

The Wonders of Ul

(Oldskool Edition)



Credits

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Author's Foreword

Ull is the armpit of the World of Greyhawk. It is not pretty to look at, it can be hairy or smelly and it's usually not important to anyone, but it is there all the same like all your other body parts, no matter how hard you try to cover it up. And sometimes, the armpit has an itch that needs to be scratched.

What drove me to my mad obsession to write everything concerning the land of Ull? The answer is, plainly, the itch needs to be scratched. Back in the heyday of my 2nd edition Greyhawk campaigns I needed a remote place to send my players where they'd be cut off from the typical comforts of the Flanaess but not yet completely removed from civilization. Having already been around the map a few times to dark jungles, vast swamps and icy lands, one of the last best spots to use turned out to be Ull. From this simple beginning were my first notes on what would later become a quest to comprehensively develop a region that I had discovered around 2004 was on nobody's to-do list. Neither the triads of the RPGA's Living Greyhawk Campaign, nor the hordes of fanatical online Greyhawk fans seemed to give much stock in developing anything for Ull. In fact, from Gygas to present, the amount of canon material on Ull can literally fit on the front and back of a piece of paper.

That is when I decided to make it my own, writing for the Greyhawk fan site Canonfire. And now six years later, much to my surprise, my mastery of Ull has gone unchallenged so to say. Whether this is a boon or a curse, only time will tell. Until then I plan to continue writing new Ull material and also give my old stuff some new polish so that both old and new readers can perhaps see what they are missing in their own Greyhawk campaigns. That is the goal of The Wonders of Ull anthology.



Enjoy.

Michael 'mortellan' Bridges
February 2010

Editor's Note

First off, the practical, nuts-and-bolt gaming information: Caution! Dates in this version of Ull have changed slightly from Michael's originals. I play in a pre-Wars version of Greyhawk (circa 576 CY), thus some of the historical events, NPCs and locations have been altered here and there or backdated by ten or twenty years to make sense in the earlier time frame.

Now for what I *really* want to say: In the six or seven years I have had the pleasure of knowing him, I have never met Michael in real life. Our contact has been solely online, through live chats in the Greychat IRC channel and correspondence via e-mail or on Canonfire. He has always been unfailingly polite, encouraging, good spirited and helpful to any Greyhawk gamers he encounters, old or new. I'm fortunate to have been one of them.

When Michael first began posting the articles that make up the body of this work to Canonfire in 2004, I was busy putting together a combined canon/fanon map collection of the Flanaess. I archived his articles with an eye to creating a detailed map and mini-gazetteer. So many things got in the way that, much like Ull itself, it lay overlooked for several years. That is, until *this* year when my campaign took my players west through the Baklunish states and then south into the arid regions bordering the Dry Steppes. I rapidly came to appreciate the sheer amount of work and passion put into detailing this least-examined area of Oerth.

Around the same time as Michael began work on Ull, I posted an article adapting the late 1st edition generic AD&D module I9 - Day of Al-Akbar to fit the geography of Oerth, placing it several hundred miles south of the Ull territories on the edge of the Crystallmist/Dry Steppes border. Now, with my players finally questing for those relics, I find the depth, detail and creativity that comprise Michael's vision of Ull to be deeply satisfying - so much so that I have integrated his Ull as fan-canon in my adaptation. Serendipity has played its role too - similar to Gary Gygas (whose death our current campaign commemorates), Michael has a talent for creating an area rich in story-seeds yet not so specific as to rule out almost anything happening there. That takes skill - I am all admiration.

My players are very much enjoying exploring the culture, society and adventures given herein. This is what I believe to be the highest compliment - not an aging DM's praise regarding structure or creativity - the enjoyment of the players. "Good game! We had fun this week!" - *that's* the real proof in the pudding. What else can I say? Thanks Mortellan!



Brian Dougherty
a.k.a.
Braggi, Swain and Varlet at Large
September 2011

History of Ull

Migrations and Occupation

The region known today as Ull was settled by several Oeridian tribes from Western Oerik, seeking to avoid the depredations of war, slavery and humanoid expansion. Their respite was brief however, as the onset of the Baklunish-Suel Wars (-485 CY) threatened stability in the region. The Wars soon escalated with both sides recruiting burgeoning hordes of humanoids for the first time (-466 CY). At the same time these humanoid mercenaries battled one another, they were also turned aside by their purist employers to inevitably begin pillaging north and east into Oeridian villages. Within a decade the pressures of the Wars and unrestrained humanoid incursions finally became too great for many Oerids, who left behind their settlements and resumed their destined migration to the east beyond the Tuflik valley. Not all Oerids would leave so easily though. The stubborn Yorodhi, at the time a rival of the mighty Aerdri tribe, were tired of flight and refused to be driven from their lands.

The Wars came to a climatic end as the Suloise unleashed the Invoked Devastation upon the Baklunish Empire destroying it utterly; yet not before the Baklunish managed to retaliate with the Rain of Colorless Fire reducing the entire Suel Empire to dust (-422 CY). Survivors of the Invoked Devastation escaped northward where their kin still prospered despite aggression from raiders and opportunistic humanoid groups. With the empire shattered the Paynims were unbound and free to roam the newly created Dry Steppes or plunder the settled north, sometimes even warring against each other as mercenaries for those nations.

Similarly to the south one rather large tribe, the Ulli began to covet the herds and grazing lands east of the Ullsprues. These transitional lands once occupied by numerous Oeridian tribes were now ripe for raiding since massive emigration had left little except the determined Yorodhi to defend their villages and flocks. Unexpectedly the Ulli broke from their old pattern and migrated into the Yorodhis' northern territory (-350 CY). Led by the ambitious Paynim warlord Ulaghai Ora Khan, these first occupiers remained nomadic yet soon the scattered Yorodhi villages were also absorbed intact, driving the natives further south. Ulaghai had no intention of his people leaving this time and much to the chagrin of the Yorodhi the nation of Ull was born.

The Ulli increasingly expanded south keeping the Yorodhi between them and the desolation of the Dry Steppes. Those Yorodhi who were complicit fast became slaves while the majority fled into the hills as a last refuge. Old Kester the largest of Oeridian settlements from the age before the Twin Cataclysms was occupied last and rebuilt from the bones of the Oeridian foundation (-323 CY). Following the example of rebuilt Kester and other occupied Yorodhi settlements, Ulaghai's heir, Khuzhan the Builder further cemented Ull's permanency by founding Ullakand (-315 CY), the first true Ulli settlement. Built upon a low mesa bordering Paynim lands, Ullakand became the seat of power and central gathering ground for Ull's semi-nomadic families.

A hundred years after Ullakand's founding, on a night often regarded as an ill omen in Ull history, a burning star streaked across the sky and vanished to the east within the Barrier Peaks. Called the Spear of Gruumsh by the Euroz, its divine implications were significant for many long dormant descendants of humanoids employed in the Baklunish-Suloise Wars. From that point forward a

massive incursion of orcs spilled into Ull's lowland while another branch drove north eventually settling in the domain of Zeif on the Plain of Antal. Not long after, Bherek the Silent decisively put down and contained the orcish movement (-210 CY).

All surviving humanoid chieftains submitted to the Orakhan and were allowed to live primarily in the south. Bherek even adopted an orc-blooded son from one of his defeated rivals as a show of faith. With the Yorodhi cowering in the hills and throngs of humanoids corralled in the south, Ull finally knew stability for the first time. Even orcs began assimilating into the culture by the end of the century.

Prosperity and Depravity

Stability wasn't to last long, for the Ulli eventually learned of a lush and wealthy valley on the other side of the Barrier Peaks. The next Orakhan, a half-orog named Bhrevan the Twisted Limb had come to power over all the Ulli families by mysterious means and with his new found influence, he began an expedition into the mountains to exploit this land. Along with newly allied ogre and humanoid forces, the already battle-starved Ulli pushed into the Javan Vale leading to a series of skirmishes that would not abate for over a decade (-198 to -187 CY).

After little success and great loss in the Vale, the Ulli could not maintain the raids or lost interest altogether, preferring easier attacks on caravans from the north seeking to establish trade routes through their land. Following decades of this resistance, merchants from the north finally managed to establish a permanent market hub in the city of Kester (-115 CY). From this prosperity an influx of halfling migrants also began appearing in the settled south. All of this certainly would not have occurred so easily but for the fact that Otogak Orakhan (the Drunkard) had a love for Zeifan liquor and finery.

Forty years after this, slaving expanded into a lucrative trade under the rule of Umighun Orakhan, a fervent slaver himself. Demand for laborers in the caravan town of Kester and Ull's ore mines spurred a new resurgence of slaving raids upon the Yorodhi hill men for the next few decades. When slaving efforts in the south went into a lull, Ull then turned on their Paynim cousins to the north. Numerous ancient blood feuds were instantly renewed and bitter clan wars were fought throughout the northern plains for many years to come.

As the hostilities in the north finally receded, to the south a new diversion gripped much of Ull. In Kester the sport of pit fighting was started (26 CY) by several self-styled Pit Masters whose wealth from the trade town had made them debauched and hedonistic. This gladiatorial sport both benefited from the ongoing slave trade and the Ulli lust for violence.

The growing culture of depravity in Ull was challenged during the one-year reign of young Kugask Orakhan (49 CY) whose rule was ended abruptly when it was revealed that the illustrious ruler was in fact a wife of the last Orakhan in disguise. Kugask (Ges kari) the False, backed by foreign advisors, advocated allowing missionaries into Ull to bring civilization and stability. Her successor, Eruzhal was also her executioner. The khanates were to be forever outraged by the False Orakhan debacle and the influence foreign religions tried to play on Ull. It wasn't long before most foreign clerics were routed, enslaved or killed. Only the faiths of Geshtai and Ralishaz retained some small presence afterwards in the south.

Uprisings and Incursions

For nearly two centuries Ull continued its existence unchanged until the inexplicable 74-year reign of the Orakhan, Churzhal the Ageless ended with his self-imposed exile from Ull. Leaving behind no clear successor, civil war broke out as feuding khans and their allied warlords battled within Ull for several years until the true royal line of the Orakhan was ultimately re-established in Ulakand (237-245 CY).

Conflict would soon find Ull again but this time from another would-be occupier. Sultan Melek II of Zeif needed a buffer zone between his land and raiding Paynims so he invited the immigration of disaffected nomads from south of Komal to settle on the plains. The Brazen Horde as they were known eagerly moved into the region (301 CY) and turned out to be no less warlike than the Paynims or Uli. With Zeif's support initially the Horde wrested much of the plains away from the Paynims. Unfortunately Zeif hadn't anticipated that the Horde would then turn their attentions to plunder Tusmit, Ket and the fringes of Ull and Veluna.

During the growing chaos in Ull's north over raids by the Brazen Horde, free Yorodhi from the highlands banded together to wage a vengeful rebellion against their Uli occupiers in the south (304 CY). The two-front war would be trying for Ull as many of their lesser settlements ended up destroyed or abandoned for years to come. Following the slaying of their long-time ruler Barateng Orakhan, Ull rallied behind the indomitable Drashan Orakhan and made a decisive stand against the Brazen Horde at the Battle of Ulakand (308 CY). Ull's fanatical warriors routed a significantly larger force at the mesa capital and by a show of unspeakable atrocities afterward, they finally ensured the Horde would never return.

The remnant of the Yorodhi insurgency was easily crushed following the sundering of the Brazen Horde. Many defeated Oerids made the pilgrimage north to Ekbir along with refugee Baklunish displaced by the Horde (315 CY). The remaining Yorodhi still refusing to surrender their ancestral claim scattered back to their remote territories. The Caliphate of Ekbir created refugee camps along the Blashikmund River for these displaced peoples and Ekbi forces were set to protect the camps and maintain order; that is until two larger groups of Paynim nomads arrived and refused to submit to the caliphates rules. The so-called Nomad Intrusion (316 CY) became a riot as the nomads incited the refugees to take all they could and leave the camps. The chaos resulted in the deaths of most of the Ekbi garrison followed by an elusive chase of the refugees northward until their escape into the Yecha Hills and beyond.

With the destruction brought on by the Brazen Horde still lingering for the next few generations, Ull had to once again rally its might this time under the banner of Ullghir Orakhan. An unexpected incursion of ogres and lesser giants flowed down from the Ullsprues to wreak havoc (387 CY). The Hunt as it became called was brief but harsh enough to chase the giant interlopers back to their highland caves rather than be enslaved.

Heroes and Villains

For the next century onward, life returned to normal. In this relatively peaceful time Ull still saw the emergence of new legendary figures such as Kuchakar Orakhan who earned his nickname by slaying the great blue dragon

Fusarkalon and his young within their lair in the southern Ullsprues (483 CY). Kuchakar made off with a hoard unlike no Uli had ever seen and thereafter lived a life of leisure.

Surviving the raid was the dragon's mate Kilberenden Sand-Twister. This female dragon went mad upon discovering the slaughter and retreated to live reclusively in the Dry Steppes. It is said she still has an unresolved agenda to kill the Orakhan, despite whom it might presently be.

Over two hundred years since the Yorodhi Uprising and flight, a long series of plagues tore through Ull keeping the population low and the mood somber (521-551 CY). Most blamed the afflictions on Incabulos for the wickedness of Ull. It is no coincidence however, that during the period individuals of great evil came to stalk the land. The outlaw wizard, Abi Dalzim and his mentor known as the Sand Sha'ir were both forced from Ket after the theft of the Beygraf's vaults in Lopolla (542 CY). From Ket they chose to hide among the lawlessness of Ull. It was in Kester that Abi Dalzim rose to even greater infamy and disposed of his master to ally with a cultist of Incabulos.

The questing wizard Rary gathered dervishes and clerics devoted to Al'Akbar to finally put down the evil of Dalzim and his Incabulite allies (552 CY). Many died in the effort, but the cult was purged while Abi Dalzim was forcibly taken as the prisoner of the dervishes. Held in the town of Kanak, Dalzim was brutally punished until a mysterious dao came for him to answer for other misdeeds against genie-kind. Against all odds, Abi Dalzim later resurfaced in Ull at a ruined tower in the Ullsprues near Kester. Now a recluse, Dalzim has nonetheless managed to quickly rebuild his power using his hidden wealth and connections. This time however most in Ull think Abi Dalzim to be a ghost or an imposter.

As the people recovered from plague and evil depredations a new type of flora called bliss flower, or hul zil in Ulagha, appeared in Ull (567 CY). Previously unknown in Eastern Oerik, it is said bliss flower was brought across the Dry Steppes from far southwest of the Sea of Dust. Along with the importation of the flower came the knowledge of how to produce highly desirable opiate drugs from its seeds. Within a few years the flower spread throughout Ull's rugged mountain valleys and foothills creating fields of color in contrast with the prairie grasses of the north and the droughts to the south. On the heels of bliss flowers' increase was formed the Yellow Cartel, a collective gang of petty warlords, nameless sheikhs and other criminals from throughout the West (576 CY). Out of nowhere they best capitalized upon the trade of opiates in Ull and later internationally.

As this new resource flourished, hostilities flared once again between warbands of the Paynims and Uli across their open borders. Scheming pashas to the north who sought to divert the attention of troublesome Paynim raiders away from their trade routes largely instigated these conflicts.

While this struggle transpired in the north, to the south of Ull a new leader emerged among the Paynim dervishes of the Dry Steppes. This enigmatic Mahdi is closely tied with the coming Prophecy of the Phoenix, a rekindling of the ancient war between Good and Evil. His goal to unite all Paynim tribes and end Ull's slave trade could change the political and religious landscape of the West forever.

Government

Ullakand is the principle meeting ground for the Khanate Council. This rabble gathering is composed of leaders from as many as twenty major clans, both settled and nomadic, throughout Ull. Only distant Kester remains conspicuously absent from these meetings since no khan can be determined there. At the head of this volatile group is the Orakhan who lords over Ull with a voracious dictatorial reputation. The council traditionally meets each season to intensely debate matters concerning all Ull in front of their glowering ruler. Despite the façade of government, little actually gets done at these meetings and the Orakhan's decisions almost always result in violent solutions that the khanates are all too willing to carry out.

Given this lust for fighting, the faces on the council frequently change as dueling and assassinations happen with an accepted irreverence. Even Draske, the current Orakhan, risks meeting his demise at the bloodied hands of his own half-ogre nephew Bruzharag, should his grip over the council slip but a fraction.

In the south, especially in Kester, the Pit Masters have the greatest influence over what law exists. They have the most resources, the best weaponry and through collusion tightly control the slave market and the single biggest source of entertainment in Ull. Their clique is comprised of several independently wealthy sheiks, self-styled amirs and other tribal chieftains. The Pit Masters show fealty to the Orakhan only as much as necessary to keep the status quo in the south.

In the north, Ullakand is the rallying point for scores of traditional Baklunish light cavalry groups that eagerly respond to the call of their illustrious leader in times of great peril. These vicious lancers and archers ride upon the best horses drawn from Ull. In lean times these militant bands can resort to banditry and slaving against merchant caravans bound for southerly Kester while others for a price will offer to protect them on their journey back north through the Plains of the Paynims.

In southern Ull every free person from young boy to family elder owns a weapon. Infantry thus are more common in the southern towns than cavalry. The deadliest of Ull warriors are known for great bows that rely on power more than accuracy. There are also a wide variety of exotic polearms, finding use in both war and sport. The weapon of choice among most infantry in the southern towns however is the mace, the bigger the

better. It is not uncommon for ogre-kin and orcs to march among Ull warbands of the south.

Roll of Orakhans

All dates given in Baklunish Hegira; 3224 BH=565 CY

2310-2340	Ullaghai Ora Khan (the Conqueror)
2340-2366	Khuzhan (the Builder)
2366-2387	Buhul (the Warlike)
2387-2420	Ullzhak (the Golden)
2420-2447	Durske (the Unlucky)
2447-2461	Bherek (the Silent)
2461-2473	Bhrevan (the Twisted-Limb)
2473-2483	Lurzud (the Quarreler)
2483-2486	Erlun (the Fool)
2486-2531	Kadzusk (the Enduring)
2531-2545	Dengai (the Forkbeard)
2545-2563	Otogak (the Drunkard)
2563-2585	Kardugai (the Bloodthirsty)
2585-2590	Lhaskun (the One-Handed)
2590-2611	Umighun (the Slaver)
2611-2640	Rhazal (the Ill-Tempered)
2640-2655	Hengek (the Cleaver)
2655-2685	Payak (the Long-Rider)
2685-2707	Ullarsk (the Bone-Breaker)
2707-2708	Kugask (the False)
2708-2717	Eruzhal (the Executioner)
2717-2749	Boshari (the Loud)
2749-2789	Ghurshan (the Fearless)
2789-2823	Alaghri (the Black-Helm)
2823-2896	Churzhal (the Ageless)
2896-2904	Eruchan (the Merciless)
2904-2936	Nimek (the Horse-Tamer)
2936-2967	Barateng (the Shield)
2967-3016	Drashan (the Elder)
3016-3031	Drashan (the Younger)
3031-3046	Tovaske (the Cunning)
3046-3068	Ullghir (the Hunter)
3068-3109	Saghuz (the Iron)
3109-3120	Geskal (the Wanderer)
3120-3144	Ullzhun (the Victorious)
3144-3171	Kuchakar (the Dragonslayer)
3171-3190	Durghai (the Hooded)
3190-3200	Drasusk (the Betrayer)
3200-3224	Kanduz (the Sullen)
3224-present	Draske (the Short)

Geography



The land of Ull is an area about 90,000 square leagues in size, cradled between the craggy Ullsprue Mountains, a spur of the Crystalmist chain, and the more imposing Barrier Peaks to the east. This crescent of mountains provides the land with only two easy ways of entry. Ull's indefinable northern boundary is part of the vastness of the Plains of the Paynims. Only those who are well traveled and intimately know the area would even realize when they had ventured into the territory viciously regulated by the Ull town of Ullakand.

Ullakand is an aberration among the plains, where nomads gather to build their tents around the base of an isolated low-lying mesa. Up several timeworn trails to the top of the mesa are town's permanent buildings that provide a clear and unobstructed view over the leagues of grassland they claim. At night, dozens of home fires burn upon the mesa providing a beacon to all clans of Ull seeking protection.

To the south is the Kester Escarpment, a sheer cliff dividing higher elevation Ull from the Dry Steppes below. This would naturally be an impediment to caravans if not for the Dust Road, a well-worn trail that cuts into the escarpment.

The caravan town of Kester sets on a terraced area of the Ullsprue foothills and much of its construction is made

of the local stone, giving most buildings beige or reddish-brown coloration. The south part of Ull contains other smaller towns and villages that fall along the most commonly used trails between Ullakand and Kester.

Ull's bordering highlands are dotted with many deep cave systems, mines and rocky ravines that are every bit as inhabited as the lowland towns.

Climate and Ecology

Ull's climate is considered temperate on average. Unlike the bordering Plains of the Paynims, the northern and central plains of Ull see little substantial rainfall except during the winter season. These grasslands are fertile enough for grazing but widespread agriculture is futile leading to veritable famines. Throughout the summer high winds funnel between the Ullsprues and Barriers from south to north. In the south conditions are worse as hot dust storms sometimes blast across the escarpment contributing to what is an increasingly arid climate.

Southern Ull like much of the Dry Steppes is caught within a continuous series of droughts. Desertification is set in from many factors like soil degradation, overgrazing and the limited rainfall. Kester's position at the foothills of the Ullsprues gives it the luxury of being the best and last watering spot for most travelers or their animals before

they enter the steppes. Earthquake tremors, a legacy of the Invoked Devastation some say, hit the southern escarpment every few years causing substantial damage to the southern settlements and causing rockslides in the Ulsprue foothills.

The open grasslands of Ull are home to scores of species of animals, from rodents like the despised camprat to several of the finest breeds of horses. Nomads in both the plains and lowland hills herd wool-bearing sheep while fending off carrion birds and wild dogs. What little arable land exists on the southern escarpment and the nearby mountain highlands is mainly used for flocks of goats and sheep or the increasingly lucrative cultivation of Hul Zil (Bliss Flower), an opiate bearing flower recently imported from far southwest of the Sea of Dust.

In the northern regions of the Ulsprues can be found valued bronzewood trees whose reddish brown wood when properly treated is extremely strong yet still light in weight. Woodland in the rest of Ull is decidedly sparse, found most often along seasonal creeks originating from the Barrier Peaks. These deciduous trees include the thorny Yarpick but no fruit bearing species.

Beyond the open plains, the Ulsprue Mountains and the Western Barriers are rife with dangerous beasts and unimaginable horrors. Most of these creatures rarely venture forth from their rocky lairs unless provoked or captured by slave bands for use in Kester's fighting pits. Commonly seen monsters include manticores, minotaurs, wyverns, chimera, numerous clans of ogres, trolls, and larger giant-kin. It is superstitiously believed that the mysterious Mage of the Vale is responsible for other unexplained aberrations found in the Barriers leaking into Ull's domain.

Resources

Ull's potential for mineral deposits is still largely underdeveloped along the ore rich Barrier Peaks whereas the Ulsprue

Range is still relatively unexplored but for a few minor silver and copper mines in the foothills. Pockets of gems are occasionally discovered as well, producing mainly citrine, bloodstone and onyx. Control of these mines is in the hands of just a few khanates, notably in Okkand and Kurukand.

Bronzewood lumbering operations in the northern Ulsprues are carried out by slave labor and traded with Zeif. Such exports are a mere trickle compared to demand however.

Since the Oeridians first settled the region, horses of excellent quality have roamed in great herds. To their credit, the Uli have elevated these populations to an even greater level, some say to the envy of their cousins to the north and far west. Further south from the fertile grazing lands, livestock grows thinner and famine from food shortages is a daily concern.

Kester accounts for much of Ull's economy as a trade nexus between the Dry Steppes and merchants of the north. Behind the bartering and daily trading of goods is a thriving black-market of illicit items such as poison and drugs. In particular are the derivative drugs of opium that are highly sought from buyers thousands of miles away.

Ull's greatest resource however is its unabashed slave trade. For centuries the Yorodhi have provided a steady crop of able-bodied slaves while Uli slavers are just as apt to enslave enemy Paynims and humanoids as well. Most slaves are auctioned in the town of Kester where a use can be found for just about anyone.

Ull's Trails

Five main trails mark the most frequently used trade routes cutting through Ull. The elements and nature prevent the trails from being permanent and in most cases local guides are still needed to ensure caravans don't wander into dangerous locales.

Wadi Khijar Trail

The Wadi Khijar Valley runs from the Dry Steppes to the Dramidj Ocean. Some trade with Antalotol and the Far Baklunish West arrives from this direction. Once past the shadow of the Ulsprues there is little sign of the trail until Ulakand.

Ceshra Trail

This trail is the most worn and frequently used by northern caravans. It is said the same intrepid merchant caravans that first had an audience with the distant Shah of the Waters blazed this trail.

Barrier Trail

The Barrier Trail is a secondary route to the north that follows the edge of the Barrier Peaks, then along the rugged Banner Hills and on into Ket. Most caravans brave this direction to avoid Ulakand on their way to Ull's southern towns.

Ullzha Trail

Both foreign caravans and Uli nomads heavily traverse the Ullzha Trail. Sudden redundant forks, side paths and warband ambushes however often complicate its utility.

The Dust Road

This path starts in the trade town of Kester to the escarpment separating Ull from the Dry Steppes. A well-worn trail winds down from the cliff and then strikes out into the empty aridness of the steppes where it soon vanishes altogether.

