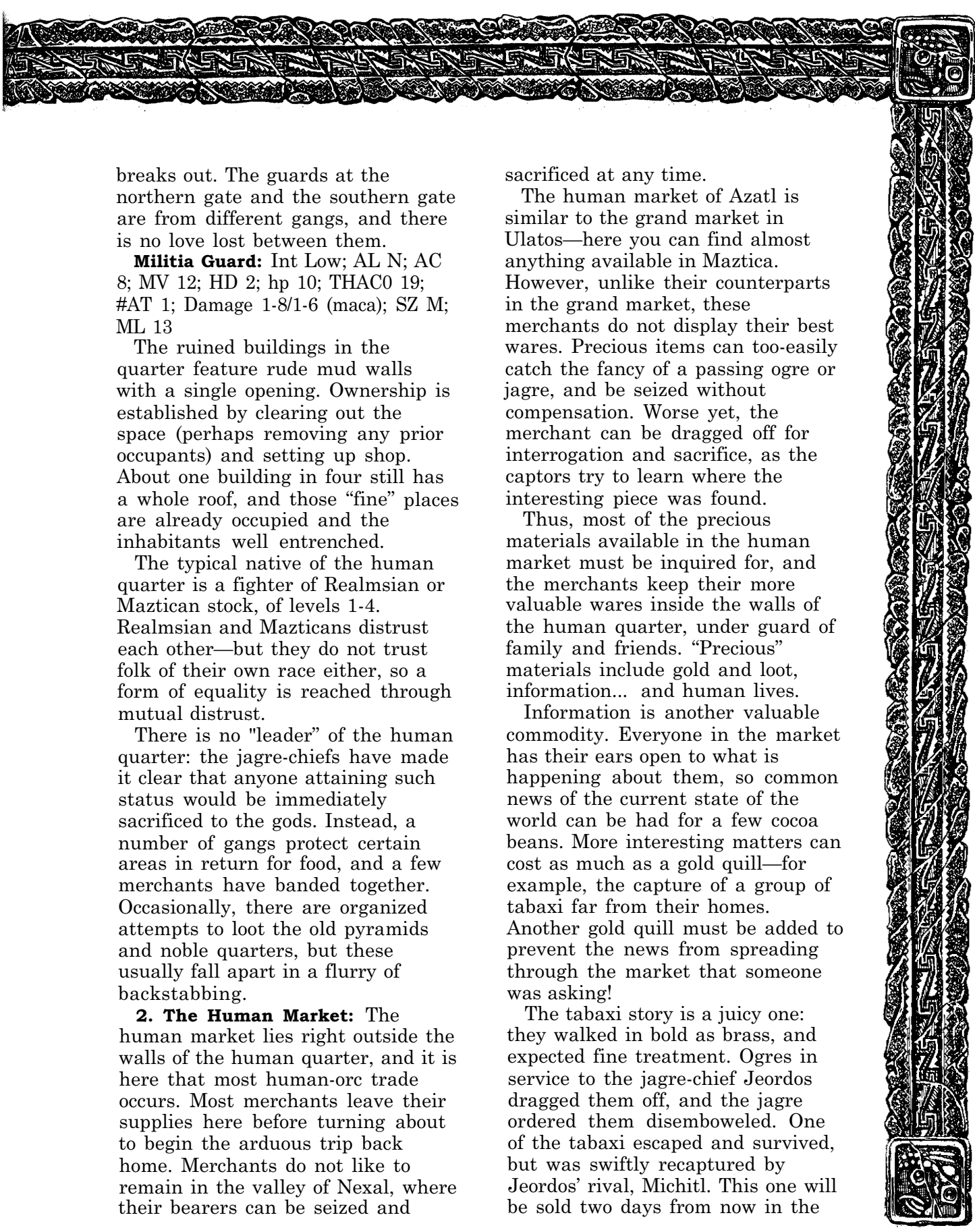
The rest of the city is divided

between three of Hoxitl’s more powerful jagres. Theoretically, their task is clearing the ruins around the pyramids and noble palaces, sending all the loot to Hoxitl’s own temple. Hoxitl has let it be known that the jagre-leader who most impresses him will be made viceroy of Azatl and owner of the humans therein. The jagres spend much of their time undercutting each other. Meanwhile, humans make a prosperous business sifting through the ruins before Hoxitl’s creatures reach them.

**1. The Human Quarter:** The southern half of Azatl is inhabited chiefly by evil humans: natives who have thrown in with the hordes of Viperhand; those who fled their own people seeking power in the new regime; and foreigners who came for plunder but found Cordell’s rules too limiting. All newcomers are suspect, but they are accepted into the community if they are ill-mannered and rude. If they act soft and “good,” they will be turned over to one of the three jagre-chiefs for sacrifice.

Around the human quarter, the walls are little more than rubble piled ten feet high between buildings to form a solid obstacle. The walls are easily scaled for those who choose not to take advantage of the huge number of doorways and holes that allow anyone to slip in and out of the quarter without being detected.

The “gates,” north and south, are just two openings without barriers, wide enough for a wagon. The gates are guarded by the local human militia—a gang of toughs who shake down any who would pass for a few coins or a quill. There are three guards on duty, and about ten more lounging nearby, ready if a fight



breaks out. The guards at the northern gate and the southern gate are from different gangs, and there is no love lost between them.

**Militia Guard:** Int Low; AL N; AC 8; MV 12; HD 2; hp 10; THACO 19; #AT 1; Damage 1-8/1-6 (maca); SZ M; ML 13

The ruined buildings in the quarter feature rude mud walls with a single opening. Ownership is established by clearing out the space (perhaps removing any prior occupants) and setting up shop. About one building in four still has a whole roof, and those “fine” places are already occupied and the inhabitants well entrenched.

The typical native of the human quarter is a fighter of Realmsian or Maztican stock, of levels 1-4. Realmsian and Mazticans distrust each other—but they do not trust folk of their own race either, so a form of equality is reached through mutual distrust.

There is no “leader” of the human quarter: the jagre-chiefs have made it clear that anyone attaining such status would be immediately sacrificed to the gods. Instead, a number of gangs protect certain areas in return for food, and a few merchants have banded together. Occasionally, there are organized attempts to loot the old pyramids and noble quarters, but these usually fall apart in a flurry of backstabbing.

**2. The Human Market:** The human market lies right outside the walls of the human quarter, and it is here that most human-orc trade occurs. Most merchants leave their supplies here before turning about to begin the arduous trip back home. Merchants do not like to remain in the valley of Nexal, where their bearers can be seized and

sacrificed at any time.

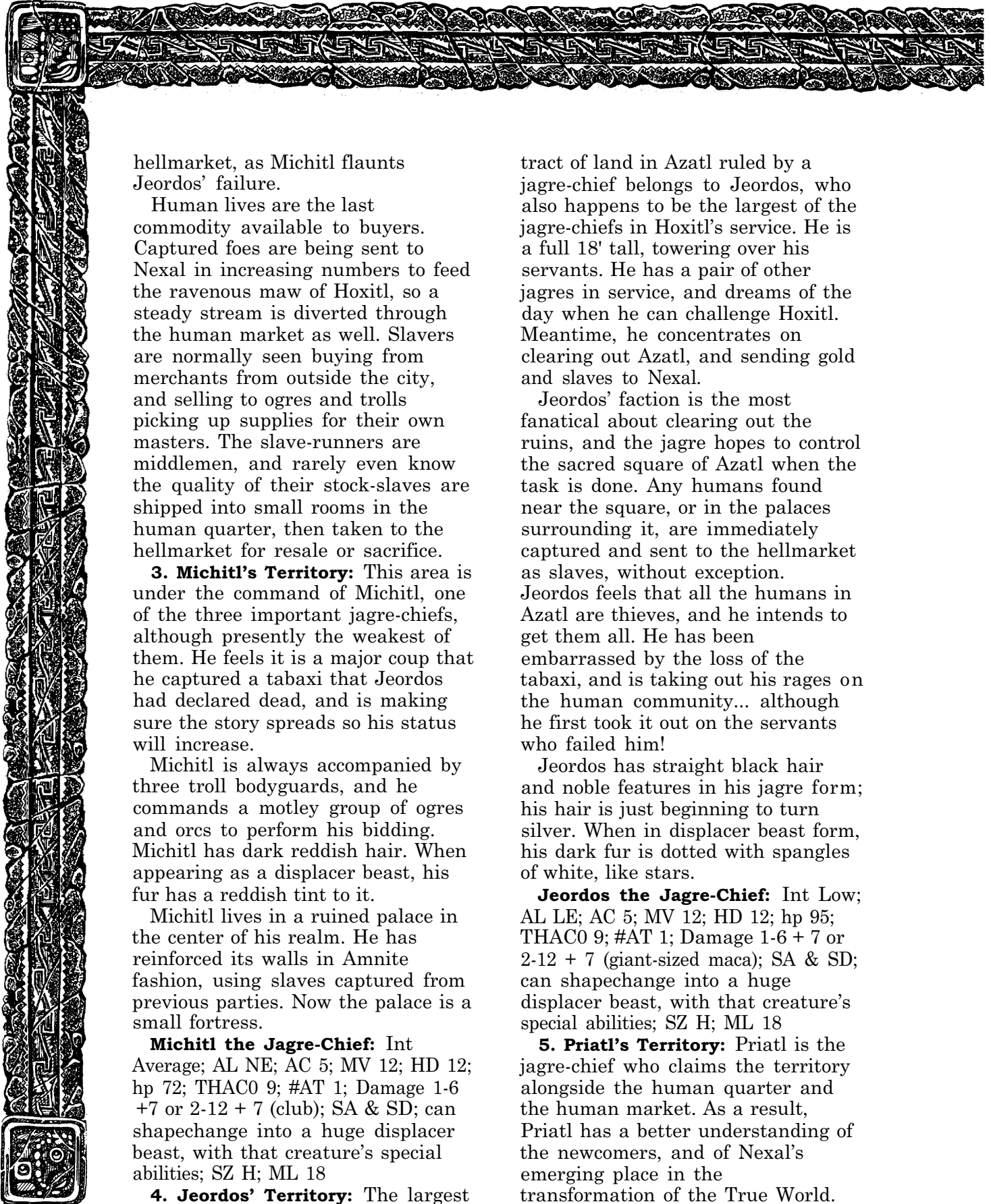
The human market of Azatl is similar to the grand market in Ulatos—here you can find almost anything available in Maztica. However, unlike their counterparts in the grand market, these merchants do not display their best wares. Precious items can too-easily catch the fancy of a passing ogre or jagre, and be seized without compensation. Worse yet, the merchant can be dragged off for interrogation and sacrifice, as the captors try to learn where the interesting piece was found.

Thus, most of the precious materials available in the human market must be inquired for, and the merchants keep their more valuable wares inside the walls of the human quarter, under guard of family and friends. “Precious” materials include gold and loot, information... and human lives.

Information is another valuable commodity. Everyone in the market has their ears open to what is happening about them, so common news of the current state of the world can be had for a few cocoa beans. More interesting matters can cost as much as a gold quill—for example, the capture of a group of tabaxi far from their homes. Another gold quill must be added to prevent the news from spreading through the market that someone was asking!

The tabaxi story is a juicy one: they walked in bold as brass, and expected fine treatment. Ogres in service to the jagre-chief Jeordos dragged them off, and the jagre ordered them disemboweled. One of the tabaxi escaped and survived, but was swiftly recaptured by Jeordos’ rival, Michitl. This one will be sold two days from now in the





hellmarket, as Michitl flaunts Jeordos' failure.

Human lives are the last commodity available to buyers. Captured foes are being sent to Nexal in increasing numbers to feed the ravenous maw of Hoxitl, so a steady stream is diverted through the human market as well. Slavers are normally seen buying from merchants from outside the city, and selling to ogres and trolls picking up supplies for their own masters. The slave-runners are middlemen, and rarely even know the quality of their stock-slaves are shipped into small rooms in the human quarter, then taken to the hellmarket for resale or sacrifice.

**3. Michitl's Territory:** This area is under the command of Michitl, one of the three important jagre-chiefs, although presently the weakest of them. He feels it is a major coup that he captured a tabaxi that Jeordos had declared dead, and is making sure the story spreads so his status will increase.

Michitl is always accompanied by three troll bodyguards, and he commands a motley group of ogres and orcs to perform his bidding. Michitl has dark reddish hair. When appearing as a displacer beast, his fur has a reddish tint to it.

Michitl lives in a ruined palace in the center of his realm. He has reinforced its walls in Amnite fashion, using slaves captured from previous parties. Now the palace is a small fortress.

**Michitl the Jagre-Chief:** Int Average; AL NE; AC 5; MV 12; HD 12; hp 72; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Damage 1-6 +7 or 2-12 + 7 (club); SA & SD; can shapechange into a huge displacer beast, with that creature's special abilities; SZ H; ML 18

**4. Jeordos' Territory:** The largest

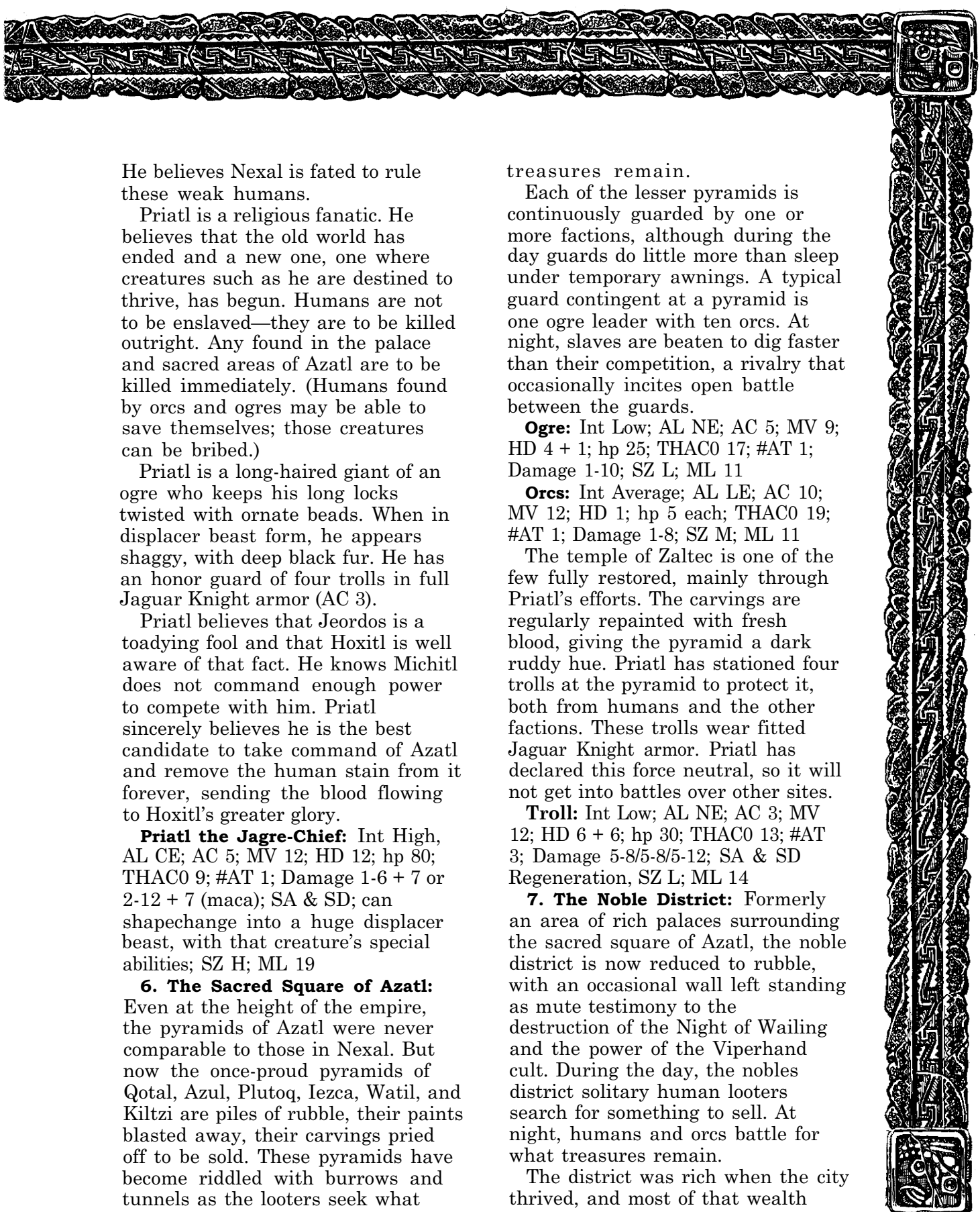
tract of land in Azatl ruled by a jagre-chief belongs to Jeordos, who also happens to be the largest of the jagre-chiefs in Hoxitl's service. He is a full 18' tall, towering over his servants. He has a pair of other jagres in service, and dreams of the day when he can challenge Hoxitl. Meantime, he concentrates on clearing out Azatl, and sending gold and slaves to Nexal.

Jeordos' faction is the most fanatical about clearing out the ruins, and the jagre hopes to control the sacred square of Azatl when the task is done. Any humans found near the square, or in the palaces surrounding it, are immediately captured and sent to the hellmarket as slaves, without exception. Jeordos feels that all the humans in Azatl are thieves, and he intends to get them all. He has been embarrassed by the loss of the tabaxi, and is taking out his rages on the human community... although he first took it out on the servants who failed him!

