

ZEF6-06

Piety

A One-Round D&D® Living Greyhawk™ Sultanate of Zeif Regional Adventure

by R.C. Gray

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Come one, come all! Glory awaits you in the Tournament of Al'Akbar! Do you dare face the same challenges faced by a god? Do you dare endure these same dangers and risk your own life for fame and fortune? Step right up, and join the competition! Follow in the High Cleric's footsteps and perhaps you may find yourself a god amongst mortals! A one-round Core adventure set in Zeif for characters level 1-11 (APLs 2-10).

Resources for this adventure [and the authors of those works] include *Complete Adventurer* [Jesse Decker], *Complete Arcane* [Richard Baker], *Complete Warrior* [Andy Collins, David Noonan, Ed Stark], *Miniatures Handbook* [Michael Donais, Skaff Elias, Rob Heinsoo, Jonathan Tweet], *Monster Manual III* and *Sandstorm* [Bruce R. Cordell, Jennifer Clarke Wilkes, JD Wiker].

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Richard Baker, and Peter Adkison.

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If you are planning on playing this adventure, stop reading now. The rest of the information in this adventure is for the DM only. If you read farther than this section, you'll know too much about its challenges, which kills the fun. **Also, if you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, reading beyond this point makes you ineligible to do so.**

PREPARING FOR PLAY

To get the most out of this adventure, you need copies of the following D&D rule books: *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*.

Throughout this adventure, text in ***bold italics*** provides player information for you to paraphrase or read aloud when appropriate. Sidebars contain important information for you, including special instruction on running the adventure. Information on nonplayer

characters (NPCs) and monsters appear in abbreviated form in the adventure text. Full information on NPCs and monsters are given in Appendix 1. For your convenience, that appendix is split by APL

Along with this adventure you'll find a RPGA Session Tracking sheet. If you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, complete and turn in this sheet to your senior GM directly after play. You'll also find a LIVING GREYHAWK Adventure Record (AR).

LIVING GREYHAWK LEVELS OF PLAY

Because players bring their own characters to LIVING GREYHAWK games, this adventure's challenges are proportionate to the modified average character level of the PCs participating in the adventure. To determine this modified Average Party Level (APL) follow the steps below:

1. Determine the character level for each of the PCs participating in the adventure.
2. If PCs bring animals that have been trained for combat (most likely dogs trained for war), other than those brought by virtue of a class ability (such as animal companions, familiars paladin's mounts) or the warhorse of a character with the Mounted Combat feat, use the sidebar chart to determine the number of levels you add to the sum of step one. Add each character's animals separately. A single PC may only bring four or fewer animals of this type, and animals with different CRs are added separately.

	Mundane Animals Effect on APL	# of Animals			
		1	2	3	4
CR of Animal	1/4 & 1/6	0	0	0	1
	1/3 & 1/2	0	0	1	1
	1	1	1	2	3
	2	2	3	4	5
	3	3	4	5	6
	4	4	6	7	8
	5	5	7	8	9
	6	6	8	9	10
	7	7	9	10	11

3. Sum the results of step 1 and 2, and divide by the number of characters playing in the adventure. Round up to the nearest whole number.

4. If you are running a table of six PCs, add one to that average.

Throughout this adventure, APLs categorize the level of challenge the PCs face. APLs are given in even-numbered increments. If the APL of your group falls on an odd number, ask them before the adventure begins whether they would like to play a harder or easier adventure. Based on their choice, use either the higher or the lower adjacent APL.

APL also affects the amount of experience and gold a PC can gain at the end of the adventure. If a player character is three character levels or more either higher or lower than the APL at which this adventure is being played, that character receives only one-half of the experience points and gold for the adventure. This simulates the fact that either the PC was not challenged as much as normal or relied on help by higher-level characters to reach the objectives.

Furthermore, a PC who is four or more levels higher than the highest APL supported by the adventure may not play the adventure.

LIVING GREYHAWK adventures are designed for APL 2 and higher. Four or five 1st-level characters may find the challenge of an APL 2 adventure difficult. Suggest the following to these groups to help increase their chances of success:

1. Enlist a sixth player.
2. Advise characters to buy riding dogs to help protect them and fight for them.

TIME UNITS AND UPKEEP

This is a standard one-round Regional adventure, set in the Sultanate of Zeif. Characters native to the Sultanate of Zeif pay one Time Unit per round, all others pay two Time Units per round.

Adventurer's Standard Upkeep costs 12 gp per Time Unit. Rich Upkeep costs 50 gp per Time Unit. Luxury Upkeep costs 100 gp per Time Unit. Characters that fail to pay at least Standard Upkeep will retain temporary ability damage until the next adventure, must buy new spell component pouches and healer's kits, and may suffer other in-game penalties (or possibly gain in-game benefits) as may be detailed in this adventure.

A character that does not pay for at least Standard Upkeep may also avoid the above-described penalties by living off the wild. If the character possesses four or more ranks in the Survival skill and succeeds at a DC 20 Survival check, the character will heal temporary ability damage as if he or she paid for Standard Upkeep, may refill spell component pouches and healer's kits, and may restock up to 20 arrows or bolts if the character has at

least four ranks in Craft (bowmaking). The player is allowed to Take 10 on this roll.

More information about Lifestyle and Upkeep can be found in the "Lifestyle and Upkeep" section of Chapter 3 of the *LIVING GREYHAWK Campaign Sourcebook*.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The Beylik of Elyan is a small province in the southeast corner of Zeif, ruled by Zinn-i-Bey-ibn'Zinn al'Ceshra, Bey of Elyan. It is also home to the two towns of Yatirdes and Abar Nur-Ter'I. The residents of these towns have honored the demigod Al'Akbar and believed that he led one of his many pilgrimages between the two points.

The pilgrimage in question is believed to have been in 2217 BH (-442 CY). Al'Akbar, along with a small group of followers, headed through the plains and hills from Yatirdes to Abar Nur-Ter'I in order to bring a healing salve to the people who had fallen under a plague. Al'Akbar and his followers encountered several creatures and obstacles in their travels, which an elven bard in the group, Maeglin Calmacil, recorded.

The first encounter occurred on the first day, late into the afternoon. The party had approached a vast sand dune, littered with a number of different sized boulders and rocks. A warrior, Ferando Alhain, strode into the sand, finding the boulders too slow a source to navigate. He'd not walked ten paces when he began to sink into the sand. His descent would have continued were it not for the assistance of his cohorts, who threw him a rope and pulled him to safety. Al'Akbar examined his surroundings and proposed a solution with the rocks. He began to climb and transverse the sand dunes using the rocky outcrops, and managed to cross unscathed to the other side. His companions followed suit, including Ferando, who was less than pleased at his inability to kill something.

Upon the second day, the party was growing hungry and thirsty, their rations either lost through earlier combat or from consumption. By chance they wandered into a valley from which a number of sculpted bushes grew around a well managed estate. Al'Akbar approached a man who sat reading scrolls in a gazebo near the path, and asked for some supplies. The man, a wizard named Cultis Voy, immediately cut down Al'Akbar's request, and ridiculed him and his motley team. While patient, Al'Akbar was nonetheless insulted by the man's rudeness. While he diplomatically made clear to the wizard his party's intentions to cross peacefully, the man grew even angrier. With a muttered phrase, Cultis Voy waved to his topiary, which sprang to life and immediately began attacking Al'Akbar and his cohorts. The battle was fierce and Al'Akbar found himself between two attacking

fronts; the immediate assault from the plants and the arcane attacks from Cultis Voy. While Al'Akbar believed that had he the time to take on and defeat the wizard completely, there was still the matter of getting the salve to the people of Abar Nur-Ter'I. He ordered his people to fight their way through the valley towards Abar Nur-Ter'I. He was the last through, urging his companions through the trail first. Once past the estate grounds, the topiary creatures ceased their attacks, and maintained a vigil in case Al'Akbar returned, which he did not.

By the third day, Al'Akbar realized that he and his team were behind schedule, as people were dying in Abar Nur-Ter'I almost on an hourly basis. He pushed his people forward. The light vegetation of the plains and valleys receded and it became desert once more. The heat of the sun increased, and the sands beneath them erupted into fiery columns of flame. Undaunted but still thinking of his companions, Al'Akbar was first into the blazing sands. He gave orders to his followers where to tread, acting as a scout for the others to cross safely. Once across the hazard, he and his team proceeded with haste to Abar Nur-Ter'I, and made it by nightfall.