Random Encounters in Ull

Northern Ull Plains	
D%	Result
01-02	Camprats ¹
03-04	Halflings ¹
05-10	Herd Animals
11-15	Humanoids
16-20	Men, Bandits
21-30	Men, Herders
31-40	Men, Merchants ⁴
41-50	Men, Nomads ⁵
51-56	Men, Slavers ⁷
57-61	Patrol, Men, Warband
62-65	Wild Horses
66-00	Use Standard Tables

Southern Ull Escarpment	
D%	Result
01-02	Ghouls ²
03-04	Halflings ³
05-14	Herd Animals
15-20	Humanoids
21-25	Men, Bandits
26	Men, Dervishes ⁴
27-36	Men, Herders
37-46	Men, Merchants ⁴
47-56	Men, Nomads ⁶
57-61	Men, Slavers ⁷
62-66	Men, Tribesmen ⁸
67-71	Patrol, Men, Warband
72-74	Wild Horses
75-00	Use Standard Tables

Ulsprue Mountains	
D%	Result
01-08	13-27 Humanoids ⁹
09-15	Men, Nomads
16-31	Men, Tribesmen ⁸
32-46	Ogres ¹⁰
47-53	Use Ulsprue Special Encounters
54-00	56-00 Use Standard Tables

Western Barrier Peaks*	
D%	Result
01-07	Giants, Hill
08-12	Giants, Stone
13-27	Humanoids ⁹
28-43	Men, Tribesmen ⁸
44-48	Ogres ¹⁰
49-55	Use Western Peaks Special Encounters
56-00	Use Standard Tables

Ulsprue Special Encounters	
D6	Result
1-2	Minotaur
3	Manticore
4	Chimera
5	Troll
6	Giant-kin, Fomorian.

West Barrier Peaks Special Encounters	
D4	Result
1	Dwarves
2	Troll
3	Wyvern
4	Men, Slavers

*Based on encounter descriptions from the [World of Greyhawk Glossography](#) and the [Monster Manuals](#).

Footnotes

1. See [Greyhawk Adventures](#) for details. In addition, 5% of camprats here will actually be Kund, also known as blink camprats.
2. Ghouls are said to prowl the fringes of Kester by night.
3. Halflings are mainly found in Uli towns and typically share their customs and venal dispositions.
4. Will always be mystical devotees in the service of the Mahdi of the Steppes.
5. Daring caravans from the northern Baklunish states are typically bound for Kester a trade nexus with the nomads of the Dry Steppes.
6. Double standard encounter numbers for nomads in the Northern Plains.
7. Southern slaving bands search for Yorodhi tribesmen and humanoids while the northern slavers capture Paynim nomads.
8. Civilized Yorodhi hillmen (Oerid) normally except in the Ulsprues where they are instead less civilized ogre-blooded men (Baklunish).
9. Humanoids indicate bands migrating and foraging into the lowlands. It is not uncommon for smaller bands of orcs and half orcs to function in Uli society.
10. Ogres include many half-ogres and also ogre magi within the Ulsprue Mountains.

Society and Culture

Four Feet of the Dragon

In Ull the ancient custom of the Four Feet of the Dragon, honor, family, generosity and piety is greatly diluted from what most urbanized Baklunish would expect. Family is the most important factor in Ulli culture and is the only one of the four aspects that hasn't altered for the worst. The many khanates in Ull take the notion of family a step further and have a rabid ethnic pride for being Ulli, which manifests in their willingness to set aside feuds to battle a common enemy. Honor is openly boasted about by the venal citizens of Ull but not practiced with much virtue in their actions. In fact, the Ulli are prone to exaggeration and lies to enhance their own self-worth among society.

Generosity is almost unknown here unless it is through pity or ulterior motive. The sacred custom of hospitality between Baklunish strangers is still adhered to among Ulli homes yet few ever request it for generosity soon turns sour. Desperate travelers can find themselves cowed into indentured servitude by their fearsome hosts for the smallest slight or overbearing guests can become a nagging burden to less assertive families. Where Ulli custom diverges the most is piety. In Ull there is no care for the traditional adoration of the Baklunish pantheon. Instead, religion and structure are replaced by a spiritual worship of tribal ancestors with a variety of other associated superstitions and taboos.

Religion in Ull

The Ulli have a deep belief in the power of ancestor worship. Ulli are inspired by past deeds in the hope they too will be aided to success by their dead ancestors.

Organized religion in Ull is uncommon, often being completely corrupt. Few temples exist, with the deities Geshtai, Incabulos and Ralishaz being best known. Occasional missionaries of other faiths sometimes try to aid the poor of Ull and win converts, but all eventually outlast their welcome.

If anything can be said to be sacred to the Ulli, it would be their mounts. The clans of Ull revere horses above all else - they are considered family members and are treated accordingly.

Population and Language

No true population count can be taken in Ull for dodgy highland tribes, Oeridian hill men and swelling slave pools complicate the totals. Nominally the Mouqollad's census estimate Ull's population at over 270,000. It is an ethnic blend of majority Baklunish with minority groups of Yorodhi (Oerid), halfling and orc. Half-blood bastards of orc or ogre parents are quite common in the highlands but are now spreading into even Ullakand thanks to Ull's newest Orakhan.

Most people in Ull live in relative poverty and under the constant strain of slavery or violence. Average life expectancy here is very short, about 45 years old for humans and the mortality rate of infants is indeed grim given the conditions.

The major language spoken in Ull is Ulagha, the regions own debased dialect of Ancient Baklunish. While Baklunish and Common is known in Ull locals almost exclusively use Ulagha out of spite and to make life more difficult for visiting traders or newly acquired slaves. The neighboring Yorodhi still cling to a remnant of their Oeridian tongue but have found it almost totally replaced by colloquial Ulagha as the generations go by.

Humanoids of the Ullsprues likewise have incorporated the slang-laden Ulagha into their everyday language.

Races of Ull

Baklunish: Baklunish Ulli tribes comprise the majority ethnic group in Ull as expected. Their cousins the Paynims are not uncommon in Ull either raiding, trading or as slaves. Baklunish of the settled nations to the north can be found here frequently by way of caravans. Specific Ulli family, khanate or even warband allegiances are always apparent, at least to locals, by either a particular style of wearing clothing or in the complex designs found on family carpets.

Northern Ulli sees themselves as pure culturally, most still adhering to traditional nomadic ways and shunning the settled life. They even try to segregate themselves from other races. Southern semi-nomadic Ulli are generally considered more venal by outsiders and not only freely associate with other races, but in the case of many highland families they even have ogre or orc blood.

Humanoids: Most humanoids in Ull are orc or half-orcs descended from the same humanoids that once served as mercenaries for the Baklunish Empire. The original Euroz tribe branched after a prophetic falling star fell over the Ullsprues. Those who went north to Zeif are now known for the Sultan's Uruzary Corps while the southern branch eventually settled in the highlands and towns of Ull. Today, orcs in Ull have largely been assimilated in the Baklunish culture either by acceptance or by slavery.

They are essentially tribeless and as such do not adhere to the clan totems or even deities of their forebears. Humanoids typically find their greatest potential in serving for various warbands where they excel as infantry.

Oeridians: Most native Oeridians populating the hills and desert valleys of Ull are of the Yorodhi tribe. Racially they are the most pure strain of Oeridian left in eastern Oerik but with each decade their numbers dwindle due to rampant slavery and skirmishes with their Ulli oppressors. Few Yorodhi remember what their culture was like before the Invoked Devastation brought on droves of Baklunish nomads that raided and eventually occupied their settlements.

The Oeridians have not made a significant organized attempt to retake Ull since their opportunistic attack during the incursion of the Brazen Horde. Since a northward exodus of many lesser Oeridian tribes soon followed Ull's repulsion of the Brazen Horde, the stubborn Yorodhi are now unorganized, instead happy to exact small revenges on Ulli warbands and merchant caravans.

Whispers tell of exotic ogre-magi moving secretly about the fringes of Ull, possibly loyal to a foreign figure called the Lord of the Ogre Magi.

Halflings: Seven hundred years ago merchants from the northern cities broke into Ull, establishing routes of trade. Among the first wave of prosperity brought into Ull's towns were large families of migrant halflings encouraged by merchants to settle the area. Drawn mainly from Tusmit, these hard-working, naive halflings fast became an overlooked minority to the Ulli who found them curiously unthreatening and likewise not suitable for general slavery.

Halflings in Ull resemble their kin to the east in form and demeanor, but that is where the similarities end. Their beliefs and culture has blended well with the common Ulli over time, even to the point of being corruptible. Halfling language and deities are only found

in old writings kept by elders who practice their traditions in secret.

Ogres: Scattered tribes of ogres fill the Ulsprue and Barrier Peak highlands. Among these lands some hardy Uli families have a rapport with the barbaric ogres, often proudly intermingling bloodlines. In Kester, ogres are bred with female orc and human slaves to produce the half-ogre, half-orc and orog specimens that are highly prized by all Pit Masters. Ogres are frequently enslaved or bribed into being laborers and fighters for Uli slavers and warlords who use them as shock troops. Bruzharag, nephew of the Orakhan and a half-ogre himself, includes ogre bodyguards among his entourage.

Full-blooded mountain ogres have distinct customs, taboos and a language more akin to the giants, whereas lowland and half-breed ogres start to show assimilation into Uli culture. All ogres, regardless of background, have a healthy fear of the deity Vaprak and the demon prince Baphomet, two conflicting ogre religions among the shamans of the Ulsprues.

The Khanates of Ull

Ull is composed of about twenty minor khanates, most of which are made up of nomadic families. The territory of these khanates is always in dispute, with the exception of those Khanates ruling towns and villages. The size of each khanate varies due to deaths, births and defections to other families. In general a large khanate is 20,000 to 10,000 people, a medium khanate is 10,000 to 5,000 people and a small khanate is 5,000 to 1,000 people. Among the khanates, violent "warbands" of slavers and warlords also operate, sometimes crossing family boundaries in loose alliances. Warbands and slaver groups are listed in the Khanate from which they operate. A large warband is composed of between 3,000 and 5,000+ warriors, a medium warband between 1,000 and 3,000 warriors and a small warband musters between 250 and 1,000 warriors.

Settled Khanates of Ull

Ullakand

Uli Khanate (Large Semi-Nomadic)

The royal family of the Orakhan traditionally holds sway over an area 20 leagues in all directions from the caravan city. Ullakand's population is semi-nomadic, going from 12,000 residents in the summer to 6,000 in the winter, with double those numbers roaming the plains daily. The town is the rallying point of all Uli nomads who seek shelter and safety in numbers. Merchants and slaver bands frequent the town to trade or replenish supplies on their way further south. Such trips don't always occur however, since foreign caravans are often randomly seized or turned back in the name of the Orakhan. Upon Ullakand's mesa the Khanate Council regularly meets with Draske Orakhan to settle disputes and sometimes start new ones entirely.

The Misbegotten Horde: Large Warband, 5,000 Uli, 100 Ogres

Raiment: Bloodstained ochre, no headwear

Armament: Mixed (light warhorse, footman's mace, club)

Originally this collection of malcontents raided from the central Ulsprues along the southern caravan routes. Things changed when Bruzharag, a former pit-fighter, rallied them into a warband with an eye toward his planned coup of Ullakand. Under the half-ogre's leadership members of the Misbegotten Horde raid much deeper into the territories between Ullakand and their highland homes to the west than ever before. Recently, their attacks have become much more brazen, even

daring an assault on one occasion within 20 miles of the city itself.

Protectors of Ullakand: Medium Warband, 2400 Uli

Raiment: Pointed helm, ochre shields

Armament: Mixed (light warhorse, light lance, composite longbow, horseman's mace, polearms)

These fiercely loyal Uli pledge their lives to defend Ullakand against all comers and will always defer to the councils of the sitting Orakhan. They claim to be the law of the caravan town despite the recent challenge provided by the Misbegotten Horde's ogre-kin.

Semust

Qilak Khanate (Small Semi-Nomadic)

This small Uli town is built on the ruins of an ancient Oeridian village. Semust serves a channel for many black market items going to and from the north. With an amicable relationship with Kurukand, Qilak Khan (1st level fighter/3rd level thief) enjoys wealth beyond those in his khanate, which he often spends in Kester betting on fights.

Okkand

Durgai Khanate (Medium Semi-Nomadic)

The Tamers: Small Slaver Band, 300 Uli, 200 Orcs

Raiment: Tan turbans wrapped about a tall helm

Armament: Footmen (footman's mace, whip, polearm, longbow)

The Tamers work almost exclusively for Durgai Khan (6th level fighter) to find slaves to work in his Ulsprue silver mines. Most of these laborers are drawn from the mountains as well in the form of orcs, ogres and the odd giant or two. It is also not uncommon to see halflings among the slave pool in specialized roles.

Kurukand

Jalhir Khanate (Large Semi-Nomadic)

The sprawling town of Kurukand is a smaller version of Ullakand to the north but no less successful. The population of this town at the height of winter is 5,000. Kurukand enjoys trade passing through it on route to Kester as well as maintaining nearby slave-worked copper mines belonging to Jalhir Khan (7th level fighter).

The Undeclared: Large Warband, 4,000 Uli

Raiment: Dark green & black turbans intertwined with ends tucked in

Armament: Footmen (footman's mace, polearm, longbow)

This arrogant warband has free reign to wander from Kurukand to Semust and even farther north into Umighak khanate territory. Their fabled history of success dating back to the Brazen Horde has earned them the respect of most tribal leaders.

Kester

The Khanate of Kester (Large Settled)

Kester sits at the crossroads between the Dry Steppes and more fertile plains to the north as a hub of trade both legal and illegal. Kester is remarkably large for the region where it was founded. The population fluctuates seasonally from 6000 in the unbearable summer to 10,000 in the winter, averaging out to 8,600 the rest of the year. While technically still a khanate under the rule of Ullakand's royal family, little fealty is actually shown to the Orakhan as no one truly rules the town. A semblance of order is maintained by a balance of free trade, the threat of violence and Kester's own brand of gladiatorial entertainment. If anyone truly rules Kester it is the wealthy

Pit Masters, who run both the lucrative slave markets and the popular fighting pits.

Followers of Zhabask: Medium Warband, 2,000 Uli, 100 Halflings

Raiment: White & black turbans intertwined with ends hanging loose

Armament: Footmen (polearm, footman's mace, longbow, sling).

Among the largest of the mercenary warbands in Kester, the Followers of Zhabask specialize in protecting foreign merchant caravans. They do their job well and are zealous at proving their worth to employers. Their Halfling slingers are infamous across the southern steppes.

Thevun's Gang: Medium Warband, 2,000 Uli, 200 Orcs/ Half-orcs

Raiment: White & black turbans intertwined with ends tucked in

Armament: Footmen (polearm, footman's mace, scimitar)

Thevun's Gang is considered the main rival to Zhabask's Followers for valuable caravan guard assignments. Their penchant for intimidation and harassment in landing merchant contracts is well known.

The Scourges: Small Slaver Band, 300 Uli

Raiment: Black and red turbans intertwined with ends tucked in

Armament: Mixed (camel, mancatcher, footman's mace, whip, net)

This band of slavers is much maligned by Yorodhi and southern Paynini alike. Their captives find their way back to the pits of Kester more often than most slaving bands.

The Fingers of Ralishaz: Small Slaver Band, 250 Uli

Raiment: Unknown

Armament: Footmen (varies)

Thought to be a well-coordinated street gang by most or simply thuggish beggars by others, the Fingers of Ralishaz are so intermixed in Kester society that they have become invisible. The Fingers rarely strike outside town where they have no power and their brand of slaving consists mainly of high-risk kidnappings and ransoms. Understandably this band has made many enemies, especially among the Mouqollad Consortium, local khans and Kester's elitist Pit Masters.

Yorod

Ahmud Khanate (Small Settled)

The southerly town of Yorod is a bygone remnant of the age when Oerids claimed the land. Now the only Oeridians here are the Yorodhi hillmen captured by slaver bands that use the town as a staging area. Cut off from Ull's main trails, an earthen rampart is the only defense for Yorod, which regularly sees counter-raids by the willful hillmen.

Ahmud's Net: Small Slaver Band, 400 Uli

Raiment: Tan turbans and ochre sash

Armament: Footmen (polearms, mancatcher, footman's mace, whip, net)

This fearless group of slavers works directly for the khan of Yorod, capturing slaves and transporting them to Kester. Their secondary duty of defending their town from counterattacks and slave breakouts has led to dwindling numbers.

The Skullbreakers: Small Slaver Band, 250 Uli

Raiment: Dented helms and ochre shields

Armament: Mixed (camel, clubs, footman's mace, net)

This band of roughnecks uses Yorod as a base to zealously launch raids into the southern hills and capture Yorodhi alive with their bludgeoning weapons. They are quite popular with the pit masters of Kester for their fine slave lots.

Abd Incabul: Small Warband, 250 Uli

Raiment: Solid black turban around helm, dark green aba

Armament: Light Cavalry (light warhorse, scimitar, light lance)

These fearsome riders are ignored by most other warbands while their wrath is turned south. Their main agenda is the eradication of holy men in the cause of their deity, Incabulos. Understandably they spend a lot of time in the Dry Steppes stalking Paynim dervishes and servants of the new Mahdi of the Steppes.

Nomadic Khanates of Ull

Note: The nomadic khanates are listed according to their keyed locations on the map of Ull (i.e. **K1** Jadrun, **K2** Ulghar, etc.)

K1: Jadrun Khanate (Large Nomadic)

Drashan's Legion: Large Warband, 4,500 Uli

Raiment: Helm with black turban wrap, ochre shields

Armament: Light Cavalry (light warhorse, composite longbow, lance, horseman's mace)

The oldest warband in Ull, they serve their own interests and also serve as the personal guard of Jadrun Khan (10th level Uli barbarian) whose ancestor was Drashan Khan the Elder, who defeated the larger Brazen Horde at the Battle of Ulakand.

K2: Ulghur Khanate (Large Nomadic)

Far Hunters: Medium Warband, 1,500 Uli

Raiment: Helm, ochre shields with horse device

Armament: Light Cavalry (light warhorse, composite longbow, light lance)

The Far Hunters are a warband of young restless horsemen who are counted amongst the worst enemies of the Paynim tribes. Centuries ago and now the subject of local legend, a group of Far Hunters were known for penetrating as far north as the Plains of Antal before eventually being wiped out by an avenging undead army from the Zeifan Uruzary fortress of Dar-Zaribad.

K3: Khugari Khanate (Medium Nomadic)

Nimtai's Drivers: Small Slaver Band, 300 Uli

Raiment: Masks, helms and ochre shields

Armament: Light Cavalry (composite bows, lasso, light lance, nets)

Feared by Paynim and foreigner alike for their speed and skill at capturing slaves, Nimtai's Drivers are generally thought to be of the family of Khugari Khan (5th level Uli barbarian). Their unconventional use of masks seems to be not so much for anonymity, but instead as an intimidation tactic. Few sights in Ull are grimmer than a slave train winding south led by the Drivers in their leering demonic masks.

K4: Inchak Khanate (Medium Nomadic)

The Taskmasters: Medium Slaver Band, 1,000 Uli

Raiment: Horsetail helms, whip and medium shield

Armament: Mixed (light warhorse, longbow, lasso, light lance, whip, net)

The Taskmasters are the premier slaving operation in the north of Ull. With the direct alliance of Inchak Khan (11th level Uli barbarian) the renowned Leader of a Thousand Horses, this slaver band notoriously preys on neighboring Paynim tribes to procure fresh slaves for their

labor pool. Most of these slaves are put to work immediately, for the Taskmasters manage Ull's bronzewood lumber trade with Zeif. This comparatively hard servitude is maintained without revolt as troublesome slaves are soon sent to Kester's fighting pits.

K5: Ulzai Khanate (Small Nomadic)

K6: Kirghai Khanate (Medium Nomadic)

Black Talons: Medium Warband, 2,000 Uli

Raiment: Helm with black tassel

Armament: Light Cavalry (light warhorse, composite longbow, horseman's mace)

This group is composed of the most skilled mounted archers in Ull, drawn from many neighboring khanates. Kirghai Khan (4th level Uli barbarian), an avid archer himself, allows them to roam his territory much to the chagrin of their rivals the Farhunters.

K7: Zhunis Khanate (Medium Nomadic)

K8: Umighak Khanate (Small Nomadic)

K9: Ohkir Khanate (Small Nomadic)

The Wildmen: Small Warband, 500 Uli

Raiment: Faded-red checker design, piecemeal armor

Armament: Mixed (light warhorse, polearm, light lance, footman's mace, scimitar)

A vocally loud band of raiders that once was ten times its size during years of the Yorodhi Uprising. Now the current Wildmen wander the plains looking for petty skirmishes, mainly residing in the Ohkir Khanate since the Broken Scimitars are known to cross over into their territory.

K10: Lurzid Khanate (Medium Nomadic)

Broken Scimitars: Small Warband, 800 Uli, 100 half-orcs

Raiment: Ochre shield with broken scimitar device

Armament: Footmen (footman's mace and other bludgeoning weapons)

The Broken Scimitars are purely anarchic raiders with no allegiances and many enemies notably the Wildmen. They wander across the Lurzid, Ulzai and Ohkir Khanates at their own peril, recruiting new blood from the three Khanates' outcasts as members of their band are killed off.

K11: Khurut Khanate (Large Nomadic)

K12: Najul Khanate (Large Nomadic)

Bloody Maimers: Small Warband, 900 Uli

Raiment: Helm and bloodstained cloaks

Armament: Mixed (light warhorse, polearm, scimitar, longbow)

This vicious band is largely concerned with protecting highland cultivation of poppy fields so that it reaches the hands of the Yellow Cartel. Those unfortunate enough to tend their fields are apt to be missing body parts for all sorts of transgressions.

K13: Geshtun Khanate (Medium Nomadic)

K14: Ongusk Khanate (Medium Semi-Nomadic)

The Grey Host: Medium Warband, 1,000 mixed orc, half-orc, orog, etc.

Raiment: Ash covered hair and faces

Armament: Footmen (polearm, footman's mace, club, scimitar)

This warband lives on the fringes of the Ulsprues' western face, preying on any unwary travelers in their territory. This warband is on good terms with many highland ogre tribes, and the ogre-blooded Ongusk Khan (Bar12). Naturally the Grey Host is at odds with no few slaver bands that view them as choice stock for the fighting pits of Kester.

Major Uli Settlements

Ulakand, City of Horses

Many leagues north of wind-swept Kester, the wide expanses of grassland become increasingly more fertile until one doesn't know where Ull ends and the Plains of the Paynim begin. It is in the middle of these rich plains that Ulakand, capital of the notorious Uli Khanates, stands as a monument to their arrogance and indomitable strength.

Overview of the City of Horses

Open Range: Ull's indefinable northern boundary is part of the vastness of the steppe known as the Plains of the Paynim. The open, unsettled grasslands are home to scores of species of animals, from the stealthy camprat to several of the finest breeds of Paynim horses. Only those who are well traveled and intimately know the area would even realize when they had ventured into the territory viciously regulated by the Uli town of Ulakand. Ulakand is an aberration among the plains, where nomads gather to build their southerly facing tents and numerous corrals around the base of an isolated low-lying mesa. Up several timeworn trails to the top of the mesa are town's permanent buildings that provide a clear and unobstructed view over the leagues of grassland they claim. At night, dozens of home fires burn upon the mesa's top, providing a beacon to all clans of Ull seeking protection.

Uli Pride: History is unclear what compelled the Orakhan of the Paynims and his Uli tribesmen to descend upon the last vestiges of these Oeridian lands. Most sages presume that the occupation followed in the wake of chaos created by the Invoked Devastation in order to take advantage of the territorial vacuum left by the Oeridians fleeing eastward before the Twin Cataclysms. At first, happy simply to plunder and raid the indigenous folk, the Uli eventually adopted settlements for their use by either assimilating entire Oeridian villages or, as in Ulakand's case, building from the ground up.

Just as civilization began progressing for the Uli, there came the clash with the Brazen Horde, their far-flung cousins raiding westwards. The Horde's drive into their grazing lands was fiercely challenged and would have ended swiftly if not for a simultaneous uprising among the subjugated Oeridians almost certainly led by the defiant Yorodhi tribe. In time many Oeridian refugees made the trek north to Ekbir and beyond, their homes and lives shattered by the fighting. Despite it all, the Uli resolutely turned away both threats and thus solidified their violently independent identity in the Flanaess for centuries to come. For its part, Ulakand became a lasting symbol of Uli power and pride; it's rocky heights providing the perfect defensible position against their enemies.

Population

Settled Nomads: Ulakand serves a semi-nomadic population base that fluctuates from 12,000 in the summer to 6000 in the winter. Ulakand, unlike the diverse trade town of Kester tries their best to maintain a segregated society. The majority who shelter in Ulakand are of pure Baklunish extraction and are ethnically Uli, speaking the Ulagha dialect of Baklunish. Specific clan ties are always apparent, at least to locals, by either a particular style of wearing clothing or in the more complex designs found on family carpets. Few Oeridian or Paynim slaves are actually kept in town unless their value is important and even then not many commoners in

Ulakand have the resources or desire to bother with slaves.

Ogres: A small but growing sub-culture does exist though of Uli who have ogrish blood in them. These physically strong half-breeds have been slowly migrating up from the south and west regions of Ull where contact and admixture with ogre tribes is not uncommon. The old prejudices against these ogre-kin have tempered down since their roles in society have become more defined or even preferred by the khans who now employ them as personal bodyguards.

Trade in Ulakand

Commodities: Ulakand is the focal point for many nomadic herders who make their seasonal routes across the plains and down into the interior of Ull. Every manner of animal found on the plains is exchanged here from game birds to wool bearing sheep. Most valued of all is the wild plains horses that are captured and corralled by the hundreds about Ulakand's base to be trained and for the right price traded to trusted foreigners. Ulakand's equine wealth may have been what first spurred the Brazen Horde to raid Ull long ago before they ultimately passed on to Ket.