Jeordos has straight black hair and noble features in his jagre form; his hair is just beginning to turn silver. When in displacer beast form, his dark fur is dotted with spangles of white, like stars.

**Jeordos the Jagre-Chief:** Int Low; AL LE; AC 5; MV 12; HD 12; hp 95; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Damage 1-6 + 7 or 2-12 + 7 (giant-sized maca); SA & SD; can shapechange into a huge displacer beast, with that creature's special abilities; SZ H; ML 18

**5. Priatl's Territory:** Priatl is the jagre-chief who claims the territory alongside the human quarter and the human market. As a result, Priatl has a better understanding of the newcomers, and of Nexal's emerging place in the transformation of the True World.



He believes Nexal is fated to rule these weak humans.

Priatl is a religious fanatic. He believes that the old world has ended and a new one, one where creatures such as he are destined to thrive, has begun. Humans are not to be enslaved—they are to be killed outright. Any found in the palace and sacred areas of Azatl are to be killed immediately. (Humans found by orcs and ogres may be able to save themselves; those creatures can be bribed.)

Priatl is a long-haired giant of an ogre who keeps his long locks twisted with ornate beads. When in displacer beast form, he appears shaggy, with deep black fur. He has an honor guard of four trolls in full Jaguar Knight armor (AC 3).

Priatl believes that Jeordos is a toadying fool and that Hoxitl is well aware of that fact. He knows Michitl does not command enough power to compete with him. Priatl sincerely believes he is the best candidate to take command of Azatl and remove the human stain from it forever, sending the blood flowing to Hoxitl's greater glory.

**Priatl the Jagre-Chief:** Int High, AL CE; AC 5; MV 12; HD 12; hp 80; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Damage 1-6 + 7 or 2-12 + 7 (maca); SA & SD; can shapechange into a huge displacer beast, with that creature's special abilities; SZ H; ML 19

**6. The Sacred Square of Azatl:** Even at the height of the empire, the pyramids of Azatl were never comparable to those in Nexal. But now the once-proud pyramids of Qotal, Azul, Plutoq, Iezca, Watil, and Kiltzi are piles of rubble, their paints blasted away, their carvings pried off to be sold. These pyramids have become riddled with burrows and tunnels as the looters seek what

treasures remain.

Each of the lesser pyramids is continuously guarded by one or more factions, although during the day guards do little more than sleep under temporary awnings. A typical guard contingent at a pyramid is one ogre leader with ten orcs. At night, slaves are beaten to dig faster than their competition, a rivalry that occasionally incites open battle between the guards.

**Ogre:** Int Low; AL NE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 4 + 1; hp 25; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Damage 1-10; SZ L; ML 11

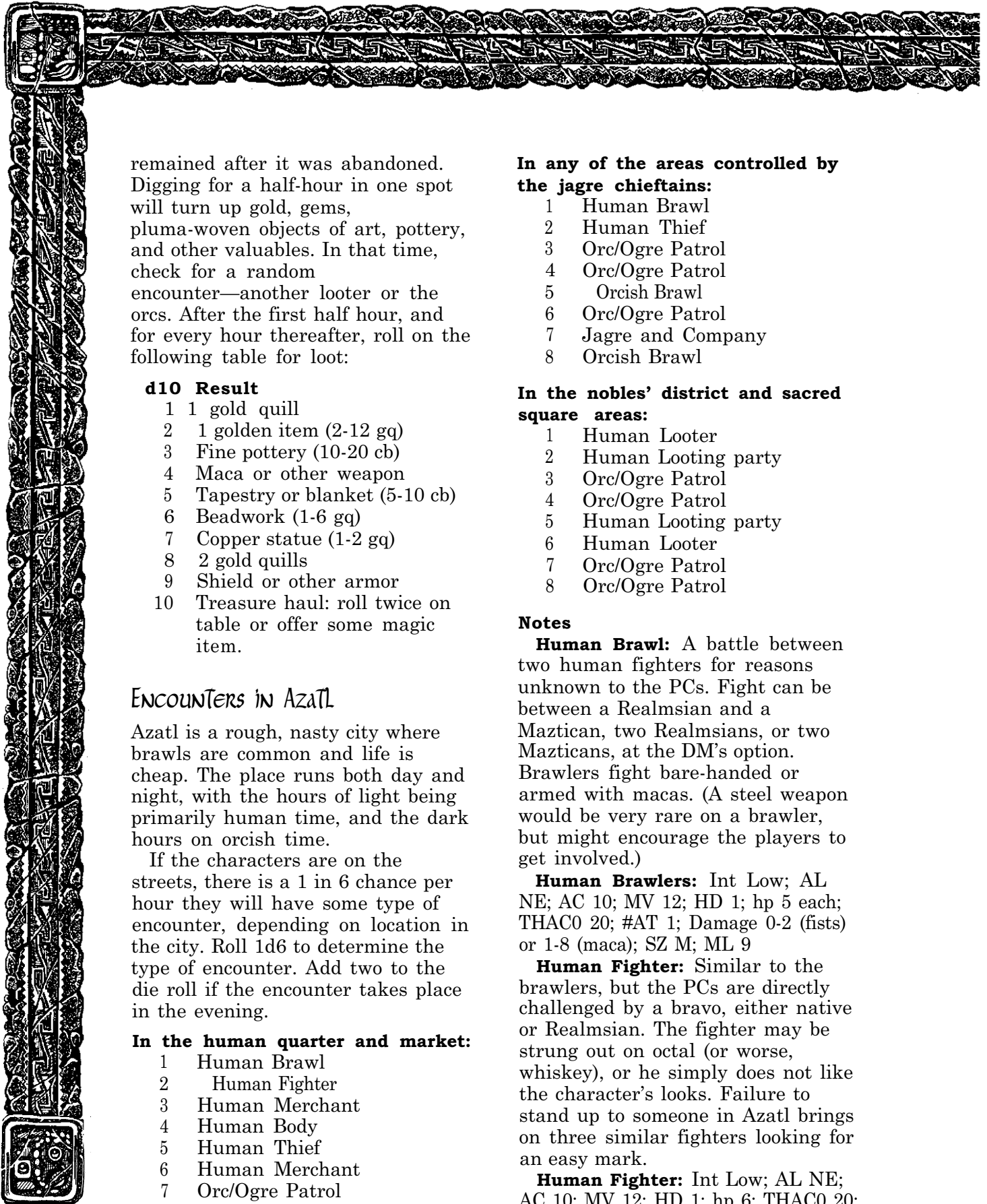
**Orcs:** Int Average; AL LE; AC 10; MV 12; HD 1; hp 5 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Damage 1-8; SZ M; ML 11

The temple of Zaltec is one of the few fully restored, mainly through Priatl's efforts. The carvings are regularly repainted with fresh blood, giving the pyramid a dark ruddy hue. Priatl has stationed four trolls at the pyramid to protect it, both from humans and the other factions. These trolls wear fitted Jaguar Knight armor. Priatl has declared this force neutral, so it will not get into battles over other sites.

**Troll:** Int Low; AL NE; AC 3; MV 12; HD 6 + 6; hp 30; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Damage 5-8/5-8/5-12; SA & SD Regeneration, SZ L; ML 14

**7. The Noble District:** Formerly an area of rich palaces surrounding the sacred square of Azatl, the noble district is now reduced to rubble, with an occasional wall left standing as mute testimony to the destruction of the Night of Wailing and the power of the Viperhand cult. During the day, the nobles district solitary human looters search for something to sell. At night, humans and orcs battle for what treasures remain.

The district was rich when the city thrived, and most of that wealth



remained after it was abandoned. Digging for a half-hour in one spot will turn up gold, gems, pluma-woven objects of art, pottery, and other valuables. In that time, check for a random encounter—another looter or the orcs. After the first half hour, and for every hour thereafter, roll on the following table for loot:

**d10 Result**

- 1 1 gold quill
- 2 1 golden item (2-12 gq)
- 3 Fine pottery (10-20 cb)
- 4 Maca or other weapon
- 5 Tapestry or blanket (5-10 cb)
- 6 Beadwork (1-6 gq)
- 7 Copper statue (1-2 gq)
- 8 2 gold quills
- 9 Shield or other armor
- 10 Treasure haul: roll twice on table or offer some magic item.

**ENCOUNTERS IN AZATL**

Azatl is a rough, nasty city where brawls are common and life is cheap. The place runs both day and night, with the hours of light being primarily human time, and the dark hours on orcish time.

If the characters are on the streets, there is a 1 in 6 chance per hour they will have some type of encounter, depending on location in the city. Roll 1d6 to determine the type of encounter. Add two to the die roll if the encounter takes place in the evening.

**In the human quarter and market:**

- 1 Human Brawl
- 2 Human Fighter
- 3 Human Merchant
- 4 Human Body
- 5 Human Thief
- 6 Human Merchant
- 7 Orc/Ogre Patrol
- 8 Human Brawl

**In any of the areas controlled by the jagre chieftains:**

- 1 Human Brawl
- 2 Human Thief
- 3 Orc/Ogre Patrol
- 4 Orc/Ogre Patrol
- 5 Orcish Brawl
- 6 Orc/Ogre Patrol
- 7 Jagre and Company
- 8 Orcish Brawl

**In the nobles' district and sacred square areas:**

- 1 Human Looter
- 2 Human Looting party
- 3 Orc/Ogre Patrol
- 4 Orc/Ogre Patrol
- 5 Human Looting party
- 6 Human Looter
- 7 Orc/Ogre Patrol
- 8 Orc/Ogre Patrol

**Notes**

**Human Brawl:** A battle between two human fighters for reasons unknown to the PCs. Fight can be between a Realmsian and a Maztican, two Realmsians, or two Mazticans, at the DM's option. Brawlers fight bare-handed or armed with macas. (A steel weapon would be very rare on a brawler, but might encourage the players to get involved.)

**Human Brawlers:** Int Low; AL NE; AC 10; MV 12; HD 1; hp 5 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Damage 0-2 (fists) or 1-8 (maca); SZ M; ML 9

**Human Fighter:** Similar to the brawlers, but the PCs are directly challenged by a bravo, either native or Realmsian. The fighter may be strung out on octal (or worse, whiskey), or he simply does not like the character's looks. Failure to stand up to someone in Azatl brings on three similar fighters looking for an easy mark.

**Human Fighter:** Int Low; AL NE; AC 10; MV 12; HD 1; hp 6; THAC0 20;

#AT 1; Damage 0-2 (fists) or 1-4 (obsidian knife); SZ M; ML 9

**Human Thief:** A native or Realmsian sneak-thief who comes across the party. The thief may try to pick a pocket if the group is together, or to get one person alone and waylay him or her.

**Human Thief:** Int Average; AL CE; AC 10; MV 12; HD 2; hp 7; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Damage 1-4 (obsidian knife); SA Thieving abilities SZ M; ML 9

**Human Merchant:** This slimy individual traffics in loot, information, or slaves. He will try to single out newcomers, either to sell something to them, or get them alone for capture. In the latter case, he will ask to meet with one member, later and alone, and direct him to a location with five human fighters (stats as above).

**Human Merchant:** Int Low; AL NE; AC 10; MV 12; HD 1; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Damage 0-2 (fists) or 1-4 (obsidian knife); SZ M; ML 9

**Human Body:** Just what it says. The characters stumble over the inert form of a former fellow human, killed in some mindless bit of fun. The body was stripped of valuables soon after death.

**Human Looter:** A lone looter, he will attempt to avoid a large party on the move. If he surprises the adventurers digging, he will try to slip off and return in 1-3 turns with a human looting party (below).

**Human Looter:** Int Average; AL CE; AC 10; MV 12; HD 1; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Damage 1-4 (obsidian knife); SZ M; ML 8

**Human Looting Party:** 3-12 human looters relying on strength in numbers. They will attack parties they outnumber. They will flee from orcs and other evil nonhumans.

**Human Looter:** Int Average; AL NE; AC 10; MV 12; HD 1; hp 6;

THAC0 20; #AT 1; Damage 1-8 (macas); SZ M; ML 10

**Orc Brawl:** Set up is similar to the human brawl, but with orcish participants. Again, if PCs avoid the battle it will be noted, and the characters risk being challenged themselves. Then again, they might also be challenged if they get involved in the fight, for "messing with orcish business."

**Orcs:** Int Average; AL LE; AC 10; MV 12; HD 1; hp 6 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Damage 1-8; SZ M; ML 10

**Orc/Ogre Party:** Ten orcs led by a single ogre are on a mission in the area. DM may decide whether they are merely walking guard, looking for trouble, out to recruit more sacrifices for Zaltec, etc. Regardless of the situation, anyone who crosses their path or looks at them funny is in for a battle.

**Ogre:** Int Low; AL NE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 4+1; hp 25; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Damage 1-10; SZ L; ML 11

**Orcs:** Int Average; AL LE; AC 10; MV 12; HD 1; hp 3 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Damage 1-8; SZ M; ML 11

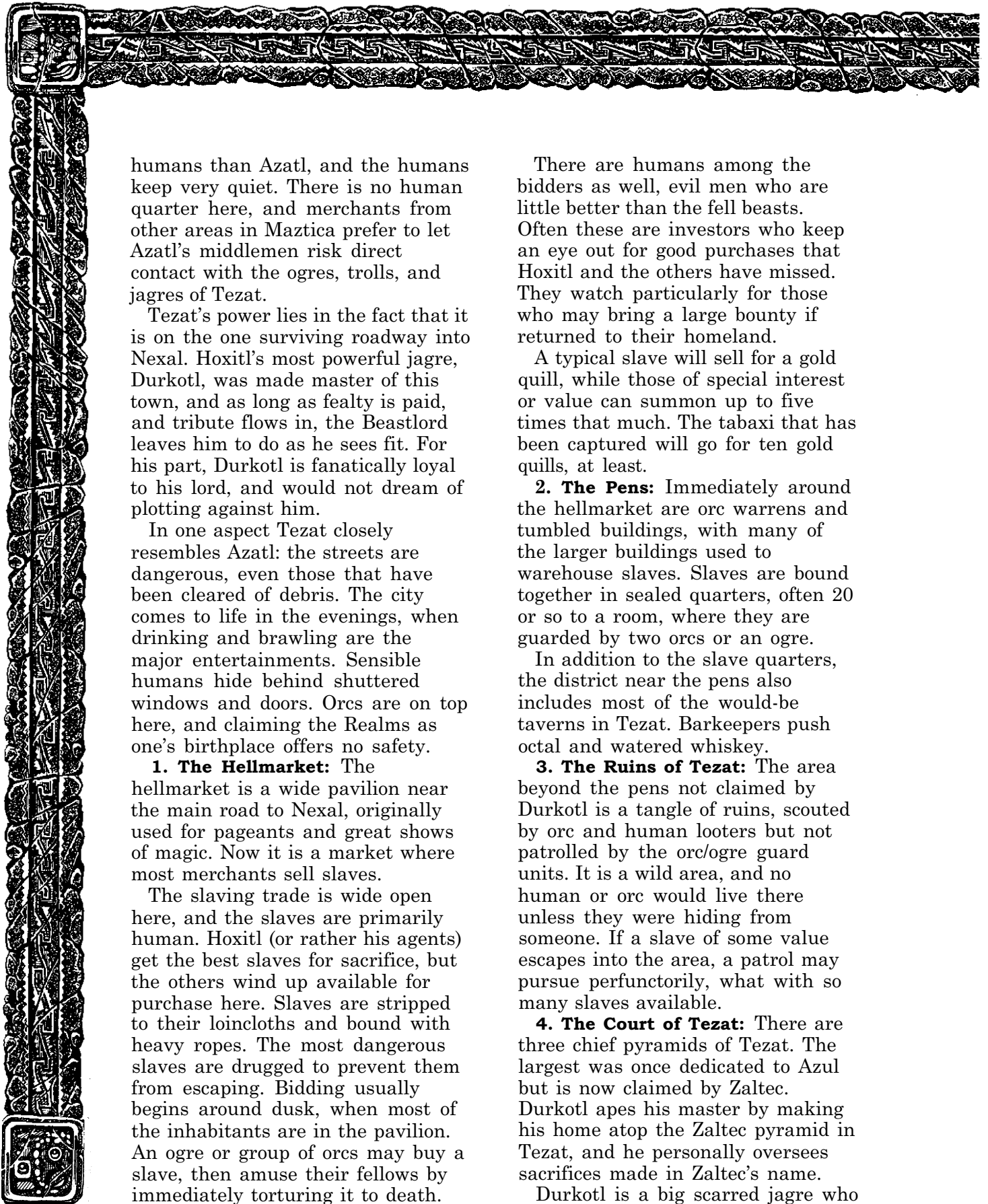
**Jagre Company:** A jagre and his ten ogre bodyguards are passing through. The jagre is not meant to be one of the ruling three, but the DM may choose to make it so.