The people reacted with joy and relief to his appearance, and he gave the salve to the local temple to distribute to the masses. The plague was soon put out, and Al'Akbar was decreed a hero and savior of the region.

Since then, the pilgrimage has enjoyed a yearly celebration that the people call The Footsteps of Al'Akbar. Bards recounted the encounters, while people dressed up as Al'Akbar or his companions and made celebrations through the week. This continued for years, and people still enjoy the festivities related to the pilgrimage.

Faith in Al'Akbar is intense in this region, and many continue to pray daily to him. While not everyone has prospered equally under the faith, all still value Al'Akbar and his beliefs in law, goodness and fairness. Residents continue to treat each other and even strangers well, for to fail to do so would be considered an affront to the teachings of Al'Akbar.

The same cannot be said for Zinn-i-Bey-ibn'Zinn al'Ceshra. For years, he has feasted on the faith of the people. Where they practice fairness and equality, he endeavors to serve only himself and put his rule forward. He is intelligent enough not to do this outwardly, but perpetrates his schemes by portraying himself as a noble, selfless individual whose only love is for the people while instead taking from them and deceiving them.

By the time Zinn-i-Bey-ibn'Zinn al'Ceshra came to power, he was well acquainted with the celebrations of the pilgrimage, and plotted to use this for his own benefit. Concerned with the possibility that someone might find out his true nature, and equally concerned about some upstart willing to kill him and take his place,

he sought to use the legendary travel as a way to eliminate possible competition and make some money at the same time.

Zinn-i-Bey-ibn'Zinn al'Ceshra announced a recreation of the event, one where competitors would race from Yatirdes to Abar Nur-Ter'I and encounter the same creatures that Al'Akbar himself had. The Bey also used this as an opportunity for gambling. Those who made it past the final encounter whom the Bey believed would be a possible threat to him, as well as those he saw as untouchable in their purity, would be killed by the Bey's men prior to their crossing the finish line. Those he felt had a very good chance of winning, but little interest in anything other than gold, he would bet on with other nobles.

However, there was still the obstacle of Al'Akbar himself. Some years after the pilgrimage, a number of followers of Al'Akbar set up a temple in his name and blessed by his clerics. The temple also housed a powerful item blessed by Al'Akbar himself, a censer which itself claimed healing powers. Not wanting to take a chance at having those in the race stumble upon the temple, he had his men attack the temple and desecrate it. Undead creatures and traps were installed into the building. The censer was left there, as the Bey's men were unable to get past the temple's own security measures surrounding the censer in the first place. As a gesture of goodwill, Zinn-i-Bey-ibn'Zinn al'Ceshra had a new temple of Al'Akbar built in Abar Nur-Ter'I. To ensure that no true power emanated from the temple, the Bey made sure that it was improperly blessed.

The Bey then proceeded with his plans for the new contest. He created new rules for the journey. There were certain points that the participants were instructed to pass through as check points, not only to give them some semblance of resting up, but to pass onto the Bey who had survived that particular encounter. Those that lived but did not pass through the checkpoints at night would be disqualified. As an additional aid, maps were handed out at the beginning of the race. The maps given to participants of the course also made sure that the participants would hit the same deadly encounters that befell Al'Akbar and his companions. Zinn-i-Bey-ibn'Zinn al'Ceshra also made sure that no mounts were allowed. Mounts would only aid in their possible survival, but the Bey claimed it was because Al'Akbar himself had no mounts for his journey.

On the week of the celebration of the pilgrimage, he held the first of many tournaments. Adventurers from far and wide attended, signed up, and formed into teams. The Bey had his scouts determine which of the parties would most likely be a threat to him, and he then instructed his people to ensure that they did not cross the finish line. The scouts would also inform him whom they

believed were more interested in monetary benefit than moral fulfillment, and Zinn-i-Bey-ibn'Zinn al'Ceshra would place his bets on them. Then, at the start of the competition, Zinn-i-Bey-ibn'Zinn al'Ceshra gave his blessings to the attendees and struck a gong, signalling the participants to commence the journey. Zinn-i-Bey-ibn'Zinn al'Ceshra then traveled with his entourage to the finish line using an alternative travel route which arrived in time to greet the 'winners'. The tournament has now been going on many years. Some have prospered with the Bey's greed, winning through the killing of more deserving, altruistic adventurers by the Bey's troops. Many have died, either from the creatures and dangers along the path or from the sharp weapon of one of the Bey's loyal guard, later to be fed to the undead creatures guarding the cup.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The adventure begins in Yatirdes, the day before the tournament in the middle of summer. The Footsteps of Al'Akbar Tournament has been widely publicized for months, and adventurers from across the Flanaess have come to test their mettle in the competition. The PCs are no exception, hearing of great monetary prizes and challenges to their skills. It is in the town itself that the PCs may sign up for the event, and there is no shortage of kiosks for that. Many Yatirdes residents gather around the kiosks, hoping to get a look at those brave or foolish enough to sign up.

After signing up for the challenge, the PCs may rest overnight and prepare whatever they need (*Player's Handbook* equipment list and Living Greyhawk permissible items and spells) at the official inn for the tournament, The Oasis of Al'Akbar. At the inn, the players meet an attractive woman, Naris' Sha. She will offer to read the player's their fortune. In fact, what she speaks is of the trials coming up in the tournament, so that the party may have a chance to avoid most of the combat. She will also make some comment on the desecrated temple of Al'Akbar, although she knows nothing of the actual temple itself. She comments that sometimes to win for many, one must accept personal loss.

The players are free to gather information on the tournament, Naris' Sha, or Zinn-i-Bey-ibn'Zinn al'Ceshra. Most will not have anything poor to say about the Bey. The residents believe him to be a firm supporter of Al'Akbar, who does what he can to aid those of the faith. There is little information on Naris Sha. Some claim that she is merely a gossip and troublemaker. Others claim that she works for the Qadi, clerics of the Exalted Faith of Al'Akbar. As those who have won the tournament are no longer in the region, having retired to greener pastures,

they cannot be contacted for information on the tournament. Residents know very little of the tournament other than what is known of Al'Akbar's pilgrimage, and most only know that the demigod faced three challenges between the two towns.

The following morning, the various competitors gather at the starting point of the race. Competitors receive colored sashes to mark their teams, and rules of the race are given. The teams also receive maps of the route. As the players mull over their situation, another team of NPCs wishes the other teams well. Once all have gathered, a page will call out the rules of the race.

No mounts are allowed. This is a foot race. There are required checkpoints. In order to meet the checkpoints by the end of the day, running is the preferred method of speed. The race is held in the summer, and, as such, the rough desert-like plains are very hot and players must save versus heat dangers in hot conditions.

Zinn-i-Bey-ibn'Zinn al'Ceshra appears before the crowd from the balcony of a nearby building. As both spectators and participants listen, he speaks of the contest and wishes everyone well. He speaks of how the contest enriches everyone. It is at this point that he looks at the PCs, and sharp eyed players may notice that he touches his money pouch as he says this. After he finishes his speech, he instructs everyone to take their place in the starting line and strikes a gong to begin the race.

The players roll their saves against the heat and possible forced march in order to continue in the race to meet the checkpoints by the allotted time. Their first encounter is at the sand dunes where they must navigate the obstacle using the rocks. A hooked claw and a tattered rope are in the area, and can be transformed into a makeshift rope and grapple from which to swing from rock to rock if the PCs cannot make the jumps.

The first night's checkpoint is easy enough to find. The camp leader notes how the teams did that day, and the parties are separated into their respective tents.

The next day begins with the participants starting out as before. The day's encounter brings them to the ruins of a mansion between steep peaks of a valley. There are various topiary hedges surrounding a gazebo in the front. Inspecting the dead wizard's body in the gazebo or passing by it to proceed along the path causes the topiary beasts to attack. They will stop attacking once the players have left the area.

As day ends, the players arrive at the next checkstop and rest for the night.

On the following day, the teams leave to race to the final checkpoint. It is this day that the players may notice the remnants of the old temple of Al'Akbar. Here they may either choose to ignore it and proceed to the rest of the race or they may enter, which may lead to their

disqualification from the race, as they will have bypassed a necessary checkpoint.