Barter is the preferred means of trade in Ulakand. Here a family's wealth is measured by their property because local coinage like the copper kurush and silver ukka are devalued and rejected by most merchants who pass through. Being practical, the residents of Ulakand find better use for gems and bits of metal, often making jewelry that can be worn or traded if need be. Uli who do accumulate coinage often head south to the trade nexus of Kester, where gambling is encouraged and a stream of illicit goods can be acquired discreetly. Despite this, mineral wealth from the mines of the nearby Ulsprue Range find its way into Ulakand in the form of silver ore, onyx and bloodstones. These are bartered to foreign traders for prized weapons and other simple imported goods that are considered a luxury in this remote town. The Baklunish Moquollad Consortium seeks to limit trade with Ulakand, however. Caravans owned by their members are often seized for no reason in the name of the Orakhan, with their contents inevitably being sold or fenced by the Uli elsewhere.

Slavery: A few aggressive clans conduct slaving operations around Ulakand's domain. Even more treacherous than normal Uli tend to be, these slave masters are hunting bands of horsemen who employ nets and bludgeoning weapons to capture and plunder non-Uli with impunity. Both the neighboring Paynim and highland dwelling Oeridians who venture too far into Uli territory are prime targets for these slavers. Humanoid incursions and the occasional adventuring party also find their way into the slaver's nets. Ulakand invariably is the central market for slaver groups when they need to re-supply or sell off excess captives. While only a small amount of slaves actually get traded or ransomed in Ulakand, the bulk of the slave trade soon makes its way directly south from here in a difficult march along the Ulza trail to Kester whose slave auctions are infamous in the Baklunish West.

Rule in Ulakand

Power Struggles: Ulakand is the principle meeting ground for the Khanate Council. This rabble gathering is composed of leaders from as many as twenty major clans, both settled and nomadic, from all throughout Ull. Only distant Kester remains conspicuously absent from

these meetings since no khan can be determined there. At the head of this volatile group is the Orakhan who rules Ulakand with a vicious and dictatorial hand. The council traditionally meets each season to intensely debate matters concerning all Uli in front of their glowering ruler. Despite the façade of government, little actually gets done at these meetings. The Orakhan's decisions almost always result in violent solutions that the khanates are all-too willing to carry out.

Given this lust for fighting, the faces on the council frequently change as dueling and assassinations occur with an accepted irreverence.

Warrior Culture: Throughout Ulakand can be found roving bands of mace- or polearm-wielding warriors who are bloodthirstily loyal to the Orakhan, while being chaotically corrupt when away from his grim influence. Their ubiquitous presence throughout the heights of Ulakand ensures that outsiders are always tailed and kept in line.

In times of great peril Ulakand becomes the rallying point for scores of light cavalry groups that eagerly respond to the call of their illustrious leader. These wild and vicious lancers ride upon the best horses drawn from Ull. Among the corrals of Ulakand these barbaric warriors put many horsehides and scalps of enemy riders on display as evidence of their prowess. Many of these battle trophies come from tribal skirmishes with neighboring Paynim clans who still cling to feuds dating back to before the founding of Ulakand. In lean times some of the militant bands resort to banditry against merchant caravans bound south for Kester, while others offer, for a price, to protect the same merchants on their journeys back north.

Spirituality and Superstitions

Practical Worship: More so than their kin to the south, Ulakand clans have a deep belief in the power of ancestor worship. Why they typically refrain from respecting or patronizing the pantheon of the West is unknown. What is known is that the Uli take great inspiration from past deeds, believing that, with enough faith in their lineage, their ancestors will aid them too in achieving success. In this way the people of Ulakand seem more practical in seeking solutions to the everyday problems of life than their more pious cousins to the north. This overconfident attitude lends itself well to their warlike tendencies, as death in combat is generally the quickest way to join the ranks of one's ancestors.

Despite the indifference or outright abhorrence for deities in the region, many worshippers of demonic cults easily find influence amongst the tent city of Ulakand. The most devious of these practitioners subtly use the belief in ancestors as a way to delude common Uli into furthering their unholy schemes.

Horse Customs: The clans of Ulakand revere horses with more passion and celebration than anything else. Horses are considered part of the family so their care and respect is treated accordingly. The naming of horses is very important - many clan elders proudly memorize the lineages of horses under their family. Taboos involving horses tend to be highly personal and become the source of many brawls throughout the town. Many Uli refuse to ride another man's horse or even lead it to water, while it's a common taboo all over Ull for women to first give a treat to a horse before riding it. Uli warriors are fond of exchanging locks of hair with their mounts before battle or long journeys. This fact leads warring clans to scalp or skin the hair or hides of their fallen foes believing this will give them a measure of control over their enemy's descendents in future battles.

Ulakand itself is built on a legend regarding a gargantuan horse. This mythic story tells of the great stallion that became angered when the gods tried to tame it. In its fury it trampled down part of the Barrier Peaks, creating present day Ket, then rampaged wildly to the southwest where it eventually laid down and died rather than be controlled. The great stallion's remains are said to have become the mesa on which the city was founded.

Naajam Festival: Every year during mid-summer (the festival of Richfest in the eastern Flanaess) there is a unique event held in Ulakand that draws folk from far and wide: Ull's first Orakhan brought the Naajam Festival to this region long ago, basing it on ancient Paynim tradition from the far western plains. For two long weeks local clans and many curious foreigners gather under a tenuous truce to celebrate in drunken revelry and show off their horse-riding prowess. Ulakand's size doubles around this time as sturdy tents spring up all around the mesa and herds of untrained horses are paraded into town. People wear their most colorful garments during the festival while singing and dancing to ancestral songs that usually boast of the power of Ull. Each day aspiring riders, ranging from children to the ablest of Uli warriors, display their skills on horseback for the festival crowds. These performances include attempts to unhorse rival riders, high-speed acrobatic stunts and mounted archery contests.

Above all, the most important event is the deadly cross-country Naajam Trials. This highly competitive race attracts arguably the best riders and best horse breeds from across the Baklunish West and, infrequently, even from beyond Ket. On the first day of the Naajam Festival all the entrants take off at once towards the southwest, blazing through Ull's interior until they reach the halfway checkpoint at Kester. From there the riders continue their trek around the Ulsprues, hugging the mountain range while within the inhospitable Dry Steppes, until they arrive back at the familiar Plains of the Paynim. From here only the hardest of horsemen remain to sprint back to Ulakand and the howling Naajam crowds. The lethality of this race comes from many factors including the sweltering climate of the Steppes, horses dying from over-exertion and several well-timed ambushes along the foothills by ogres or opportunistic dervishes. While much betting occurs between the khans and other rich patrons at the festival, the fearless competing riders do it merely for the honor of being titled 'Leader of a Thousand Horses' amongst their clan and having their winning horse revered in song for generations to come.

The Trade Town of Kester

Standing upon the windswept escarpment of southern Ull is the trade town of Kester. Situated between the imposing Crystalmist Mountains and the foothills of the Ulsprue Range, Kester serves as the hub of a dangerous trade route connecting the inhospitable Dry Steppes with the equally perilous northern plains of Ull and richer Baklunish lands beyond.

Geography

Harsh Landscape: Kester sits at a point between the Dry Steppes and Southern Ull called the Kester Escarpment. The escarpment is a sheer cliff literally dividing Ull's sparse landscape from the bordering steppe. This would naturally be an impediment to caravans if not for the Dust Road, a well-worn trail that cuts into the escarpment near the edge of town. Kester is built on a terraced area of the Ulsprue foothills and much of its construction is made of local stone, giving most buildings a beige or reddish-brown coloration. The bordering hills

are dotted with many deep cave systems and rocky ravines that are every bit as inhabited as the town itself.

Earthquake and Tremors: A legacy of the Invoked Devastation some say, tremors and quakes hit the escarpment every few years causing substantial damage to Kester and rockslides in the foothills. Long-time residents can point out the places where the city has been rebuilt literally on top of itself. Less disastrous than quakes, but more a daily concern to locals is the wind. Throughout the summer high winds and violent dust storms blast across the escarpment contributing to what is an increasingly arid climate.

Drought and Famine: Kester, like much of the Dry Steppes, is caught within a continuous series of droughts. Desertification has set in from many factors, including soil degradation, overgrazing and limited rainfall. Kester's position in the foothills of the Ulsprues gives it the luxury of being the best and last watering spot for most travelers and their animals before entering the steppes. Camels begin to replace usefulness of the vaunted Paynim horses when one lives in Kester.

Famine is a fact of life here. What little arable land exists on the escarpment is mainly used for goat and sheep grazing or the increasingly popular cultivation of opiates. Most of Kester's food stores are imported from the north, even from as far away as Zeif. Given the difficulty of a caravan successfully navigating the Uli trade routes, this does little to assuage the famine gripping the town.

Population

Peoples of the Fringe: Kester is remarkably large for the region where it was founded. The population fluctuates seasonally from a tally 6,000 in the unbearable summer to 10,000 in the winter, averaging out to around 8,600 souls during the rest of the year. Kester is ethnically diverse only in that it is a meeting place for tribes and clans of many races. Various Baklunish Uli tribes comprise the majority here, as would be expected, with Dry Steppe nomads and other Baklunish travelers being not that uncommon. Oeridian hillmen and proud Paynim can also be found here in great numbers due to the rampant slavery practiced by the Uli. Blending in among the rabble of humankind are small groups of halflings and orcs who form an uneasy minority. These hobniz and euroz share more customs and beliefs with the Uli than those typical of their race elsewhere. This patchwork of races and cultures is further dotted with scatterings of ogres venturing down from the Ulsprue Mountains, their half-ogre kin and other rarities of humanoid-kind brought in for Kester's peculiar taste in entertainment.

Despite all this racial diversity, locals almost exclusively use the Ulagha dialect of Baklunish, likely out of spite and to make life more difficult for visiting traders and newly acquired slaves. Most citizens in Kester live in poverty and under the constant strain of slavery or violence. Life expectancy here is very short - about 45 years for humans. The mortality rate of infants is indeed grim given the conditions.

Edge of Civilization: Kester is technically a khanate under the rule of Ulakand's royal family, but little fealty is actually shown to the Orakhan. Like everywhere in Ull, the ruling tribe in Kester changes frequently through sporadic outbreaks of violence. It is now to the point that no one can agree who is really khan of the town any longer. Outright anarchy is only suppressed through the distractions provided by Kester's favorite blood sports and the proliferation of weapons amongst the populace. Indeed, every free person, from young boy to family elder, has a weapon in his or her possession. The fiercest of the Uli warriors are known for great bows that rely on power

more than accuracy. There are also a wide variety of exotic polearms in Kester, finding use in both war and sport. The favorite weapon in Kester, however, is the mace. Every shape and size of mace can be found here, to suit the Uli lust for drawn out, bone-breaking combat. A general lawlessness is felt here when outsiders come to trade and these travelers soon pay for protection with certain Kester tribes or slavers.

Religion here is maligned and self-serving. No temples exist in Kester. Of all the Baklunish deities, only Geshtai, Daughter of the Oasis finds praise here for her continual struggle against Incabulos' droughts and famines. At the same time people in Kester thank Geshtai for life giving water, they invoke Incabulos' ill name to curse their enemies with diseases and nightmares. These two conflicting deities are the personification of life in Kester. Only Ralishaz finds more homage in Kester. The venal folk of Kester casually throw his name to the wind to explain their misfortunes and excuse their behaviors. Others pay token bribes to Ralishaz to improve their gambling stakes at the gladiatorial pits. Foreign clerics of Al Akbar sometimes stay in Kester aiding the poor and hoping to win converts, among other pursuits, but all eventually outlast their welcome and leave before they end up in chains.

Trade in Kester

Caravan Circle: As the nexus of trade in the region, Kester sees a daily influx of caravans from all directions. At the lowest level in town is the Caravan Circle. The Circle is a wide yard, centrally located in the shadow of Kester's terraces. It is in this sandy roundabout that visiting caravans stop their animal trains and gather for mutual protection. Many roads and alleys radiate outward from the Circle and each street in turn is lined with trading stands and weatherworn tents that get progressively smaller and poorer in quality the farther they get from the Circle. In the center of this bustling yard is an old but well maintained fountain built by clerics of Geshtai. Popular superstition is that if the fountain of Geshtai goes dry the city will fall into ruin forever. Also facing this Circle is Kester's only inn, the Blind Billy Goat (detailed hereafter), a haven for merchants and pilgrims who seek a safe, quiet place indoors.

Commerce in Kester: Most residents of Kester with money use their local currency, the silver okka and the copper kurush. The okka's value is substandard to most foreign traders in that Ull doesn't make them, but rather they are clipped and mutilated silver pieces from Zeif, Tusmit or elsewhere. The kurush are also minted poorly in comparison to more civilized nations. Their size varies so much that merchants in Kester never forget their weighing scales. Higher denominations like gold and gems are traded very discreetly in Kester and usually only between the most powerful slave masters or merchants.

Not surprisingly, barter finds more use in everyday trade than coinage. Everything from sheep to water to weapons is exchanged back and forth here. Within this subculture of trade in Kester is a simplistic bartering language made of hand signals and head gestures that are invaluable to foreign merchants who find Kester folk hard to understand.

Illicit Trade in Kester

Thriving Black Market: Kester's dark alleys and smoky parlors host a burgeoning black market unlike any other in the Baklunish west. Indeed, the far-reaching Moquollad Consortium despises Kester since illicit trade operates without hindrance and sometimes without pretence in the common market. Shipments of newly forged weapons

and armor raided by the Paynim and fenced in Ull find their way into Kester's streets on a regular basis. Assassins know Kester for its abundance of poisons, particularly several types of rare scorpion venom. Furthermore, strange alchemical items and multitudes of vile components to aid evil spell casters can easily be discovered in the town. Without a doubt though, the greatest proportion of the black market trade involves opium-based drugs grown and produced throughout the region. These plentiful, potent drugs, in addition to being a staple of Kester recreation, are highly sought by decadent users from Ket to Komal.

Slavery and the Auctions: Nowhere is the commodity of slavery more openly practiced than Kester. Aggressive slavers from the north of Ull drive their unwanted captured slaves southward down the Ulzha and Barrier trails to Kester. Those that survive the arduous journey end up at the auction grounds where numerous cages and covered pits await them. Equally fierce slavers in the south make sport of capturing Yorodhi hillmen that wander too far from their lands. Others incite humanoid tribes to raid down from their mountain lairs where they are then lured into carefully orchestrated ambushes. Enslavement of the nomads from the Dry Steppes, who already greatly distrust Ull, is less lucrative, however, since they attract many of the rich caravans from the north to the trade town in the first place.

Coupled with the rampant slave trade is a growing practice of kidnapping high profile foreigners to hold for ransom. Interestingly, this scheme has frequently proven lethal for the usually inexperienced Ull kidnappers, who often make outrageous demands without properly knowing in advance who or what they may be dealing with.

Slave auctions are held once a week on Kester's second tier, adjacent to the infamous fighting Pits. Drove of people flock to the auction grounds to watch the proceedings more out of curiosity than to purchase a slave. Surprisingly the auction is a well-organized event full of tradition with teams of highly respected, sharp-tongued auctioneers running the show. Most slaves sold or traded here end up serving in various households in Kester's upper tiers or with large caravans looking for extra free labor. Agents of the competitive Pit Masters scout for the best slaves here, especially those already skilled in weaponry in order to become new prospects for their deadly gladiatorial games.

The Fighting Pits

The Pits and Gambling: The Pits of Kester draw blood sport enthusiasts from all around; from feuding Ull khans in the north to visiting merchants from Tusmit, they all venture from far and wide to witness spectacles of combat outlawed in most civilized societies. Built into the second tier of the town, the Pits are a series of three gladiatorial arenas of varying size. Each has limited seating that is erected in a crude stadium fashion to accommodate the throngs of onlookers moving from one pit to the next as the fights progress. The Pits are an additional boon to Kester's economy, as the locals tend to be more frugal on those days of the week. The haughty Pit Masters share opulent pavilion tents at the edge of each Pit where attended by slaves, they sit on silk cushions and watch their fighters perform. Remembered by few residents is the fact that the origin of these arenas is actually Oeridian as evidenced by underlying architecture built over by the Ull during their long occupation.

Fights are held twice a week. Gambling rings run non-stop on those nights, with the greatest wagers put down

between either the Pit Masters themselves or with their celebrated guests from out of town. Gambling is a serious pastime in the trade town and those who go back on bets often lose a limb as punishment. In fact, Kester so fervently believes in misfortune that losing bets have come to mean losing to Ralishaz.

All sorts of gladiatorial combat are on display at the Pits, from simple knife fights to duels with exotic weaponry. Pit teams are sometimes assembled for longer melees while on slow nights vicious wild dogs are thrown in against each other. The sadistic Pit crowds tend to favor torturous battles over quick kills and their admonishment can even spell death for the winner. Once in a while special Pit fights are organized between champion gladiators, like the feared Oeridian strongman Al Drak, and exotic captured monsters from the nearby mountains, such as the legendary Abular, paragon of minotaurs. These events predictably have the highest turnout, as these fighters invariably are celebrities to the masses.

Pit Masters and Gladiators: The Pit Masters have the greatest influence over what law exists in Kester, since they have the most manpower, resources and the best weaponry. Through collusion, they tightly control the slave market and the single biggest source of entertainment in town. Their clique is comprised of several independently wealthy sheiks, self-styled amirs and other tribal chieftains. Each Master owns a compound on the third tier of Kester overlooking Caravan Circle, the Auction Grounds and the petty hovels of the town. The Pit Masters all live in relative luxury here, jealously defending their wealth and slave-property with war dogs, hired guards and clever pit traps.

Gladiators are considered more valuable than ordinary slaves but, because they are more dangerous and likely to rebel, all pit fighters are kept in deep, grave-like earthen pits covered with barred grates. Many such enclosures dot the third tier of Kester, where they tend to collect rainfall and runoff from the foothills, a situation both refreshing and hazardous for the caged gladiators. Training for the Fighting Pits goes on at all times as older retired gladiators continuously teach bands of new slave warriors the basics. As a reward to those that excel in the pits matches, ogre and orc fighters are often matched with enslaved women of both human and orcish blood to breed the half-ogre, half-orc and orog races that are highly prized by all Pit Masters. It is this selective breeding in part that has contributed to the abundance of mixed-bloodlines throughout Ull.

Denizens of the Lands Around Kester

Dervishes of the Steppes: The dervishes of the Dry Steppes are nomadic religious zealots that fearlessly defend their lands from Ull by martial fanaticism and cooperative magic. Their leader is the Mahdi of the Steppes, an enigmatic prophet hailed by the dervishes as the one chosen in the Prophecy of the Phoenix. The Mahdi has raised brows from Kester to Zeif for he is successfully uniting most of the tribes of the Dry Steppes, and apparently seeks to do the same with the contentious Paynim tribes of the northern plains. The Mahdi himself wisely never comes to Kester, but his dervishes always stir up plenty of gossip when they arrive in town to trade.

Moquollad Consortium: Headquartered in Zeif, this organization of Baklunish merchant clans is led by clerics of Mouqol whose agents monitor interests in all Baklunish cities to ensure fair trade. While Ull in general is viewed as a hostile territory for their members to work in, Kester with its enviable position as a trade nexus is concentrated on more than their northern kin. Of greatest concern to the Worthy Elders of the Moquollad are Kester's out of

control black market, their appalling currency and the need for someone to undisputedly take the title of khan to bring more order and stability to the town. Mere mention of the Consortium to commoners in Kester draws scorn and suspicion. Due to this antipathy the Consortium's efforts for the time being have been discreet.

The Yorodhi: The Yorodhi who populate the jagged mountains and desert hills to the south are Kester's traditional enemies. All caravans departing south from Kester, unless they are slavers, are well advised to go out of their way to avoid the Yorodhi territories. The pure Oeridian Yorodhi have an inborn hatred of Kester because historically the town was once theirs before the Invoked Devastation brought on droves of Baklunish nomads that raided and eventually occupied their settlements. For their own benefit the displaced Oeridians haven't made a significant organized attempt to retake Kester since their opportunistic attack during the incursion of the Brazen Horde. Since a northward exodus of many lesser Oeridian tribes soon followed Ull's repulsion of the Brazen Horde, the stubborn Yorodhi are now unorganized and dwindling in numbers each decade.

The Blind Billy Goat Inn

The building known throughout the Baklunish West as the Blind Billy Goat Inn has served many purposes in its long history. It was first constructed in the late centuries of the Baklunish Empire as a monastery dedicated to a forgotten religious sect that later relocated north. By the Oeridian era the building became re-inhabited by the extended family of a Yorodhi Hetman who fled with his kin from their lands in Western Oerik. During the Baklunish-Suloise Wars, raiding humanoids looted and cleared out the great building leaving it vacated along with much of Old Kester until the Invoked Devastation ended the conflict.

In the misty years that followed the Twin Cataclysms, the slightly damaged structure took on both Baklunish and Yorodhi refugees who returned to Old Kester for shelter and safety. This grand refuge was gradually restored and expanded over the next century until the coming of the warlike Uli tribe forced its inhabitants to flee into the hills or face slavery. The Uli, for all their barbarity, rebuilt and occupied Kester while the large building served as barracks and stables for the town's garrison until the khanate eventually slipped into lawlessness and was abandoned to beggars and street urchins.

Over the next couple centuries as Kester flourished with trade, sport and new immigrants, the first foreign merchants to establish themselves in town managed to secure the complex for their own use as an inn. As local legend goes, the merchant company searched the desolate courtyard of the Inn and saw a gnarled, blind goat clumsily walking into walls. Since that point it has been called Diahd Ashar Khanshin or the Blind Billy Goat Inn in the Common tongue.

This sturdy edifice is in a constant state of repair from centuries of war, windstorms, abrupt earthquakes and a continual stream of patrons. The Inn is three stories tall and broad, with a gradually curving façade conforming to Caravan Circle. Through a wide archway, the Inn has a long central plaza extending back three blocks where numerous stables, storehouses and a couple old wells are found. The Blind Billy Goat is predominantly constructed out of reddish stone, matching the rest of Kester's featured monochromatic architecture. The Inn's roofs are flat and provide a stunning view of the surrounding terraced neighborhoods, gladiatorial pits and even the desolate Dry Steppes on the horizon.

Despite being deep within Ull territory, the Inn is technically under the auspices of the Mouqollad Consortium. However there is a clandestine system of rotating proprietors in place to keep the locals in Kester suitably confused to the actual ownership of the old Inn. The current Grand Manager of the Blind Billy Goat Inn is Harib Kalim al-Ceshri, a jolly, well-dressed Baklunish man in his late 50's with the gift of being resourceful enough to meet any guest's needs, even here on the very edge of civilization. Harib has been in Kester since 565 C.Y. and has quickly gained the friendship (and thus protection) of many of Kester's most powerful personalities such as pit masters, warlords and caravan managers. Harib al-Ceshri is such an important figure in Kester that foreign merchants and travelers are usually advised to see him when arriving in town for the first time.

Inn Locations and Services

Lobby and Office of the Grand Manager: To the left as one passes under the great arch of the Blind Billy Goat is the Lobby, an oasis of civilized culture among the frontier landscape. The lobby is furnished with posh benches, thick carpets, imported plants in clay pots and a variety of art from many lands. Behind a stout counter Harib al-Ceshri and his household assistants are first to greet travelers to the Inn and make arrangements for their stay. Able-bodied slave porters are always on hand to carry luggage upstairs or offer a drink to guests waiting in the lobby. Off the lobby, Harib's own office is well appointed with a bronzedwood desk and a few leather seats. This room also contains a discreet shrine to the god Mouqol in one corner that also secretly serves as a concealed safe for visitors who need small valuables stored away.

First Floor Guest Rooms: These rooms, mainly on south wing are broken into two types, narrow single bed units and larger communal bunkrooms. The bunkrooms are favored by merchant caravans for housing their staff and guards. The prices for these rooms are standard for most inns with discounts given to companies that stay for extended periods of time.

Second Floor Guest Rooms: Found on both the north and south wings, these rooms range from typical communal rooms to good private rooms and a couple adjoining suites facing Caravan Circle. From sunrise until sundown Halfling workers and human slaves clean the halls and guest rooms as needed, moving between all three floors. The prices for these rooms are also standard with the same kind of discount given for extended stays.

Third Floor Guest Rooms: At the highest level, all the rooms are considered private suites with the best amenities possible in all of Ull, including airy canopied beds, soft pillows and fresh Ekbiri linen. The best of these rooms also have narrow balconies overlooking Caravan Circle and other parts of Kester. The prices for the suites are triple the standard rate, sometimes higher depending on the season. Notably, Harib al-Ceshri occupies one of these apartments year-round as well.

Plaza, Stables and Storehouses: The wide central courtyard of the Blind Billy Goat is a well-traversed path that leads to the rear of the inn complex. Grooves and ruts created from years of caravan traffic lead in both directions from the great archway. Signs that the town was once more fertile are here in the form of cracked ancient pottery and a central strip of scrubby landscape that may have once held spaced out trees.

Cleverly hidden halfway down the row is a shrine dedicated to both Geshtai and Istus, disguised as one of two weatherworn wells in the courtyard. An astute eye will spot the carvings of their symbols on the stonework of the

well. Those that know of the shrine are said to drop coppers into the well in exchange for boons from the gods, a practice that local Uli would scoff at as a waste.

The complex contains an extensive series of stables and lesser animal pens that are constantly maintained by a cadre of Paynim handlers who are loyally indentured to the service of the Inn. They know no joy save for working for the inn as they have been trained since childhood by their own families who were kidnapped long ago on the northern plains and enslaved.