**Jagre:** Int Low; AL NE; AC 5; MV 12; HD 12; hp 60; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Damage 1-6 + 7 or 2-12 + 7 (club); SA & SD; can shapechange into a huge displacer beast, with that creature's special abilities; SZ H; ML 14

**Ogre:** Int Low; AL NE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 4 + 1; hp 20 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Damage 1-10; SZ L; ML 12

## The City Of Tezat

Tezat is slightly smaller than Azatl, but no less devastated. The city has more humanoids and fewer



humans than Azatl, and the humans keep very quiet. There is no human quarter here, and merchants from other areas in Maztica prefer to let Azatl's middlemen risk direct contact with the ogres, trolls, and jagres of Tezat.

Tezat's power lies in the fact that it is on the one surviving roadway into Nexal. Hoxitl's most powerful jagre, Durkotl, was made master of this town, and as long as fealty is paid, and tribute flows in, the Beastlord leaves him to do as he sees fit. For his part, Durkotl is fanatically loyal to his lord, and would not dream of plotting against him.

In one aspect Tezat closely resembles Azatl: the streets are dangerous, even those that have been cleared of debris. The city comes to life in the evenings, when drinking and brawling are the major entertainments. Sensible humans hide behind shuttered windows and doors. Orcs are on top here, and claiming the Realms as one's birthplace offers no safety.

**1. The Hellmarket:** The hellmarket is a wide pavilion near the main road to Nexal, originally used for pageants and great shows of magic. Now it is a market where most merchants sell slaves.

The slaving trade is wide open here, and the slaves are primarily human. Hoxitl (or rather his agents) get the best slaves for sacrifice, but the others wind up available for purchase here. Slaves are stripped to their loincloths and bound with heavy ropes. The most dangerous slaves are drugged to prevent them from escaping. Bidding usually begins around dusk, when most of the inhabitants are in the pavilion. An ogre or group of orcs may buy a slave, then amuse their fellows by immediately torturing it to death.

There are humans among the bidders as well, evil men who are little better than the fell beasts. Often these are investors who keep an eye out for good purchases that Hoxitl and the others have missed. They watch particularly for those who may bring a large bounty if returned to their homeland.

A typical slave will sell for a gold quill, while those of special interest or value can summon up to five times that much. The tabaxi that has been captured will go for ten gold quills, at least.


**2. The Pens:** Immediately around the hellmarket are orc warrens and tumbled buildings, with many of the larger buildings used to warehouse slaves. Slaves are bound together in sealed quarters, often 20 or so to a room, where they are guarded by two orcs or an ogre.

In addition to the slave quarters, the district near the pens also includes most of the would-be taverns in Tezat. Barkeepers push octal and watered whiskey.

**3. The Ruins of Tezat:** The area beyond the pens not claimed by Durkotl is a tangle of ruins, scouted by orc and human looters but not patrolled by the orc/ogre guard units. It is a wild area, and no human or orc would live there unless they were hiding from someone. If a slave of some value escapes into the area, a patrol may pursue perfunctorily, what with so many slaves available.

**4. The Court of Tezat:** There are three chief pyramids of Tezat. The largest was once dedicated to Azul but is now claimed by Zaltec. Durkotl apes his master by making his home atop the Zaltec pyramid in Tezat, and he personally oversees sacrifices made in Zaltec's name.

Durkotl is a big scarred jagre who



fought beside Hoxitl in his conquest of Nexal, and received Tezat as a reward. He wears Jaguar armor tailored to fit, augmenting his mighty looks and abilities. Even more imposingly, Durkotl's armor is made from the hide of a fellow jagre, taken while his foe was in displacer beast form. In addition to enjoying the armor's protection, Durkotl uses it to send a message to any who might think to oppose him, regardless of race.

Durkotl has a personal guard of three other jagres, who in turn each command a unit of three trolls and five ogres. He will always be accompanied by at least one jagre and the honor guard at any time.

**Durkotl, Master of Tezat:** Int High; AL LE; AC 3; MV 12; HD 12; hp 90; THACO 9; #AT 1; Damage 1-6 + 7 or 2-12 + 7 (maca); SA & SD; can shapechange into a huge displacer beast, with that creature's special abilities; SZ H; ML 19

The other two major pyramids in the complex are those of Tezca the Fire God, and Eha. Priests of Tezca sacrifice each evening to ensure the sun rises the next day. The pyramid to Eha is the least of them all, no more than 20' high, and Eha's worshippers are few in Tezat.

All three pyramids are ringed by low, square mounds, upon which duelists battle to settle arguments. The location was provided to offset brawling in the streets, but it has only added another venue of bloodshed. There are usually two or three battles going on at any time on the platforms, with mixed race combats (such as orcs fighting human slaves) as the biggest draws.

## ENCOUNTERS IN TEZAT

Random encounters in Tezat are fewer than in Azatl, but deadlier. There is only a 1 in 8 chance of an encounter during the day, 1 in 6 at night. Roll 1d6 to determine which encounter, and add +2 for nighttime occurrences (except in the ruins).

### Everywhere in Tezat (except ruins):

- 1 Human Merchant
- 2 Orcish Fighter
- 3 Orc/Ogre Patrol
- 4 Orcish Fighter
- 5 Orcish Brawl
- 6 Ogre Fighter
- 7 Troll Fighter
- 8 Orc/Ogre Patrol

### In the ruins (no modification regardless of time):

- 1 Human Looter
- 2 Human Looting Party
- 3 Lone Orcish Looter
- 4 Orcish Looting Party
- 5 Orc/Ogre Patrol
- 6 Lone Ogre Looter

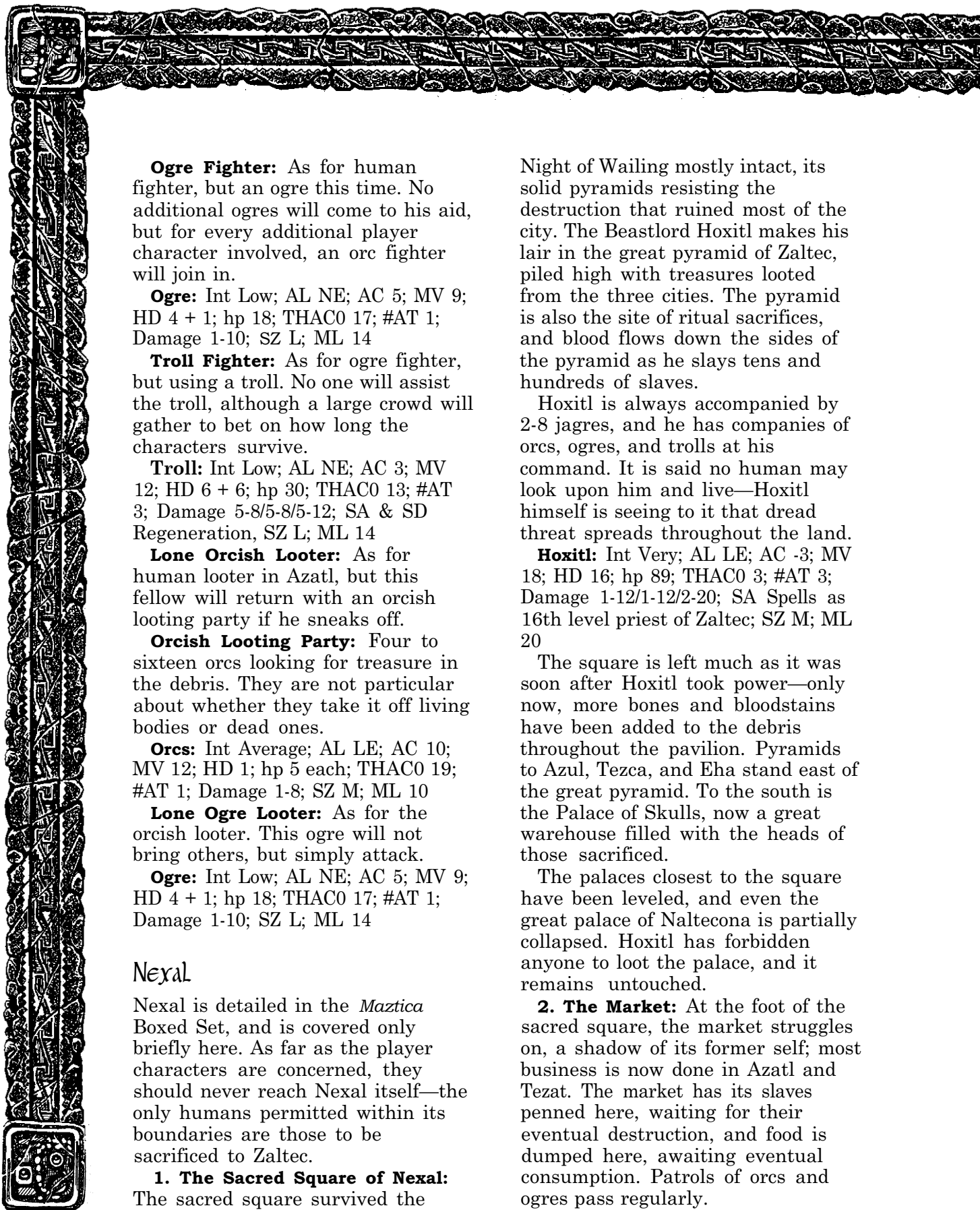
Notes apply as for Azatl (above), with these additions.

**Human Merchant:** Will always be a slaver. If the PCs do not look tough, he will try to have them captured by four human fighters later in the evening.

**Orcish Fighter:** As for human fighters, but an orc instead. Will try to single out one human for challenge and attack. Beginning the third round, and every round thereafter, another orc will join the fight. Another orc will also join the fight for every additional player character involved.

**Orc:** Int Average; AL LE; AC 10; MV 12; HD 1; hp 6 each; THACO 19; #AT 1; Damage 1-8 (maca); SZ M; ML 12





**Ogre Fighter:** As for human fighter, but an ogre this time. No additional ogres will come to his aid, but for every additional player character involved, an orc fighter will join in.

**Ogre:** Int Low; AL NE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 4 + 1; hp 18; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Damage 1-10; SZ L; ML 14

**Troll Fighter:** As for ogre fighter, but using a troll. No one will assist the troll, although a large crowd will gather to bet on how long the characters survive.

**Troll:** Int Low; AL NE; AC 3; MV 12; HD 6 + 6; hp 30; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Damage 5-8/5-8/5-12; SA & SD Regeneration, SZ L; ML 14

**Lone Orcish Looter:** As for human looter in Azatl, but this fellow will return with an orcish looting party if he sneaks off.

**Orcish Looting Party:** Four to sixteen orcs looking for treasure in the debris. They are not particular about whether they take it off living bodies or dead ones.

**Orcs:** Int Average; AL LE; AC 10; MV 12; HD 1; hp 5 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Damage 1-8; SZ M; ML 10

**Lone Ogre Looter:** As for the orcish looter. This ogre will not bring others, but simply attack.

**Ogre:** Int Low; AL NE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 4 + 1; hp 18; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Damage 1-10; SZ L; ML 14

## Nexal

Nexal is detailed in the *Maztica* Boxed Set, and is covered only briefly here. As far as the player characters are concerned, they should never reach Nexal itself—the only humans permitted within its boundaries are those to be sacrificed to Zaltec.

### 1. The Sacred Square of Nexal:

The sacred square survived the

Night of Wailing mostly intact, its solid pyramids resisting the destruction that ruined most of the city. The Beastlord Hoxitl makes his lair in the great pyramid of Zaltec, piled high with treasures looted from the three cities. The pyramid is also the site of ritual sacrifices, and blood flows down the sides of the pyramid as he slays tens and hundreds of slaves.

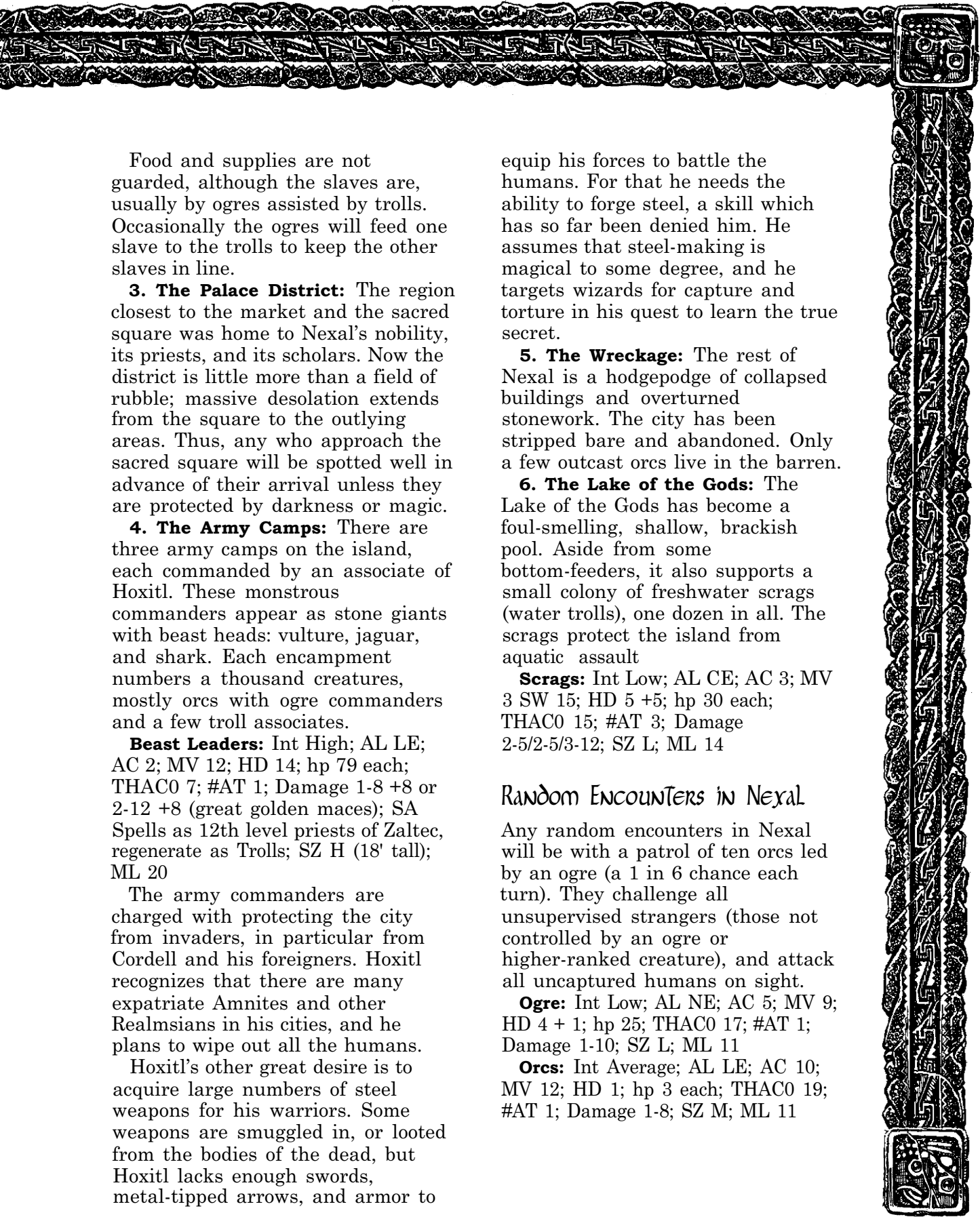
Hoxitl is always accompanied by 2-8 jagres, and he has companies of orcs, ogres, and trolls at his command. It is said no human may look upon him and live—Hoxitl himself is seeing to it that dread threat spreads throughout the land.

**Hoxitl:** Int Very; AL LE; AC -3; MV 18; HD 16; hp 89; THAC0 3; #AT 3; Damage 1-12/1-12/2-20; SA Spells as 16th level priest of Zaltec; SZ M; ML 20

The square is left much as it was soon after Hoxitl took power—only now, more bones and bloodstains have been added to the debris throughout the pavilion. Pyramids to Azul, Tezca, and Eha stand east of the great pyramid. To the south is the Palace of Skulls, now a great warehouse filled with the heads of those sacrificed.

The palaces closest to the square have been leveled, and even the great palace of Naltecona is partially collapsed. Hoxitl has forbidden anyone to loot the palace, and it remains untouched.

**2. The Market:** At the foot of the sacred square, the market struggles on, a shadow of its former self; most business is now done in Azatl and Tezat. The market has its slaves penned here, waiting for their eventual destruction, and food is dumped here, awaiting eventual consumption. Patrols of orcs and ogres pass regularly.



Food and supplies are not guarded, although the slaves are, usually by ogres assisted by trolls. Occasionally the ogres will feed one slave to the trolls to keep the other slaves in line.

**3. The Palace District:** The region closest to the market and the sacred square was home to Nexal's nobility, its priests, and its scholars. Now the district is little more than a field of rubble; massive desolation extends from the square to the outlying areas. Thus, any who approach the sacred square will be spotted well in advance of their arrival unless they are protected by darkness or magic.

**4. The Army Camps:** There are three army camps on the island, each commanded by an associate of Hoxitl. These monstrous commanders appear as stone giants with beast heads: vulture, jaguar, and shark. Each encampment numbers a thousand creatures, mostly orcs with ogre commanders and a few troll associates.