In the abandoned temple, the players encounter the temple guardian, an avoral, Melieras. Having been aware of the PCs for some time, he offers them a chance to aid in the service of Al'Akbar. The old temple was attacked and desecrated by invaders a number of years ago, and desecrated with undead. Melieras wants the party to retrieve the temple's holy object, a cup, from one of the rear chambers. After ensuring that the PCs have no ulterior motives other than to aid the service of Al'Akbar, Melieras will inform them not only of the undead, but that the invaders also placed a number of traps in the temple. PCs may recognize from the descriptions of the invaders that these are men loyal to Zinn-i-Bey-ibn'Zinn al'Ceshra.

The players travel down a hall which leads to the room where the cup is safeguarded. Blade traps have been installed here by the Bey's troops as a deterrent, should anyone enter the temple.

Once past the traps, the players find themselves in the Artefact foyer. The room contains a puzzle installed by the clerics of Al'Akbar to ensure that no unauthorized people would gain access to the viewing chamber.

After the players have completed the foyer puzzle, they enter the Artefact room itself. It is also guarded by undead, hardened by arcane magic. Once the PCs defeat the undead, Melieras appears, and offers to transport the PCs along with the cup closer to Abar Nur-Ter'I. However, the path that Melieras offers to transport them is not near a checkpoint for the race, which the PCs may uncover if they have their maps handy. This will disqualify them from the tournament.

After their teleportation, the PCs find themselves on a ridge overlooking the final obstacle which faced Al'Akbar, the burning desert. In the burning desert, the team which greeted everyone earlier is under attack by a number of thugs loyal to Zinn-i-Bey-ibn'Zinn al'Ceshra. Here the players have another choice. They may either go straight to Abar Nur-Ter'I, as the path they are on ignores the burning desert, or they may assist the other team, which will surely die without aid from the PCs.

Once the battle is finished, any members of the NPC team left alive will thank the PCs for their intervention and offer to drop out of the race in honor of them. If the PCs realize that they are no longer in the race, and inform the other team of this, the team offers to walk with the PCs to the finish line.

As the PCs arrive in Abar Nur-Ter'I, the people greet them like conquering heroes. Zinn-i-Bey-ibn'Zinn al'Ceshra himself is there. If the PCs bypassed the temple, he will offer them their reward. If the PCs instead chose to take the cup at the temple, the Bey will offer to take it and have it properly installed in the new temple. This of

course is a lie. The PCs may offer to take it to the temple themselves. The Bey, again feigning honor and piety, will allow the PCs to do so. The Bey cannot afford to look less than proper in front of the welcoming crowd. He will force a smile on his face, and offer them free access to the temple. Once the players put the cup on a pedestal, the game concludes as the temple is now properly blessed.

PREPARATION FOR PLAY

Rules of the Race:

No mounts are allowed. No flying spells are permitted. This is a foot race. There are required checkpoints both during the day and at the end of the day's race. In order to meet the checkpoints by the end of the day, running is the preferred method of speed. The race is held in the summer, and as such, the rough desert-like plains are very hot and players must save versus heat dangers in hot conditions.

A character in very hot conditions (above 90° F) must make a Fortitude saving throw each hour (DC 15, +1 for each previous check) or take 1d4 points of nonlethal damage. Characters wearing heavy clothing or armor of any sort take a -4 penalty on their saves. A character with the Survival skill may receive a bonus on this saving throw and may be able to apply this bonus to other characters as well (see the skill description). Characters reduced to unconsciousness begin taking lethal damage (1d4 points per hour).

The race itself is fixed. The PCs are intended to find themselves at the finish line prior to any other team. This is due to the Bey's team of orcs hiding at the final challenge of the tournament and killing off all of the NPC competitors that manage to gain the lead.

The DM will instruct the PC with the highest Survival Skill modifier to roll a Survival check in reading the map given to them to determine their success and navigating the terrain better than the other teams.

INTRODUCTION

The PCs have arrived at Yatirdes (pronounced Yah tear des) in the summer just prior to the Start of the Tournament of Al'Akbar, an event celebrated between this town and another village named Abar Nur-Ter'I (pronounced A-bar Nur Tur el) which is approximately three days away on foot. The word has gotten around much of the Flannaess, and characters are approaching the area out of curiosity or a desire to compete. Some or all of the PCs may have managed to previously cross paths with the Bey of Elyan, Zinn-i-Bey-ibn'Zinn al'Ceshra. Those that have done so and have implicated him previously will face some consequences.

Yatirdes:

For implicating the Bey once, the PC will have taken from his or her person a mundane weapon or other equipment that the DM sees fit up to a maximum value of 100 gp.

For Implicating the Bey twice, the PC will have taken from his or her person, a masterwork weapon or other equipment that the DM sees fit up to a maximum value of 450 gp.

For Implicating the Bey thrice, the PC will have taken from his or her person, a +1 weapon or other equipment that the DM sees fit up to a maximum value of 2,450 gp.

The equipment shall be removed as the PCs enter Yatirdes. The Bey has informed his underlings of the PCs should they arrive at the city gate for sign in, and have informed them of what matters to take. Any and all equipment will be returned upon completion of the adventure.

ENCOUNTER ONE: STEP RIGHT UP!

It has been several days since you began your trip to Yatirdes in the southeast of Zeif. Each day has been hotter than the last as the summer season nears its zenith, and it is with some sense of relief that you finally spot the border of the town. The call for adventurers for the tournament of Al'Akbar was sounded loudly across the lands, and it was either out of curiosity or a desire to claim the fame and fortune of the tournament that you came here. But you certainly have not come alone. On your trip, you encountered others with similar motivations, and it is they who march with you for the starting point of the Footsteps of Al'Akbar.

Players may introduce their characters at this point if they so choose.

The town itself appears humble enough. Certainly, that is not unexpected in a region where the reverence of the demigod Al'Akbar is nearly without equal. Upon entering the modest gates, you find yourselves surrounded by the common folk. They each wear a smile and meet each other with hearty greetings; you find yourselves the targets of similar good wishes by these complete strangers. "Welcome to Yatirdes," some say. "You've come to witness the blessings of Al'Akbar himself, no doubt," say others. The people move off as quickly as they appear, and you notice as they depart that beyond the

crowd are a number of kiosks with banners where a

Type: Large town Gold piece limit: 838 gp

Population: 4,247 Total wealth: 178,075 gp

number of people equipped similarly to yourselves stand in line. The banners read 'Tournament Sign Up', and bordering the line of potential tournament competitors on either side are a flock of town residents, who may be there just to catch a glimpse of those who may win the prize.

Players may ask residents if they so choose any questions about the tournament. The townsfolk don't know specifics about what dangers lurk in tournament, but they do know this:

- The kiosks are for sign ups for the Footsteps of Al'Akbar pilgrimage. It is in honor of Al'Akbar who made a pilgrimage between here and Abar Nur-Ter'I many years before. He and his three followers spent three days and nights making the trek to Yatirdes.
- The tournament has been going on for nearly 10 years.
- Many have joined in the tournament, but only a few have ever made it to complete the race. Those who have completed it received fortune and fame.
- Bey Zinn-i-Bey-ibn'Zinn al'Ceshra sponsors the pilgrimage to show his respect for the demigod.
- Tomorrow is the beginning of the race.

If the PCs want specifics of the pilgrimage and tournament, the townsfolk are unable to give any. The residents know much of Al'Akbar which is known in the Player's Guide to Zeif, but do not know the exact nature of the race.

The players may choose to go to the local temple of Al'Akbar. However, Zinn-i-Bey-ibn'Zinn al'Ceshra has ensured as much ignorance of Al'Akbar as possible for the people. The Bey has in fact used clerics not of Al'Akbar at the temple, which has become weak in its holy power. If the PCs have already had experience dealing with Zinn-i-Bey-ibn'Zinn al'Ceshra, they may already be wary of the contest.

Any cleric of Al'Akbar in Yatirdes who is under the influence of Zinn-i-Bey-ibn'Zinn al'Ceshra will avoid giving the PCs any real information on the plot of the Bey against the faithful of Al'Akbar. Any questions that the PCs may have will be answered with vague responses.

In order for the PCs to continue in the adventure, they must sign up for the event. The kiosks are numerous all about town, so it will not difficult to find one. Upon

stepping up to a kiosk, the booth manager will look over the party.