Tucked in at the very end of the yard are three strong bronzewood doors that can be barred, chained and in times past warded. These lead into the Inn's storehouses, where merchant companies and successful adventurers can deposit their valuable commodities during their stay. Caravan bodyguards and private security are allowed access to the storerooms and stables at the agreement of the Grand Manager upon receipt for this additional amenity. At all other times the inn has its own detail of a dozen well trained and armed slave-soldiers who patrol all the grounds in shifts.

Blind Billy Goat Lounge: Immediately past the great archway and to the right is a door with a bleached goat skull hanging above the lintel. This entrance leads to an inviting taproom located within the first floor of the Blind Billy Goat's north wing. Spicy, exotic scents linger in the air as the place caters to travelers from many lands. Unlike most taverns, the clientele themselves mostly supply the inn with the best foodstuffs and liquors, thus making the Lounge second to none in Kester for quality. Meals are never too pricey and their selection of bottled drinks is decent for a frontier town though local brews are nearly non-existent here. It is not uncommon for beggars to come up to the great archway for a mere sniff of the aromatic air coming from the Lounge. Affluent locals will commonly come here to talk business, hear news from abroad or just try a cultured game not found elsewhere in town such as Dragonchess. In addition to the regular crowd, there is often a few halflings around eager to work for patrons as a guide or messenger service. These cagey demihumans know all quickest and safest directions to everywhere in Kester.

The Lounge is maintained by a staff of respectable workers (many of which double as cleaning staff during the day), including a retired gladiator named Uhlgark the Hammer, a freed dwarven slave from the Crystalmist Mountains named Arthen Vorinson and an expatriate cook from Tusmit named Alia bint Allamir. All three of these trusted employees are loyal friends of Harib and have many contacts of their own around Kester as well.

Den of Pleasure: In the Lounge is a dark niche concealed only by an opaque curtain. Behind it is a wide dusty staircase that leads down beneath the inn to a rough-hewn chamber that has an ambiance of old Kester to it. Dimly lit by smoldering lamps set haphazardly around the place, this spacious basement is where Kester's most hedonistic pursuits can be found. Surprisingly the Den of Pleasure, as it is called is not a secret. In fact, the employees of the Blind Billy Goat do their best to promote its use and improve its services. This is why the Den is a well known and highly sought

after place by patrons who have literally come through pain and hardship to arrive at the Inn and want some sort of comfort or relief. In the center of this hazy den is an abundance of opulent pillows, benches, futons and rugs upon which patrons can relax the day away, administered to without inquiry by hired herbalists and several obedient slaves. For a modest fee, customers have access to a variety of pleasures to alter the mind and mood including the finest opiates and most potent herbs from the region.

A few curtained rooms built off the den find heavy use for guests who want a hot bath drawn or need a massage after a stressful day. Much like the Lounge upstairs, traffic into and out of the Den is steady all day, yet more often than not the Inn's private guards are called to carry away someone who has overstayed their welcome. For those who aren't paying guests at the Inn, this can sometimes mean waking up in chains to an entirely new line of work.

Adventure Hooks and Intrigues at the Inn

- The Mouqollad Consortium has hired the PCs to bodyguard an abrasive caravan master staying at the inn, while he tours all the hot spots in Kester.
- Whispers overheard in the Den of Pleasure lead to a possible plot to kidnap someone vitality important to the PCs at the Inn later that night.
- A slave girl working at the Inn is actually a missing Zeifan noble that the PCs have been tasked to look for, but she refuses to go home without a struggle.
- The PCs are contacted at the Inn by a pit fight handler who is looking for adventurous talent to go on a monster trapping expedition into the Ulsprues.
- One of the PCs has noticed a stranger dropping a valuable object down a well in the courtyard before leaving through the main archway.
- The PCs are invited by a wealthy pit master to watch the local gladiatorial fights after impressing him with their martial skill in a recent brawl.
- The head cook of the Inn, Alia bint Allamir fled Tusmit years ago for some reason that is now catching up to her. She implores the PCs to protect her and the place she now calls home.
- One of the PCs heard a rumor that there is a secret room somewhere within or below the inn that contains the lost treasure of an ancient Baklunish monastery.
- There is a very important item belonging to another guest that is kept under heavy guard in the storehouse and the PCs need to acquire it for their own goals without rousing the entire attention of the inn.
- The PCs return from doing their business in town to find a dead servant in one of their beds and the inn staff there to question them.

The Yellow Cartel

Within the lawless region of Ull exists an organization of wealth that rivals the Pit Masters of Kester and has the influence to affect the decisions of the Orakhan. Ull's black market has always operated openly, much to the chagrin of established Baklunish trade groups like the Mouqollad, but now the Yellow Cartel's emergence in Ull has given them new cause for concern.

Flowers and Foundations

In a land of poverty and many social ills, a new commodity has taken root in the last few decades. Throughout Ull's rugged bordering mountain valleys, fields of poppies grow abundantly in stark contrast with the severe droughts to the south. These precious poppies are called Hul Zil (Bliss Flower) in the Ulagha tongue. Unknown before the reign of Kanduz Orakhan, the plant is said to have been brought across the Dry Steppes from far southwest of the Sea of Dust. Equally unheard of, the Yellow Cartel appeared out of nowhere not long afterward to seize upon the lucrative manufacture and trade of the opiates made from Hul Zil. The Yellow Cartel is an improbable association of independent nomad warlords, anonymous sheikhs and other sundry villains from the West. How the foundation of the Yellow Cartel came to be in this lawless frontier is a mystery to all, as there seems to be no clear hierarchy of control or set base of operations. Loyalty inside the Cartel is tenuously maintained as long as there is work to be done and their mutual power and wealth grows. The coterie of Cartel bosses, when necessary, quietly exact discipline from within while brazenly defending their interests from others through a brutal cadre of enforcers made up of retired Kester gladiators and the worst of Paynim outcasts and mercenaries.

Poverty threatened Ull's commoners provide an ample workforce by harvesting the valuable flowers to bring to the Cartel's roving agents for payment. These rewards, while meager by normal Baklunish standards, are tempting enough to make an impoverished Ull clan comfortable year to year. Indeed, inter-clan fighting over fields of poppies is not uncommon in the highlands of Ull. With that in mind, Draske the Ferocious was first to be conciliatory to the Yellow Cartel's swift rise, allowing them freedoms and concessions never heard of in any khanate. More recently however, Draske's nephew, the half-ogre Bruzharag has been eyeing the clandestine methods of this organization. Wild rumors circulate that Bruzharag seeks the Yellow Cartel's assistance in his plans for a bloody coup.

Demand and Distribution

What makes the Yellow Cartel dynamic is their far-reaching ambition. They are not content with simple caravan raiding or bartering in the markets of Kester. They seek nothing less than the spread of their own brand of corruption to distant cities that most Ull have never seen, much less heard of. The flood of drugs out of Ull has taken off in all directions, from Ket to Kanak and even across the Dramidj Ocean to pirate islands. Their opiates are much prized on the shadowy streets of Zeif and Tusmit and have even broken into use among Perrenland's idle mercenaries. Righteous Ekbir has so far had success banning opiates as contraband, enacting a low tolerance for offenders. This sentiment is not unique. Indeed the Worthy Elders of the Mouqollad Consortium exhaustively spend resources to ferret out members who

assist the Yellow Cartel in their international smuggling and also to covertly tear apart this rival consortium before it gets too powerful.

Demand for opiates across the Flanaess has been underestimated by the Mouqollad. On the streets of far flung metropolises like Gradsul and Greyhawk City, cultural neighborhoods like "Little Ket" in the Free City are already showing the influence of the Yellow Cartel. Furthermore, faithful of many religions are now discreetly seeking out the drugs to enhance their own diverse needs. Templar guards of Hextor in the east use opiates as painkillers while clerics of Olidammara use them purely for pleasure. Addicted cultists of Ralishaz and Tharizdun look to the drugs to spread their maddened visions even as peaceful poets of Lirr use the substances as a means of new inspiration.

The Yellow Cartel distributes their opiates insidiously swift, smuggling along regular trade routes that intersect Ull and the Plains of the Paynims, but by and large the bulk of their product moves invisibly and unhindered using extraordinary magical means in order to reach farther customers faster. While the Mouqollad and Ekbir waste time searching hundreds of caravans, the Cartel's agents make use of extra-dimensional carrying devices, teleportation items and custom flying carpets. Stories abound that the Cartel even have secret locations in the surrounding mountains where they hide special magic gates to cities in the East. Allegedly nothing living can pass through these gates, instead it is said transactions are conducted between sites by golem porters. These methods and many more are devised each year and though some might be fanciful tales, if even half of them are true the taint of the Yellow Cartel will be hard to wash away.

Ull Drugs

In Ull, the most common way opium is used is by eating the seeds and resin of Hul Zil directly or baked into food. Other parts of the plant can also be chewed on for a lesser effect. Below are a few of the many opiate substances that are finding their way out of Ull and into the hands of abusers all across the Flanaess.

Otoghul (Opium Wine): This potable is made by dissolving opium resin into an already potent alcohol. Opium wine first saw popularity among roving Paynim horsemen but is now gaining a hold in the clergies of Olidammara and Lirr. Otoghul is easy to make and is moderately addictive, causing euphoria and lowered inhibitions followed by a brief desirable period of intense focus.

Zharkat (Pleasure Herb): This is a combination of harvested opium and various stimulant herbs, smoked in its final form. Zharkat while highly addictive is popular due to its portability and its cheap street price. Hazy pleasure dens are common in Kester and are now appearing in the many cities of the West. Pleasure herb produces strong hallucinations and is claimed to take all worries and fears away.

Kadzur-Ruz (Blackstones): These black colored pills are made in shadowy shops belonging to agents of the Yellow Cartel. The most addictive product of opium to date, Blackstone is a mixture of several medicinal herbs, figs and the purest opium. Expensive but long lasting, the pill is a strong painkiller that also creates a short euphoric sensation of flight.

Major NPCs of Uli

His Illustrious Ferocity, Draske “The Short”, “Orakhan” of Uli

Chaotic Neutral (Evil) Human Male, 13th Level Uli Barbarian

Strength: 17 (To Hit/Dmg: +1/+1; OD: 1-3; BBLG 13%)

Intelligence 11 (+Lang: 2; Learn Spell: N/A %; Max Spells: N/A)

Wisdom: 12 (MAA: Nil, Bonus Spells: N/A)

Dexterity: 17 (RAA: +2; -6* or -3** to AC)

Constitution: 16 (HP Adj: +4; SSS: 95%; RS: 96%)

Charisma: 16 (LB: +20%; RA: +25%)

AC: -2; Shieldless: -1; Surprised: 5

Size: M

Move: 15

Hit Points: 114

Base THACO: 8; Strength: 7; Missile: 6; Hurl: 5

No. of Attacks: 2

Damage: By weapon

Base Saving Throws: P/P/DM: 5; P/P: 6; RSW: 7; BW: 5;

Spell: 8

Current X.P.: 3,659,474

* In non-bulky armor.

** In fairly bulky or bulky armor.

Barbarian Abilities

- Saving throw bonuses: P/P/DM: +3/+4/+3; P/P: +3; RSW: +2; BW: +2; Spell: +3
- Back Protection: 65%; Detect Magic: 90%; Detect Illusion 65%
- Surprise opponents 3 in 6, 4 in 6 in familiar terrain
- Effective Charisma of 25 with other Uli barbarians
- May strike creatures requiring +5 or better with normal weapons
- Climb Cliffs and Trees: 99.3%; Hide in Natural Surroundings, Unfamiliar 85%, Familiar 99%
- Tracking (Outdoors Only): Base 110%
- Tertiary Skills: Animal handling, horsemanship, long distance signaling (mirror), running, snare building

Items

Scimitar of speed +3 (1d8+4), *horseman's mace* +2 (1d6+3/1d4+3), *leather armor* +3, small shield, composite short bow, 5 *arrows* +1 (1d6+1), 19 normal arrows (1d6), light warhorse (AC: 7, THACO: 16, HP: 16 HD: 2 #ATT: 2; Dmg: 1d4(x2)), Uli salve (x3)

History

Draske, Orakhan of Ulakand, (sometimes called “the Short” although never within his hearing), is a thoroughly unpleasant individual. Greedy, arrogant, unprincipled and power hungry, the small Uli man looks after his own interests first and foremost. Nothing is sacred to the Orakhan save for his battle prowess and his warhorses. His rule of Ulakand (and Uli as a whole) is marked by the satisfaction of his personal desires exclusively. Although selfish, Draske does have his fair share of cunning, with a strong sense of what excesses the Khans he rules will and won't tolerate. Given the nature of Uli society, this leaves him wide latitude for indulging his personal agenda.

As a young man, in the days before taking Uli from the rule of Kanduz the Sullen, Draske rode with the Protectors of Ulakand. His horsemanship was second to none in the group and he quickly won great respect for his prowess. In combat he is known for releasing volleys of arrows

while mounted and then charging in to finish off his foes with lightning-fast strokes from his scimitar.

Draske was able to take Kanduz's position through a drunken challenge issued by the Orakhan himself at the Naajam Festival in 3224 BH (565 CY). Kanduz had long been jealous of the excellence of Draske's horsemanship, ever since the younger Uli had unwittingly out-ridden the Orakhan while guarding him in a raid. Although only the Orakhan and Draske witnessed the event in the chaos of the battle, the younger Uli knew that one of the two would eventually have to fall. Resolving that he would not be the vanquished, Draske cunningly procured a rare drug from the markets of Kester. At the Naajam Festival he personally spiked and then served the drink of the Orakhan. The drug was such that it lay dormant for a time, allowing the imbiber unimpeded speech and movement. Only during heavy exertion, such as the mounted acrobatics the Orakhan preferred, was the substance activated, drastically increasing the drink's intoxicating effects. Upon realizing that he was suddenly much more intoxicated than he should be, the Orakhan became suspicious and challenged his bodyguard to mounted combat. This Draske easily won and Kanduz's broken and scalped body was left unheeded in disgrace upon the field. What became of the dead Orakhan's corpse is a mystery to this day - during Draske's victory celebration it simply vanished. None of the Uli Kahns cared enough at the time to inter Kanduz in Khur Razjin while the council of Ulakand was confirming its new leader. Uneasy speculation in the years following indicates that some believe the fallen Orakhan may still walk the land since he was denied the Path of Shadows as a resting place. Of course, Draske places no stock whatsoever in such tales.

Besides being devious and underhanded, Draske bears little love for his royal kin. It is a well-known fact that he has cynically sent each of his three brothers to certain doom at the forefront of one hopeless battle or another. He has even stooped to use his kin as chattel, selling his youngest sister to Pit Master Vachir for gambling debts; debts Draske easily had the means to pay. As a person of some principles (especially in comparison to the unscrupulous Orakhan), the girl was an unceasing annoyance to Draske with her constant insistence on honoring the ways of their ancestors. When Draske notes her absence at all, it is merely to smile wickedly at the newfound silence in the Orakhan's family apartments.

Description: Draske is a hale man in his late thirties, a respectable age given the mortality rate for the Uli as a people. His unbraided hair is still a deep shining black with no hints of silver. He retains his physical strength and prowess with his weapons and mounts. The Orakhan is still as cunning as ever and his cruelty remains unabated.

There are some signs that the Orakhan may be close to stumbling in his rulership. Of late, he has spent more time drinking and gambling than is usual. Too, he spends much time collecting horses; far too much time, some whisper. Hoarding animals needlessly is not favorably looked upon in Uli society. Finally, Draske has not reacted as swiftly as is his usual wont to the threat presented by his half-ogre nephew Bruzharag. In the past, the Orakhan would have mercilessly crushed anyone who openly defied him as the ex-pit fighter has. Draske believes the reports about the half-ogre to be overly exaggerated, thinking of Bruzharag's annoyance that can be brushed aside whenever he chooses. Such ill judgment could easily turn to the Orakhan's undoing, especially since

some on the council of Khans see his arrogance as a grave weakness.

Bruzharag “The Misbegotten”

Chaotic Evil Male Half-Ogre, 10th Level Fighter

Strength: 19 (To Hit/Dmg: +3/+7; OD: 7 in 8; BBLG 50%)

Intelligence 13 (+Lang: 2; Learn Spell: N/A%; Max Spells: N/A)

Wisdom: 9 (MAA: Nil, Bonus Spells: N/A)

Dexterity: 12 (RAA: Nil; 0 to AC)

Constitution: 19 (HP Adj: +5; Poison Save: +1SSS: 99%; RS: 100%)

Charisma: 8* (LB: -5%; RA: Nil)

AC: 3; Shieldless: 3; Surprised: 3

Size: L

Move: 10

Hit Points: 97

Base THACO: 12; Strength: 9; Missile: N/A; Specialization: 8

No. of Attacks: 2 or 5/2

Damage: By weapon or 1d8+7

Base Saving Throws: P/P/DM: 8; P/P: 9; RSW: 10; BW: 9;

Spell: 11

Current X.P.: 905,589

*Treat as 16 for ogres and half-ogres.

Racial Abilities

- 60' infravision
- Doubles first level hit dice and thereafter advances normally in hit points

Fighter Abilities

- Gains 1 attack/level/round vs. creatures of 1 HD or less
- Footman's Mace Specialization - #ATT: 5/2; 1+ to hit/+2 damage

Items

Footman's mace +3 (1d6+13/1d6+12), *splint mail* +1, medium warhorse (AC: 7, THACO: 16, HP: 17 HD: 2+2 #ATT: 3; Dmg: 1d6(x2)/1d3), Uli salve (x2)

History: Draske Orakhan settled his gambling dues to the Pit Master Chagan Vachir by giving away his youngest sister into slavery. She was soon paired with Vachir's best ogre pit fighter. Bruzharag's mother died in childbirth and his father fell in pit combat weeks before ever seeing his son. Vachir now owned an orphaned half-breed combining royal Uli blood with potent ogre stock. Bruzharag was groomed for greatness from a young age in all modes of fighting. Those who reviled Bruzharag nicknamed him “the Misbegotten”, a derisive name that the young half-ogre aptly turned to his advantage in the Pits. With a flair for causing pain and showing off to the crowd, Bruzharag quickly caught the attention of all in Ull especially his uncle Draske.

The Orakhan feared his nephew's popularity as well as his blood-tie and soon began backing others to defeat him. When it finally became apparent that none could defeat the half-ogre openly, the Orakhan changed tactics and exerted his influence to have Bruzharag freed from slavery. The untrusting half-ogre undermined Draske when, without warning, he ran away to the Ullsprue Mountains rather than become someone else's slave. Bruzharag quickly found succor with the ogre-blooded tribes of the highlands while his uncle hunted for him.

Bruzharag did not hide for long but instead roused his new allies into a spate of banditry throughout central Ull. Those khans and sheiks that once adored Bruzharag are now coming to condemn him. Orakhan Draske is beginning to age and may lack the resolve he once had to quell the banditry. Thus far, he has stayed safely far away

in his hall at Ullakand, leaving others to try and control his nephew. Bruzharag is slowly rising from bandit leader to rival warlord, seeking to amass a personal horde of half-ogres and Uli cavalry for a bid to take Ullakand. Several khanates have begun to sense an impending shift in power and are starting to side with the half-ogre.

The hulking warrior dreams of leading his army to storm the mesa of Ullakand in a bloody coup - Bruzharag wants the Orakhan disgracefully paraded around the city in chains for abandoning and enslaving Draske's youngest sister to pay off gambling debts. Afterward, in the grisly tradition of Uli succession, none among the opposing khanates would dare to challenge his claim.

Description: Bruzharag the Misbegotten is a half-ogre male with incredible natural strength and uncanny stamina. He stands seven feet tall, with broad shoulders and thick vein-corded limbs. Bruzharag's eyes are gray and ever squinting, set deep within his thick forehead. His straight, coarse hair is blue-black and his skin is a motley mixture of ogre and Baklunish tones. He bears the scars of innumerable pit fights across his body, most notably the severed tip of a pinky finger on his left hand and a sliced lip that has impaired his speech, although none will admit it to him. Bruzharag shuns flaunting his station instead leading a simple lifestyle.

Bruzharag favors wearing leather or hide attire at all times, except in the hot months when he goes shirtless in public. He is accompanied by several ogre and half-ogre bodyguards brought with him from the Ullsprues. While he is skilled at all martial weapons and a few exotic ones, his preferred weapon is a *footman's mace* +3 reputedly made of a rare metal that he acquired during his early bandit days. Due to his ogreish blood, Bruzharag is able to wield this fearsome weapon effectively from horseback with either one or both hands.

Jadrun Khan

Chaotic Neutral Human Male 10th Level Uli Barbarian

Strength: 18/86 (To Hit/Dmg: +2/+4; OD: 1-4; BBLG 30%)

Intelligence 10 (+Lang: 2; Learn Spell: N/A; Max Spells: N/A)

Wisdom: 13 (MAA: Nil, Bonus Spells: N/A)

Dexterity: 17 (RAA: +2; -6* or -3** to AC)

Constitution: 16 (HP Adj: +4; SSS: 95%; RS: 96%)

Charisma: 14 (LB: +5%; RA: +10%)

AC: 0; Shieldless: 0; Surprised: 6

Size: M

Move: 12

Hit Points: 111

Base THACO: 12; Strength: 10; Missile: 10; Hurling: 8

No. of Attacks: 3/2 or 2

Damage: By weapon

Base Saving Throws: P/P/DM: 8; P/P: 9; RSW: 10; BW: 9;

Spell: 11

Current X.P.: 1,627,319

* In non-bulky armor.

** In fairly bulky or bulky armor.

Barbarian Abilities

- Saving throw bonuses: P/P/DM: +3/+4/+3; P/P: +3; RSW: +2; BW: +2; Spell: +2
- Back Protection: 50%; Detect Magic: 75%; Detect Illusion 50%
- Surprise opponents 3 in 6, 4 in 6 in familiar terrain
- Effective Charisma of 25 with other Uli barbarians
- May strike creatures requiring +4 or better with normal weapons
- Climb Cliffs and Trees: 99%; Hide in Natural Surroundings, Unfamiliar 63%, Familiar 85%

- Tracking (Outdoors Only): Base 110%
- Tertiary Skills: Animal handling, horsemanship, long distance signaling (mirror), running, snare building

Items

Horseman's mace (1d6+4/1d4+4), light lance (1d6+4/1d8+4), composite longbow and 24 arrows (1d6), *leather armor* +2, *helm of sensory protection* (+4 to saves vs. light-based, gaze & sound attacks and gases requiring inhalation), light warhorse (AC: 7, THACO: 16, HP: 10 HD: 2 #ATT: 2; Dmg: 1d4(x2))

History: Jadrun Khan is regarded as the most powerful single khan in Ulil besides the Orakhan. He is the ancestor of Drashan the Elder who defeated the Brazen Horde at the Battle of Ulakand and this lineage gives him the respect of foe and friend alike. When Draske is not to be found, it is Jadrun Khan's opinion that most khans turn to. His khanate is one of the largest in the north and a staunch rival of the Ulghur and Inchak khanates at horse riding prowess.

Description: Jadrun Khan is a middle aged yet physically fit Baklunish male with long braided hair that has never been cut. He wears dark leather armor and wears a decorative helmet that is reputedly magical, an heirloom of his family dating back to the reign of Ulaghai the Conqueror. When traveling, Jadrun is never far from his personal bodyguard, the enormous warband Drashan's Legion.

Sheik Chagan Vachir, Pit Master of Kester

True Neutral Human Male, 10th Level Thief

Strength: 12 (To Hit/Dmg: Nil; OD: 1-2; BBLG 4%)
 Intelligence 17 (+Lang: 6; Learn Spell: N/A; Max Spells: N/A)
 Wisdom: 13 (MAA: Nil, Bonus Spells: N/A)
 Dexterity: 15 (RAA: Nil; -1 to AC)
 Constitution: 15 (HP Adj: +1; SSS: 91%; RS: 94%)
 Charisma: 10 (LB: Nil; RA: Nil)
 AC: 1; Shieldless: 1; Surprised: 2
 Size: M
 Move: 12
 Hit Points: 44
 Base THACO: 16; Strength: N/A; Missile: N/A
 No. of Attacks: 1
 Damage: By weapon
 Base Saving Throws: P/P/DM: 11; P/P: 10; RSW: 10; BW: 14; Spell: 11
 Current X.P.: 313,719

Thief Abilities

- PP 80%; OL 67%; F/RT 65%; MS 78%; HiS 63%; HN 30%; CW 99%; RL 50%
- Backstab: +4 to hit, 4x damage

Items

Turban of defense AC4, *amulet of protection* +2, *jambiyah of venom* (1d4+1 + poison /1d3+1 + poison), *gloves of missile snaring*, various potions and poison types

History & Description: Obese, disease-marked, and disgustingly hedonistic, Sheik Vachir is the foremost pit master of Kester. His pavilion tents can be found about the town's slave auctions, markets and pit grounds. He specializes in scouting, breeding and training slaves to become gladiators. Amongst his greatest successes are the late Bruzhog the Maul, Abular "paragon of minotaurs", and Bruzharag the Misbegotten, now challenging the Orakhan of all Ulil. Sheik Vachir is a

schemer with seemingly unlimited resources and contacts. Some say he may even be a member of the Yellow Cartel. His current rival among the Pit Masters is the upstart female, Nura bint Ramil, the only woman in Ulil who dares reject his salacious advances.