**Beast Leaders:** Int High; AL LE; AC 2; MV 12; HD 14; hp 79 each; THAC0 7; #AT 1; Damage 1-8 +8 or 2-12 +8 (great golden maces); SA Spells as 12th level priests of Zaltec, regenerate as Trolls; SZ H (18' tall); ML 20

The army commanders are charged with protecting the city from invaders, in particular from Cordell and his foreigners. Hoxitl recognizes that there are many expatriate Amnites and other Realmsians in his cities, and he plans to wipe out all the humans.

Hoxitl's other great desire is to acquire large numbers of steel weapons for his warriors. Some weapons are smuggled in, or looted from the bodies of the dead, but Hoxitl lacks enough swords, metal-tipped arrows, and armor to

equip his forces to battle the humans. For that he needs the ability to forge steel, a skill which has so far been denied him. He assumes that steel-making is magical to some degree, and he targets wizards for capture and torture in his quest to learn the true secret.

**5. The Wreckage:** The rest of Nexal is a hodgepodge of collapsed buildings and overturned stonework. The city has been stripped bare and abandoned. Only a few outcast orcs live in the barren.

**6. The Lake of the Gods:** The Lake of the Gods has become a foul-smelling, shallow, brackish pool. Aside from some bottom-feeders, it also supports a small colony of freshwater scraggs (water trolls), one dozen in all. The scraggs protect the island from aquatic assault

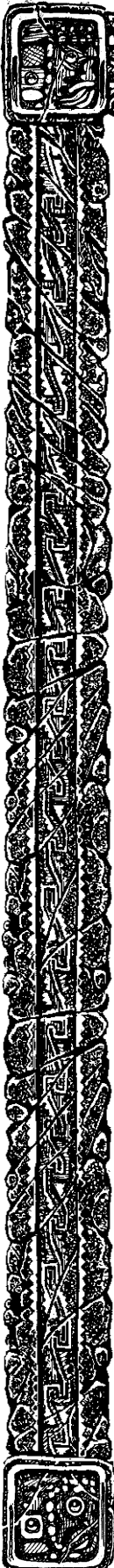
**Scraggs:** Int Low; AL CE; AC 3; MV 3 SW 15; HD 5 +5; hp 30 each; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Damage 2-5/2-5/3-12; SZ L; ML 14

### Random Encounters in Nexal

Any random encounters in Nexal will be with a patrol of ten orcs led by an ogre (a 1 in 6 chance each turn). They challenge all unsupervised strangers (those not controlled by an ogre or higher-ranked creature), and attack all uncaptured humans on sight.

**Ogre:** Int Low; AL NE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 4 + 1; hp 25; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Damage 1-10; SZ L; ML 11

**Orcs:** Int Average; AL LE; AC 10; MV 12; HD 1; hp 3 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Damage 1-8; SZ M; ML 11



## SET ENCOUNTERS IN THE NEXAL VALLEY

### Encounter 1. The Contact

This encounter occurs if Ironspike is still with the party. He leads the PCs to the human quarter, and asks for directions to a bar called The Death's Head. He brings his keg of rum, if it has made the trip.

The Death's Head isn't much of a bar. A toppled monument serves as the counter, and at low tables are assorted humans who smoke and drink somberly. A sun-burned Realmsman tends the bar.

Ironspike strides over to the man, "I'm looking for a man named Millos. He runs this place."

The Realmsman spits, and says, "Not any more he don't."

Ironspike tilts his head. "And where can I find him now?"

Another look. Another spit. "You can find what's left of him in the Palace of Skulls on Nexal. They killed him two weeks back."

Ironspike is surprised; he didn't expect his contact to die before he arrived. Everyone sits, and several drinkers nearby leave, steering clear of the party. (They are going to fetch the guard.)

Ironspike says that Millos had information for him. The barkeep, Hanovar of Ruathym, knows something about it—for a price.

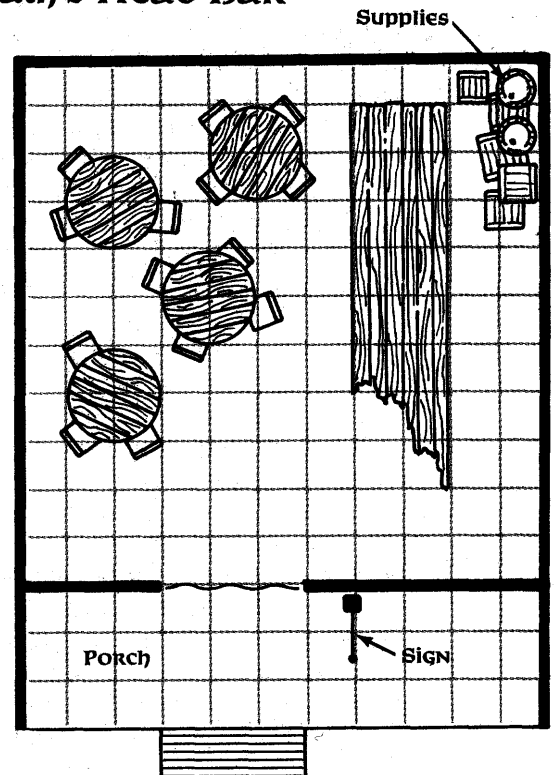
The DM should let the players handle the haggling. The barkeep is tight-lipped and cryptic until he's bought off. ("Might be I know a bit. Maybe not. Millos knew, and they ripped his heart out.") Hanovar wants the rum, if possible, plus two gold quills or the equivalent. If the rum is gone, he'll settle for three gold quills.


Hanovar knows Millos found out something about the cloak. (He refers to it only as "a certain item.") "Didn't tell me. But he told a group of cat-men who showed up. First time anyone seen the cat-men in Azatl! Millos got gold but the cat-men got nailed by the orcs. The cats must have let out something about Millos. Orcs came for him, and they sacrificed him."

Hanovar knows one of the tabaxi survived and was taken by Michitl, and held in Tezat's pens. "Be sold at auction, then probably killed, night after this."

After Hanovar spills his guts, he

**Map 6**  
**Death's Head Bar**





looks up to the door of his bar and his face goes white. In the doorway is an ogre with ten orcs. The ogre points at the barkeep and snarls in Nexalan, "Kill them all."

**Hanovar:** Int Low; AL N; AC 10; MV 9; HD 2; hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Damage 1-4 (obsidian knife); SZ M; ML 11

**Ogre:** Int Low; AL NE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 4 + 1; hp 15; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Damage 1-10; SZ L; ML 17

**Orcs:** Int Average; AL LE; AC 8; MV 12; HD 1; hp 3 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Damage 1-8; SZ M; ML 13

The other patrons in the bar will avoid the fight. If the DM needs to even the odds, add 1-4 human fighters to balance the mix. Hanovar and Ironspike will fight for their lives. Hasoctl will dive for the floor and deny everything.

Battle is to the death, and the orcs will not retreat while the ogre lives. If the ogre captain dies, there will be no further pursuit. If the ogre escapes, every patrol in Azatl will be hostile. If the heroes defeat this patrol, Hanovar or another patron will get them to a healer (not a priest, but someone with healing skills). The hubbub will die down.

Go next to Encounter 4.

### Encounter 2: The Source

Run this encounter only if the PCs arrive in Azatl with Hasoctl but not Ironspike. Hasoctl will be very nervous about the Viperhand orcs everywhere, and he will advise seeking out humans in the market.

The market of Azatl is no threat to the grand market of Ulatos. An expanse of broken stone, it has just a few stalls around the perimeter. The wares displayed will not turn any heads, but there

seems to be a brisk trade.

Hasoctl suddenly shouts "Aha!" and strides over to an ancient, worn merchant, smiling broadly like he's long-lost kin. They begin to converse rapidly in Payit.

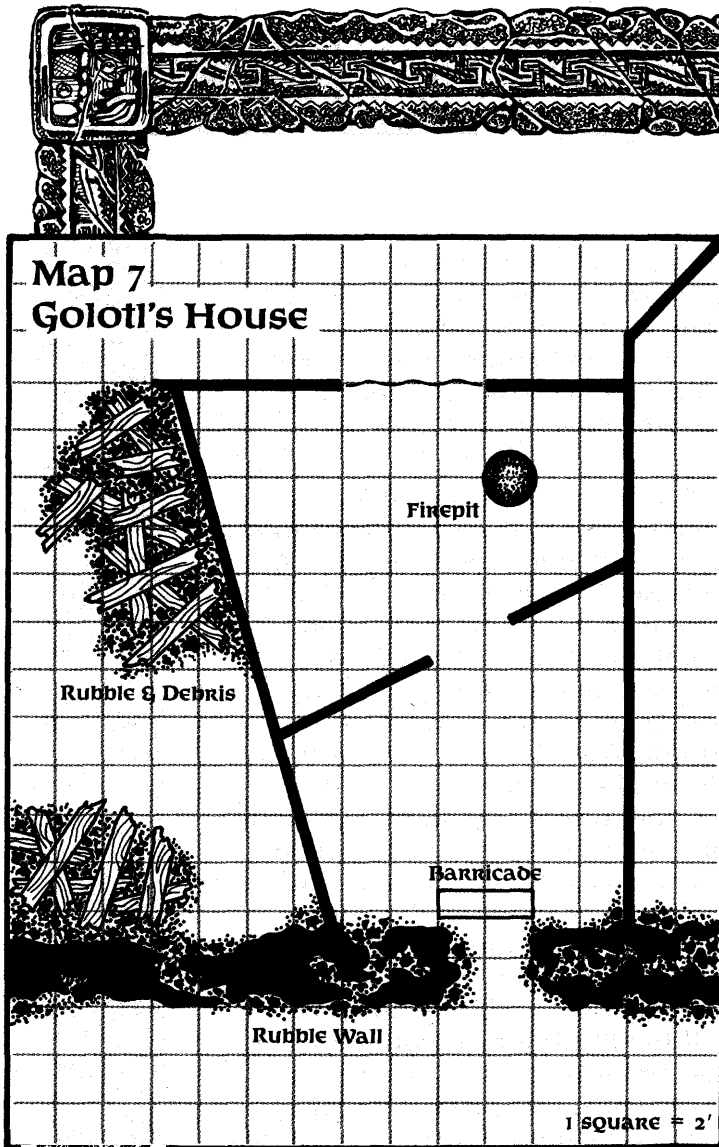
The old man is Golotl the Merchant, a native of Ulatos, a thief of modest ability, and an old friend of Hasoctl. Hasoctl and Golotl make casual conversation, and when Golotl finally asks Hasoctl his business in the area, Hasoctl says the group is on a mission for a mutual friend Caxal, to recover the Cloak of One Plume.

Golotl hisses him quiet. "Speak not of that in the open. I have a small home along the south wall, marked with a red banner by the door. Come after the moon rises and I can tell you what you need. Bring money." Golotl will say no more.

If the PCs follow Golotl, they will see him talk to many other merchants, using a number of languages, then wearily retire to his hut at day's end. Talking to the merchants, he tells others to meet him later at his home also.

Golotl's hut is just two rooms along the south wall of the human quarter. A wooden barricade covers a hole in the wall leading outside. This is Golotl's escape route.

On the PCs' arrival, Golotl asks a modest fee (a gold quill) and tells his tale, a tale bought and sold among the merchants. A rumor floats that many of the magical items of ancient Nexal survived the Night of Wailing. The Cloak of One Plume was said to have been rescued and hidden by priests of Azul, who died rather than reveal the cloaks hiding place. Many a looter hopes to find the magical cloak in the ruins.



About two weeks ago a group of tabaxi, true jaguar-men, arrived in the city, creating a stir because they had not been seen since long before the city's fall. Claiming they were emissaries sent by their lords to recover the Cloak of One Plume, they said they knew where the cloak lay. But the tabaxi were captured and killed by Jeordos' servants, and Hoxitl never even learned they had come.

But one of the tabaxi escaped and survived, only to be captured by the jagre-chieftain Michitl. Michitl cared nothing for the legend. He would embarrass his rival Jeordos for

losing the prisoner, and make a good profit selling the captive. This tabaxi, named Chioptl, is being held in the pens in Tezat, awaiting sale at moonrise the next night. "Your answer is there," Golotl ends.

As Golotl speaks, from outside comes the sound of sandals on dirt. Turning, the characters see a large Realmsian human standing in the doorway with a steel sword drawn. He is flanked by two Nexala. Golotl shrugs, backing off and explaining, "In Azatl, everything is for sale."

The Realmsian leader is Candoria, a 4th level fighter, accompanied by two second-level thieves. Candoria is wearing chain mail. Their orders are to prevent others from finding out about the tabaxi's potential knowledge, so that their client can more easily buy the cat-man.

**Candoria:** Int Average; AL CE; AC 5 (chain mail); MV 12; HD 4; hp 25; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Damage 1-18; SZ M; ML 15

**Thieves:** Int Low; AL CE; AC 10; MV 12; HD 2; hp 7 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Damage 1-8; SZ M; ML 11

Candoria has been ordered to leave no one alive, including Golotl. He offers no quarter and expects none. The thieves are Candoria's hirelings; they will not retreat while he lives. If the attackers are slain, it is nothing special in Azatl. If the thieves flee, their tale is of victims who turned the tables on their foes.

Golotl will try to bolt out through the wall. If Golotl is spared but cannot flee, he will express surprise that Candoria turned on him. He can help get the party healed by a local priest of Eha. He can give directions to the pens where the tabaxi is kept, but he won't join up.

Go next to Encounter 4.

### Encounter 3: Into Their Laps

Run this encounter if the heroes arrive in the Nexal valley without Hasoctl or Ironspike. The PCs should suspect that the Cloak of One Plume is somewhere in the valley, but not know how Ironspike or Hasoctl planned to locate it.

Let them get a handle on things in Azatl, seeing the sights, coming to understand the area. Have a few random encounters, then point them toward the human market. If the DM desires, Maztican-born players may discover Golotl there, allowing a switch to that plotline. Otherwise, the PCs get little except rumors about a number of magical items. If PCs offer in trade a valuable item like a metal sword, magical item, or keg of rum, they will learn that the tabaxi who came to town knew more, but now there are no tabaxi alive. Perhaps they should search the ruins with the other looters...

Once the characters are on the move again, run this encounter. Roll as if it were a "random" encounter, then read the following:

You hear the shouts of a battle up ahead—yet another brawl, no doubt. But this time, you see someone running away from the din.

She is a humanoid jaguar, cat-like in appearance but with the basic form of a human female. She abruptly stops upon seeing you. Her hands are tied behind her, and she wears wooden leg-shackles. She has slipped free from one shackle, but the other drags behind. She looks back towards the sounds of battle, then back at you. "Help me," she says in oddly-accented Payit, "You will be rewarded if you do."

This is Chioptl the Tabaxi, the last survivor of the expedition; she knows where the Cloak of the One Plume is. She was being moved by Michitl's forces when Jeordos' guards ambushed them, intent on stealing the prisoner to restore their master's damaged reputation. In the confusion, Chioptl managed to escape both groups. No guards are to be seen here on the street.

Three rounds after Chioptl comes around the corner, the survivors of the battle (Michitl's unit) come after her: four orcs and a wounded ogre leader. If Chioptl is trying to escape alone, or if she is abandoned by the player characters, she will be recaptured. Then the PCs will have to rescue her from the pens (Encounter 4).

If the heroes try to help Chioptl escape, she moves at half-speed until the shackle is broken (one round to do so with any weapon). The heroes can try to misdirect the orcs and ogre, or do battle with them. They will receive no further reinforcements.

However, once the word gets out that the tabaxi is loose, there will be an increased number of searchers: all encounters in the city will be orc/ogre patrols. Anyone who sees the tabaxi will sell the information to one of the jagre forces. Chioptl recommends that the player characters get clear of the city as soon as possible. Once they get her outside to relative safety, she will tell her tale (see Encounter 5.)

**Chioptl:** Int High; AL CN; AC 6; MV 15; HD 2; hp 16; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Damage 1-3/1-3/1-3; SA Rear claws, 2-5 each; SD Surprise, surprised on a 1; SZ M; ML 12

**Ogre:** Int Low; AL NE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 4 + 1; hp 10; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Damage 1-10; SZ L; ML 9



**Orcs:** Int Average; AL LE; AC 10; MV 12; HD 1; hp 3 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Damage 1-8; SZ M; ML 8

#### Encounter 4: The Pens of Tezat

The PCs will realize that the tabaxi Chioptl holds the key to the quest, and it is likely they must free her from the pens in Tezat.

The pens are an open and busy area, even busier at night than in day. The tabaxi is kept in a single building removed about 20' from the street, hidden from the main flow of traffic. A small battle could occur here without anyone noticing.