The kiosk stands before you with a few people already in line to sign up. As you take your place in the line-up, you see the surrounding observers point towards you. Their voices remained hushed, but it seems they are more than excited to see more people join the tournament.

Next to the kiosk is a large banner. It reads:

'Tournament of Al'Akbar Registration Outlet: Pay heed to these rules of the race, should you decide to join. This race is a footrace, and, as such, all mounts are banned. All flying, levitating, and translocation spells are disallowed. Each participant will serve in a team of four to six members. The race will take three days. Participants will be allowed time to rest each day.

Please make note that participants will not be allowed to purchase new equipment once the tournament begins. You will only be allowed to compete with what you yourself carry.

May the High Cleric bless you or your families, should you fail to cross the finish line.'

As the adventurers ahead of you complete their application, you step forward and find yourself face to face with tall Baklunish man, who is most likely much younger than what his weathered features show. His eyes dart about you and your fellow competitors. He smiles and raises a hand, motioning you closer to the stand.

"Ah, you too wish to participate in the grand tournament of Al'Akbar! Of course you do! You look hardy enough! Come! Step right up! Sign your name right here!"

The man motions to a parchment on the wooden stand with a dozen or so names already present. Before you have a chance to react, you find that a quill has been thrust into your hand. The weathered man looms to your side, nearly quivering with anticipation.

If the PCs sign up, the man responds:

"Wonderful!" the man exclaims. He reaches into a trunk by his side, and brings out arm bands. "These will show your participation in the event. Wear them with honor. Wear them with pride!" The man's smile broadens as he distributes them.

The man will wait for the PCs to put on the bands. Once they do this, he continues:

"Outstanding! Outstanding! Now, if you please, make your way to The Oasis of Al'Akbar. That is the official inn of the competition, and it certainly would not do to have participants such as yourselves be less than refreshed on the day of the race! May the Restorer of Righteousness be with you!"

With that, the man motions you in the direction of the inn.

Should the PCs decline to sign at this time, the man responds:

"Ah, do you question if you are up for the pilgrimage of Al'Akbar? That is understandable. Many have fallen in his footsteps. There is no shame in declining the challenge. But should you change your minds, any of our sign-up booths will be available for you until nightfall. May the Restorer of Righteousness be with you!"

The man is a watchman for Zinn-i-Bey-ibn'Zinn al'Ceshra. It is his duty not only to assign the teams for the tournament, but to also pass along his feelings on the hardiness of the contestants. After examining the PCs, he's decided that this is the team that will win the race.

ENCOUNTER TWO: FORTUNE FAVORS THE FOOLISH

Access to the Oasis of Al'Akbar is easy and plentiful. There is a banner hung across the building reading 'Welcome to the Tournament of Al'Akbar'. Should the PCs wander before going there to gather information, residents will be able to give them directions.

The Oasis of Al'Akbar teams with life. There may be well over one hundred townspeople surrounding the flat and wide two story inn cheering on the adventurers who have already signed up for the tournament.

Upon entering, the public house is just as crowded. There are other teams displaying their arm bands seated at tables and surrounded by numerous admirers. There is a nearly unimaginable mixture and collection of races seated at their tables. One table contains nothing but Halflings, while a table of elves and humans sit at another. A group of dwarves sit with their backs turned to the mass, drinking their ales. A group of orcs with their half-brethren sit at a table further away from the main drinking area. As you take in the sights, a server approaches you. "Ah, the latest batch," he says. He guides you to an empty table, and you are motioned to sit. "Your quarters will

be set up for you shortly. In the meanwhile, may I interest you in some beverages?"

After taking your orders, the server leaves. Without a moment's hesitation, several townspeople fill in the spots around you. Questions flow from them like the ale from the nearby bar, fast and furious without pause for a response. 'Who are you?' 'Where do you come from?' 'Have you ever killed a dragon?'

The townsfolk continue their barrage of inquiries, but it is a soft, gentle voice which catches your notice.

"May I please have the honor of reading your fortunes?"

You track the voice to its owner, a slight, soft featured Baklunish woman.

"My name is Naris'Shar, and it would be my privilege to read the fortune of the brave adventurers who would participate in the Footsteps of Al'Akbar. May I?"

If the players agree, she replies:

Naris'Sha pulls up an empty chair, and seats herself. Removing a pack of cards, she deals several cards on the simple wooden table.

"You will go on a long and arduous journey, but of course you know this." She flips another card, then another. "You will be faced with challenges... obstacles." Naris'Shar turns over another card into place. "There is a sea of dust which houses hunger and darkness. You must cross it to reach your goal, but you are not to touch down upon it." Naris'Shar places several other cards down. "There is another challenge beyond. You will find a home with no hospitality, no sanctuary. You will face the hunger of that which lays hidden in the open garden." More cards turn under her hand. "Your last trial shall be one of fire, where you will face a dilemma. One path will lead to safety and betrayal while the other path will lead to danger and salvation."

Naris'Shar draws additional cards. "Interesting. There is more. There is darkness. It is all around you and the glory of Al'Akbar. Yours is a quest for a treasure you do not seek, and in finding it, you may lose what you seek to win."

If the PCs say no, she replies:

"As you wish. However, should you have a change of mind before tomorrow, I shall be here." The woman bows and disappears through the crowd.

Naris'Shar: Baklunish Cleric 2 (Istus).

Naris'Shar has told of the three trials of the tournament, namely the sand valley threat, the topiary danger, and the volcano desert and attack on other NPC parties. If questioned on the future, she will not be able to give any specific answers or clarifications. The cards tell all which they need to know. She cannot go any further in depth as Al'Akbar has not given her providence to do so.

Naris'Shar departs with a bow, and will disappear into the crowd. Searching for her is fruitless, as she has moved on to where Al'Akbar has seen fit.

At this point, the PCs are notified that their accommodations have been prepared, and they are free to retire there for the rest of the night. The PCs are free to wander about the inn and the town for information. Should they ask residents of Naris'Shar, the residents will shake their heads, claiming the girl simply isn't right. On a DC 20 Gather Information check, PCs will learn that Naris'Shar has been seen in the company of travelling clerics who wear the symbol of Al'Akbar, although they are not from Yatirdes, nor do they stay there.

The room that has been reserved for the PCs is sparsely furnished but clean. Beds are available for all members, and nothing happens during the night.

Remind PCs that they will be entering a desert environment and they need to outfit themselves accordingly. The town does have the resources for *endure elements* scrolls and potions.

ENCOUNTER THREE: WAKE UP CALL

A sudden slam cuts through the room from the door. "All rise for the tournament!" a gravely voice calls out. "All parties are to meet in the foyer for starting instructions! Everyone involved in the tournament is to go downstairs now!"

This wake up call will occur every five minutes until all the participants are down and ready for the next phase of the pilgrimage.

Shouts and cheers ring up from the foyer as you descend the stairs. A number of Oeridians with arm bands signifying themselves as a team strut around the floor inside a circle made of other contestants.

"Today we seize upon the chance of greatness!" one of the Oeridians shouts. "We face the earth, fire, and tempests of this land for a chance to prove ourselves for the glory, not only of Al'Akbar, but of our own spirits! Surely we may taste suffering and perhaps the pain of death in this quest! But we do this as comrades in arms, kindred spirits! As I stand with

my brothers here, I know that I would stand with each and every one of you in this room as my brothers! May your gods favor you this day, and may all of us see each other at the end in Abar Nur-Ter'I."

The man's comrades throw up their grog mugs in a toast as all the Oeridians drink heartily. The other contenders shrug at their enthusiasm and turn towards their own parties for conversation.

The Oeridian speaker notices you and raises his mug in your direction. "Ah, more brothers (and sisters) in arms! A hearty hale and well met to you. I am Aceari Romaro! How do you fare this day of challenge?"

Aceari Romaro (Ranger/Barbarian) is a well meaning and earnest individual, along with his brothers. He is generally always positive and constructive in his words.

If questioned about the tournament, this is what he knows, or believes:

- The race is a way to strengthen the participant physically, mentally and spiritually.
- There are numerous tests and challenges to overcome.
- There may be vile abominations of nature to overcome, if they're fortunate.