Abi Dalzim, "The Father of Droughts"

Lawful Evil Human Male, Dual Classed 18th Level Geomancer/9th Level Cleric of Incabulos

Strength: 10 (To Hit/Dmg: Nil; OD: 1-2; BBLG 2%)
 Intelligence 19 (+Lang: 7; Learn Spell: 95%; Max Spells: All)
 Wisdom: 15 (MAA: +1, Bonus Spells: 2, 1)
 Dexterity: 16 (RAA: +1; -2 to AC)
 Constitution: 15 (HP Adj: +1; SSS: 91%; RS: 94%)
 Charisma: 7 (LB: -10%; RA: -5%)
 AC: -1; Shieldless: -1; Surprised: 1
 Size: M
 Move: 12
 Hit Points: 49
 Base THACO: 13; Strength: Nil; Missile: 12
 No. of Attacks: 1
 Damage: By weapon
 Base Saving Throws: P/P/DM: 10; P/P: 7; RSW: 5; BW: 9; Spell: 6
 Current X.P.: 1,708,422/450,974

Geomancer Abilities

- Spells: 9,8,7,6,5,4,3,2,1
- Gains a +2 to saving throws against spells, spell-like abilities and magical effects involving earth and paralysis.
- Vulnerable to air- and lightning-based effects, saving at -2.
- At 1st level may cast *fiat of stone* 1x/day as a special ability. This increases to 2x/day at 3rd level of experience.
- At 4th level, may cast *Maximilian's earthen grasp* 1x/day as a special ability, increasing to 2x/day at 7th level of experience.
- At 8th level, gains the ability cast *meld into stone* 1x/day as a special ability.
- May never use any magical item, scroll or potion that delivers air- or lightning-based damage. This restriction of course applies to memorized spells as well, however items or spells based in dust or using dust clouds are allowable.

Clerical Abilities

- Spells: 6,5,3,2,1
- 38% immunity to all diseases, including the effects of *cause disease*, *pestilence* and *plague* spells, mummy rot, the effects of green slime, violet fungi and similar creatures.
- May cast *hypnotism* as a 3rd level illusionist.
- Gains access to *plague** and *pestilence** as granted level 4th level spells.
- May cast a permanent *sleep*-like spell by touching the (single) intended victim. Casting time is 1 segment and a saving throw versus spells art -3 is permitted to negate the effects. This spell overrides the elven and half-elven resistances to *sleep* based magics and may be used once per day.

*See Excerpts from the Great Library, Volume II for the spell descriptions.

Items

Jambiyah +3 (1d4+3/1d6+3), *staff of striking* (1d6+3/+6/+9 and 20 charges), *turban of defense* AC2,

ring of protection +1, holy symbol, carpet of flying, rod of withering (35 charges), *periapt of proof against poison*, *dust of dryness* (5 pinches), *dust of illusion* (4 pinches), *dust of disappearance* (6 pinches), *clear spindle loun stone*, *stone salve* (x3), *potion of extra healing* (x3), various scrolls

Spell Book

1st: *Armor, clay beast, deaden sense, detect magic, fist of stone, gaze reflection, hail of stone, hold portal, identify, read geomantic magic, and slumber, sand whisper, wizard mark, write*

2nd: *Fool's gold, glitterdust, invisibility, knock, levitate, Maximillian's earthen grasp, paralyzation, sand shadow, stone sleep, summon swarm, wizard lock*

3rd: *Bands of Sirelyn, delayed shatter, dispel magic, fumble, hold person, material, Maximillians stony grasp, meld into stone, object missile, sand spray, slow, stonebolt, stoneiron*

4th: *Conjure elemental, conjure elemental-kin, dig, earthmaw, Mere's conjure sandlings, rain of rock, remove curse, repulse metal, stoneskin, wall of sand*

5th: *Conjure earth elemental, conjure para- or quasi-elemental, stone shape, transmute rock to mud, teleport, wall of stone*

6th: *Animate object, dusts of death, enchant an item, flesh to stone, move earth, part sand, stone tell, stone to flesh, transmute water to dust*

7th: *Conjure greater elemental, dehydrate, earthquake, gemjump, petrifying gaze, power word- stun, sand gems, statue, teleport without error*

8th: *Abi Dalzim's horrid wilting, maze, Otto's irresistible dance, permanency, polymorph any object, statue form*

9th: *Crystalbrittle, elemental aura – earth, estate transference, sand form*

History: Abi Dalzim was born around 510 CY in the Dry Steppes. Little is known of his childhood, his real name or which nomad tribe he belonged to. It was in his barren homeland that Abi Dalzim was first apprenticed under a little known earth elemental mage that had been banished from the exclusive Zashassar College of Magic. The wizard, known only as the Sand Sha'ir, was also a nomad by birth and chose the impressionable teen principally for his raw magical talent.

Mentor and apprentice both moved to the outskirts of Ket around 524 CY where Dalzim became indoctrinated to many aspects of Baklunish spell craft including dealings with genie-kind. During one of these negotiations, a summoned elder dao cryptically demanded the Sha'ir rename his pupil "Abi Dalzim" ("father of droughts" in ancient Baklunish), as part of his conditions of service. As the student Dalzim grew older he apparently inherited his master's prejudice against "enlightened" city folk, for both persistently plotted cruel and unprovoked attacks upon them. The dao's prophetic naming of Abi Dalzim came to fruition in 538 CY when Dalzim and a cadre of summoned genies destroyed the wells in the Caliph of Ekbir's palace. The Beygraf of Ket was also targeted when Dalzim and his evil genies stole a large amount of treasure from his vaults in Lopolla. This last great scheme was discovered and the two miscreant wizards were forced from their tower, whereupon they retreated to the lawlessness of Ull in 542 CY.

It was in the dark alleys of Kester that Abi Dalzim then met an Incabulite necromancer who offered to show him a new path of dark magic. Dalzim had learned all he desired from the Sand Sha'ir. To prove his loyalty to the necromancer, he murdered his elemental mage mentor in the name of the Black Rider. With Incabulos as inspiration,

Abi Dalzim's evil flourished over the next decade. In that time he brought many new magics into the world. Few have not heard of the moisture-draining spell *Abi Dalzim's horrid wilting*, while among the dervishes of the desert the *scarf of the Dry Steppes* is even more infamous.

Around 552 CY, Dalzim and his necromancer ally came into conflict with a wizard named Rary wandering south of Ull. Rary found company with the dervishes of the Dry Steppes and clerics of Al'Akbar to set back the evil in Ull. This effort saw the deaths of many good heroes, but the Incabulite was slain while Abi Dalzim became the prisoner of the nomads. Held in the far-flung town of Kanak, it is said Dalzim was cruelly tortured and mutilated for his misdeeds. Broken and near death, witnesses recall the day Dalzim was taken from his imprisonment by a noble dao who claimed rights to the offending wizard back in the Great Dismal Delve. None were brave enough to contest the genie's claim and assumed Dalzim would be banished from Oerth forever.

There is no account of what transpired during his incarceration in the Elemental Planes, but within the last decade Abi Dalzim resurfaced with renewed power and the resources to reestablish himself. He has since created a stronghold in the ruins of an ancient Oeridian tower in the Ulsprues, suitably overlooking the town of Kester. From his new abode Dalzim works covertly through a younger agent, the ambitious Nura bint Ramil, who is the only female Pit Master in the trade town of Kester. Today, few in the West want to believe Abi Dalzim has returned, most thinking him to be a ghost or an imposter hiding among the mountains. This will serve him all too well in future exploits.

Description: Abi Dalzim is a short Baklunish male who is definitely venerable of age but somehow lives on to practice magic despite the reported mutilations and broken bones delivered long ago by his Ull captors. He is not often seen in the flesh, instead hiding his true appearance behind a voluminous sandy-colored, hooded robe that combines the properties of a *robe blending* and with a *cloak of displacement*. His voice is low and whispering, much like sand blowing in a storm. He eschews opulent attire and excessive jewelry unless it has a purpose.

Tactics: Due to his long career, Abi Dalzim has treasure caches hidden all over the Baklunish West and as such he could bear drastically different items on any given encounter. One of his most cherished items is a concealed *rod of withering* (c.f. staff of the same name) that once belonged to his necromantic ally. Abi Dalzim is also known for employing magic items linked to the elements, especially earth. He is never without a few vials containing *dust of dryness*, *dust of illusion* or *dust of disappearance*. At his most sadistic he will carry *dust of sneezing and choking* or custom made dust items. Other items that round out his repertoire might include *stone salve* for defense, a *stone of controlling earth elementals* and a *clear spindle loun stone* for his own personal sustenance.

As an earth elemental mage, Abi Dalzim is limited in spell selection, but has made up for this deficiency quite well with devastating use of his clerical spells. Dalzim shuns fighting directly, so undead and elementals are always employed to slow down his foes while he can unabashedly unleash a *horrid wilting* spell on both enemy and ally alike.

Nura bint Ramil, Pit Mistress of Kester

Lawful Evil Human Female, 12th Level Thief

Strength: 16 (To Hit/Dmg: Nil/+1; OD: 1-3; BBLG 10%)
Intelligence: 11 (+Lang: 2; Learn Spell: N/A; # Spells: N/A)
Wisdom: 12 (MAA: Nil, Bonus Spells: N/A)
Dexterity: 18 (RAA: +3; -4 to AC)
Constitution: 15 (HP Adj: +1; SSS: 91%; RS: 94%)
Charisma: 17 (LB: +30%; RA: +30%)
AC: 2; Shieldless: 2; Surprised: 6
Size: M
Move: 12
Hit Points: 59
Base THACO: 16; Strength: 15; Missile: 13; Hurl: 12
No. of Attacks: 1
Damage: By weapon
Base Saving Throws: P/P/DM: 11; P/P: 10; RSW: 10; BW: 14; Spell: 11
Current X.P.: 781,146

Thief Abilities

- PP 110%; OL 92%; F/RT 80%; MS 104%; HiS 87%; HN 35%; CW 99.2%; RL 60%
- Backstab: +4 to hit, 4x damage

Items

Short sword +3 (1d6+4/1d4+4), 3 *daggers* +1 (1d4+2/1d3+2), short bow & 12 arrows (1d6), *leather armor* +2, *slippers of spider climbing*, grappling hook, 50' silk line, thieves' tools, *potion of invisibility* (x3), *potion of levitation*, *dust of tracelessness* (9 pinches), various poisons

History

There are few sights in Ull rarer than a woman who wields power and wealth. In the seedy heights of Kester is one such woman, and though she is not a native of Ull, none dare contest her right to live and prosper in that harsh frontier land. Nura bint Ramil is the only Pit Mistress of the far-flung Ull town of Kester. She arrived on the scene less than ten years ago, bringing with her enough wealth and attitude to buy her way into the upper echelon of Kester's slave and gladiator markets. Her fame and influence quickly grew given that being a woman she had to be twice as ambitious and aggressive as her rival male pit owners. She operates from her own walled compound in Kester, including numerous slave pits and a training yard for her handpicked stable of gladiators. Nura is frequently found appraising new talent at Kester's slave market or at the Grand Pavilions placing bets with her fellow Pit Masters on their fighters. A retinue of loyal eunuch bodyguards and other sycophant servants always accompanies her. Whispers tell that the exotic Pit Mistress also has a very powerful and secret benefactor watching over her in return for unknowable favors abroad.

Nura bint Ramil was born in 554CY in Sefmur. She is the daughter of a small time guild thief named Nadira and a notorious assassin, Ramil (The Serpent). Nura was only one when her father was apprehended on a mission in Ket. Ramil was never seen again so she never knew him. Nura grew up on the mean streets of Sefmur with little attention from her roguish mother who eventually left her orphaned when she left town with a rich traveler. The young girl ran with the ragged Kester youth gangs from the age of age eight. She faced the judgment of the qadi magistrates several times for picking pockets and cutting purses. Nura spent time in more than squalid-celled detention house and was even forced to work as a slave for local Sefmuri clothiers.

At the age of fourteen Nura caught the eye of a lieutenant in the Sefmur thieves' guild named Mirak al-

Massari. Mirak came to the clothiers to have garments custom made for the guild. By chance one day, he saw Nura casually concealing sewing needles, strong thread and even scissors in her clothing as she worked. Watching her skill at pocketing these items, the thief was impressed and took the girl aside during a break. Nura was told by Mirak that she had special talents and that she was wasting her time here. Mirak managed to get her released from the sweatshop after bribing the head seamstress with promises and fake jewelry.

Nura soon joined the thieves' guild, sponsored by Mirak. In a few years she advanced through the ranks of the guild faster than any other woman in decades. She concentrated on house burglaries at night and bait-and-switch jobs during the day. It wasn't long before she overheard talk from the senior lieutenants about her abilities. They remarked on how she was the spitting image of her mother Nadira, who once rebuffed the Guildmaster's love to have an affair with a Sefmuri assassin named Ramil. Nura was intrigued since her mother had told her nothing about her father except his name - she became obsessed with learning more about Ramil, his history with her mother, what happened to him and even what kind of debts the guild owed him.

A few years later, Nura's curiosity got her into trouble when she broke into the guild records one night. She discovered to her ire that the Guildmaster sent Ramil on a guild-sponsored mission to Ket. The mission was a set-up with the Ketite authorities to separate him from Nadira. Nura was just finished reading the records when Mirak and the other senior lieutenants caught her in the act. Breaking serious guild laws, she was turned over to the qadis on trumped up charges created by bribed officials. Nura was sentenced to slavery and was sold to an unscrupulous caravan master whose last recorded expedition was south through Ull toward the Dry Steppes. Fate intervened however and the caravan was scattered by a freak dust storm that took the life of the caravan master and left everyone else fighting for survival. Surprisingly, Nura turned up in Kester a week later, a free Baklunish woman once more, with newfound wealth to start her new life there. While she now enjoys a career beyond her wildest dreams, Nura still plots revenge for her family on the Sefmur thieves' guild in the future.

Description: By all frontier standards Nura is a comely individual, fit and youthful in appearance with lustrous black hair down to her waist. However, her severe hazel-colored eyes and harsh demeanor show what a rough life she has in fact lived. She is normally dressed in the finest robes and dresses that can be found in Kester, along with an endless assortment of veils and jeweled accessories won from bets with other pit masters or gifted from visiting merchants. When traveling outside the comforts of Kester through the rugged land of Ull she dresses in leathers, a light cloak and often a heavy turban to disguise her sex and appearance.

Nura is highly proficient in many weapons and will always have at least one blade hidden on her person during any given encounter. She is not above the use of poisons and odd rumors have it that her eclectic collection includes venoms that can be delivered with a kiss or from her painted fingernails. Given her resources and contacts, any of the above items in her possession could be magical with an emphasis on protective worn devices. In certain dangerous situations, Nura may also have access to magical dusts, sands and possibly even items with the ability to summon an earth elemental.

DM's Notes: The enigmatic Abi Dalzim was, in fact, the one who recovered Nura from the sandstorm that overtook her slave caravan. The Father of Droughts had

recently returned to the outskirts of Kester after a long banishment at the hands of his nemesis Rary and needed an agent in Kester in order to protect his secrecy. Nura is completely in his thrall, secretly doing his bidding without fail. She fears his omnipresent attention from the crumbled ruins of his tower in the Ulsprue foothills. When not tasked into some fell quest by her shrouded master, Nura is free to pursue her own goals. This is an

arrangement she willingly chose over a life of slavery, thus making her even more cunning than most would-be villains. Her position as a Pit Master in lawless Kester makes her an excellent source for information or minor missions to player characters who don't mind her shady nature. In the most extreme situations she can even buy captured PCs and put them to work in the town's deadly fighting pits until they can earn their freedom back.

Uli Magic Items

Magic items have spread prodigiously throughout the Flanaess since the Migrations to the point where every culture and region has dozens of unique creations attributed to their name. The crafting of magical items, once the province of Mages of Power and High Priests, is now practiced in every major city and town by spell casters of all levels, from Archmages to simple hedge wizards. No less abundant are the wondrous items coming out of the Baklunish West. This includes Ull, a remote region not famed at all for arcane or divine creations. It is this misconception that has kept many of Ull's exotic treasures long hidden from adventuring eyes.

Loremasters of the arcane can tell much of a magic item's history just by studying its age and design. However, from time to time an unearthed magical treasure will confound cursory examination and reveal a possible new layer to a region's past. It is in the unlikely armpit of the world called Ull that a few such items have been rumored to exist.

Note

Due to the unreliable information given by Ull "experts" to certain members of the Moquollad Consortium and the Seekers, players should be provided with only rough histories of the magic items and vague descriptions of their rumored powers. DM fiendishness is advised when doling out such information.

Potions

Stone Salve

This ointment has two uses. If an ounce of it is applied to a petrified creature, it returns the creature to normal exactly as per the *stone to flesh* spell. If an ounce of it is applied to a non-petrified creature, it protects as if the creature were the recipient of both a *stoneskin* and *protection from petrification* spell.

XP Value: 450

GP Value: 650

Ull Salve

"Ull healing works. Just don't plan on attracting anything other than flies for the next few days..."

- Overheard from an adventurer in Ull.

This thick, dark-grey unguent is composed of powdered herbs and roots suspended in a goat fat base. When applied to a wound the salve has both healing and astringent properties. *Ull salve* will restore hit points at a rate of 1d4+1 per application. Two applications of the unguent have a powerful astringent effect, allowing bleeding wounds to close (c.f. *sword of sharpness*) in addition to the salve's normal healing ability.

1d6 applications of the salve will be found in small, goatskin-wrapped clay containers. Due to the tendency of the goat fat to curdle, Ull salve is not highly sought after outside of Ull since it has a terrible stench. Amongst the Ull, the salve is used as a cure-all.

XP Value: 300

GP Value: 200

Rings

Ring of the Yorodhi

"The Yorodhi shall have their birthright!"

- Heard minutes before an Ull Warlord was found murdered in his tent.

This magic ring is held in high regard by the Yorodhi hill folk as a symbol of tribal heritage and tenacious strength. It appears as a thick band of silver etched with airy Oeridian glyphs and inset with several tiny sapphires between the line works. The origin of the ring, like anything else in the region, has been spun into tall tales to increase the Yorodhi's self-importance. Most stories claim it to be crafted in a time before the Baklunish-Suloise Wars when the Oerid people were at their strongest in the West. Of course, it is also claimed a great King of their people supposedly wore it. Whether this apocryphal Oeridian monarch and his kingdom truly existed within present day Ull is debatable.

What is known is that the ring first found in the foothills of the Barrier Peaks by tomb plundering Ull shortly after their occupation of the Yorodhi lands. Infuriated by the tomb desecrations, the Yorodhi have since waged years of secret vendetta against any Ull or foreigner who is thought to possess or have ties to the stolen ring.

The ring's powers have not fully been studied, since its owners have invariably been on the run constantly, but legend states that it brings great morale to the hearts of those around the wearer much akin to the presence of a paladin or cavalier. Other fanciful tales relate that the ring can only truly be used by one of pure Oeridian blood, a claim at the heart of the Yorodhi vendettas. Allegedly the wearer can also boast to be imbued with heroic physical prowess but to what extent has not yet been verified.

Powers

- Immunity to fear 10' radius centered on the wearer
- +1 to the wearer's Strength (effect ends if removed)
- Fighters, cavaliers and paladins of pure Oeridian blood gain +1 level while wearing the ring

X.P. Value: 1,500

G.P. Value: 5,000

Rods, Staves and Wands

Rod of Dhawar

"Fear Gorr! Gorr am your master now!"

- Ogre shaman to a summoned Nalfeshnee.

This fell rod is said to have once belonged to the self-styled prophet Dhawar, used in his demon-worshipping cult during pre-Devastation times. The device was lost during the initial throes of the Invoked Devastation and is believed to lie buried somewhere amongst the Ullsprue Mountains to this day. The rod has occasionally found its way into the hands of some ogre shaman or explorer, but it somehow always returns to the craggy heights where Dhawar once presided over his Altar.

The *rod of Dhawar* is an unremarkable blackened metal bar, tapered in the fashion of a human leg bone. It bears no overt markings save for numerous nicks from attempts to break its adamantite-like hardness. When first held, the rod is said to make the owner more charismatic and self-assured, improving the effect of his or her presence on others. In the right hands, however, the rod's true power can be fully exercised.

Many superstitious ogres and other aspiring cult leaders whisper that the rod excels at summoning demons that are otherwise beyond the ability of the possessor to call upon. Unfortunately, few realize that the rod does not give full control over whatever is summoned, resulting in some

disastrous rituals for the rod's wielders over the centuries. Additionally, lore masters continue to be puzzled over the tales of those possessing the rod being compelled to eventually return to the Ulsprues. Speculation has it that the fell device is tied to the Altar of Dhawar on some spiritual level and must eventually return there to recharge.

Powers

- When held, the *rod of Dhawar* duplicates the Charisma- and appearance-enhancing abilities of a *rod of splendor*. This ability does not drain charges from the rod.
- The rod's wielder may cast *contact other plane* once per day at the cost of one charge. Such contact is restricted to the lower planar regions and the user does *not* gain reductions to his or her chances of insanity from a high Intelligence score.
- The rod may be used to cast a special version of the *cacodemon* spell at a cost of three charges. This is the most treacherous and deadly function of the rod, since that which is summoned is not automatically under the caster's control. The rod is attuned to (and thus may be used to summon) creatures from the Abyss. It cannot be used to summon a demon lord or prince, but all other types are fair game. The caster has no control over how many of a given demon type will answer the rod's summons
- Unlike the normal version of *cacodemon*, 1d3 sub- or minor demons can be automatically summoned at the cost of a single magical charge from the rod. They are 95% likely to be under the rod wielder's control. Demons affected by this level of power from the rod include the bar-igura, chasme, dretch, rutterkin and manes. (The exception to this is the manes, of which 1d4 may be summoned and having a base 100% chance of being controlled since they are the fetch-and-step servants of most other abyssal creatures.)
- 1d2 lesser demons may be summoned with a 90% chance of appearing and a 65% chance of being under the caster's control. The babau, bulezau, gelloudes, glabrezu (type III), hezrou (type II), incubus, shadow demon, succubus and vroek (type I) are all examples of the demon types affected by this power of the *rod of Dhawar*.
- A single named major demon may be summoned with a 65% chance of appearing and a 35% chance of being controlled by the rod wielder. Note that in order for the summoning to have any chance of success, the rod wielder must have the demon's true name. If an incorrect name is used, there is a 75% that something of much greater power (demon lord or prince) will answer the summons by *gating* the wielder, (minus the rod) directly into imprisonment within his or her abyssal realm. Demons affected by this power of the rod include the balor (type VI), cacodemon, cataboligne, dusin, goristro, marut, molydeus, nabassu, nalfeshnee (type IV), marilith (type V), and skurda.
- Summoned creatures that the caster is initially successful in controlling are subject to the conditions of the *cacodemon* spell – i.e. a

service may be demanded of them, they can be bargained with and/or soul trapped, etc. Also, as with the abovementioned spell, summoned demons are stronger than normal, being at 8 hit points/dice.

Modifiers to Controlling Summoned Creatures

- Summoner is of chaotic evil alignment: +5%
- Summoner is of chaotic or neutral good alignment: -10%
- Summoner is of lawful good alignment: -15%
- Summoning performed at the altar of Dhawar: +20%
- Summoner is not within a circle of protection or protected by a thaumaturgic triangle with *protection from evil* cast: -30%
- An imprisoning pentagram has not been prepared for the summoned demonic creature to arrive within: -30%

X.P. Value: 4,500*

G.P. Value: 7,000

*Evil alignments only. Neutrals gain ½ the amount, while those of good alignment lose this amount for using the rod.

Staff of the Barrier Peaks

"Find any metal poles?"

- *Joke told among weapon dealers and explorers.*

No magic item in Ull legend has vexed more minds than the enigmatic *staff of the Barrier Peaks*. Less than a century ago, the strange metal pole was first brought to the land of Ull by a dying slaver whose band had ventured deep into the Barrier Peaks seeking humanoid captives. As the only survivor of the expedition, the stricken slaver babbled madly of a hidden, marshy valley filled with intelligent plant-life and grotesque animals unknown in the West. According to his ravings, a lucky few of the slaving band found refuge from the vale's denizens within a bizarre cave of light and sound. It is there that they found many strange treasures including the staff.

Normally such deluded ranting would have been dismissed, if not for the burns and abrasions on most of the man's body and the curious metal pole that supposedly saved him from the horrors of the place. First thought of as a weapon, the staff has since passed on to many ambitious (but usually failed) gladiators and slavers who put far too much stock in the tale. Interestingly, the most recent sighting of the metallic staff was while on its way back to the Barrier Peaks when its last owner decided to retrace the origins of the item in search of answers.

The *staff of the Barrier of Peaks* is the length and weight of a normal quarterstaff, yet it is composed of bands of very strong, interlocking metal. It is topped with an embedded crystal of unknown type that can be hidden by a button-activated shutter built into the bands. The craftsmanship is a point of contention among lore seekers. Some attribute the staff's creation to the dwarves, while experts of that race point to the Mage of the Vale as the origin of the strange item. Still others claim it is perhaps something originating from UnderOerth.

In any case, the staff is believed to somehow emit an inaudible and invisible *antipathy* effect. The effect targets intelligent plant-life. In less sentient plants and animals it has even been known to cause pain. As a melee weapon, the staff has proven itself to be less effective in combat compared to normal bludgeoning weapons, excepting its durability of course.

Powers

Pressing the button to reveal the hidden crystal drains one charge from the staff. All creatures within a 15' radius of the staff's wielder must make a saving throw versus rods, staves and wands or suffer the effects, which vary depending on the creature's type and Intelligence score.