Because the pen is well off the

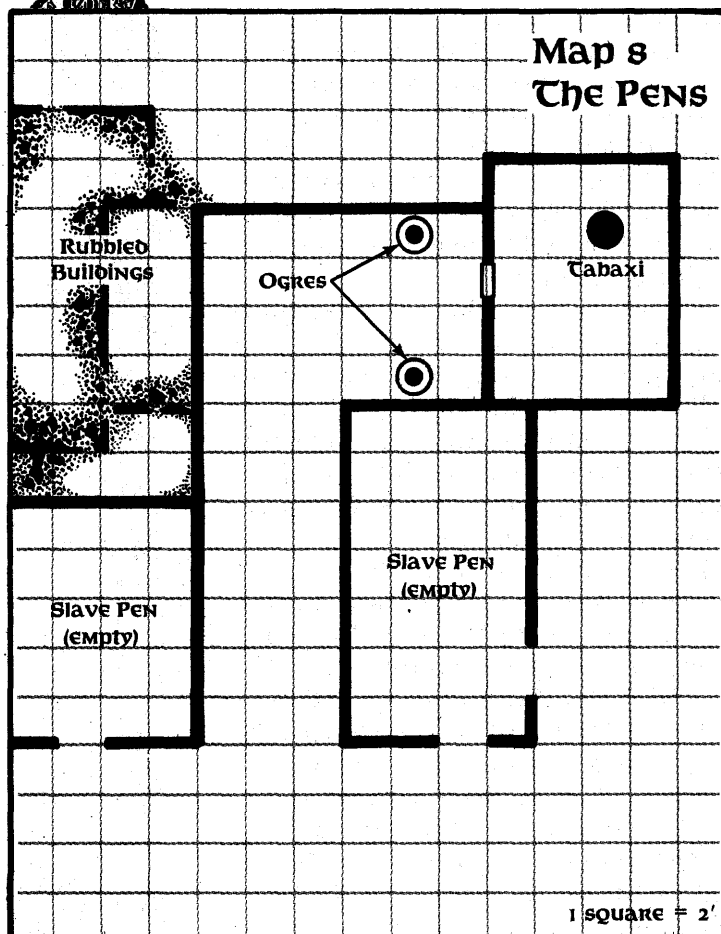
beaten path, the heroes must get specific directions to it (such as provided by Golotl), or they must get fairly lucky searching the area (sure to raise suspicion), or they must ask around. A gold quill buys the location of the tabaxi's pen, and it also buys silence until dusk.

Most buildings in the district are guarded by orcs. The building holding the tabaxi is guarded by a pair of ogres instead, members of Michitl's personal guard. Both ogres are dressed in tabards and cloaks of yellow and black, the colors of Michitl, and they carry spears (although they will continue to inflict normal ogre damage).

**Ogres (2):** Int Average; AL LE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 4 + 1; hp 33 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Damage 1-10; SZ L; ML 14

The ogres have specific orders that only those showing a medallion with Michitl's symbol can see the tabaxi prisoner. Moreover, no one is expected before the auction the next night. They will be suspicious of anyone who attempts to come up and make conversation; they will use their spears to convince such folk to move along. They know they are allowed to eat what they kill.

The ogres will fight until one falls, then the other will try to escape to summon more help—going through the attackers if need be. From the time he escapes, the adventurers have four rounds before pursuit arrives. The pen door is bolted on the outside. Inside, the tabaxi is hobbled with leg-shackles; her hands are bound behind her. The same circumstances apply for Chioptl's escape here as in the previous encounter: all encounters are patrols, all patrols will attack if the tabaxi is obviously with the party, and the patrols will try to kill





everyone except the tabaxi.

Away from the city, the tabaxi will talk. Go to Encounter 5.

#### **Encounter 4.5: Purchase**

The PCs may try to buy the tabaxi at the auction. They will face five bidders: one group of ogres, and four brokers for various jagre. Chioptl will sell for 30 gold quills to Durkotl of Tezat. The PCs may outbid Durkotl, but they will be marked by patrols for attack and sacrifice.

#### **Encounter 5: Chioptl's Tale**

When the group gets clear of the city (whether it is Tezat or Azatl), Chioptl will demand to be fully freed (assuming she isn't already), offering what she knows in exchange for her freedom. The tale that follows assumes that the player characters have treated her well. She will leave out details (such as clues to the cave's location) if she is threatened, and will demand that the players help her recover the Cloak of One Plume.

“My people are ruled by a wise elder who had a vision in which Qazizio, whom you call Qotal, appeared to him. The god said the twisted humans of Nexal had squandered their heritage, and that our people should travel to Nexal and recover the Feather-Blanket. Two moons have passed since my compatriots and I left to seek the Blanket-made-with-one-feather—your Cloak of One Plume.

“The blanket was said to be hidden in the burning earth, in the greatest mountain in the world. The great mountain is riddled with caverns, and the Feather-Blanket is within one of those. The elder told me how to

know the cave where the blanket resides, and how to appease its guardian.

“The great mountain must be Zatal,” she finishes, waving at the flaming mountain. “Will you aid me in the blanket's recovery?”

Chioptl will be willing to defer the question of ownership of the Cloak of One Plume until after it is recovered. She knows she needs manpower to defeat the creature within, and is willing to bargain now and argue later.

She has not told the whole truth, however. The vision that appeared to her village elder was from Tezca, god of fire. Tezca knows the affront Azul, god of rain, has committed hiding the cloak in his volcano, and wants to have it and its guardian removed without letting the cloak fall into the hands of the already-powerful Zaltec. Further, the village elder is a Jaguar Lord, a follower of Azul. If Chioptl returns with the cloak, she will become the Jaguar Lord's bride.

The cave she seeks is marked by the symbol of the two-headed serpent, and breathes with cool air instead of hot, as do other caves in the flaming mountain. To gain the character's trust, Chioptl will tell the latter bit of information.

She knows that the guardian is a rain dragon, which must be slain before the cloak can be recovered. The dragon is young, and can be gulled briefly with offerings of cocoa beans and jade. The PCs may have to reenter the city to acquire these items, risking patrols.

If the characters agree, Chioptl will accompany them to recover the Cloak of One Plume. If they attack her she will flee. If possible, she will return later if to ambush them after they have fought the dragon.



## Fires of Zatal

Mount Zatal is the highest mountain in the True World, an active volcano still growing. Unchecked, it will consume the Lake of the Gods and Nexal itself within a century. Lava still flows from its peak and from a vent in the western face (Cavern A). The most recent eruption was prompted by the gods—and it may take the intervention of the gods to quiet it again.

Inside Mount Zatal are a huge number of chambers and caves formed as lava tubes during eruptions. Many of these are inhabited, although not by creatures who are affected by heat. This adventure mainly deals with one cavern unlike the other caves, but the others must be described briefly because the PCs may explore them.

The caverns marked B-E are openings into the heart of Mount Zatal. Cavern A is an opening half-filled with molten lava. Any creature not protected from heat suffers 1-4 points of damage per round if within 10' of the lava. Those immersed in lava suffer 4-24 points unless protected.

Similarly, the air in the caves leading from A-E is superheated. Those without natural or magical protection suffer 1-3 points of damage per round in the caves. Unprotected creatures will be well aware of the heat before entering, and most will not even attempt it.

The caves are the lairs of fire lizards and fire newts. After 2-8 turns within the cave complex, the explorers will encounter either a group of 2-20 fire newts or a single fire lizard. All will be hostile to interlopers. There may be even more deadly creatures farther in,

but the lizards and newts will provide a warm welcome.

**Fire Lizard (1):** Int Animal; AL N; AC 3; MV 9; HD 10; hp 60; THAC0 11; #AT 3; Damage 1-8/1-8/2-16; SA raking claws, fire breath; SD resistance to fire; SZ G; ML 11

**Fire Newts:** Int Low; AL NE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 2 + 2; hp 7 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Damage 1-8 (maca); SA Breathe fire; SD fire resistance; SZ M; ML 11. The fire newts of Mount Zatal do not have giant strider mounts.

On the surface of the volcano, there is a lesser chance of facing hostile creatures: a 10% chance per hour of encountering a fire lizard. The creature is not hostile as long as the adventurers do not attack, and they stay out of its cavern.

### The Odd Cavern

Cavern F greatly differs from the others. First, it does not radiate heat; in fact, cool breezes issue from its depths. Second, the smoke streaming from its opening is moist and pleasant, like fog. Last, above the cavern is a carving where a lintel would be above a door. The depiction is of a serpent with a snake's head at one end, a jaguar's at the other. Mazticans recognize the symbol of a tlaloatl, a rain dragon and servant of Azul, god of the rains.

Cavern F is the home of a tlaloatl, the Maztican dragon detailed in the appendix (pg. 63). The tlaloatl is 80 years old (very young, age category 2).

**Hokioptl the Tlaloatl:** Int Average; AL LE; AC 2; MV 3 FL 30 (B); HD 8; hp 60; THAC0 XX; #AT 3 + special; Damage 3-24/3-18/2-8; SA Breathe fog (obscure vision) or

steam (3-18 +3) or ice crystals (3-18 +3), poison, constrict one opponent; SD waterbreathing, Priest spells; SZ L 12' long; ML 17

The cavern floor slopes down to a wide landing, then continues down to the main lair. On the landing is an altar marked with the symbols of Azul and of the two-headed serpent. Priests of Azul from the Nexal valley make monthly pilgrimages to the lair to leave sacrifices for the rain dragon at this altar.

The rain dragon will leave its lower lair to get the sacrifices. Otherwise, it will fight from its burrow if individuals attempt to come beyond the altar uninvited. To take the sacrifices, the dragon will breathe a cloud of normal fog through the cave, obscuring vision. In the narrow confines, individuals will still see the dragon, but only as a grey shape. Chioptl recommends that PCs attack when the creature comes to get the sacrifice. If they surround the creature, the PCs get one free round against it.

In combat, the tlaloatl will bite and constrict, breathing only when it has a clear shot toward the doorway (it does not wish to damage its treasure). If its morale is broken, the dragon will try to flee to its lair, cast two *cure light wounds* on itself, and wait for the others to follow. If its morale is broken again, it will flee to the lower caves. If it cannot retreat, it will fight to the death.

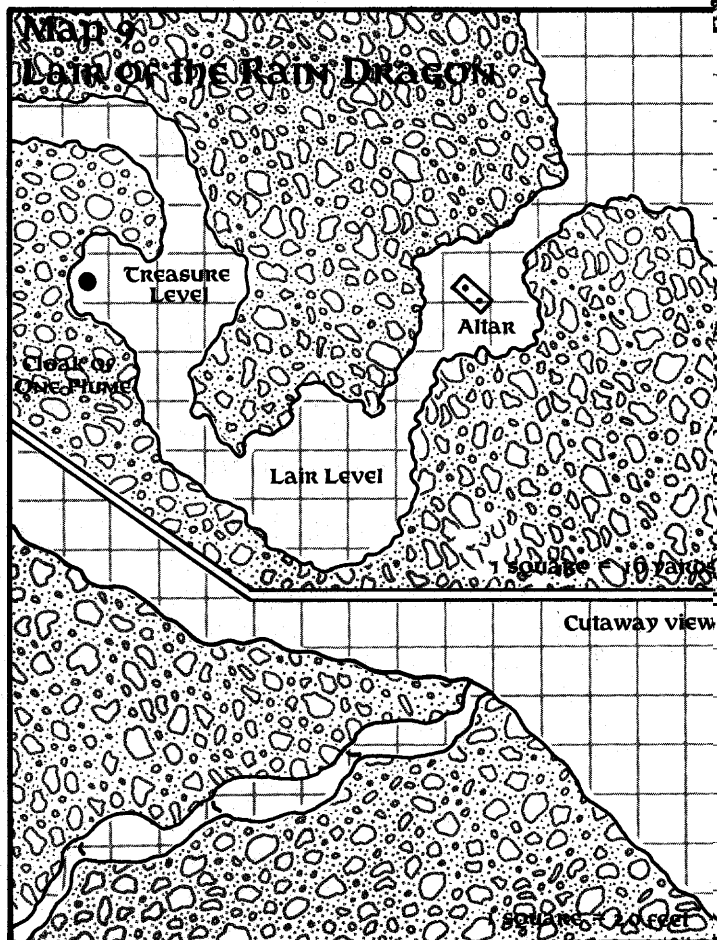
With the death or retreat of the rain dragon, the cavern will no longer be shielded from the heat—the dragon's breath weapon is all that had kept the lair habitable. In one turn (ten minutes) the air will become uncomfortably hot. In another turn, the air will become superheated, which causes damage as noted above. The heroes have

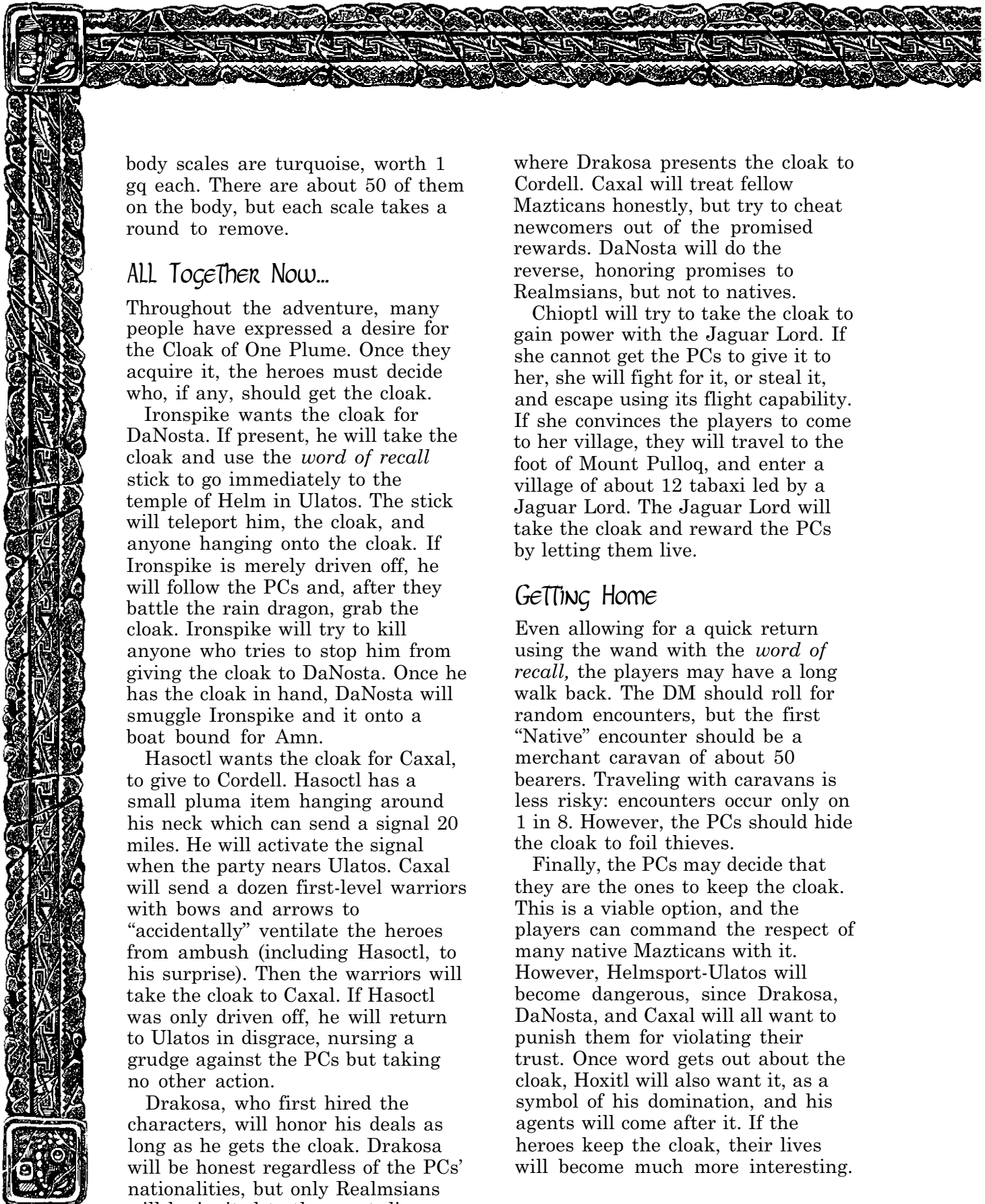
only that long to load up and get away.

In the treasure level, the Cloak of One Plume hangs over the shoulders of a warrior statue. In addition, there are the following:

- 20 quills of gold
- 10 copper statuettes of jaguar-spirits (worth 1 gp each)
- A chain shirt +2
- A maca +2
- A long sword +1
- A scroll containing the Realmsian spells *fireball*, *dimension door*, and *fear*

Moreover, the rain dragon's upper





body scales are turquoise, worth 1 gp each. There are about 50 of them on the body, but each scale takes a round to remove.

### All Together Now...

Throughout the adventure, many people have expressed a desire for the Cloak of One Plume. Once they acquire it, the heroes must decide who, if any, should get the cloak.

Ironspike wants the cloak for DaNosta. If present, he will take the cloak and use the *word of recall* stick to go immediately to the temple of Helm in Ulatos. The stick will teleport him, the cloak, and anyone hanging onto the cloak. If Ironspike is merely driven off, he will follow the PCs and, after they battle the rain dragon, grab the cloak. Ironspike will try to kill anyone who tries to stop him from giving the cloak to DaNosta. Once he has the cloak in hand, DaNosta will smuggle Ironspike and it onto a boat bound for Amn.

Hasoctl wants the cloak for Caxal, to give to Cordell. Hasoctl has a small pluma item hanging around his neck which can send a signal 20 miles. He will activate the signal when the party nears Ulatos. Caxal will send a dozen first-level warriors with bows and arrows to “accidentally” ventilate the heroes from ambush (including Hasoctl, to his surprise). Then the warriors will take the cloak to Caxal. If Hasoctl was only driven off, he will return to Ulatos in disgrace, nursing a grudge against the PCs but taking no other action.