If asked where he comes from, he answers this:

He and his brothers, Baros, Cecandan, Dornam, and Enarus originally came from the northern reaches of Ahlissa in search of their family's killers. While there is no need to go into detail of the event at this time (the story would take two hours to tell), they have traveled from Ahlissa through Nyronnd, the Shield Lands, Furyondy and Ket until they reached Zeif.

On how he came to hear of the Footsteps of Al'Akbar Tournament:

The brothers had come across a group of orcs raiding a human caravan. Upon dispatching the evil creatures, the brothers travelled with the caravan until they reached a small town by the name of Dalmongaard. It was here that they uncovered a treacherous plot by the ruling local nobility to enslave the population of the region. There was an elongated confrontation with the nobility, involving vampires, planar travel and a pit filled with a foul stench. Should the PCs again ask how he learned of the tournament, Aceari will cut to the chase and say that, as they were leaving town following the final battle, they noticed a flyer on a post.

Once the questions are answered, an envoy for the tournament arrives.

The slamming of a cane breaks the mood, and the holder of the cane, a short balding man of some years, looks upon you and the other contestants.

"Hear ye all! It is the appointed time of the competition. For those searching for the glory of the Restorer of Righteousness, please walk with me now."

The man turns and leaves the inn. The other teams follow in his wake, and you find yourselves moving through a path bordered by a congregation of townsfolk who are eager for one last look at the faces of those whom they may never see again. Unlike yesterday, the crowd is now strangely quiet. Their eyes are wide, and their mouths move in silent prayers.

ENCOUNTER FOUR: BANG A GONG

The PCs finish their walk at the town boundary. A podium has been erected where the officials, including Zinn-i-Bey-ibn'Zinn al'Ceshra have gathered.

The path of townsfolk opens up at the edge of the town. As you approach the boundary, tournament officials motion each competitor to a specific location near the starting line. From your vantage point, you notice a round bronze gong and a large podium off to the side of the town which wasn't there yesterday. Well dressed individuals of varying degrees of nobility and well respected merchant house heads sit in seats along the stage, each one flanked by their personal guards. You notice that all eyes of the townsfolk have now fallen upon them and not you. The silence is broken as one last figure appears from the rear of the podium. The people of Yatirdes raise their hands and applaud. From your position, it is difficult at first to make out the figure due to the cheering mass of people, but then you manage to catch a glimpse as he steps to the very edge of the stage towards you and raises his hands. It is the Bey of Elyan, Zinn-i-Bey-ibn'Zinn al'Ceshra himself.

"My greetings upon you," he begins, before the throng drown him out with their applause. The Bey waves and lowers his hands. The common people follow his lead, and the crowd grows quiet. "My people," he smiles broadly and gently. "Today is the day we have been waiting for. Today the pilgrimage is upon us once more. We stand here gazing upon those who would deem themselves worthy of Al'Akbar, and it is His Grace alone that will favor the champions."

The thunderous clapping and vocal cheers erupt around you as the townspeople allow their emotions

to overcome the solemnity of the moment. The Bey again raises his arms to bring the outburst to an end. His smile grows wider still for a brief pause, before it is replaced by a more solemn and stern visage.

"In accordance with the records of his travels, the pilgrimage will take three days. The journey follows the location travelled by Al'Akbar. Each day you will face the same hardships encountered by the High Cleric. This is detailed on the maps you will now receive."

Pages scurry from the sides of the platform, each carrying with them parchments. You and each member of your party are given one, as are the members of the other teams around you. Glancing over the scroll, you notice a map of the region. There are several locations marked on the rough trail given.

The Bey continues, "In order to keep the challenge fair to all parties, there are requirements you must meet every day. Every party must check in with camps set up along the trail. There are four camps each day where you will be marked not only for your continued participation of the pilgrimage, but also for the order of your arrival. Each camp will pass along this information to the next camp. At the last camp of the day, you shall rest, and the teams will leave in the order that they arrived. Failure to arrive at each and every one of these camps will disqualify you from the pilgrimage and the honors of Al'Akbar."

Several members of the other teams mumble to themselves. From their faces, they do not appear pleased with this turn of events.

Bey Zinn-i-Bey-ibn'Zinn al'Ceshra smiles at the murmurs and makes a wave of his hand. Two burly servants move across the stage, carrying a container covered with a fine silk cloth.

"Of course, some of you may have had the inclination to participate in this event not merely for holy blessings from above, but perhaps for more physical amenities."

The cloth is quickly removed by one of the servants, revealing the contents of the newly unveiled display. A massive scimitar glitters in the enclosure, encrusted with jewels, its pommel and cross guard covered in gold. Surrounding the sword are gold coins and gems, sparkling in the early sun. You can make out rings, amulets, and bracelets, all crafted of fine materials, laid bare before the weapon.

"My people," the Bey continues, "This is not some midday amble in the rolling hills. This is a pilgrimage in honor of the hardships faced by Al'Akbar himself. Even he was tested by what he faced, and he became the stronger for it."

Zinn-i-Bey-ibn'Zinn al'Ceshra pauses yet again to let his words sink in. Then he smiles once more, and

you get more than a feeling that he is looking directly at you.

"Al'Akbar ascended to godhood, and thus by his wisdom alone, the champions will be chosen."

You notice the Bey move his hand to his change purse, and he gives you and your team mates a nod.

Without another moment, he strikes out his arm, pointing to the horizon. "Let the Footsteps of Al'Akbar begin!"

The servant at the gong swings and strikes the bronze plate. The thunderous echo reaches out across the field, and the surrounding teams, including that of Aceari Romaro, dash out to the trail away from Yatrides.

It is here that the PCs must begin their race, or else they will be disqualified for not making it to the checkpoints. The weather in this region of Zeif is hot, and, as such, rules for trekking in very hot weather apply:

A character in very hot conditions (above 90° F) must make a Fortitude saving throw each hour (DC 15, +1 for each previous check) or take 1d4 points of nonlethal damage. Characters wearing heavy clothing or armor of any sort take a -4 penalty on their saves. A character with the Survival skill may receive a bonus on this saving throw and may be able to apply this bonus to other characters as well (see the skill description). Characters reduced to unconsciousness begin taking lethal damage (1d4 points per hour).

The object is to make it to each checkpoint first. While the PC and NPC parties may ultimately run, they will need to ascend and descend some slight hills, go through some light bush and over dry land. Unless otherwise noted, there is no hampered movement in the race. This makes the race more of a consistent hustle. A character can hustle for 1 hour without a problem. Hustling for a second hour in between sleep cycles deals 1 point of nonlethal damage, and each additional hour deals twice the damage taken during the previous hour of hustling. A character who takes any nonlethal damage from hustling becomes fatigued.

A fatigued character can't run or charge and takes a penalty of -2 to Strength and Dexterity. Eliminating the nonlethal damage also eliminates the fatigue. Unless otherwise noted in the race. For more information, see Player's Handbook page 164.

The PCs will also need to make Survival Checks on avoiding getting lost. As the PCs each have maps of the route, and as the geography is mainly plains and prairies, the Survival Check DC is 6.

ENCOUNTER FIVE: BETWEEN A ROCK AND A SOFT PLACE

This encounter occurs after the third checkpoint on the first day. This is 8 hours into the day's journey. PCs will have to make 5 heat checks at this point in the day (DC 15, 16, 17, 18, 19).

It has been some time since you can recall running for this long. Your muscles cry out for rest; your throat, despite any water you may consume is still parched and your chest burns with every breath of the dry prairie air.

Ahead, there seems to be some break in the monotony of the mostly flat plains. Columns of porous, craggy rocks crest through a vast dune of sand upwards. The rows of rock span the width of the sand dunes, easily 100 feet across, before the ground appears to return to the sold dirt you currently race across. The map you have is clear. You must proceed to the next checkpoint beyond the stone islands.

Terrain Hazard (EL 2): The sand dunes are like quicksand after the first 15 feet in. Anyone proceeding past that point will begin sinking. The first round the PC will sink up to his or her waist, and the second round up to his or her head. By the third round, they will go under. Damage can be calculated as per drowning rules and holding breath.

The only way to cross the sand safely is via the large stone formations. The climb DC for the initial pillar is 15. Pillars range from between 5 to 10 feet across, and are located about 10 feet from each other. The appearance of the rock is porous, with many hand holds for climbing. Pillar heights are marked on the map. Jumping up from a lower ledge to a higher one uses the same x4 penalty as per jumping rules.