Effects Vs. Plants Intelligence	Effect	Duration
Non-Animal	Quiescent	1d10+10 turns
Animal	<i>Symbol of stunning</i>	1d4+10 turns
Semi-Low	<i>Symbol of pain</i>	10 turns
Average	<i>Hold monster</i>	5 turns
Very and above	<i>Antipathy</i>	2 turns
	None	Nil

Effects Vs. Animals Intelligence	Effect	Duration
Non-Animal	Unconsciousness	1d6+6 turns
Animal	<i>Symbol of pain</i>	1d4+6 turns
Semi-Low	<i>Hold monster</i>	6 turns
Average and above	<i>Antipathy</i>	1 turn
	None	Nil

- When wielded as a weapon, the staff is very slow and clumsy, always striking last in a melee round. Note, however, that use of its magical ability is quite fast, requiring but 1/6 of a segment (1 second) to accomplish.
- The staff is always -1 to hit and damage in melee.
- Unlike most staves, the *staff of the Barrier Peaks* can hold a maximum of 50 charges. When drained, the staff does not crumble to dust. Instead, pressing the button will simply no longer cause the crystal to emerge from its housing and the staff's normal effects are absent. Absorbing electrically based spells recharges the staff as follows:

Spell/Effect	Charges Regained
Wand of lightning, <i>shock</i> effect	1
Staff of thunder & lightning, <i>shock</i> effect	2
<i>Otiluke's electrical screen</i>	3*
<i>Mordenkainen's electric arc</i>	5
<i>Nystul's radiant baton</i> (blue)	7
<i>Lightning bolt</i> or similar effect	10
<i>Otiluke's radiant screen</i> (blue)	10*
<i>Nystul's radiant arch</i> (blue)	15
<i>Chain lightning</i> or similar effect	20**

* Number of charges regained per round of contact

**Item must successfully save as hard metal versus lightning or be rendered permanently burnt out and inert.

- The staff can absorb additional charges above the stated maximum of 50. These additional charges simply allow a margin of error for the staff wielder. They do not add uses to the staff, nor do they have any other beneficial or baneful effects, except in the case of a massive *overcharge* as detailed below.
- When *overcharged* (i.e. anywhere between 51 and 59 charges are present in the device), the staff will become warm to the touch, vibrate and hum audibly. The heat, vibration and sound will increase in proportion to the overcharge amount.
- If fully 10 charges above the staff's maximum capacity are absorbed (i.e. the staff is brought to 60+ charges in total), the *overcharged* item will instantaneously explode in a retributive strike (c.f. *staff of power* or *staff of the magi*). Thus, a fully charged *staff of the barrier peaks* can absorb an additional 9 charges safely before detonating.

X.P. Value: 1,000

G.P. Value: 800

Miscellaneous Magic

Jug of Geshtai

"Careful fool! That could be Geshtai's Jug!"

- A water trader yelling at his porters.

This two-handed weathered clay jug is tall as a gnome and is indistinguishable to the untrained eye from the thousands like it found in Ull and the Dry Steppes. Closer appraisal reveals a difference in decoration however; the *jug* is painted with scenes of waterfalls, streams and wells with common women filling vessels from them. These scenes are deplorably faded and flaking from age and the elements.

Clerics of Geshtai claim the vaunted jug was created and consecrated in the Dry Steppe town of Kanak, with the aid of the Shah of the Waters no less. Some historians and sages believe it dates back to the time well before the fall of the Baklunish Empire, even though the chances of something that frail enduring is doubtful. Despite this, the jug in more recent lore has been attributed to the caravan town of Kester where several witnesses have seen it, all of who have asserted newfound piety for Geshtai after having used the jug.

The *jug of Geshtai* is generally agreed to be a larger variation of the well-known *decanter of endless water*, Operating in most respects like its smaller cousin, the jug's main difference is that its water is both purified (as per the *purify food and drink* spell) and is holy water sacred to the church of Geshtai. The magically created water loses its holy blessing shortly after it is poured forth, but still retains its crystal-clear appearance long after it is redistributed. The jug has no stopper of its own and when deactivated appears completely empty, further masking it from identification when among other earthenware water vessels.

X.P. Value: 1,500

G.P. Value: 5,000

Robe of Incabulos

"It's your funeral."

- A bodyguard, moments before his master puts on the robe for the first time.

This vile robe was created by an evil devotee of the Dark Rider. While he or she is said to have perished decades ago, the robe still remains somewhere in the vicinity of Ull. It has been blamed for the deaths of many hapless souls and is even listed by Rary of the Circle of Eight as a profane item that should be destroyed on sight. The *robe of Incabulos* nonetheless has changed hands many times and has proved worth the risk to possess.

Writings relate that it is a typical hooded robe, charcoal grey in color with frayed edges. It appears in every respect to be a *robe of eyes* when *identified*, but its latent powers cannot be unlocked until it is donned by its owner for the first (and possibly last) time. After putting on the robe, the wearer is afflicted with a fast acting magical disease, which may not be cured save by a *wish* spell or the intervention of an artifact or relic of great healing power. Furthermore, the robe cannot possibly be removed during the initial stages of the disease, which onlookers have described as a disturbing nightmarish sleep-state where the wearer screams, thrashes and manifests bodily sores.

If the wearer manages to live through the initial trials inflicted by the robe, he or she awakens fully healthy, albeit mentally weakened (permanent -1 to saving throws

versus mind-influencing spells and effects) and is thereafter free to remove and put the robe back on without further risk. In addition to powers of a *robe of eyes* it is said the successful wearer of the *robe of Incabulos* is also granted immunity to all diseases and poisons, a property that many in Ull (or beyond) would and have killed for.

X.P. Value: 5,200

G.P. Value: 53,000

Swords

Gloryseeker, Short Sword +3

"Behold! In my hand I hold Gloryseeker!"

- A gladiator's boast to the crowd.

"That was not Gloryseeker. Pay up."

- Phrase often heard when a gladiator's sword breaks.

This now legendary sword is an indelible part of Kester urban legend. As the stories are often retold around the fighting pits, *Gloryseeker's* true origin is unknown for certain. A popularly held belief however, is that the fabled sword was used extensively in ancient gladiator combat; primarily a symbol of excellence among many real and falsely celebrated champions. Where fiction and fact become further jumbled is in the exact dating of the blade. Most will proclaim it to be the steel of the great west Paynim riders, others attribute the sword to the pre-migration Oeridians that left eastward before the Ulli came to claim the land and even more deluded opinions state the blade is of neither and really comes from someplace called Tdon. Attempts at authentication have been few and far between since counterfeits have been created and because the real sword has changed hands more times than can be tracked. *Gloryseeker* actually has not been seen for over two decades, but popular opinion is the blade still rests somewhere in the Kester area.

Gloryseeker is a short sword of extreme sharpness and adamantite toughness. Its make is of a curious sort for the region, being both broad and double-edged with a strong parrying crosspiece. It is not generally agreed on how strong a magical emanation *Gloryseeker* exudes since no form of divination (*identify*, *legend lore*, etc.) is able to quantify the item's dweomer. When used in a gladiatorial even, the sword special ability is to increase the wielder's popularity with the spectators, granting them the equivalent of a Charisma of 21 (Loyalty base: +70%; Reaction adjustment: +50%, awe power affecting up to and including 4 HD creatures) while in the arena or when amongst fans of gladiatorial games.

X.P. Value: 1,800

G.P. Value: 2,500 (8,500 to gladiators)

Miscellaneous Weapons

Dagger of Misfortune +3

"Never take an enemy's blade unless you know first what killed him."

- Old Ulli warband saying.

In the chronicles of magical lore there are innumerable magical daggers, yet few astute sages bother to learn about the history of cursed items of this sort, finding them an annoying footnote at best. Out of the Baklunish West, however, there is one dagger that has proved tenacious enough to be the talk of many a Baklunish assassin or illicit weapon trader.

The *dagger of misfortune* is also widely known in the shadowy underbelly of the West as the Dagger of Ralishaz or the Unlooked For Blade. Despite this, there seems to be no conclusive evidence that the namesake deity

desecrated this weapon for his cause, for there are vying claims from decadent mages and demonic cultists as to the origin of the blade. All agree however, that the blade has a long and grisly history that has now become part of Baklunish legend.

Naturally most accounts relate the dagger as being found on or embedded in the dead body of its last hapless owner. For this reason in many Baklunish families and tribes it is taboo to take a dead man's dagger. Interestingly, from a hundred documented stories over several centuries, the *dagger of misfortune* has turned up west of the Velverdyva River consistently even if borne into the East by a newly cursed owner. Adherents of Ralishaz say this is not fate but the hand of their god's misfortune at work.

The *dagger of misfortune* appears as a mundane blade with neither markings nor any remarkable craftsmanship. The *dagger* gives off no discernable magical aura nor any hint of malicious alignment. Even worse, once it is claimed as a personal possession it is tenaciously hard to get rid of. The weapon has been said to change its form to look like other nearby daggers in order to confuse the owner. In many cases it inexplicably swaps itself into the sheath of a new dagger if exchanged in market. Simply leaving it behind has been found to be futile as well, since it merely reappears in the possession of the cursed owner the next time they check. Indeed the only known ways to be rid of it is by the death of the owner death or by the power of a *limited wish*, *wish* or greater spell.

The *dagger of misfortune* is wielded as a +3 weapon, assuming its owner can overcome its deadly side effects. Any time it is drawn, there is a 5% chance the dagger will strike of its own accord and automatically inflict a grievous wound to a random body part of the possessor (treat as either a critical hit or assign a -2 penalty to hit rolls, damage rolls, saving throws and/or ability checks involving the injured limb). Even if the initial injury is avoided, the *dagger of misfortune* will continue to act unpredictably. If thrown, it has a 10% of magically returning and striking the wielder instead, using the wielder's original to hit and damage rolls. If used in melee, the *dagger* forces the user to roll twice for each attack and then take the worst of the two results. Any natural roll of a one is always considered a fumble: the dagger then re-rolls an attack to hit its owner.

Some believe the *dagger of misfortune* has been broken or destroyed many times only to find it's way back into circulation at some mad god's whim. Needless to say, if the Dagger is ever sundered, the poor fool who accomplishes this task will suffer 1001 days of bad luck (The exact nature of the bad luck is left to the DM; the curse should as hard to remove as the *dagger* itself).

XP Value: Nil

GP Value: 2 when not *identified*, otherwise nil

Artifacts & Relics

Minotaur Mask of the Ulsprues (Lesser Artifact of Baphomet)

"The power, I can feel it in my...RARRRRR!"

- A Thrall of Baphomet donning the mask.

History: This hideous looking and possibly cursed item was created as a profane gift to a long dead cult of Baphomet, the demon lord of minotaurs. Sages speculate the *mask* was made to perpetuate a much larger and complex rite involving something called the Elder Maze.

The first recipients of the *minotaur mask* operated covertly among a few isolated congregations of the ancient Baklunish Empire, using its powers as part of their debased rituals or to engage in spates of anonymous

bloodshed abroad. In either case the cult's leader or champion typically wore the *mask*; filled with bloodlust, the cursed wearer would then hunt down a victim before brutally slaying them. Such proceedings often took place in a highly secret maze, a cave complex, or in the winding and densely crowded alleys of a major city. The blood of the sacrifice was then shared among Baphomet's faithful by the wearer of the *minotaur mask*, hoping in turn to be granted the Elder Curse by their demonic lord.

In the years building up to the Baklunish-Suloise Wars, the *mask* fell into the hands of the Suel Empire's Mages of Power. The unusual item was rigorously studied for its magical secrets in an effort to duplicate it so the Empire could field their own minotaur shock troops. The Suloise successfully crafted an unknown number of copies but the original was eventually stolen back by the cultists at a great cost of lives on both sides. Thereafter it lay deep underground until the Twin Cataclysms nearly buried the knowledge of the Mask forever.

Within the last several decades what was purported to be the original *minotaur mask* turned up in the hands of an ogre tribe living in the Ulsprue Range. With their proximity to the strange Altar of Dhawar they immediately brought about a resurgence of Baphomet's worship for not only ogres and minotaurs, but orcs and humans as well. The *mask's* influence can still be felt today as clans of Vaprak- and Baphomet-worshipping ogres feud among the craggy highlands of the Ulsprues. Inevitably these chaotic clashes have led to the disappearance of the *mask* again. Whether the original *minotaur mask* or any of its copies still remains in the West remains to be seen, but unquestionably many cults of Baphomet - both ogre and human - are tirelessly searching for it today.

Description: The *mask* is comprised of a minotaur's skull with the lower jawbone missing, still sporting a pair of dull, timeworn bull's horns. To verify its authenticity, an unfading glyph of Baphomet is etched with dried blood into the skull's forehead. A strap, likely made of minotaur hide, is attached in such a way that any creature of small to large size can buckle it over their head and cover their face. Once it is secure, the magic of the Mask activates instantly. The user undergoes a swift and grisly alteration as the skull melds with the wearer's head, making it appear as if the long-dead minotaur has been given flesh, blood and life again. The change is by no means permanent and only extends to the wearer's head and neck, leaving the rest of his or her body, including any items worn or carried, untouched. Individual appearances will vary based on who wears the *mask*, for it will usually match hair and eye color of the owner and even resize

proportionately to body dimensions for ease of movement.

Powers

The *minotaur mask* imparts the user with knowledge of its powers but at the same time affects his personality for the worst. Besides having the superficial appearance of a minotaur, the *mask* grants the wearer the following abilities:

- Immunity to *maze*, *hallucinatory terrain* and *distance distortion* spells
- The wearer has a 5 in 6 chance of discovering concealed or secret doors, including those concealed by illusions or other magical means. Each time this power is used the mask's wearer has a 5% cumulative chance of moving one step closer to chaotic evil alignment. The cumulative amount resets to zero each time a single step in the alignment shift occurs – thus, if this power of the *mask* is used sparingingly, the onset of becoming evilly-aligned is very gradual and may not be noticed at first.
- The *masked* one is enraptured with euphoric bloodlust, allowing them to rage* as a barbarian 1x/day (or one additional time if already able to rage) and while raging may use their altered head in a goring attack for 4d6 damage.
- Once per day the *mask's* wearer can also emit a terrible roar that acts as a *shout* spell cast at the 10th level of ability.
- Each time the *minotaur mask* is worn the bearer loses 1d4 points of Wisdom (to a minimum of 6), which then cannot be recovered until the item is removed. Lost Wisdom is recovered at a rate of 1 point per week, so long as the *mask* is not worn. Removing the *minotaur mask* voluntarily requires a saving throw versus spells, but with a –5 modifier since the user has become enamored with the unholy power of the item. Once the *mask* is successfully removed, whether voluntarily or otherwise, it becomes quiescent and will not function again for 24 hours. Despite its side effects, the benefits of wearing the *minotaur mask* often keeps its bearer eager to wear it once more.

*See the *Complete Barbarian's Handbook* for the full description of this ability.

Adventures in Ull

One does not have to go far in Ull to find adventure; sometimes it finds you first and with dire consequences. The following hooks can be used for both short term and long term campaigns in Ull.

The Altar of Dhawar

Prophecy of Devastation: A thousand years ago the Baklunish-Suloise War was about to come to a cataclysmic end, yet before this, many Oeridian tribes wisely began migrating away from their ancestral lands rather than be killed as innocent bystanders. However, not all Oeridians chose to leave their lands behind and chiefly among them were the Yorodhi tribe. Legends passed down through time by Yorodhi elders and corroborated by dervish campfire tales, say that within the Yorodhi society existed a deeply seeded doomsday cult that revered one or more demon princes for their unique insights and divinations. The cult conducted their unholy rituals at a carved stone altar in the southern Ulsprue Mountains atop a remote peak that faced out toward the horizon where one could gaze upon the distant strife in the Baklunish Empire.

According to legend, the cleric who founded the cult was an Oeridian pariah named Dhawar. Dhawar claimed he was led to the site by visions and whispered voices that forewarned him of an impending doom. For a few years Dhawar collected like-minded followers who could help him in averting this possible cataclysm or at least keep it from spilling over into the lands that the Yorodhi resolutely refused to abandon. While most of their clandestine gatherings involved grisly live sacrifices to gain knowledge and minor aid, none in the cult knew the lengths to which Dhawar would go to change fate.

The Final Sacrifice: It was on the hour of the Invoked Devastation that the cult was sinisterly persuaded by Dhawar to become the final sacrifice to their baleful demonic patrons. One by one their blood was spilled upon Dhawar's Altar even as the threat of the Devastation roiled towards them on the horizon. What became of Dhawar after his cult's demise is still shrouded in speculation to this day for there was only one witness. A single cultist doubted Dhawar in the end and hid among the crags while his brethren offered themselves in sacrifice. The vile horrors the cultist saw manifested that day were enough to paralyze him in fear and when at last the Invoked Devastation shook the region, Dhawar fell, or in later accounts, was pulled by something into an abyssal fissure that opened near the Altar. While the Yorodhi did barely survive the cataclysm, only Istus knows what Dhawar's cult truly accomplished that day.

The Altar Revisited: Over the centuries the tainted Altar would still see more hapless visitors. Local worshippers of other evil deities such as Ralishaz and Incabulos became attracted to the Altar of Dhawar by the legends and sought to reap rewards for their own sacrifices there. Other times lost pilgrims would find the peak on accident during their journeys to similar hidden holy sites within the Ulsprues. Eventually rumors spread to the ears of adventurers about treasure at the Altar of Dhawar either left by cultists in sacrifice to their gods or lost by unwary pilgrims. Even more speculation abounded over what wealth could be found in the dark depths of the peak top crevice. What ever their intent, travelers kept easily returning to the Altar, at least until the ogres moved in.

Effect on the Ogres: The ogre population in the Ulsprues steadily grows each year and two decades ago

one of these highland tribes chose to settle in a cavern system along the same pathway that leads to Dhawar's mountain. The barbarous ogres knew of the tainted Altar atop the peak and at first thought it to be a sign by their god to settle in the area. Unfortunately their shamans found no favor in using the Altar for many were suddenly stricken with diseases and dementia. Many other times they spoke of a shadowy form dragging one of their own into the fissure. To add to these fears, the tribe experienced several uncommon visits through their territory by evil cultists that repeatedly resulted in disappearances of several ogre women or children. The ogre chieftain had enough and decided to bar the way up the peak. Ogre shamans marked the trails around the mountain with skulls and flayed skins on poles so that all would know the area was taboo. While the ogres were superstitiously afraid of defiling the Altar, they were bold enough to destroy parts of the trail leading up to it with rock falls and tools. Finally as a last measure to dissuade other trespassers from coming into this accursed area, they created many hand-made pitfalls and traps. Despite their crude hindrances, the tribe knows it will not completely deter outsiders from seeking this site. As a result they are ever wary to ambush or turn away anyone moving through their lands that they do not trust.

Survey of the Altar: The peak is a flattened area about 200 feet in diameter that has an unimpeded view of the Dry Steppes. The ground here is uneven and excessively weatherworn from being flanked by two taller mountains that create a powerful wind tunnel. The Altar of Dhawar itself is a 6-foot long slab of carved stone that is inconsistent with the local rock. How it was brought to this remote location is a mystery unto itself for nothing is written about its construction. The Altar is stained with the blood of innumerable beings, a stark discoloration that even the elements haven't been able to wear away. Besides setting at the center of the peak, there is actually nothing else outwardly remarkable about the Altar. There are no symbols or inscriptions that would indicate the Altar's original religious affiliation, nor any perceptible aura to lead one to assume it is magical. The entire area does however radiate an aura of powerful permanent evil that enhances vile rituals to whichever deity it is currently attuned. Careless priests, who have neglected to first consecrate the unholy Altar, have experienced horrible curses or dubious fates.

Five feet to one side of the Altar is a fissure that nearly bisects the entire peak, giving the impression the whole area could fall apart. This tear in the peak is ten feet across at its widest, tapering towards the ends. The deceptively deep crevice leads down into the inky depths of the mountain's cavernous heart. This is where the true danger exists and possibly the greater reward. Whatever still sleeps below the Altar of Dhawar is old indeed and strong enough to take down a fully-grown ogre. The true nature of this unseen monster from the shadows has yet to be revealed and is confounded by contradicting stories. The creature typically only emerges when the Altar invokes a curse on someone or if some great upheaval attracts its attention, otherwise it invisibly remains in its cavernous lair. If there is any treasure still to be had, it is hid within these lightless caverns where further secrets from a time well before the Twin Cataclysms are waiting to be discovered.

Caravan Guarding

The most common way Ull is reached by foreigners is along caravan routes braved by merchants seeking exotic goods from the south. Caravans traveling through Ull always will seek to find suitable guards for their wagons, sometimes even hiring those who may have raided them before. At Ulakand caravans are often seized for no reason in the name of the Orakhan. Inevitably these same goods end up fenced by the Ulli elsewhere.

In addition to being the main destination for caravans to trade, the town of Kester enjoys a burgeoning black market unlike any other in the West. In Kester unscrupulous traders can buy slaves, poisons, drugs, stolen weapons and more. The Mouqollad Consortium despises Kester, for this illicit trade operates without hindrance and sometimes without pretence in the common market. Their field agents are ever on the lookout to catch members breaking Consortium law in this frontier town. Another danger to caravans, those entering the Dry Steppes are well advised to go out of their way to avoid the reach of vengeful Yorodhi hill men.

The Father of Droughts

Abi Dalzim is most notable for creating the *Abi Dalzim's horrid wilting spell* and the wicked *scarf of the Dry Steppes*. For almost half a century his villainous exploits have earned him the enmity of Rary of the Circle of Eight, the Caliph of Ekbir, the Beygraf of Ket and clerics of several faiths including Geshtai.

Since returning from his imprisonment on the Inner Planes, it is rumored that Dalzim seeks artifacts such as the *cup and talisman of Al Akbar* and the *chalice everlasting* to sacrifice to Incubulos in order to gain even greater power. For these endeavors, he covertly recruits adventurers through his agent, the only female Pit Master of Kester, Nura bint Ramil. This way, more often than not, unsuspecting adventurers will not know whom they truly work for.

When Abi Dalzim isn't seeking relics of great power to further his own ambitions, he terrorizes the region with created undead and summoned elementals. Caravans traveling to Kester at night are disrupted on occasion by shriveled up zombies aptly named the Dry Ones or equally ravenous desert ghouls. Sightings of dune stalkers in the Dry Steppes have raised brows among the dervishes. So far Abi Dalzim has no designs for retribution on Rary, the Caliph of Ekbir or the Beygraf of Ket, but they are by no means forgotten.

The Haunt of Gol Usan

"Our band was on the trail of a coward thief hiding near a wooded lake when we came upon the hovel of a strange old hermit. Before we had a chance to question him, he began to threaten us! He told us that we should leave the woods before nightfall or else forfeit our lives. Of course we ignored the fool. We couldn't turn back now or the Orakhan would have our hides instead. The hermit wouldn't speak anymore even after we sacked his home searching for the thief. He just stared and smiled. Then our dogs picked up a new scent so we set off into the woods once again just as the sun was setting and an ill wind began to blow across the mesa. What happened over the next several hours was a nightmare. If only we had known the legend of the Haunt of Gol Usan; the old hermit was trying to warn us."

- Testimony of Khurai, sole survivor of the Teeth of Ulakand.

The Ghost Lake: Gol Usan or Ghost Lake in the common tongue lies within the central wilderness of the Ulakand mesa found south of the Plains of the Paynims on the indefinable northern border of Ull. This lightly wooded region with its abundance of water and game is a popular campsite for parties traveling between the town of Ulakand on the western cliffs and the rocky mesa heights to the east. The lake is tranquil and unusually foggy for its location leading most to believe this is reason for its ominous name. Unfortunately few locals are aware of the obscure legends surrounding the true danger that exists here.

Every generation for nearly as long as men have settled the mesa, entire encampments are said to have vanished or fled in terror after encountering some sort of ghostly, inhuman killer. Pieced together accounts of the Haunt's appearance vary from a barefoot Baklunish male in tattered clothes wearing a scarf over most of his face, to a shirtless half-ogre with a sack over his head secured by the frayed remains of a noose. All survivor stories agree that the Haunt silently rises from the murk of the lake to relentlessly track down trespassers wielding a ghostly polearm.

Rumors About the Haunt: Recently a crazed, nameless hermit has taken up residence on the fringe of the wood leading to Gol Usan. The old man normally keeps to himself, occasionally pestering passing travelers with cryptic warnings or blessings, but is otherwise no danger. For those willing to stop and listen, the hermit claims amongst his babble to know the legends concerning the Haunt of Gol Usan, although nothing he knows has ever been useful in fighting the villainous being. Paranoid individuals say the hermit either must know the pattern to when the Haunt manifests or that he is the one who is responsible for summoning the Haunt in the first place. Whatever the case, the old hermit seems to be the only person not considered an intruder in the wood, unless he is withholding some way to ward his home against the vindictive Haunt.

DM Notes on the Haunt: The hermit's knowledge concerning the background of the Haunt of Gol Usan might be slightly inaccurate but he alone may be the closest to the truth. A thousand years ago during the reign of Hengek Orakhan "the Cleaver", it was not uncommon for the power hungry ruler of Ull to execute anyone he thought was a threat to usurp him. One such person was the leader of Hengek's personal bodyguards, a man of uncertain family origin but whose loyalty was unquestioned among his peers. Likewise his prowess in combat led friend and foe alike to respect him more than his bloodthirsty master. Naturally Hengek's jealousy extended to the guard's personal life as well, as the Orakhan desired to add the man's young wife to his stable of concubines.

This woman was originally a slave-girl claimed by the bodyguard from a captured Zeifan caravan. As she grew up, her beauty and cultured talents became the envy of all in Ulakand and the bodyguard eventually decided to take her as his wife. It was then that Hengek finally made his move to claim the woman, giving her newlywed husband a choice between his service to Ull and his disputed "property". The guard knew choosing her over his duty to the Orakhan would mean his execution, so the two fled to hide out in the wilderness of the mesa. Using the opportunity to be rid of the warrior legally, Hengek personally led a hunting party out to track down and kill the guard, believing he could then bring the woman back to Ulakand.