Drakosa, who first hired the characters, will honor his deals as long as he gets the cloak. Drakosa will be honest regardless of the PCs’ nationalities, but only Realmsians will be invited to the court dinner

where Drakosa presents the cloak to Cordell. Caxal will treat fellow Mazticans honestly, but try to cheat newcomers out of the promised rewards. DaNosta will do the reverse, honoring promises to Realmsians, but not to natives.

Chioptl will try to take the cloak to gain power with the Jaguar Lord. If she cannot get the PCs to give it to her, she will fight for it, or steal it, and escape using its flight capability. If she convinces the players to come to her village, they will travel to the foot of Mount Pulloq, and enter a village of about 12 tabaxi led by a Jaguar Lord. The Jaguar Lord will take the cloak and reward the PCs by letting them live.

### Getting Home

Even allowing for a quick return using the wand with the *word of recall*, the players may have a long walk back. The DM should roll for random encounters, but the first “Native” encounter should be a merchant caravan of about 50 bearers. Traveling with caravans is less risky: encounters occur only on 1 in 8. However, the PCs should hide the cloak to foil thieves.

Finally, the PCs may decide that they are the ones to keep the cloak. This is a viable option, and the players can command the respect of many native Mazticans with it. However, Helmsport-Ulatos will become dangerous, since Drakosa, DaNosta, and Caxal will all want to punish them for violating their trust. Once word gets out about the cloak, Hoxitl will also want it, as a symbol of his domination, and his agents will come after it. If the heroes keep the cloak, their lives will become much more interesting.

# Appendices

## The NPC "Minders"

### **Kuri Ironspike**

**5th Level Fighter, Native of Amn**

Armor Class: 4 (chain & dexterity bonus)

Move: 12

Hit Points: 48

No. of Attacks: 1

Damage/Attack: 1-8/1-12 (sword) or 1-6/1-8 (spear) (both +1 to hit and damage)

Special Attacks: None

Special Defenses: *Word of Recall*

Magic Resistance: Standard

Size: M (6'1")

Alignment: NE

S	I	W	D	CH	CN
17	14	10	15	10	12

Kuri Ironspike is an Amnite warrior in the service of Lord Drakosa, but secretly working for Captain DaNosta of Helmsport. He is a tall, broad native of the Realms with short black hair, and a stubby beard and moustache. He normally wears chain mail in the field, but occasionally half-plate when on official business for His Lordship.

Ironspike is an adventurer who cut his teeth fighting wyverns and gnolls in the Snowflake Mountains, and takes that sensibility when adventuring in the True World. Every situation is a potential trap, and every creature a potential danger. His way of handling danger is to hit it before it hits him. He sees himself as an excellent tactician, and will bellow orders to others in battle, expecting them to snap to and follow them without question.

Ironspike believes the native population of Maztica are, at best, children in need of leadership from

the civilized races and, at worst, savages little better than orcs. He deals with natives by speaking commonspeech loudly and slowly to make himself clear. He understands Payit, but does not let on.

Ironspike knows that the cloak exists, but does not know its location. He knows that Millos, proprietor of the Death's Head Tavern in Azatl, does have this information. Ironspike will tell the party they must visit Azatl first, but he will not mention the Death's Head.

In addition to his listed equipment and armor, Ironspike carries a small keg of rum to bribe his contact Millos in Azatl, and a wand enchanted with a *word of recall* spell. When the wand is snapped, the holder (and those hanging on) are teleported immediately back to the temple of Helm in Ulatos.

If Ironspike gets the cloak, he will turn it over to DaNosta and then attempt to leave Maztica.

### **Hasoctl**

**2nd Level Fighter, native of Payit**

Armor class: 6 (dexterity bonus)

Move: 12

Hit Points: 16

No. of Attacks: 1

Damage/Attack: 1-8/1-6 (maca), 1-4/1-3 (knife)

Special Attacks: None

Special Defenses: Pluma item

Magic Resistance: Standard

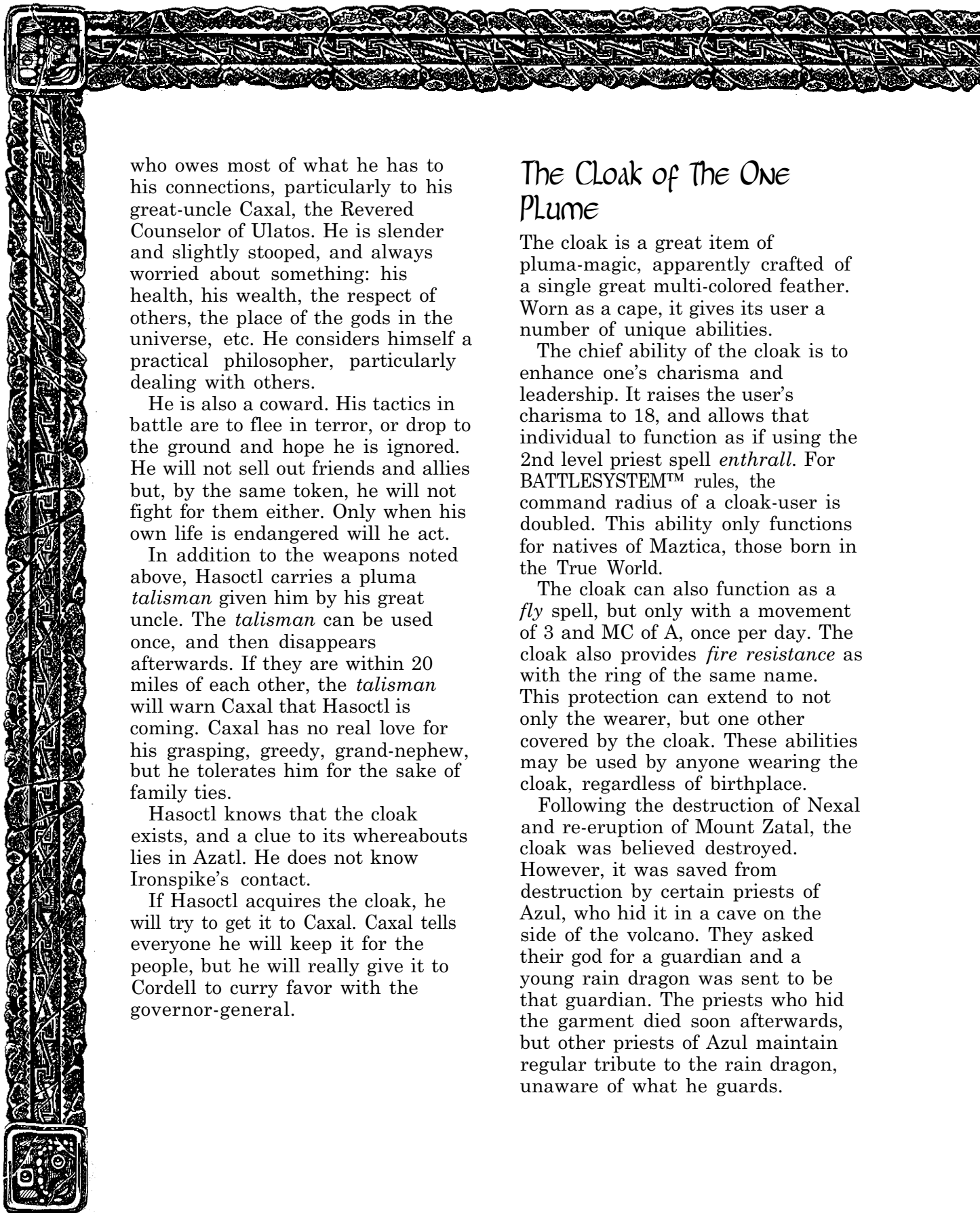
Size: M (5' 6")

Alignment: N

S	I	W	D	CH	CN
13	14	10	18	12	14

Hasoctl is a weaselly little man,





who owes most of what he has to his connections, particularly to his great-uncle Caxal, the Revered Counselor of Ulatos. He is slender and slightly stooped, and always worried about something: his health, his wealth, the respect of others, the place of the gods in the universe, etc. He considers himself a practical philosopher, particularly dealing with others.

He is also a coward. His tactics in battle are to flee in terror, or drop to the ground and hope he is ignored. He will not sell out friends and allies but, by the same token, he will not fight for them either. Only when his own life is endangered will he act.

In addition to the weapons noted above, Hasoctl carries a pluma *talisman* given him by his great uncle. The *talisman* can be used once, and then disappears afterwards. If they are within 20 miles of each other, the *talisman* will warn Caxal that Hasoctl is coming. Caxal has no real love for his grasping, greedy, grand-nephew, but he tolerates him for the sake of family ties.

Hasoctl knows that the cloak exists, and a clue to its whereabouts lies in Azatl. He does not know Ironspike's contact.

If Hasoctl acquires the cloak, he will try to get it to Caxal. Caxal tells everyone he will keep it for the people, but he will really give it to Cordell to curry favor with the governor-general.

## The Cloak of The ONE Plume

The cloak is a great item of pluma-magic, apparently crafted of a single great multi-colored feather. Worn as a cape, it gives its user a number of unique abilities.

The chief ability of the cloak is to enhance one's charisma and leadership. It raises the user's charisma to 18, and allows that individual to function as if using the 2nd level priest spell *enthrall*. For BATTLESYSTEM™ rules, the command radius of a cloak-user is doubled. This ability only functions for natives of Maztica, those born in the True World.

The cloak can also function as a *fly* spell, but only with a movement of 3 and MC of A, once per day. The cloak also provides *fire resistance* as with the ring of the same name. This protection can extend to not only the wearer, but one other covered by the cloak. These abilities may be used by anyone wearing the cloak, regardless of birthplace.

Following the destruction of Nexal and re-eruption of Mount Zatal, the cloak was believed destroyed. However, it was saved from destruction by certain priests of Azul, who hid it in a cave on the side of the volcano. They asked their god for a guardian and a young rain dragon was sent to be that guardian. The priests who hid the garment died soon afterwards, but other priests of Azul maintain regular tribute to the rain dragon, unaware of what he guards.

# Ahuizotl

<b>CLIMATE/TERRAIN:</b>	Tropical and subtropical waters
<b>FREQUENCY:</b>	Very rare
<b>ORGANIZATION:</b>	Solitary
<b>ACTIVITY CYCLE:</b>	Any
<b>DIET:</b>	Carnivorous
<b>INTELLIGENCE:</b>	Average (8-10)
<b>TREASURE:</b>	I, Ux10
<b>ALIGNMENT:</b>	Chaotic Neutral
<b>NO. APPEARING:</b>	1 (2-5)
<b>ARMOR CLASS:</b>	2
<b>MOVEMENT:</b>	9, Sw 12
<b>HIT DICE:</b>	10-12
<b>THACO:</b>	10 Hit Dice: 11 11-12 Hit Dice: 9
<b>NO. OF ATTACKS:</b>	4
<b>DAMAGE/ATTACK:</b>	1-6/1-6/3-18/2-20
<b>SPECIAL ATTACKS:</b>	Breath weapon rear claws for 2-5 (1d4 + 1) each
<b>SPECIAL DEFENSES:</b>	Nil
<b>MAGIC RESISTANCE:</b>	Nil
<b>SIZE:</b>	H (18' long + 9' tail)
<b>MORALE:</b>	Steady (12)
<b>XP VALUE:</b>	10 HD: 9,000 11 HD: 10,000 12 HD: 11,000

Ahuizotls are dangerous water beasts found in Maztica. They look something like alligators with long, feather-like blue-green scales. Their bodies are perched over comparatively long legs, rather than slung between them like an alligator. They have sharp teeth and long claws, and can breathe both water and air.

**Combat:** When attacked or when hunting, an ahuizotl rushes into melee combat using its claws and teeth. It may also slap with its long tail for 2d10 damage. When fighting underwater, if an ahuizotl hits with both front claws, it may follow up that attack with its rear claws for 1d4 +1 damage each. In addition, the ahuizotl has a much-feared breath weapon which it may use three times per day.

If in danger (or simply on a rampage), an ahuizotl will forego other attacks to spit a stream of water 15' long and 5' wide. It does 1d6 damage to anyone it hits. The water stream then becomes animate, with most of the abilities of a water weird (*Monstrous Compendium* Volume 2). The weird has 3 + 3 Hit Dice, AC 4, movement 12, and hit points equal to 1/3 of the ahuizotl's (round up). It attacks as a 6-Hit Die monster (THACO 15), and victims may be pulled into the water to drown (save vs. paralyzation each round or die). It attacks once per round and may affect only one victim at a time. It is directed mentally by the ahuizotl.

This animated breath weapon can be slain by a *purify water* spell. Cold-based attacks slow the water weird, and fire-based attacks do half or no damage, depending on the creature's saving throw (made at the ahuizotl's level). Although it takes only 1 point of damage from sharp weapons, the weird will not re-form if reduced to 0 hit points-in such an event, it becomes a large puddle of ordinary water. Slayers earn 420 xp for killing the breath-weird.

These weirds may not usurp control of water elements. They stay animate for only 5d4 rounds, even if the ahuizotl is slain before this time expires.

If the battle is going badly, the ahuizotl may seek to escape while the weirds cover its retreat.



**Habitat/Society:** Ahuizotls are able to breathe air but greatly prefer staying in water. They may make lairs in any body of water, although they prefer fresh water and will most often be found in a ceta (a water-filled sinkhole). An ahuizotl that lives in a ceta will often menace local natives until they appease him by dumping treasure, art objects, and food (preferably living animals) into the ceta. If an ahuizotl must raid natives several times before they get the message, it may acquire a taste for human flesh, demanding that as well. Fortunately, ahuizotls seem to be dying out, and they demand regular sacrifice in only a few places.

Although normally solitary, a male and a female come together briefly to mate and raise young. The female lays 1d4 eggs about 2 weeks after mating, and they hatch in about 12 weeks. The parents jealously guard the eggs and young, often trying to build a small hoard for them. Predators, and parents irritated past endurance, usually account for the fact that rarely do more than one or two offspring reach maturity.

Newly hatched young have five hit dice and attack for 1d3/1d3/ 3d3/1d10. They achieve full growth in one year.

Ahuizotl mates seldom stay together after their offspring reach the end of their first year. They tend to argue and fight terrible battles with one another.

**Ecology:** Ahuizotls are one of the most feared aquatic predators, and they have few natural enemies. Alligators and crocodiles, which often compete for the same territory, are seldom a match for an ahuizotl's intelligence and strength.

Ahuizotl treasure should be converted to Maztican values. When coins are indicated using the above treasure types, substitute coral buds.

Ahuizotl scales may be fashioned into decorative armor that protects as scale mail.

# Tabaxi

	Tabaxi	Jaguar Lord
<b>CLIMATE/TERRAIN:</b>	Tropical and subtropical jungles	
<b>FREQUENCY:</b>	Rare	Very rare
<b>ORGANIZATION:</b>	Clan	Clan or solitary
<b>ACTIVITY CYCLE:</b>	Any	Nocturnal
<b>DIET:</b>	Carnivorous	Carnivorous
<b>INTELLIGENCE:</b>	Average to Highly (8-14)	Highly to Genius (13-18)
<b>TREASURE:</b>	U	U
<b>ALIGNMENT:</b>	Chaotic Neutral	Chaotic Evil
<b>NO. APPEARING:</b>	2-8	1
<b>ARMOR CLASS:</b>	6	3
<b>MOVEMENT:</b>	15	15
<b>HIT DICE:</b>	2	8
<b>THACO:</b>	19	13
<b>NO. OF ATTACKS:</b>	3	3
<b>DAMAGE/ATTACK:</b>	1-3/1-3/1-3 or by weapon	1-4/1-4/1-10
<b>SPECIAL ATTACKS:</b>	Rear claws, 2-5 (1d4 + 1) each	Magic use, rear claws 2-7 (1d6 + 1) each
<b>SPECIAL DEFENSES:</b>	Surprise, surprised only on a 1	Surprise, surprised only on a 1
<b>MAGIC RESISTANCE:</b>	Nil	Nil
<b>SIZE:</b>	M (6'-7' tall)	L (10'-12' long)
<b>MORALE:</b>	Steady (11-12)	Average (8-10)
<b>XP VALUE:</b>	420 Clan leader 975 Shaman, 3rd 975 Shaman, 5th 3,000	5,000



Also known as jaguar-people, tabaxi have spotted coats ranging in color from light yellow to brownish red. These graceful feline humanoids are tall and slender, with retractable claws, and eyes of green or yellow.

**Combat:** Tabaxi are extraordinary hunters, combining their quick, stealthy movements with their natural camouflage to surprise most prey. Opponents suffer a -2 to surprise rolls. Tabaxi often use weapons of wood, bone, and stone, including bolas, slings, macas, and javelins with atlatl. They are as likely to use claws and teeth as any weapon. If both forepaws hit, a tabaxi may rake with its rear claws.

A group met in the wild will include a Hunt Leader with maximum hit points, and may (50% chance) include a 3rd-level shaman (priest) with appropriate Hit Dice and spells.

Tabaxi are clever and organized in combat, often driving prey into an ambush. They may, though, decide to play with wounded prey for a time before closing for the kill.