If players are uncomfortable with the concept of jumping and climbing, they may discover with a DC 15 Search check or Spot check a black hooked claw partially buried in the sand. A tattered rope is also partially buried in the area near the first crossing stone. These can be made into a makeshift rope and grapple. One PC may attempt to throw the grapple to a stone and swing over to it. Once on top, they may throw the rope to the next person to cross over. It is very obvious that the surface of the rocks have enough pock marks and holds so that a grappling hook may be used.

After the PCs manage to cross the sand dunes, they will make the final check stop. The PCs will be ushered into their own team tent where they will receive basic food and water. Guards of Zinn-i-Bey-ibn'Zinn al'Ceshra

will be present to ensure that everyone sticks to their respective tents.

The following morning, the teams will depart in the order that they arrived the previous evening.

Map 1 shows sand pit and rock formations including color based elevations.

ENCOUNTER SIX: YES, IT'S A GAZEBO

Continue to make survival and run checks for the various PC and NPC parties. They will pass two checkpoints. This is 6 hours into the day's journey. PCs will have to make 4 heat checks at this point in the day (DC 15, 16, 17, 18).

The brisk air is the only respite to another continued day of gruelling movement. There are few clouds and no shade. The sun continues to stare down from the heavens, but as the day progresses, and you pass the second encampment, the rolling plains begin to break into steeper valleys. Vegetation begins to creep into the scenery, and there is some semblance of life in this region. Checking your map, you notice the trail delves through one of the shallower dales. There is some sense of descending, but that could just be from the rising rocky ridges which surround you on either side. The valley offers some slight respite, as the sun's rays cannot directly penetrate into the gorge, and you find some relief in the mild shadows.

Your path before you, generally only about 20 feet across, breaks into an opening like a large crater. On the opposite side of the fissure, you notice that the valley continues. Before that, old dilapidated buildings mark what was once some kind of estate. A large structure sits off to the west, most of its walls cracked and crumbling. It appears to be the main house, and it is flanked by several smaller structures, perhaps guest houses and supply sheds. Beyond that, positioned before the path you must maintain are several large bushes in dire need of trimming which surround a circular, domed structure. It is a gazebo.

The buildings are now empty, and there is nothing of value here. This is the estate once called home by the wizard Cultis Voy. His body remains on the gazebo where he died years earlier. A DC 10 Spot check will let the PCs notice that there is a figure there. On a success of DC 20, they will notice that it is a skeleton.

Creatures: The bushes are what remain of the topiary once used in the attack against Al'Akbar. The magic that animated them is nearly gone, save for one or two of them.

APL 2 (EL 3)

Boar Topiary Guardian: hp 32; Appendix 1.

APL 4 (EL 5)

Boar Topiary Guardians (2): hp 32, 32; Appendix 1.

APL 6 (EL 7)

Lion Topiary Guardian: hp 85; Appendix 1.

APL 8 (EL 9)

Lion Topiary Guardians (2): hp 85, 85; Appendix 1.

APL 10 (EL 10)

Lion Topiary Guardians (3): hp 85, 85, 85; Appendix 1.

Cultis Voy previously used these creatures as his guardians, and had enchanted them to attack any visitor who approached within 20 feet of him. Voy's body now lies in the gazebo.

PCs approaching the topiary may make a DC 10 Craft (gardening) or Profession (gardener) check to notice that the bushes do have some distinct shape, although unkempt for their forms. PCs may also use Knowledge (nature) to identify the monsters, as usual.

Tactics: Once the PCs approach within 20 feet of Voy's body, the topiary will spring to life and attack. PCs may certainly stay and fight, but should they choose to run, the topiary will only chase the PCs for 1D4+2 rounds past either perimeter of the crater, meaning that the PCs may continue down their path.

Treasure: If the party examines the body in the gazebo, which does not attack, a search will reveal that the body contains:

APL 2: Loot – 0 gp, Coin – 0 gp, Magic – *replenishing skin* (83 gp each).

APL 4: Loot – 0 gp, Coin – 0 gp, Magic – *replenishing skin* (83 gp each), *ring of sustenance* (208 gp each).

APL 6: Loot – 0 gp, Coin – 0 gp, Magic – *replenishing skin* (83 gp each), *ring of sustenance* (208 gp each), *spellsight spectacles* (208 gp each).

APL 8: Loot – 0 gp, Coin – 0 gp, Magic – *replenishing skin* (83 gp each), *ring of sustenance* (208 gp each), *spellsight spectacles* (208 gp each).

APL 10: Loot – 0 gp, Coin – 0 gp, Magic – *replenishing skin* (83 gp each), *ring of sustenance* (208 gp each), *spellsight spectacles* (208 gp each), *sceptre of obedience* (1042 gp each).

Detect Magic Results: *replenishing skin* (faint conjuration), *ring of sustenance* (faint conjuration),

spellsight spectacles (faint divination), *sceptre of obedience* (faint enchantment).

Development: There are no further challenges for that day. Survival checks may be made for the next two checkpoints for their position in the race. Upon arrival at camp, the teams are again separated and are fed.

Map 2 outlines the valley, gazebo, topiary, and surrounding buildings.

ENCOUNTER SEVEN: PERCHING ANGEL, HIDDEN TEMPLE

This is the third and final day of the tournament. The teams are released in the order in which they arrived the night before.

As the teams set out, they pass one checkpoint during the day prior to making it to the former and now desecrated temple of Al'Akbar.

The rising sun continues to increase in intensity as the day progresses. The vegetation of the previous day has once again disappeared, replaced instead with dry grass and dirt.

As the PCs approach the temple, those with the Track feat may make an additional DC 15 Survival check to notice that there is another trail hidden under some grass and sparse vegetation that branches off from the map's route. A DC 8 Spot check will reward players with bits of debris, most likely of blasted stone stemming from the old trail. One such portion is a carved piece of stone which bears the mark of a star-shaped talisman. The trail is a short one and leads to the collapsed entrance of the old Temple of Al'Akbar which has been built into the side of a shallow hill.

The haphazard trail opens up past a ridge into a field of rolling hills. Just ahead, you see what appears to be some kind of ruin. Once-carved stones have been crushed asunder; former columns reaching towards the sky are now broken and razed. The pillars emanate from what appears to be a stone portal in the side of the hill.

A DC 18 Search check will find runes and symbols on the stonework. A DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check shows that these are symbols of Al'Akbar. The runes themselves are in Baklunish, and read:

"May those who enter find what they seek and perhaps find what they do not."

The portal is easy enough to get through without incident, although medium sized PCs will find it a little snug.

If the PCs do not make the check or decide not to investigate, they may continue on with the race. More Survival checks will be necessary to determine the order of the teams.

Map 3 shows the Temple of Al'Akbar.

1 Foyer

Passing through the crevice, you find yourselves entering into a large room lit by cracks from the domed ceiling above you. The decay of the outside continues into the interior. From the looks of the layout, this may have been some kind of common room. Rotting wooden pews lay strewn about the room covered in dust and muck. Bones also litter the floor, the remains of some congregation cut down quickly and swiftly; you find the carrion strewn over some of the pews and rotted furnishings. A central pulpit contains the remnants of an altar which is similarly covered in grime. Behind that appears to be a dark corridor half hidden behind a thick, rotting wooden door which hangs nearly off its hinges. Broken balconies look down from upper floors. Several passages begin to lead off from the main area, but are quickly cut off by more fallen rubble and stone.

There are additional symbols of Al'Akbar here, with the same DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check to recognize.

Treasure:

There is some treasure spread around the room. It can be found on a number of dead bodies:

APL 2: Loot – 0 gp, Coin – 0 gp, Magic – Medium +1 anti-impact chainmail (275 gp each), badge of valor (83 gp each).

APL 4: Loot – 0 gp, Coin – 0 gp, Magic – Medium +1 anti-impact chainmail (275 gp each), badge of valor (83 gp each).

APL 6: Loot – 0 gp, Coin – 0 gp, Magic – Medium +1 anti-impact chainmail (275 gp each), badge of valor (83 gp each).

APL 8: Loot – 0 gp, Coin – 0 gp, Magic – Medium +1 anti-impact chainmail (275 gp each), badge of valor (83 gp each).

APL 10: Loot – 0 gp, Coin – 0 gp, Magic – Medium +1 anti-impact chainmail (275 gp each), badge of valor (83 gp each), tunic of steady spellcasting (208 gp each).