The search took a few days but the pair was finally cornered at Gol Usan. Outnumbered and wielding only an

old polearm, the bodyguard brutally slew half of the attackers but was finally slowed by an arrow wound to the neck. Before Hengek could come to claim his prize however, the distraught bodyguard summoned the last of his strength and, at his wife's behest, took her life as she knelt waist-deep in edge of the lake. Once the deed was done he threw the bloody polearm as far as he could into the dark lake then collapsed. What transpired afterward is unclear but either the bodyguard was hung from a tree beside the lake or he was bound and thrown in the waters to drown. Since that time it is believed the Haunt of Gol Usan can be awakened by the presence of those feeling deep hatred. It may also be that the Haunt seeks merely to extract vengeance on unwary armed parties.

Running the Haunt: Due to the nature of the Haunt, this villain is best used as a side-trek threat for an ongoing campaign set in Ull. Use as a recurring villain is only viable in a long-term campaign focused on learning both the history of the Haunt and a means to exorcise its spirit from Gol Usan.

After witnessing a terrifying litany of death only hours ago, all was quiet and the coast was clear for the thief to come out of hiding from the top of a tall tree. He had to laugh a bit for he had survived the night and could see the sun beginning to rise to the east. Suddenly his tree began to shudder and shake, finally toppling over to crash into the lake. The thief pulled free from the tangle of broken branches before he drowned. It was then that he saw standing on the bank, a silhouette of a man holding a polearm. The rogue screamed and without thinking began to swim in the opposite direction towards the middle of the lake. As he took one last frantic look back, a pair of slender female arms emerged from beneath the water to drag the hapless thief down into the murky depths, never to be seen again.

The Hidden Fortress of Conjured Sands

Deep in the arid southern hills of Ull is a magical phenomenon that few nomads have heard of, except in campfire stories. Fewer still have actually sought out the Hidden Fortress, usually intent on acquiring demonic power or magical wealth from those who lair within. The Hidden Fortress is a subterranean complex held by a small band of ogre magi who have secretly sworn loyalty to the infamous demon-wizard, Tuerny the Merciless.

The Hidden Fortress' entrance is quite unique, appearing as a tall sand dune with no visible openings. The dune breaks up and moves along by the will of its owners to position itself in areas at their advantage. Only by walking up the dune can one be drawn into the fortress and by then there is no turning back as the dune swiftly swallows any being in contact with it. The magical dune is in actuality a mobile *gate*, cleverly conjured to keep the true location of the underground fortress a secret, although many suspect it is dozens of miles into the surrounding mountains.

Those foolish or unlucky enough to wander into the territory of the Conjured Sands are inevitably tricked and captured by the wily ogre magi. Wary nomads warn others of exotic temptresses in the barrens who lure men to the sands only to reveal their ogrish selves when it is far too late. Other times the ogre magi stalk their territory *invisibly*, flying above the landscape in search of a new slave to snatch or livestock to steal for a feast.

Despite their methods, the ogre magi's goals come second to the machinations of Tuerny. The notorious wizard may very well have created the Hidden Fortress as a base of operations for his interests in the Baklunish West and then put the magi in charge to guard it in his

absence. Tuerny's infrequent visits to the fortress give the ogre band plenty of time to pursue their own evil schemes, so long as they don't interfere with their master's plans. Most notably they are forewarned about capturing any mage without his approval. In addition, all rare magic items or artifacts they may happen to steal are certainly brought to the Merciless One's attention.

Khur Razjin: "The Path of Shadows"

The remains of Ull's first ruler, Ulaghai Orakhan were interred in the heart of a mesa by his heir Khuzhan the Builder, to serve as the cornerstone of Ulakand when it was founded in his honor. Over the following centuries, tribal khans and Ull war veterans alike have had their bones placed in the same catacombs to anchor their ancestral legacies to Ulakand. These great catacombs are an unorganized maze of natural caverns and grottoes accessed from the surface of the mesa by a highly visible and heavily patrolled sinkhole entrance. This fact however, has not dissuaded tomb robbers and foreign adventurers from chasing rumors of hidden wealth here. Those bent on the paths of exploration or plunder seek access by the well-known secondary entrance to the south called Khur Razjin - "The Path of Shadows".

Not surprisingly, locals warn that this way is fraught with danger, contributing many more corpses to the catacombs. The Path of Shadows begins at a point on the base of the southern cliffs where it has eroded deeply into the mesa's interior. This ominous entrance leads to a narrow yet traversable tunnel system that eventually connects to the catacombs to the north. While the Path of Shadows is certainly a convenient shortcut, it is so steeped in superstition by locals that few dare to tread its craggy depths much less stand in the shadow of the cliff-side. For this reason, it is considered the most extreme test of one's bravery to walk the Khur Razjin and exit up from the catacombs' main entrance.

Natural sources of light are known to fail and it is said that the very shadows of those who venture there rise to sap the strength from men's bodies. Worse yet, for those who stray or become lost, are the demon-possessed cadavers of improperly buried Ull warriors that stalk the lightless branches of the path. In the end those who survive the Khur Razjin usually discover that the belongings of previous foolhardy adventurers, who spent too much time searching for treasure, are more than they could ever find by randomly sifting through the innumerable bones of Ull's catacombs.

The Mahdi of the Steppes

The dervishes of the Dry Steppes are nomadic religious zealots that fearlessly defend their lands from Ull by martial fanaticism and cooperative magic. Their leader is the Mahdi of the Steppes, an enigmatic prophet hailed by the dervishes as the one chosen in the Prophecy of the Phoenix. The identity of the Mahdi is a well-kept secret among for his own protection. The Mahdi has raised brows in the West for he is successfully uniting most of the tribes of the Dry Steppes, and apparently seeks to do the same with the contentious Paynim tribes of the northern plains. It is only a matter of time before this movement comes into open conflict with Ull. The Mahdi and his dervish leaders are always on the lookout to recruit willing adventurers for a variety of high-risk missions within Ull.

Previously Published Adventures

Although no official adventures take place in Ull directly, several existing scenarios from 1st and 2nd edition Greyhawk are located near its periphery. The following locations, several of which are noted on the Ull map, could be considered as possibilities if a campaign in Ull shapes up. For additional ideas, see also the "For the Curious..." section of the appendix.

Adventure Codes

- **ART2d**: Site of Spelunking, Rod of Seven Parts boxed set.
- **GA1**: The Entrance to the Vale of the Mage, Greyhawk Adventures Hardcover.
- **I9**: (Not pictured on the Ull map) If using the retrofit of I9 - Day of Al-Akbar (as given in the appendix), Ull would make a sensible location for a starting point or base camp for the PC's.
- **S3**: Site of Module S3 - Expedition to the Barrier Peaks.
- **WG12**: Site of Module WG12 - Vale of the Mage.
- **WGR2n**: Possible location for the dragon Sulphacitezus' lair from A Sword for a Hero, WGR2 - Treasures of Greyhawk.

New Monsters

Blink Camprat (Kund)

ARMOR CLASS: 6

MOVE: 15

HIT DICE: 1-2 hit points

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1

SPECIAL ATTACKS: Nil

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Blink*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard

INTELLIGENCE: Animal

ALIGNMENT: True neutral

SIZE: S

PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil

Attack/Defense Modes: Nil/Nil

LEVEL/XP VALUE: 1/5+3 per hit point

Description

Rodents are among the most reviled creatures in the world, coming in many shapes and sizes. Among their kind, the camprat has become the pest of pests. It is not surprising then that out of the Baklunish West, particularly Ull, a new and more formidable breed of camprat has literally blinked into existence.

Blink camprats are rodents of the same family as the Eastern Oerik camprat, common squirrels and prairie dogs. Besides being similar in coloration and appearance to prairie dogs, their smaller size and speed are akin to their squirrel cousins. Kund weigh two to three pounds and are nine to thirteen inches long, with a stubby black tails. Their fur is yellowish in color, with darker ears and a pale buff to white belly. Their front teeth are long and extremely sharp as is their tiny claws, which are equally good for climbing and burrowing.

Generally harmless, but overly voracious and tenacious when it comes to scavenging, the Kund species first appeared among mundane camprat "towns" on the western verges of the Plains of the Paynims. They are said to have migrated east ahead of the hordes of less intelligent prairie dogs whose populations could swell to the hundred of thousands. From there the Kund increased in number on their own, notably in the lowland regions of Ull and the northern Dry Steppes. How this species came to possess the ability to blink is cause for concern among sages, leading to speculation of arcane design or divine manipulation. Others try to link them

incorrectly to blink dogs even though they are different species.

Kund are highly social rodents, traveling in small packs to effectively scavenge and then congregating in larger burrow towns during mating season. There is no organizational leader among Kund society with males and females being equal. Kund are omnivorous and will go to great lengths to sneak in and steal anything edible from other creatures. Their ability to climb, dig under or gnaw through any container makes them a threat to travelers and caravans as much as bandits.

Combat

Kund can *blink* as the mage spell and at the 8th level ability. They can begin and end the *blinking* in the same round at will. Like mundane camprats, Kund teeth constantly grow and they need to gnaw on things to keep them from growing too long, this practice also makes their teeth extremely sharp. They can chew through cloth, leather and wooden objects in one round.

Kund are prone to flight over fight, using their size and magical ability to avoid harm and get away with their food. Only when cornered will they try to bite with their sharp teeth. Despite this it is not uncommon for a single Kund to pounce on a predator as a distraction, allowing the rest of a pack to scurry away to safety. Kund are clean, unlike rats, and do not transmit diseases when biting. Blink camprats also have a high-pitched, bark-like language that is used to identify various predators such as hawks, coyotes, snakes and the equally voracious ogre.

The Haunt of Gol Usan

ARMOR CLASS: 0

MOVE: 4 or 6

HIT DICE: 9

NO. OF ATTACKS: 3/2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1d10+5 or 1d4+3

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Fear* and see below

SPECIAL DEFENSES: Resistances and see below

MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard

INTELLIGENCE: Semi-

ALIGNMENT: Neutral evil

SIZE: M

PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil

Attack/Defense Modes: Nil/Nil

LEVEL/XP VALUE: 2,050 + 12/hit point

Description

The Haunt of Gol Usan is a semi-sentient, corporeal form of undead. It never goes beyond the vicinity of the woods, and will not stop its attacks until all those intruding on its territory are slain. The Haunt either does not or cannot speak and is utterly silent when moving through the woods, despite carrying a bulky two-handed weapon and appearing drenched from head to foot. Worse yet, witnesses claim it can even walk on water and travel from one fog bank to another in the blink of an eye.

The Haunt does not discriminate or hesitate against armed opponents, except on one rare occasion when it was rumored to have spared a Baklunish female for some unknown reason. Some boastful tales (if they can be believed), say the undead villain can be slain. No proof of this has ever been found, with would-be slayers usually receiving wounds caused by its weapon instead. Even if it can be defeated, it is likely the Haunt of Gol Usan will merely vanish back to its lake until it can reform years later to terrorize again.

Combat

The Haunt of Gol Usan has great Strength (18/21), low Intelligence (4) and average Dexterity and Wisdom (10 and 11 respectively). The Haunt cannot run but can shamble into a charge (movement rate of 6); otherwise it unerringly *moves silently* when walking, leaving only wet footprints behind. It has two special movement modes; the first is the equivalent of *water walking* at will and with a maximum movement rate of 4. The second type is *fog walking*, which works similar to the *shadow walk* spell. This ability may only be used within the misty region of Gol Usan or any cloud-type spell effect (i.e. *stinking cloud*, *fog cloud*, *cloudkill*, etc.) within the same bounds. The Haunt also has the ability to track at will as a 9th level ranger while at its normal rate of movement. Tracking

may also be used by in combination in combination with its with *water walking* and *fog walking* abilities.

The Haunt possesses standard undead traits, including immunity to *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, stunning, poison, disease and death magic. Further, the Haunt takes ½ damage from blunt or piercing weapons and fire due to its water-soaked body. The Haunt also takes no damage from cold, but is instead *slowed* for 1d4 rounds. The Haunt may be turned by clerics as a mummy. A successful turn attempt will force the Haunt back toward its lake. Note, however, that it can never be dispelled or destroyed by means of turning.

Offensively the Haunt of Gol Usan *causes fear* to all within a 30' radius. Victims who fail to make their saving throw versus spells become paralyzed in horror for 1d4 rounds. Each time the paralysis wears off a new saving throw must be made while the victim remains within the radius of the Haunt's aura. Those successfully making their saving throws do not need to make further rolls unless Gol Usan is left and returned to at a later time.

The Haunt is treated as a 9th level ranger in terms of skills and proficiencies. Its preferred weapon is the *ghostly polearm +2*, which does 1d10+5 damage (including Strength bonus), has a 10' reach and has the abilities of a *sword of sharpness*. The weapon cannot be permanently broken or the Haunt disarmed of it for long - in such cases the Haunt can retrieve its old polearm or create a new one in his empty hands in but a single segment. If forced somehow into weaponless combat, the Haunt does 1d4+3 damage per blow.

The Haunt *regenerates* 2 hit points per round until it is killed and can even fight on with severed limbs (although this makes using the *ghostly polearm* difficult). If slain, the Haunt vanishes back into the misty waters of Gol Usan and slowly reforms over 1d6 years; this allows plenty of time for unsuspecting victims to wander into its territory.

Appendix: Refitting "I9 - Day of Al-Akbar" for Use in the Flanaess

Introduction

The 1st Edition adventure module I9 was a good adventure for the time it was published, but it did the World of Greyhawk a disservice by removing two of its milieu-specific artifacts and throwing them into the limbo of the generic. Additionally, the geography of the adventure is largely incompatible with the Baklunish territories, both modern and pre-cataclysm, which are the logical setting. In fact, the adventure is largely incompatible with the Flanaess' geography in general. This appendix is aimed at "reclaiming" the module, trying to solve the problems and fit it into Greyhawk's game world.

Adventure Location Synopsis

The adventure officially takes place in the land of Arir on some unspecified Prime Material plane. A deceased Sultan has locked the Cup and Talisman away in trap-riddled places of safety concealed within the ancient city of Kahiber, long abandoned after falling into chaos. Because of a plague, which only the artifacts can cure, adventurers are sought to retrieve the relics and return them to the Arir priesthood in the city of Ber-Gathy.

The adventure takes the PC's into a classic "Arabian Nights" sand-and-salt-flat desert, bordered by mountains to the north, east and south. They proceed many miles along a path leading south and then east through the desert. Once they reach Kahibar, they can choose to stealthily enter the sewers or enter the city proper to try and recover the Cup and Talisman from their places of hiding. Both locations must be visited to the two relics.

Approach

DM's running this adventure have a few options in trying to fit it into a Greyhawk campaign.

- The first is the simplest, namely have the party travel to an alternate Prime Material plane and then to run the adventure as it stands. The only things required are to provide a decent hook to lead in and to get the PC's to and from the alternate Prime Plane in a reasonable manner. If the DM is short on time or creativity, this is a good "quick fix".
- The second is to somehow try to shoehorn the module into the Bright Desert. This doesn't work very well due to both the terrain and history of the area.
- The last option, given here, is what this appendix is really all about: refitting the adventure to have it set in the Baklunish lands as we know them.

Setting Up

There are several points about the Cup and Talisman of Al-Akbar from Greyhawk lore to be considered in setting the module in the Baklunish lands, as follows:

- According to the Baklunish Hierarchy portion of *The History of Oerth* given in *Oerth Journal* #1, the priest Al Akbar

created the Cup and Talisman in 1,381 BH/-1,279 C.Y.

- The 1st Edition **DMG** reports that the Cup and Talisman were lost to demi-human raiders and were thought to have ended up in the Bandit Kingdoms.
- The 2nd Edition *Greyhawk Adventures* hardcover mentions the two relics in conjunction with the Pinnacles of Azor'Alq, stating that these islands are the resting place and true home for the artifacts. It further states that interactions could be set up between Tovag Baragu and the Cup and Talisman.
- Finally, the entry on Ekbir in the 3rd Edition *Living Greyhawk Gazetteer* mentions that the artifacts were stolen in 219 C.Y. from a procession led by the Grand Mufti in the city of Ekbir. (It can be inferred that before his divine ascension Al Akbar was the founder of the city and/or a member of the Ekberi family that settled there after the Invoked Devastation.) The raiders were said to be elves as large as men. They escaped on giant eagles and flew over the Paynims towards the Barrier Peaks. The Grand Mufti was exiled from Ekbir over the theft and fled to the Yatils where he found a safe haven amongst the mountain tribes.

The 1st Edition DMG information is intriguing, but it does not fit the module as written, leaving much to be desired for placing the adventure. The Greyhawk Adventures information is interesting but not very germane to the adventure raising this question: Why would the two sacred relics of the Bakluni be permanently located by the church on an island far north of the original Baklunish homelands? Using the *Living Greyhawk Gazetteer*'s information allows us to do some creative placing that fits reasonably well with both Greyhawk canon and the module's setting.

Final note: Although there is obvious conflict between the official sources, the unused references can still be of service to the adventure. Since these are legendary items lost centuries ago, it is only to be expected that tales and myths have been woven around them. Thus, portions of the unused lore can be fed to the party as the DM sees fit as rumors, links to side quests, adventure dressing or even intentional misdirection to keep the players on their toes and interested.

Geographic Adjustments

Locating the City of Kahibar

The question of where to locate the adventure in the Flanaess must be answered. Two main topics need addressing here: Baklunish history and Greyhawk geography.

Baklunish History

The Baklunish were known for creating powerful artifacts, as is seen in Tovag Baragu - the only obvious item of their original culture to survive the Invoked Devastation. This circle of standing stones

is regarded as the holiest existing site of the Baklunish and is thought to be the place from which they launched the Rain of Colorless Fire against the Suloise. As a pre-Devastation pilgrimage site, this sacred location would be set well within the Baklunish lands. Finally, it is well established that the Crystalmist Mountains marked the eastern borders of the pre-cataclysm Baklunish territories.

Setting Kahibar as the easternmost city-state established by the Ekberri on the Crystalmist border fits it easily somewhere within the edge of the mountains along the modern Dry Steppes. This ties in with the history of the Baklunish people extending their empire from west to east during its settlement.

Greyhawk Geography

Geographically, the module calls for a deep-desert, Arabian Nights setting. Further, if the overland maps given with the module are not to be completely ignored, the terrain should include mountains roughly to the north, east and south of the city's location.

This presents a problem on two fronts. The Dry Steppes, which were the original Baklunish homelands, are more arid grassland punctuated with salt flats than true sand-based erg. However, if the magical repercussions of the Invoked Devastation are coupled with the geography of the rocky terrain on the eastern edge of the Crystalmists, a compromise can be struck.

It would be reasonable to assume that there could be a portion of the mountain range's border that, through a combination of magical or sacred protection blended with the pre-existing climate

(mountain rain shadow, prevailing winds and rocky terrain), the effects of the Devastation were altered creating an area of true desert erg. Thus, the city was preserved from the outright destruction found elsewhere at the cost of a dramatic and permanent change to its ecosystem.

The second problem is in the layout of the overland adventure maps that come with the module, since they assume a party will be traveling from east to west. The Cup and Talisman adventure will likely originate in one of the Baklunish states, far to the north. It is unlikely a party would be willing to spend weeks of torturous slogging through the mountains, after traversing much of the Sheldomar Valley, just to get to their eastern starting point. A more reasonable assumption is that the PC's will be traveling south, through the Paynims, Ull and along the fringes and spurs of the mountain range from one of the modern Baklunish states.

Location and Map Adjustments

With all the above in mind, the module can be located on the edge of the ancient Baklunish heartlands, at Hex D6 148 on the **Darlène maps** or in the northern tip of Hex I1 29 on the **Living Greyhawk Gazetteer map**.

If this premise is followed, then the original overland maps could be used if they were simply mirror-imaged to make the journey proceed in a west to east direction. Appropriate versions of the Player and DM maps, with minor adaptations for use in the Flanaess, are given at the end of the Appendix.



For the Curious...

The map above has codes in yellow text - these are adventure sites. The locations are multi-edition, composed of official Greyhawk modules, Dungeon Magazine adventures and fan adventures alike. They compliment the [Previously Published Adventure](#) entries given in the [Adventures in Ull](#) chapter of this work. To help the prospective DM in campaign plotting, a list of the visible location codes follows:

Official Adventures

- **Art2d, f & h:** The Rod of Seven Parts - Spelunking, Hospitality and The Citadel of Chaos
- **CG15:** City of Greyhawk Adventure Card - Riders on the Storm
- **CG16:** City of Greyhawk Adventure Card - Shadows of Terror
- **G1:** The Steading Of The Hill Giant Chief
- **G2:** The Glacial Rift of the Frost Giant Jarl
- **G4-6:** Against the Giants – The Liberation of Geoff
- **I9:** Day of Al-Akbar
- **N1:** Against the Cult of the Reptile God
- **WGA5:** Die Vecna Die!
- **WGR2n** (multiple possible locations): Treasures of Greyhawk – A Sword for a Hero

Dungeon Magazine Adventures

- **DM1:** The House of Brothers, Dungeon #6
- **DM20:** Kingdom of the Ghouls, Dungeon #70
- **DM57:** Touch of the Abyss, Dungeon #117
- **DM58:** Shadows of the Abyss, Dungeon #118

Fan Adventures

- **EE2:** The Elder Elemental God Pentology (Paul Rokuskie) – The Air Temple
- **EE5:** The Elder Elemental God Pentology (Paul Rokuskie) – The Elemental Crypt
- **PC9a:** Greyhawk Lairs (Brian Dougherty) – Pursuit at the Edge of the Crystalmists
- **PC9c:** Greyhawk Lairs (“Aubrick”) – Agar’s Payment

Adjusting the Plot

Since I9 was designed for use in any milieu, it was written with the idea that adjustments would be needed to fit it into any of the published campaign worlds. Detailed here are possible plot hooks to tie the adventure specifically to the Flanaess. A note: all of the Ull information in the main body of this work is loaded with additional possibilities for adventuring on the way to and during I9. Thus, some of what is given below draws heavily on Mortellan’s conception of Ull and its surroundings.

Overall Plot Hooks

- **Ekberri Crisis:** One reasonable starting point for the adventure could be in Ekbir or through contacts with agents of that country. The simplest method would be to have the party summoned to a church of Al-Akbar to learn that the present Grand Mufti is seeking adventurers to take on the

dangerous search for the artifacts. As mentioned in the introduction to the module, a new plague has begun to appear, one that would affect Ekbir, and it does not respond to normal clerical efforts. The Mufti needs the artifact to stop it before it becomes an outright epidemic. Scrolls in the church archives dating back to 208 CY mention the successful use of the relics against a similar plague.

Alternately, agents of the Caliph could also be sent out to recruit treasure hunters who arrange a meeting between the Grand Mufti and the PC’s. The Caliph has been notified of the new sickness beginning to spread in Ekbir and, after consultation with the church and his advisors, has decided to make the recovery of the artifacts a state priority.

- **Political Power Grab:** Agents of Zeif or Tusmit would also be good motivators, since these two states would jump at the chance to recover the artifacts as a means of validating their claims of representing either the True Faith or the modern Baklunish states as a whole. They can arrange, through their network of spies and informants, a meeting for the PC’s with the Grand Mufti who is eager to get the relics back for the reasons mentioned above. In this case, the leader of the Al-Akbar church would not have any knowledge of the PC’s double agent status, although slip-ups on the PC’s part might make him suspicious enough to perform divinations about their motives. This could lead to the party being shadowed by agents of the church to ensure their sincerity and soundness of purpose, to ensure the artifacts are not misused.
- **Machinations of the Laird:** If Bakluni politics are not of interest or are simply too far afield for the present campaign, the possibility exists to tie this adventure in with a canon Greyhawk module, namely WG12 – Vale of the Mage. The latter adventure is set up for PC’s of levels 7 to 9 and I9 is designed for those of level 8 to 10. Aside from experience level compatibility, the two adventure sites are close enough geographically to allow a nice fit, assuming the geographic adjustments given in part one of this article are used. In this case, the PC’s would stumble over information on the location of the cup and talisman, perhaps within the stronghold of the Laird, while exploring the Vale itself. Further information on expanding this plot hook is given in the next section of the article, “Why are the Cup and Talisman Here?”
- **The Dark Rider:** In this case, due to the geographic location of the adventure being far to the south of Ull, Paynim and Ull agents of Incabulos have taken note of the cup and talisman’s general location. Fell divinations and dreadful signs have directed them to the unholy cause of the

artifacts' destruction. The Dark Rider's faithful will stop at nothing since these two objects that defy everything their dread god stands for. As with most evil faiths, the church is secretive and prefers working from the shadows. Given his desire to grow in power serving Incabulos, it is likely a foregone conclusion that Abi Dalzim will be deeply involved in the matter.

- **Agents of the Scarlet Sign:** For a change of pace, the PC's could be agents of the Scarlet Brotherhood, with either open knowledge of what they are doing or (as is more likely) hired as dupes or pawns in some massive deception that will benefit the Brotherhood. This particular idea opens up a number of interesting reasons for being sent after the artifacts. The Brotherhood would desire the Cup and talisman for several reasons, such as using the two relics to influence Tovag Baragu in an attempt to reverse the forces that maintain the Sea of Dust's current condition. Alternately, they may simply be seeking an edge over the Baklunish as an extension of the ancient wars that led up to the Twin Cataclysms. They may also seek to regain some of the legendary magical power of the ancient Suel by collecting up as many powerful magical items as can be obtained. Even if the Cup and Talisman were not used to serve the Brotherhood directly, at the very least that would seek to keep it out of the hands of the hated Baklunish.
- **"Well, we were in the area"...** Finally, any of these plot hooks could be used from the starting point of the city of Ber-Gathy, assuming it has been refitted as a Dervish settlement. It is likely that agents of any or even all of the factions listed above could be found here, drawn by hints and rumors of the artifacts. This could be a cloak-and-dagger scenario with numerous double cross attempts. If a more straight-up approach fits the campaign, then simply have the more open factions clashing publicly. The main idea here is to let the adventure evolve on its own with a minimum of fuss or detail. Just add the PC's and stir...