The jaguar-people climb and swim, and use those abilities to advantage over their enemies. Because of their cleverness and acute sense of smell, the chance of trapping tabaxi is practically nil.

**Habitat/Society:** Tabaxi clans contain equal numbers of males and females, and a full clan will have 2-7 Hunts of 2-8 individuals. The Hunts work the area around the clan lair. Sometimes the lair is temporary, but it is often a small village of ramadas, constructions of grass roofs supported by tall poles, with no walls. In a lair, 3-12 young with 1 Hit Die will be found. An elder with 4 Hit Dice acts as clan leader, and 50% of the leaders are aided by a 5th-level shaman. A clan also has a 10% chance of owing allegiance to a Jaguar Lord. A 5th-level shaman of Zaltec will always be present in a clan of this type. Shamans of other clans worship Tezca, Nula, or (rarely) Azul.

Tabaxi are very reclusive, avoiding other intelligent beings who often mistake them for chacs, the jaguar-spirits who help control the rains. Clans also tend to avoid other clans. Tabaxi will not engage in trade, which they consider

demeaning, but they may have agents who trade for them in rare instances.

The jaguar-people speak their own language, an ancient form of the Payit tongue. Modern Payit-speakers who realize what they are hearing will understand about 50% of what is said.

**Ecology:** Tabaxi have few natural enemies. For food, they prefer the boar-like peccaries and huge rodents called capybaras; only a very degenerate clan will attack members of another intelligent species for food. They are sometimes hunted for their pelts, worth up to 50gp each. Their skins and claws are useful to hishnashapers as strength enhancers.

## Jaguar Lord

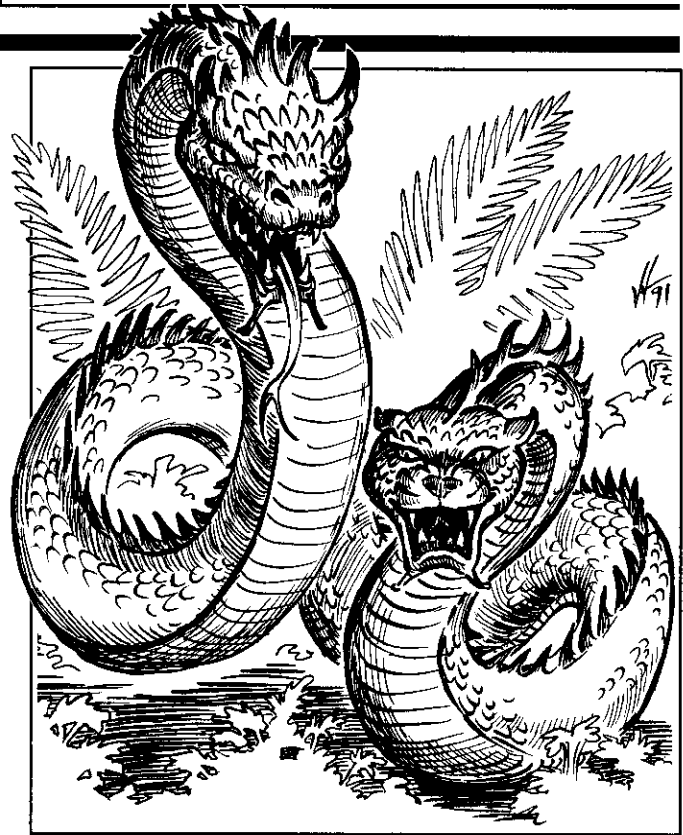
A Jaguar Lord appears as a huge jaguar with an evil disposition. They are among the supreme residents of the jungle. They are intelligent, and speak tabaxi and any languages commonly used by nearby societies. The antithesis of the couatls, Jaguar Lords hate them (a feeling that is mutual) and attack on sight.

These cunning creatures will use trickery, ambush, allies, and spells to weaken foes before closing for combat. Some 55% can wield magic as 7th level hishnashapers, while 40% are 7th level priests of Zaltec. Five percent are both hishnashaper and priest. In addition, they can use the following powers at will: *detect good/evil*, *detect invisibility*, *bind*, and *hypnotism*. The bravest and cruelest Jaguar Lords can also use *dimension door*.

Jaguar Lords are closely related to tabaxi, perhaps a blessed (or cursed) version. All Jaguar Lords are male, and must take a tabaxi mate to produce offspring (always a male Jaguar Lord). Although usually solitary, a Jaguar Lord will sometimes take leadership of a tabaxi clan for the purpose of mating and insuring offspring. Some choose to stay with a clan even after the offspring is born and sent off to make its way in the jungle.

# Dragon, Maztican (Tlalocoatl, Rain Dragon)

<b>CLIMATE/TERRAIN:</b>	Tropical clouds and mountain caves
<b>FREQUENCY:</b>	Very rare
<b>ORGANIZATION:</b>	Solitary
<b>ACTIVITY CYCLE:</b>	Any
<b>DIET:</b>	Special
<b>INTELLIGENCE:</b>	Average (8-10)
<b>TREASURE:</b>	Special
<b>ALIGNMENT:</b>	Lawful evil
<b>NO. APPEARING:</b>	1
<b>ARMOR CLASS:</b>	0 (base)
<b>MOVEMENT:</b>	3, Fl 30 (B)
<b>HIT DICE:</b>	12 (base)
<b>THACO:</b>	7 (base)
<b>NO. OF ATTACKS:</b>	3 + special
<b>DAMAGE/ATTACK:</b>	3-24/3-18/2-8
<b>SPECIAL ATTACKS:</b>	Special
<b>SPECIAL DEFENSES:</b>	Variable
<b>MAGIC RESISTANCE:</b>	Variable
<b>SIZE:</b>	G (30' base)
<b>MORALE:</b>	Fanatic (17 base)
<b>XP VALUE:</b>	Variable



Also called rain serpents, tlalocoatl are limbless and serpentine, with a head at each end. One head is snake-like; the other resembles a reptilian jaguar head. A tlalocoatl is bluish in color, ranging from sky blue on its underside to turquoise blue on top.

Tlalocoatl help dispense rain in Maztica. They will aid an arid area with moisture if properly appeased, but they sometimes act capriciously, causing floods or allowing droughts.

They have the standard dragon characteristics, except for age categories, maneuverability class, and attacks, as noted herein.

**Combat:** Tlalocoatl fly using natural magical ability and are more maneuverable than most other dragons.

They prefer to use spells and special abilities before melee. In melee, they may bite once per head, constrict, snatch (using a mouth), or plummet, but may not use other special dragon attack forms. The fanged snake head bites for 3d6 points of damage and injects poison, against which victims must make a saving throw or die. The jaguar head does 3d8 points of damage. A constriction attack causes 2d4 points of damage per round until the victim or the dragon is slain. A tlalocoatl can constrict one victim for each 8' of body length.

**Breath Weapon/Special Abilities:** A tlalocoatl has two breath weapons, each usable once every three rounds. The jaguar head breathes a cloud of water vapor 90' long, 30' wide, and 30' high. The cloud may be scalding steam, doing damage as indicated above, or cool fog which does no damage. Either form lasts for 1d4 + 4 rounds, obscuring vision as does normal darkness. The serpent head breathes a cone of ice crystals 75' long, 5' wide at the mouth, and 25' wide at the base. Damage indicated is caused half by cold and half by abrasion. If used together, the breath weapons cause normal damage, then cause rain, making as much water as a create water cast by the dragon. The rain continues for one round per four gallons of water. Creatures take 1d4 points of drowning damage for each round they stay within the storm, which has the same dimensions as the original vapor cloud.

A tlalocoatl casts spells and uses magical abilities at 5th level plus its combat modifier. Rain dragons are immune to

Age	Body Lgt. (')	AC	Breath Weapon	Priest Spells	MR	Treas. Type	XP Value
1 (0-51 yrs)	5-8	3	2d6+2	1	20%	Nil	10,000
2 (52-103)	9-12	2	3d6+3	2	25%	Nil	12,000
3 (104-155)	13-16	1	4d6+4	2 1	30%	Nil	14,000
4 (156-207)	17-20	0	5d6+5	3 1	35%	B	17,000
5 (208-259)	21-24	-1	6d6+6	3 2	40%	B	18,000
6 (260-311)	25-28	-2	7d6+7	3 2 1	45%	B	20,000
7 (312-363)	29-32	-3	8d6+8	3 3 1	50%	B, U	21,000
8 (364-415)	33-36	-4	9d6+9	3 3 2	55%	B, U	22,000
9 (416-467)	37-40	-5	10d6+10	3 3 2 1	60%	B, U	23,000
10 (468-519)	41-44	-6	11d6+11	3 3 3 1	65%	Bx2, U	24,000
11 (520-571)	45-48	-7	12d6+12	3 3 3 2	70%	Bx2, U	25,000
12 (572-675)	49-52	-8	13d6+13	3 3 3 2 1	75%	Bx2, U, Yx2	26,000

# Dragon, Maztican (Tlalocoatl, Rain Dragon)

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electricity and cold. As they age, they gain the following additional powers:

*Very young: water breathing* three times a day.

*Young: obscurement* twice a day.

*Juvenile: solid fog* twice a day.

*Adult: call lightning* twice a day.

*Mature adult: transmute water to dust* twice a day.

*Old: weather summoning* twice a day.

*Very old: transmute rock to mud* once a day.

*Venerable: control weather* once a day.

**Habitat/Society:** Rain serpents lair in caves in cloud-shrouded mountains, sometimes accompanied by *chacs* (jaguar-like rain spirits). Every tlalocoatl is a priest of Azul, and is both male and female, producing offspring when Azul gives permission. Many die young because they mature so slowly. However, they age rapidly in later years. They have a maximum age of 676 years.

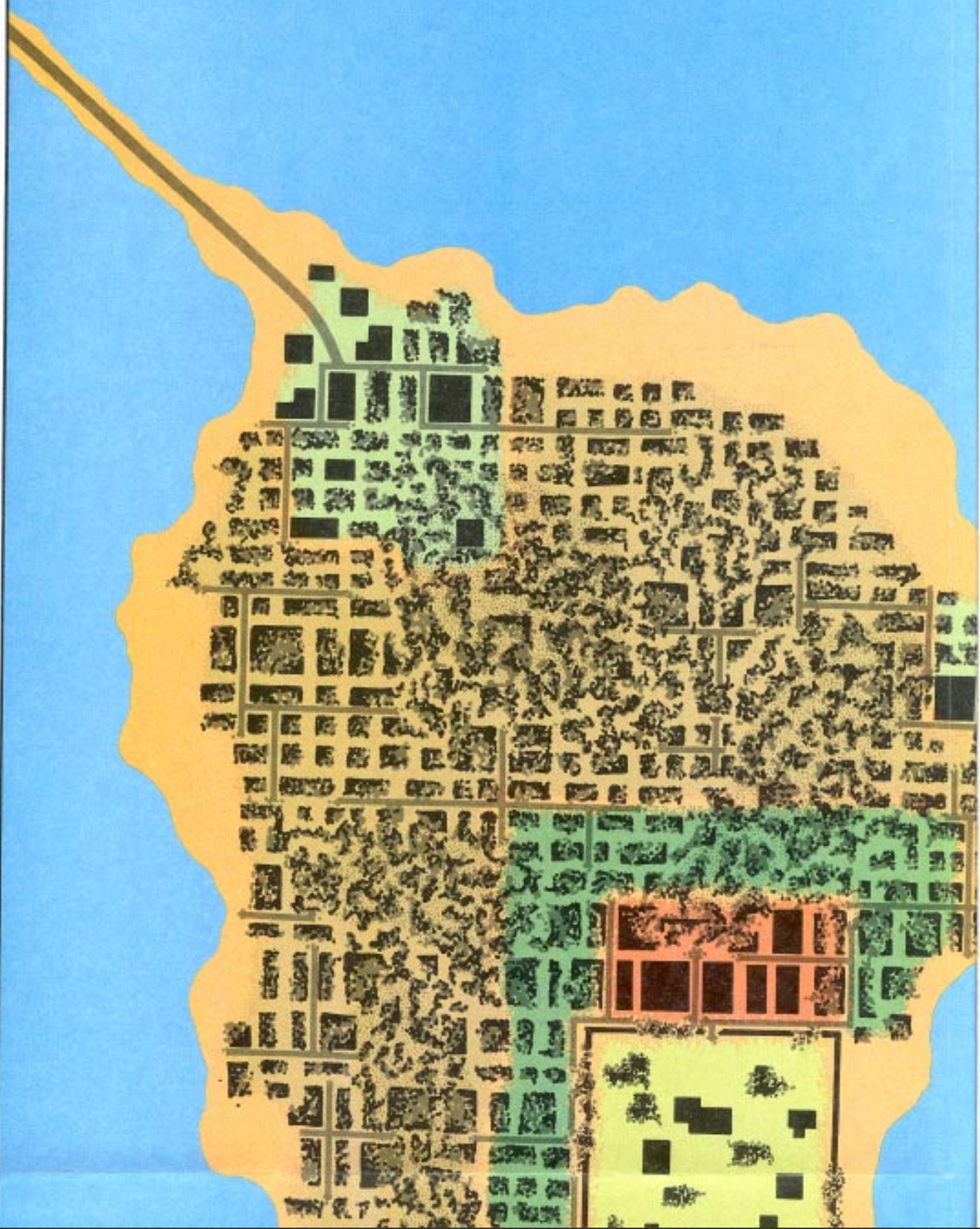
**Ecology:** Tlalocoatls are not as greedy as other dragons, but they do collect treasure. Substitute Maztican valuables for coinage: cocoa beans for copper pieces, copper blades for silver pieces, coral buds for electrum, jade or turquoise for gold, and quills of gold dust for platinum. Magical items will also be Maztican.

Tlalocoatls are especially fond of cocoa beans, turquoise, and jade, which they consume. They also drink a great deal of water, possibly increasing the dangers of a local drought. They are fond of meat, particularly that of young animals or human children.

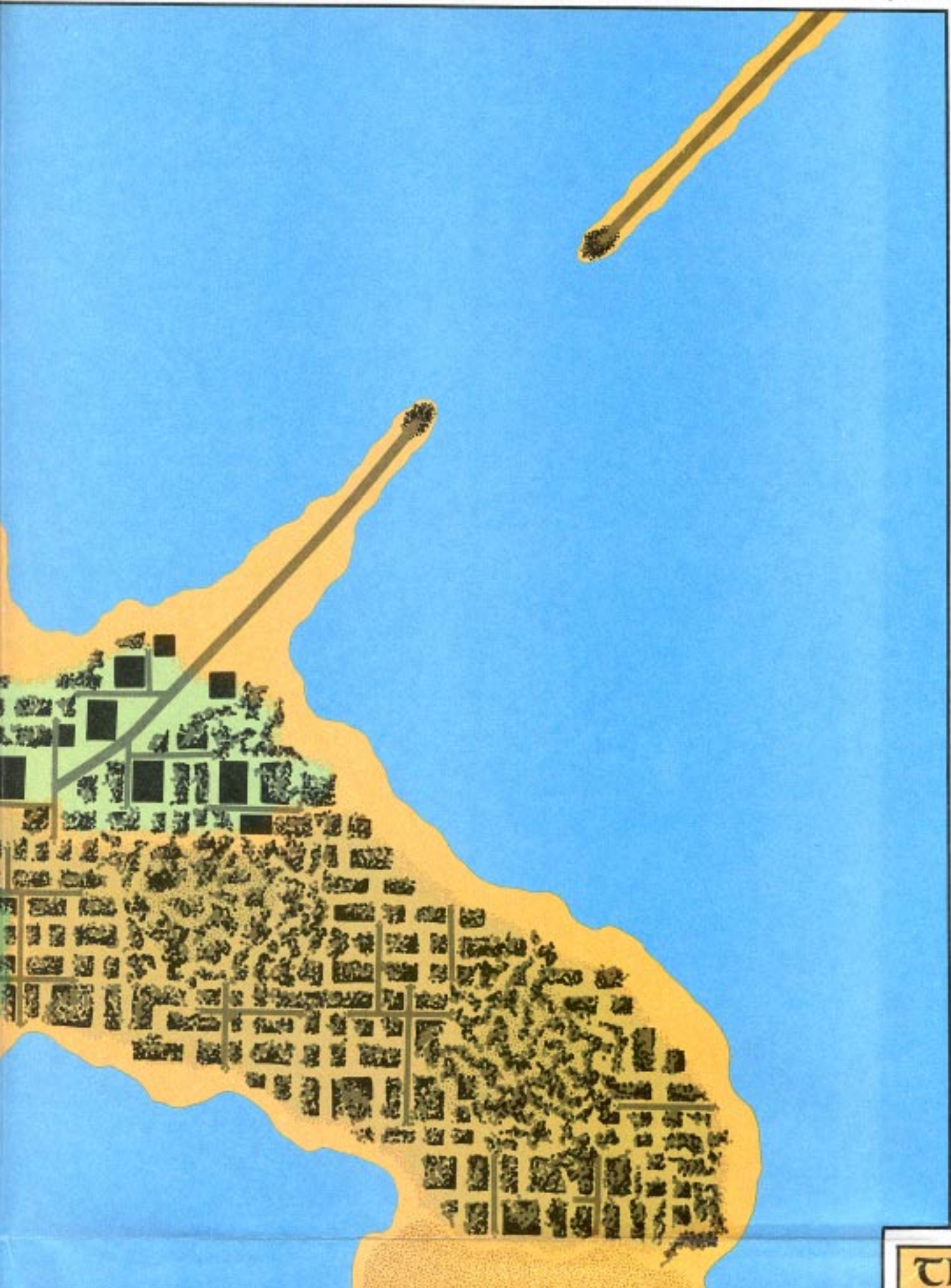
The scales from the tops of their bodies are beautiful turquoise, worth up to 1 gq each. A skilled craftsman can shape them like rock, but they are as tough as metal. Weapons made with the scales do not break like bone or stone weapons.