Detect Magic Results: Medium +1 anti-impact chainmail (faint abjuration), badge of valor (faint enchantment), tunic of steady spellcasting (faint transmutation).

Creatures: The room is monitored by the messenger of Al'Akbar, an avoral named Melieras.

All APLs

Melieras: male avoral; hp 66; *Monster Manual* 141.

Development: Melieras hides in the shadows in one of the upper balconies. He will watch the PCs and their interaction in the temple to determine their motives prior to identifying himself. Once the PCs have spent a few rounds, Melieras speaks.

The silence of the shattered remains of the building is broken by a soft, yet imperial voice. "Those who would enter this temple know that it is protected by one who will not see it defiled further. State your intentions now lest there be an incident of adverse repercussions."

Melieras will use Sense Motive (+13) against any lies that the players may tell. If he catches a PC in a lie, he will respond:

"Your words ring false. Do not presume to insult my intelligence."

If the players disclose that they are in the tournament, Melieras will appear and descend from the balcony to the pulpit:

A shadow steps from the upper balcony and with feathered wings glides to the pulpit. Retracting his wings, he stands straight, easily over seven feet tall. Feathers cover his forearms and scalp, and his eyes settle upon you; you feel his gaze pierces you to your soul.

"So the time for that affront to the High Cleric is once more at hand. It is a most foul perversion of a holy quest undertaken by the Restorer of Righteousness for the good of the peoples of this land. This atrocity has been perpetrated by those whose own grasp for power would abuse the noble intentions of the High Cleric. To be sure, this is not some playful diversion condoned by Al'Akbar.

"Do you know of the history of his pilgrimage to Abar Nur-Ter'I? I would suspect that those histories of his travels here have either been forgotten or put aside for more personal gain. There was a plague in Abar Nur-Ter'I. People were dying. Thus the High

Cleric set off from Yatirdes to deliver the healing salve which had been prepared. But it was as if fate attempted to conspire against him. Each day he faced adversity, between the suns burning touch, sand creatures, aberrations of nature, and the eruption of the land's soul itself.

"Tell me, why have you chosen to participate in this event? Do you believe that you may earn His favor by walking in his footsteps? Or do you do it for personal glory or gain?"

Melieras will hear the PCs out for their reasons for participating in the contest. Once finished, he replies.

"Most interesting." The winged being cocks his head, and again his eyes focus on you. "Perhaps you would be willing to put aside the prospect of monetary acquisition for something of a more pious principle?"

"I am Melieras. I am the guardian of this temple, although its purity has been corrupted due to the maleficent machinations of those who would benefit from the High Cleric's name and honor. I have waited here hoping that there would be those who would aid me in my duty to restore the purity of this temple. I cannot offer you gold or material riches, but I can offer you my debt should you accept. What say you?"

Melieras will wait for the PCs to respond. If they say no, he will bid them good bye and hope that they may fare better in their current path to fame and fortune. The PCs can continue the race and make Survival checks to ensure the order of the teams.

If the PCs agree to hear him out, he continues.

"Thank you. For generations, this used to be a temple of Al'Akbar. Those between Yatirdes and Abar Nur Teri'I would come here and meet and pray. But nine summers ago, a horde of uniformed soldiers came. They slaughtered worshippers, clerics and commoners alike. They desecrated this once holy place. They pillaged, stole and looted this place of all riches, divine and mundane. They did their best to ensure that whatever was good here was eliminated. But their task was only half completed.

"There is an item blessed by Al'Akbar himself here in this place. It is this item that I need you to take from this place to a place dedicated to Al'Akbar. There is one on your journey, in Abar Nur Teri'I. I know that it has been built in the name of the High Cleric, but those that control this farce of a tournament have also crossed the palms of those who claim to be the followers of Al'Akbar with coin. That

place is not pure, but can be made so, should the item be placed upon its altar.

"However, there is a price to be paid for this donation. I realize the competition you have entered has certain requirements to be met. Nevertheless, it is of utmost importance to retrieve and properly move this item as quickly as possible. Thus, you will not be able to finish the race. But I assure you, your efforts will not go unnoticed. Would you do this for the High Cleric?"

If the PCs agree, Melieras continues.

"The item is a censer, blessed by Al'Akbar. It has been sequestered in the reliquary which is in a vault at the bottom of this temple. It is a powerful item, and may aid you in your travels to your final destination.

"Once at the reliquary antechamber, you will need to unlock the combination to enter the shrine. The combination will be at your footsteps.

"Inside the censer's resting place, you will need to defeat its unholy guardians. Once you have done this, I will be able to transport you close to Abar Nur Teri'I, a safe distance past the final obstacle which faced Al'Akbar himself."

The PCs may have questions. Please refer to the responses below for the most appropriate answers.

Q: Why do you not move the censor yourself?

A: *I am bound to this temple as its last guardian. I can go no further on your plane.*

Q: Will we have to drop out of the race?

A: *Yes, I'm afraid this quest overrides your tournament, and thus you will not be able to complete both.*

Q: Do you know who was behind the massacre at the temple?

A: *They wore uniforms. They appeared human, or mostly human.*

Q: Is Zinn-i-Bey-ibn'Zinn al'Ceshra, Bey of Elyan behind the massacre?

A: *I only know that those bearing the symbols of Elyan entered and laid waste to what you see before you.*

Q: Why would they attack the Temple of Al'Akbar?

A: *The temple was destroyed not long before the first tournament was held. While the tournament bears his name, it is not sanctioned by Al'Akbar or his faithful. I can only surmise that those behind this*

race wanted the voices of Al'Akbar silenced should they protest.

Q: Can you tell us what the combination is to unlock the reliquary?

A: *That knowledge was the domain of the holy followers who looked after the censer. I am certain that your own experience will guide you properly.*

Q: Can we finish the race first, then come back and move the censer?

A: *No. Once the race is complete, the trail is sealed off and guarded so that others do not cross haphazardly into it.*

Q: What evil is guarding the censer from us?

A: *Something unholy. It is not of the realm of the living. It too was brought in by the uniformed people to ensure that the censer would not be retrieved as another safeguard.*

Once questions are finished, Melieras will usher the PCs to the hall which will lead down to the reliquary.

ENCOUNTER EIGHT: PRERELIQUARY HALLWAY

2. Hallway: This hallway leads to the reliquary antechamber. It is filled with debris, crumbled stone and aged bones.

The smell of decay fills your lungs as you breathe in the air. More bones rest near crumbled rock and mortar. Some forty feet down, you see some semblance of light leading to a further chamber.

The hallway is safe to pass through, but as the earth shifts and the temple is unsteady, the stones may shift slightly, and dust may fall on the PCs.

ENCOUNTER NINE: THE FLOOR PUZZLE

3 Prereliquary: The room is littered with tiles in the centre of the room, similar to a chess board.

Light from fissures in the ceiling allow you to make out the dusty, stone room. It measures approximately 50 feet wide and 40 feet deep. Aside from the first five feet across on your side, and the five feet across on the other, the floor is marked with arcane symbols. Next to the entrance is a set of push panels containing one of the matching symbols on

the floor per panel. There is an exact set of panels on the opposite end of the room which skirt a closed stone door.

Next to the push panels is an engraving.

The engraving is written in Baklunish. Anyone who can read Baklunish can decipher it (if not, Melieras will translate). It reads:

‘Four Followers each traveled,
Three Days and,
Three Nights’

Puzzle (EL 2): While the markings on the floor appear to be random, there is a clear path providing that the PCs can make out how the floor tiles are organized by symbol. Pressing the correct sequence of panels on either side will cause the trap to be delayed and the reliquary door to open for six rounds.

The room also is dimensionally locked (no *teleport*, *dimension door*, etc.) and there is an *earthbind* spell cast upon the doorway. (This grounds any flying creature.)

Each five foot square has a symbol on it. There are four types of symbols. There is a matching symbol set on the wall near the entrance, and another on the far wall near the locked reliquary door. There is a specific order that the wall symbols must be pushed in order to cross the floor to make it crossable by the PCs. The floor trap is deactivated by pressing the four buttons in order. The order is given on the **DM's Map of the Puzzle Room (Map 4)**. The buttons must be pushed successively, and no more than a one round difference must pass before the next button is pushed, or else the buttons and trap reset. Once the buttons have been pressed in the correct order, the PCs have 6 rounds to get across the floor before the trap resets. Once on the other side, the combination will need to be reversed to get from the Reliquary entrance to the hall doors.