Why Are the Cup and Talisman Here?

As established previously, the premise of this refit is that the Cup and Talisman were stolen from a procession in Ekbir City circa 219 CY. The thieves were said to be elven in appearance, yet oversized in stature. This poses two questions: "Who sent the thieves?" and "Why Are The Cup and Talisman Where They Are Now?"

Rather than force the storyline down a specific path, a range of possibilities are given here - plot seeds answering the two questions posed, which the DM can then use as fuel for further adventuring.

Who Sent the Thieves?

- **Baklunish Power Groups:** Religious agents of Ket, Zeif, Tusmit or even Ekbir itself are

one possibility as the ultimate authors of the theft of the two relics. Although the Baklunish states are similar in culture and religion, they cover wildly different territories, alignments and terrains. Further, the various groups of survivors of the Invoked Devastation sought the to settle in places as reminiscent of their original homelands as possible. The four main groups here would be Zeif, Tusmit, Ekbir and Ket.

- **The Laird's Gambit:** In this scenario, we have the possibility that the elves mentioned in the Living Greyhawk Gazetteer were actually real: Vale elves, to be precise. The Cup and Talisman's theft implicates a group of Vale elves under the effects of an *enlarge*, *alter self* or some other shape altering/disguising magic. They are agents of the Laird of the Vale who seeks the artifacts in conjunction with his research into attaining shade form. The artifacts might be sought as a power source for the transformation process or they may be a bribe or bargaining chip offered by the Laird to a powerful other-planar creature in exchange for the knowledge he seeks.
- **Incabulos Interferes:** Servants of the temple of Incabulos are responsible for the "theft" in this situation. As a god of plague, the powers of the Cup and Talisman are utterly at odds with Incabulos' purpose and portfolio. The Black Rider is responsible for the plague in Ekbir and seeks to remove the items from the Baklunish grasp so his faith's efforts in that country cannot be countered. If successful, this would indicate the fall of one of the most powerful Baklunish states, with Zeif and Tusmit next on the list of conquests. The cup and talisman were in process of being removed for that purpose when something altogether unexpected occurred. If Abi Dalzim, from Mortellan's Ull material, features as a part of your campaign, then he will be the prime mover in the entire affair. One possibility is that he sent worshippers of Incabulos as thieves. They may have been the ones seen fleeing with the relics, but, most likely, their unholy presence triggered the Cup and Talisman returning to their places of protection in Kahibar. In this case, Dalzim and his agents (including the thief Nura bint Ramel in Kester, the Mad Dog of the Desert and Abdul Fatar of the hidden temple (from [encounter 32](#) in the module) will be using the party as foils to locate the relics. Once this is done, they will seek to take them by any means possible so that Dalzim can attempt to destroy the artifacts as a sacrifice to the Dark Rider.
- **Vengeance of the Scarlet Sign:** The Scarlet Brotherhood would have a large number of reasons for interfering with the two items. The ancient Suel were the mortal enemies of the pre-Cataclysm Baklunish. They

sought a decisive end to the Bakluni states and people, one that they did not achieve. Now, centuries after the Twin Cataclysms, the Brotherhood has finally turned its attention back to the enemies of the Suloise Empire. The Brotherhood is always maneuvering in the shadows, seeking to establish a firm foothold through espionage and subterfuge. Thus, they would welcome the chance to strike their old enemies from a distance in retaliation for the Rain of Colorless Fire. Agents of the Brotherhood may be the thieves. Given their methods, it is more likely that they manipulate one of the power groups mentioned above (or another of the DM's choice) into arranging for the artifacts to disappear. The ultimate goal of the Scarlet Brotherhood is the outright destruction of the artifacts, since they know that the Cup and Talisman have always been integral to the well being of the Baklunish people. The temporary loss of the two items would be crippling, but their destruction would most likely prove disastrous. To this end, when the PC's become involved they can expect to be harried by Brotherhood monks and assassins.

Why Are The Cup and Talisman Where They Are Now?

- **Contingency:** When Al-Akbar created the Cup and Talisman before the Twin Cataclysms, he designated his home city as the ultimate repository for the artifacts if they were ever threatened. Kahibar was the city in question - Al-Akbar had special repositories for the relics created within it. Believing the city's geographical location at the edge of the Baklunish Empire made it both hard to reach or assault and easy to defend, the prophet had a specific *contingency* magic placed upon the relics. In times of danger or if an attempt is made to steal the two sacred items, the artifacts *teleport* to their respective safe holds until retrieved by agents of the church. This particular explanation works well with any of the plot hooks given previously. In each case the needed conditions to trigger the *contingency* are available. **Note:** In the case of the Laird of the Vale's involvement, PC researches into his home in the Vale (via adventure **WG12**) might provide clues as to what triggered the *contingency*. Perhaps the Laird was experimenting with the power of the artifacts, hoping to tap it for his transformation to shadow-stuff. If he has already achieved shade-hood in your campaign, then his experiments would be to either augment his already considerable powers or to correct an unforeseen flaw he experienced in his transformation.
- **Denial of Use:** Another possibility is that the power group(s) responsible for the theft of the relics is/are determined to keep anyone else from using them,

including those rightfully entitled to do so. In this situation, the current location of the artifacts is to confound rival factions, would-be thieves, treasure seekers and do-gooders alike. (In the case of Scarlet Brotherhood plot lines, this fits particularly well.) The possibility also exists that of one of the Baklunish states is operating in this manner, albeit to ensure that no other group can bring the Cup and Talisman forth until the state in question is recognized as the primary (or even sole) representative of the true faith.

- **Greed:** Here the motivation for the theft and concealment of the relics is money: the two artifacts are priceless. (If the Scarlet Brotherhood is the prime mover, one of their pawns will have given in to greed at an opportune moment, secreting the artifacts here for later sale to the highest bidder.) This could also be the situation with a less-than-trustworthy agent of either the Laird of the Vale or a Baklunish state. Depending on the power group in question, a high ransom or some other form of financial or political extortion involving the relics will be called for. Note that the church of Incabulos will be unlikely to use this tactic, since they desire the outright destruction of the two items. However, the servants of the Black Rider would not be above making the show of such a thing for the purposes of blackmail, demoralization or gaining concessions from their opponents.

Refitting the Cities

Ber-Gathy

The first city given in the module can be a problem because it's premise and location do not fit the history of the Dry Steppes. The city is extremely unlikely to have survived the Invoked Devastation, since that event's effects were well documented - namely the complete destruction of all of the Baklunish settlements and homelands. Having two southerly Baklunish cities survive the Twin Cataclysms will likely stretch the knowledgeable Greyhawk player's ability to suspend disbelief beyond the snapping point.

One possibility is for Ber-Gathy to be a central location for the Dry Steppe dervishes. Founded and built on the site of a city lost during the Invoked Devastation, the place is now inhabited by those following the Mahdi of the Steppes. Regardless of why or how the Cup and Talisman have been removed from their original location, the Dervishes will likely have a vested interest in the well-being and use of the artifacts.

Alternately, Ber-Gathy could be removed from play altogether, with it's former geographic location one of many known to Baklunish sages and historians from surviving pre-Cataclysm lore. The city's old site would now mark the starting point of the quest once the characters have found and entered the Ariran Erg. In this case, all the events said to occur here can be transplanted to other points in the overall adventure as decided by the DM. Since the city is

not mapped or detailed within the adventure, this type of adjustment can be made without a major influence on the module's plot.

Kahibar

Kahibar is detailed as a once-powerful city that has been greatly diminished from its former glory. In the Flanaess, since it is perhaps the only Baklunish urban location to have survived the Invoked Devastation, the city is now controlled by outcast Baklunish, Paynim and Uli, with a wild card in the form of the Mad Dog of the Desert thrown in to keep the pot boiling.

The majority of the encounter descriptions given for the city can stand as written, however several would benefit from some adaptation.

- **Area 29 - Temple of Good:** Logical deity choices for this church include the Baklunish faiths of Al-Akbar or Azor'Alq. This could also be an excellent place to insert a bit more of Greyhawk's tendency towards neutrality, by having the temple devoted to Mouqol, Xan Yae or even Istus. Other than inserting the god's name and the temple's worshippers, no other major changes are needed.
- **Area 32 - Hidden Temple of Evil:** This would fit worshippers of Incabulos best. However, other possibilities also exist including Nerull, Tharizdun and demonic cults such as Baphomet or Vaprak.
- **Area 51 - Thieves Guild:** Fearing the influence of the Yellow Cartel gaining a foothold, Al Farzikh has been merciless in expunging any organized Kahibar thieves. The original guild had only indirect ties to the cartel, but this was no protection after the outcast assassin came to power.

Adapting the NPCs

Major NPC's

Al Farzikh (I9, page 15): A Baklunish, Paynim or Uli assassin once employed by the Yellow Cartel, Al Farzikh was forced to flee after falling afoul of the cruel politics within that organization. As a result, he bears both fear and great hatred for the Cartel to this day. In his flight, Farzikh worked his way through the Paynims, Uli and the Dry Steppes, gathering a group of outcasts and brigands under his authority until he discovered Kahibar. His hatred of the Cartel is why the good- or neutral-aligned church is allowed to maintain its presence in the city. (If the church is devoted to Mouqol, he does not worry overmuch about any information the Mouqollad might take to the Baklunish states to the north - the Uli, Paynim and Dervish homelands are natural shields for the secrecy of the city. Although not a religious man, he would find the dealings of the Mouqollad infinitely preferable to those of his former employers.) Al Farzikh has only recently learned that Kahibar may be a repository for the Cup and Talisman and desires them for the power they

can bring. He has had no luck in ascertaining their exact locations yet. Depending on the plot line used, his view of the relics can range from that of a ruthless, greedy profiteer to a simple desire to preserve the city's secrecy for his own safety. In the latter case, having the Cup and Talisman gone would actually be a benefit. The absence would eliminate those seeking the relics, leaving his power base in isolation once more.

Vahtak Bey (I9, page 15): Bey could easily be an expatriate Paynim or Uli, exiled for unsuccessfully turning on his Khan. He joined up with Al Farzikh's band and was chosen as his second, despite the friction between the two that resulted in his poisoning. In the years before the takeover of Kahibar, Vahtak proved his usefulness to Farzikh by discovering an assassin in the employ of the Yellow Cartel that had infiltrated the bandit organization. Bey will be tough minded, a bit of a brute but an excellent martial strategist and intelligence gatherer. His interest in the relics could be very dangerous, given his tendency to greed. He will resent any actions by Al Farzikh that do not result in the relics fetching some kind of price on the open market. Should his poisoning be removed somehow, he will end his loyalty to Farzikh's regime, seeking a palace revolution at the earliest opportunity. This goes doubly so if he has somehow come into knowledge or actual possession of the Cup and Talisman.

Mad Dog of the Desert (I9, page 15): This particular NPC has several possibilities. He could be an expatriate of Zeif, Ekbir, Tusmit or Ket who simply seeks personal power. The Mad Dog could also be a devotee of Incabulos trying to gain favor with the dark god. He would also work well as a direct agent of Abi Dalzim or even as the cover identity that the Father of Droughts uses while tracking the Cup and Talisman.

Farouk Pasha (I9 page, 35): Assuming the premise about the Cup and Talisman's disappearance as given in the *Living Greyhawk Gazetteer* is used, Farouk Pasha is a descendant of the disgraced Ekberri cleric of Al-Akbar. Farouk Pasha's family settled in the Yatils, as mentioned, taking the both secret of the two artifacts returning to the city of Kahibar and the city's location with them. In the ensuing centuries it has fallen on the eldest son of each generation to atone for the artifacts' theft by trying to find and guard them. To that end, Farouk has succeeded in locating Kahibar and insinuating himself into the fabric of the bandit society ruling the city. He has determined that the Cup and Talisman are in the city but is heavily watched, even in his position of power, and thus has not yet been able to act. Regardless of what plot seeds are used, this NPC should be a hidden agent of Good in the adventure. He can aid the PC's or wind up working at cross-purposes, but his ultimate goal is to see the two relics used only for beneficial purposes and then returned to Kahibar where they belong.

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Wonders of Ull

(Michael Bridges)

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Personal Sources and Acknowledgements

- The Altar of Dhawar (2004) was Michael "mortellan" Bridges' first article for the fansite Canonfire! and was written for Postfest II.
- The Hidden Fortress of Conjured Sands (2009) is adapted from the article, Tuerny the Merciless by Rick "Duicarthan" Miller and Michael "mortellan" Bridges, in Oerth Journal #25.
- Khur Razjin 'Path of Shadows' (2010) is an adapted location from the soon to be released Gazetteer of the Flanaess: Ulakand the City of Horses.
- *Dagger of Misfortune* (2007) is adapted from the Postfest VII article for the fansite Canonfire!
- *Gloryseeker* first appeared in Magic Items of Ull: Part 2 (2005) for the fansite Canonfire!
- *Jug of Geshtai* first appeared in Magic Items of Ull: Part 1 (2005) for the fansite Canonfire!
- *Minotaur Mask of the Ulsprues* (2005) is adapted from the Postfest IV article for the fansite Canonfire! Special inspiration from Baphomet (2001) by Rasgon, and Excerpts from the Demonomicon of Iggwilv: Baphomet, Demon Lord of Minotaurs (2001) by Allan T. Grohe.
- *Ring of the Yorodhi* first appeared in Magic Items of Ull: Part 2 (2005) for the fansite Canonfire!
- *Robe of Incabulos* first appeared in Magic Items of Ull: Part 1 (2005) for the fansite Canonfire!
- *Rod of Dhawar* first appeared in Magic Items of Ull: Part 1 (2005) for the fansite Canonfire!
- *Staff of the Barrier Peaks* first appeared in Magic Items of Ull: Part 2 (2005) for the fansite Canonfire! and was inspired by the AD&D module, Expedition to the Barrier Peaks by E. Gary Gygax.
- Original Map of Ull was designed by Anna Bernemalm, Michael Bridges, and Rick Miller. It was originally featured in the article Gazetteer of the Flanaess: Ull for Oerth Journal #19.

Appendix and Additions

(Brian Dougherty)

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1st Edition

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- Darlene. Map of the World of Greyhawk.
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- Ward, James M. Greyhawk Adventures.

3rd Edition

- Holian, Gary; Erik Mona, Sean K. Reynolds, Frederick Weining. Living Greyhawk Gazetteer.

Personal Sources and Acknowledgements

- Lakofka, Len; Frank Mentzer. The History of Oerth (Oerik), Oerth Journal #1.
- Bridges, Michael. Wonders of Ull.
- New Ull and I9 terrain maps by Brian Dougherty with invaluable assistance by Michael Bridges

Plains of
the Paynim

Ull

Wādī

Khīṣar

Trail

Falla-nīl

Monastery

Azou-khem

Monastery

Oghe Ruins

Ullspae

Mountains

Altan of

Dhawar

Mines

Silver

Mines

Okkand

(Daw-gaf)

Kestor

(Kestor)

Tower of

AbīDazīm

Dust

Road

Yorod

(Abmad)

Dry

Steppes

Ceshra

Trail

Ullakand

(Ull)

Gol Ulean

Monastery

K11

(Nafal)

K12

(Nafal)

K13

(Nafal)

K14

(Nafal)

K15

(Ullzar)

K16

(Ullzar)

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Trail

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K4

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K5

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K6

(Khaghar)

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Javan

River

Crystalmist

Mountains

Hornwood

WGL12

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Javan

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Key

Scale: 1 Hex = 30 Miles

- City

- Town

- Village

- Monastery

- Ruins

- Tower

Notes

This map is derived from Mortellan's Ull articles and Ull Trails map from Canonfire. Additional details provided by the 3rd edition Ull Gazetteer also available on Canonfire.

Text Key

Gold text: Adventure location

Pale yellow text: Road or Trail

Bright yellow text: Political Division

Key

Scale: 1 Hex = 30 Miles



Text Key

Pale yellow text: Road or Trail

Notes

This map is derived from Mortellan's Ull articles and Ull Trails map from Canonfire. Additional details provided by the 3rd edition Ull Gazetteer also available on Canonfire.



Key

Dried marsh

1000-2000
feet elevation

3000-4000
feet elevation

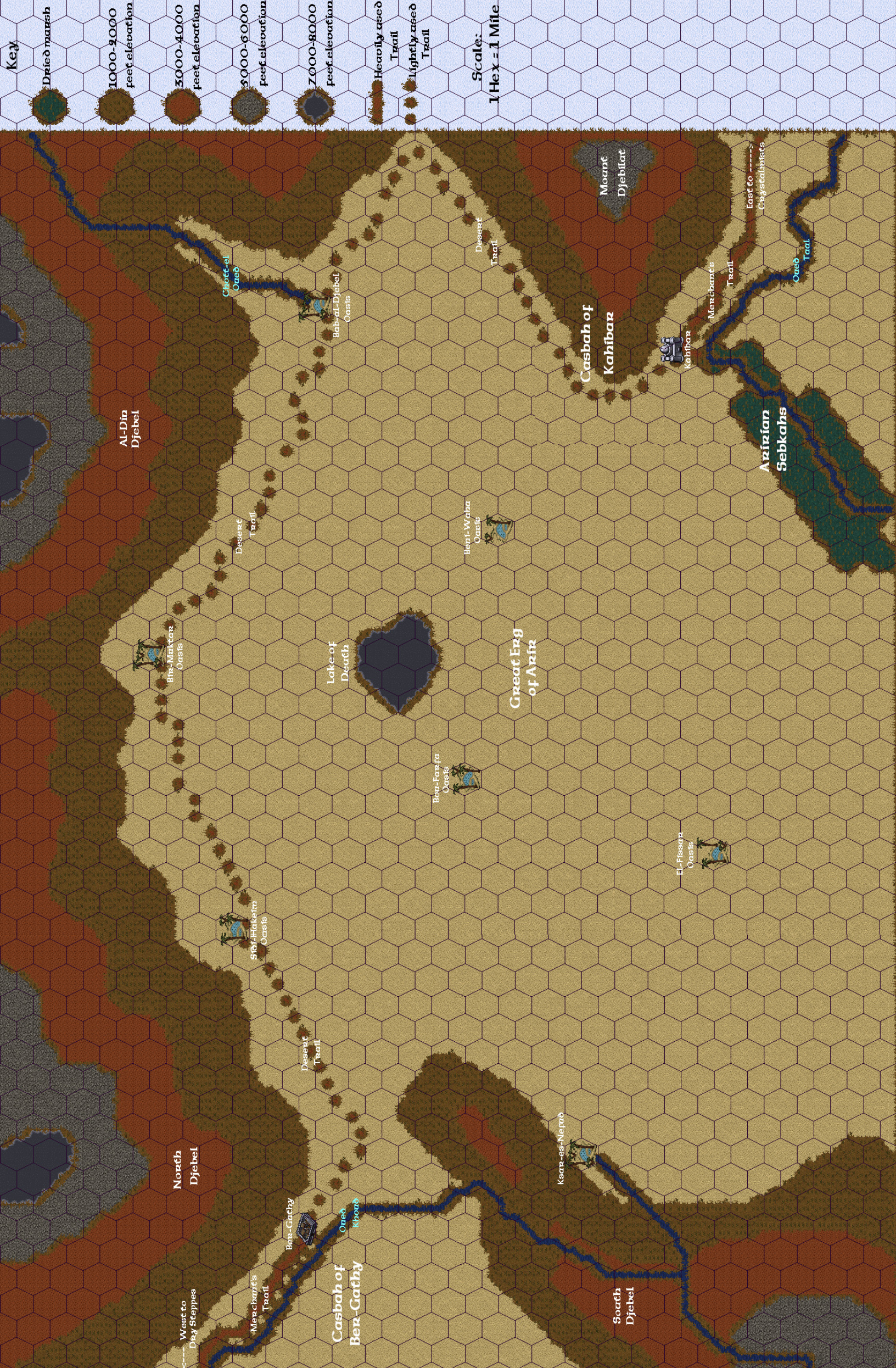
5000-6000
feet elevation

7000-8000
feet elevation

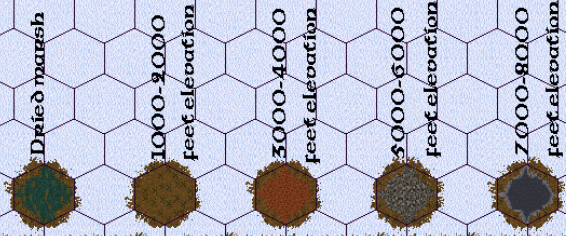
Heavily used

Lightly used Trail

Scale:
1 Hex = 1 Mile



Key



1000-2000
feet elevation

feet elevation

~~3000-4000
feet elevation~~

feet elevation

5000-6000
reef elevation

feet elevation

7000-8000
reef elevation

feet elevation

Heavily used

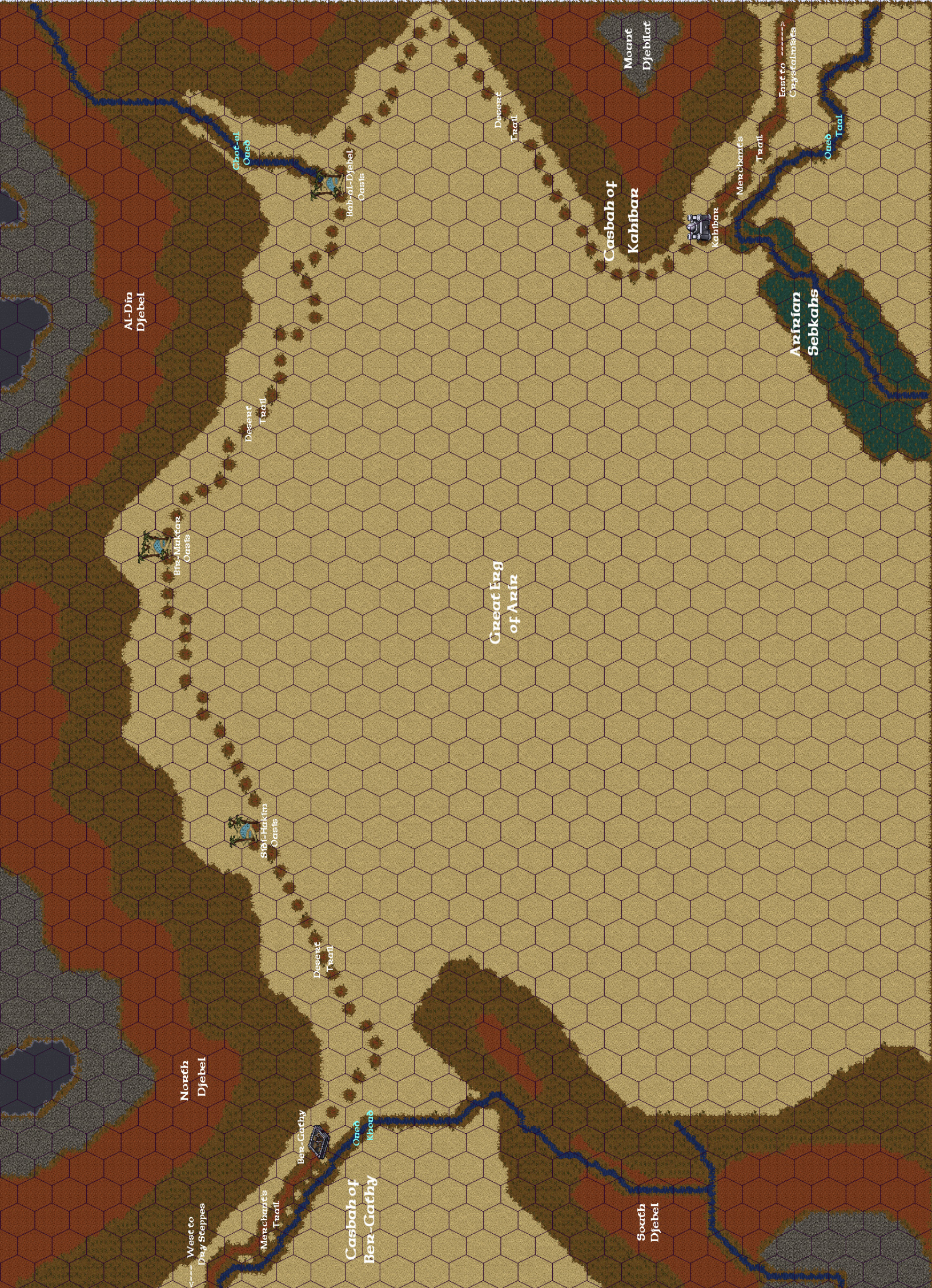
Trail

Lightly used

Trail

Scale:

1 Hex = 1 Mile



Al-Dín
Djebel

Blz-Maktar
Qasf

Sof-Hakim

Oasis

Ber-Gochy

**Casbah of
Ber-Ga'by**

Ber-Gathy

One

Khond

Great Egg
of Air

of Arir

Desert

Trail

**Casbah of
Kahilbar**

Kahibar

Meanf

Diebilde

Merchant's

Trail

East to ----->

Crystallites

Arifian Sebkahs

Sebkahs

One

Taal

South

Djebel

----- West to
Day Steppes

Day Steppes

Merchand

Trail