# NEXAL







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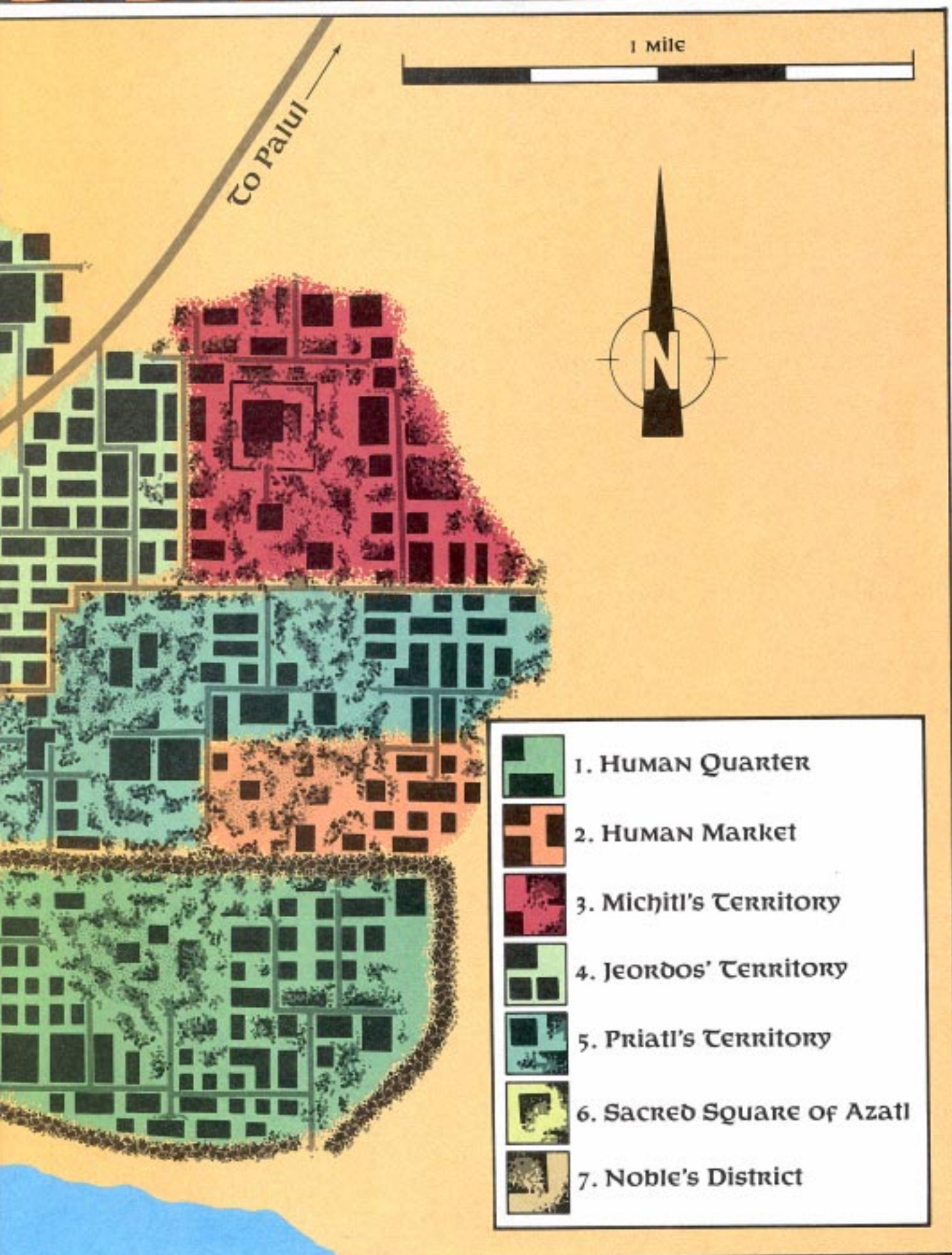


# AZATL



THE NEXAL VALLEY





-  1. HUMAN QUARTER
-  2. HUMAN MARKET
-  3. MICHITL'S TERRITORY
-  4. JEORDOS' TERRITORY
-  5. PRIATL'S TERRITORY
-  6. SACRED SQUARE OF AZATL
-  7. NOBLE'S DISTRICT

TEZAT





1 mile

9333XXX0701

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Lake of



Mud flat

f the Gods

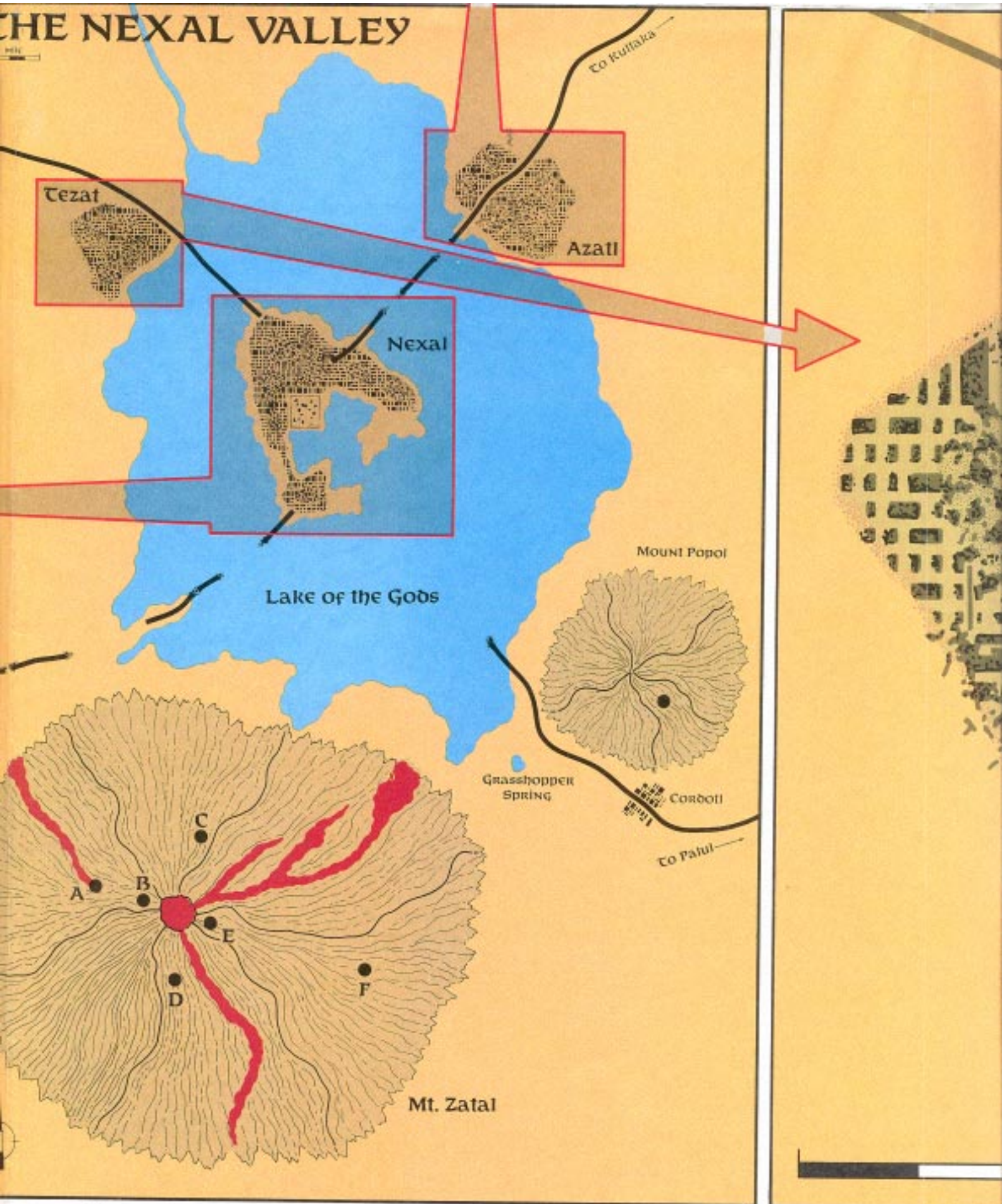
-  1. The Sacred Square
-  2. The High Market
-  3. Palace District
-  4. Army Camps
-  5. The Wreckage
-  6. Lake of the Gods

Tezat



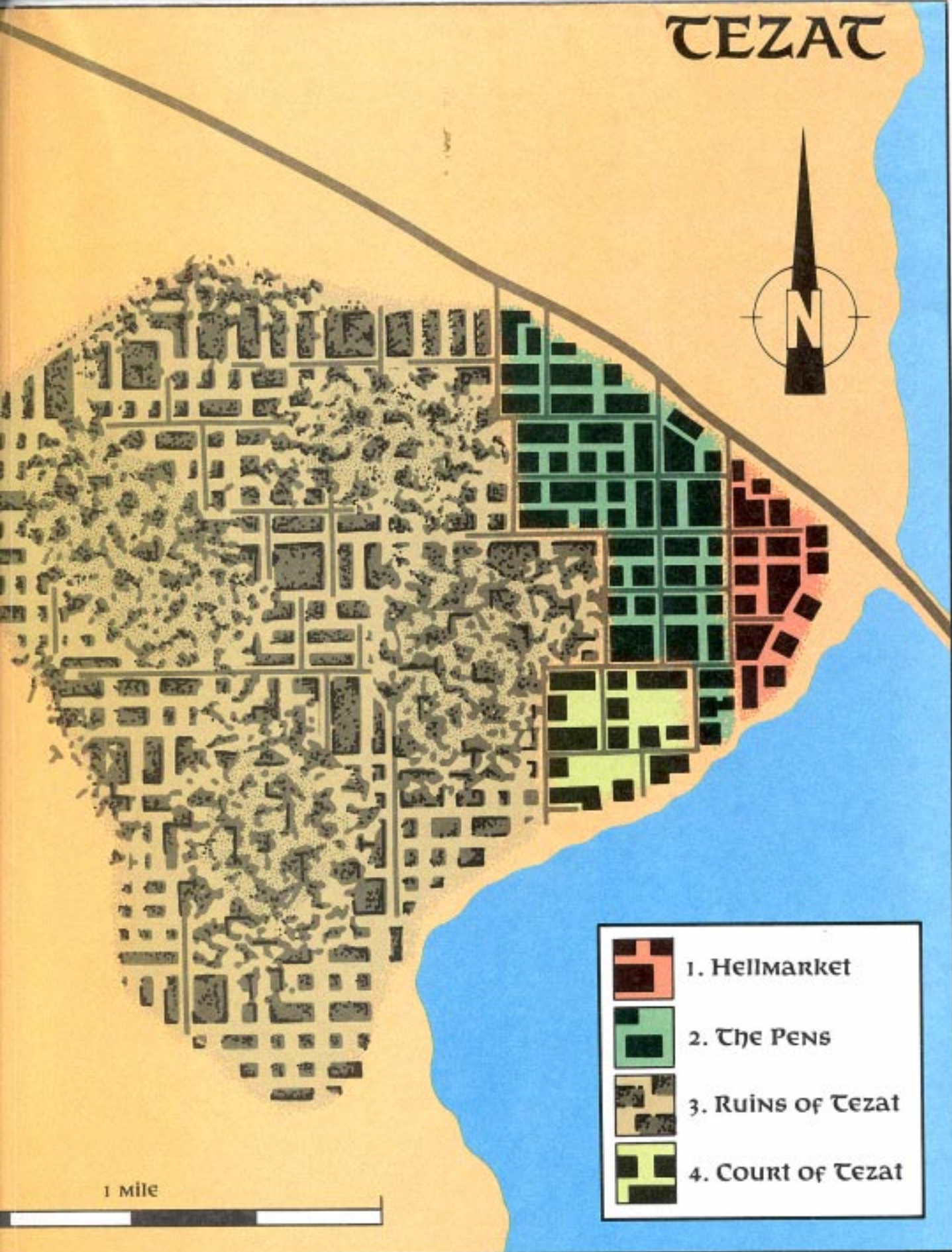


# THE NEXAL VALLEY





# TEZAT



1. Hellmarket



2. The Pens



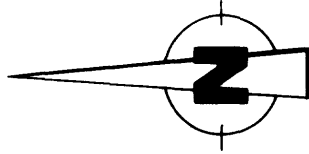
3. Ruins of Tezat



4. Court of Tezat



# Helmport and Ulatos

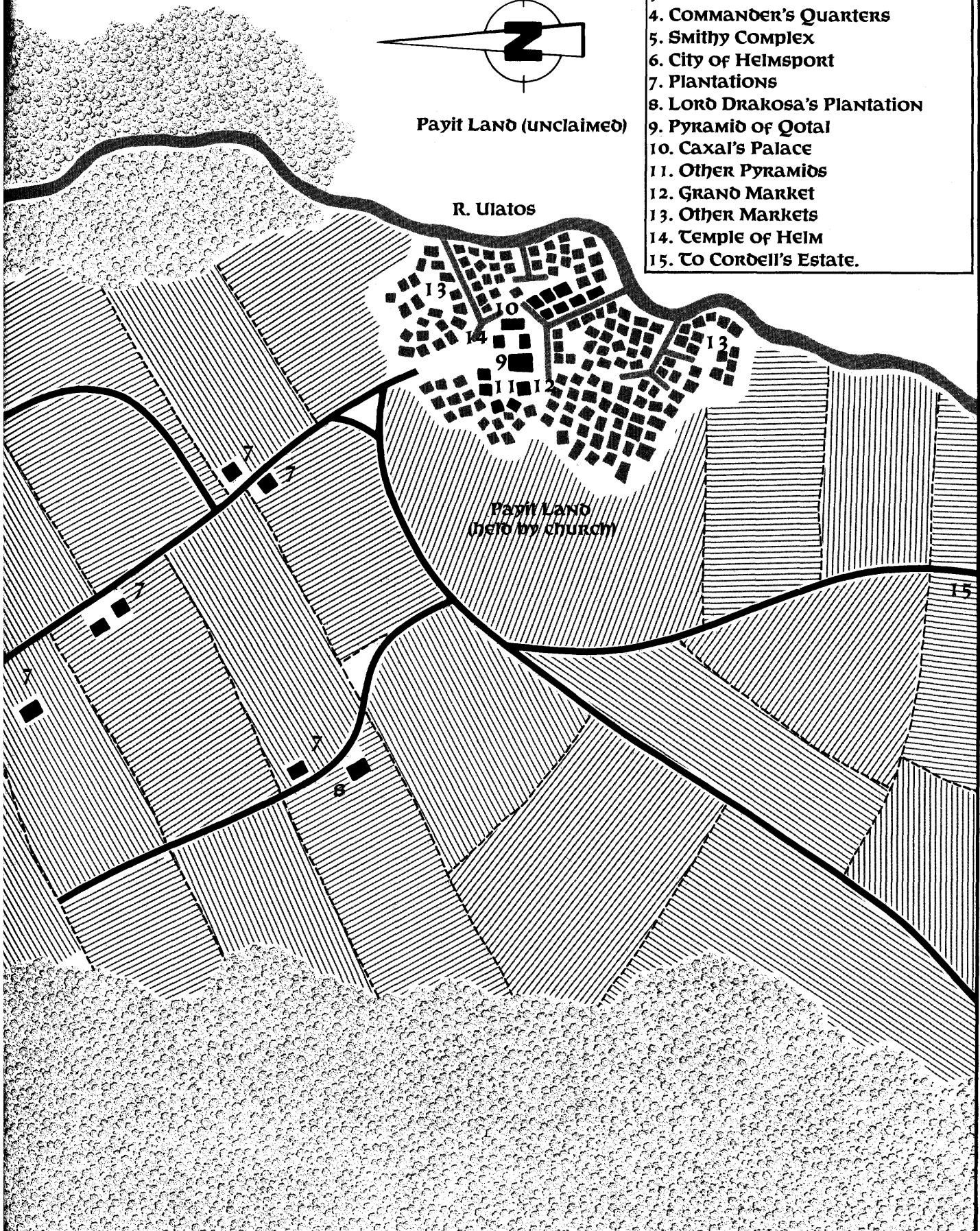


Payit Land (unclaimed)

R. Ulatos

Payit Land  
(held by church)

1. Shipyards (under construction)
2. Docks
3. Fort Cordell
4. Commander's Quarters
5. Smithy Complex
6. City of Helmport
7. Plantations
8. Lord Drakosa's Plantation
9. Pyramid of Qotal
10. Caxal's Palace
11. Other Pyramids
12. Grand Market
13. Other Markets
14. Temple of Helm
15. To Cordell's Estate.



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By Jeff Grubb & Tim Beach



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