Trap: If the symbols are not pushed, then each five foot square touched will activate its trap:

APL 2 (EL 2)

Burning Hands Trap: CR 2; magic device; automatic reset; spell effect (*burning hands*, 1st-level wizard, 1d4 fire, DC 11 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 26; Disable Device DC 26.

APL 4 (EL 2)

Burning Hands Trap: CR 2; magic device; automatic reset; spell effect (*burning hands*, 1st-level wizard, 1d4 fire, DC 11 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 26; Disable Device DC 26.

APL 6 (EL 3)

Burning Hands Trap: CR 3; magic device; automatic reset; spell effect (*burning hands*, 5th-level wizard, 5d4 fire, DC 11 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 26; Disable Device DC 26.

APL 8 (EL 4)

Glyph of Warding Trap: CR 4; spell; spell trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (glyph of warding [blast], 5th-level cleric, 2d8 acid, DC 14 Reflex save half damage); multiple targets (all targets within 5 ft.); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28.

APL 10 (EL 6)

Glyph of Warding Trap: CR 6; spell; spell trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (glyph of warding [blast], 16th-level cleric, 8d8 sonic, DC 14 Reflex save half damage); multiple targets (all targets within 5 ft.); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28.

Even if the PCs make it past the floor trap without solving the puzzle, they will still need to use the panels to unlock the reliquary door. The reliquary door has a harness of 8 and has 60 hit points, should a PC decide to break it down.

ENCOUNTER TEN: THE RELIQUARY

4 Reliquary

With the final obstacle eliminated in entering the reliquary, you see before you a domed multileveled chamber forty feet in diameter. The floor descends like an amphitheatre, with the descending steps for people to sit and observe the pedestal in the center of the room. Support pylons rise up to the ceiling, from which vague trails of light glisten through from the outside world. On the pedestal is a simple censer, covered in a light layer of dust, but otherwise untouched.

APL 2 (EL 2)

Spellstitched Ghoul: hp 13; Appendix 1.

APL 4 (EL 4)

Spellstitched Ghost: hp 29; Appendix 1.

APL 6 (EL 6)

Spellstitched Ghosts (2): hp 29; Appendix 1.

APL 8 (EL 8)

Spellstitched Ghosts (4): hp 29; Appendix 1.

APL 10 (EL 9)

Spellstitched Salt Mummy: hp 126; Appendix 1.

Development: It is not necessary to destroy the creatures; the PCs may simply just take the censer. Once they have it, they will notice that it is half filled with what appears to be water. If the liquid is poured out, the liquid will refill itself in the censer. The PCs will have to press the sequence once again to cross the floor of the antechamber, but this should be easy.

The smoke constantly rises from the censer, which offers many benefits when inhaled:

d%

1 – 20	Cure Moderate Wounds, 2d8+2
21 – 50	Neutralize Poison
41 – 60	Remove Curse
61 – 80	Remove Poison
81 – 100	Restoration

The censer may be used up to four times a day before it is done for the day. If the user of the censer knows the benefit that they need or desire, the censer fills with the correct liquid.

Treasure: Strewn about the rooms are additional gear and items left behind from the corpses of previous adventurers and pilgrims:

APL 2: Loot – 0 gp, Coin – 0 gp, Magic – 0 gp.

APL 4: Loot – 0 gp, Coin – 0 gp, Magic – *potion of resist energy (fire)* 30 (92 gp each).

APL 6: Loot – 0 gp, Coin – 0 gp, Magic – *potion of resist energy (fire)* 30 (92 gp each).

APL 8: Loot – 0 gp, Coin – 0 gp, Magic – *potion of resist energy (fire)* 30 (92 gp each), *sacred scabbard* (367 gp each).

APL 10: Loot – 0 gp, Coin – 0 gp, Magic – *potion of resist energy (fire)* 30 (92 gp each), *sacred scabbard* (367 gp each).

Detect Magic Results: *potion of resist energy (fire)* 30 (moderate abjuration), *sacred scabbard* (faint transmutation).

ENCOUNTER ELEVEN: OUT OF THE FRYING PAN

Melieras will be waiting at the foyer for the PCs return. Upon showing the censer to Melieras, he speaks.

Melierias looks at the censer and smiles. "You have most honorably shown your character, and I thank you for the risks you have taken. Thus it is up to me to assist you on your quest. Now go, and place this chalice upon the altar at the Temple of Al'Akbar in Abar Nur-Ter'I."

The winged man retrieves a parchment and speaks its incantation. You sense the world around you blur and spin, and your stomach suddenly lurches down and sideways. When you recover yourself, you are no longer at the desecrated remains of the temple, but outside on a sand bank once more at the mercy of the scorching sun. Before you, no more than an hour's jaunt, you see what must be the town of Abar Nur-Ter'I.

From your flank, you hear the sounds of clashing metal and screams. Turning, you notice one of the teams you first met at The Oasis of Al'Akbar. It is Aceari Romaro and his team in combat with the group of orcs and half orcs you also noticed as you entered the inn. Their battle is furious, made even more lethal by erupting geysers around them. One body has already fallen as a charred husk next to an eruption.

This is one more betrayal by Zinn-i-Bey-ibn'Zinn al'Ceshra to ensure money in his purse. As he has bet on the PCs to win the race, he will take no chances in their losing accidentally. Thus, the orcs and half orcs are in fact his thugs. They have sat in wait to ambush other NPC parties.

The PCs have two options. They can leave Aceari Romaro and his team to fend for themselves (and most likely die) against the thugs and they will make it to Abar Nur-Ter'I without any further incident. However, they will have been disqualified for not hitting all the checkpoints on the final day.

The area where the battle takes place is a furnace zone. Each flame spout delivers 2d6 fire damage directly. Anyone standing within 10 feet of the eruption takes 1d6 damage. At the start of this encounter, randomly determine which of the spouts marked on the map are active; the maximum number of active spouts should equal the APL. The spouts erupt each round on initiative 0. PCs that watch for awhile before joining battle may notice this and stay clear of the dangerous areas.

APL 2 (EL 3)

Bey of Elyan's Thugs (3): male orc Warrior 2; hp 12; Appendix 1.

Team Aceari Romaro (3): male human Barbarian 1; hp 12 (currently 6); Appendix 1.

APL 4 (EL 5)

Bey of Elyan's Thugs (3): male orc Warrior 3; hp 18; Appendix 1.

Team Aceari Romaro (3): male human Barbarian 2/Ranger 1; hp 30 (currently 15); Appendix 1.

APL 6 (EL 7)

Bey of Elyan's Thugs (3): male orc Warrior 5; hp 30; Appendix 1.

Team Aceari Romaro (3): male human Barbarian 3/Ranger 2; hp 46 (currently 23); Appendix 1.

APL 8 (EL 9)

Bey of Elyan's Thugs (3): male orc Warrior 7; hp 42; Appendix 1.

Team Aceari Romaro (3): male human Barbarian 4/Ranger 3; hp 62 (currently 31); Appendix 1.

APL 10 (EL 13)

Bey of Elyan's Thugs (3): male orc Warrior 11; hp 66; Appendix 1.

Team Aceari Romaro (3): male human Barbarian 5/Ranger 4; hp 78 (currently 39); Appendix 1.

Tactics: The PCs will have five rounds to decide what they will do. At the end of five rounds, another one of Aceari's team will fall; describe the man's agony as he is pushed by an orc into fiery doom. If the PCs decide to aid Aceari and his team, the thugs will attack them, as they have no desire to die without fighting. The thugs will attempt to Bull Rush PCs into the eruptions if possible. If they are unable to do so, they will attack with their falchions. Aceari and his team will fight on the PCs' side to defeat the orcs.

Treasure:

Note that the human party's equipment is not included in the treasure summary. Any surviving members want to take their comrades' equipment with them, but will share some of the *cure light wounds* potions they have with injured PCs. If the humans are all killed, and the PCs decide to loot them instead of returning the equipment to the human team's families, karma will eventually catch up with them and they will lose the ill-gotten wealth elsewhere.

APL 2: Loot – 75 gp, Coin – 0 gp, Magic – 0.

APL 4: Loot – 75 gp, Coin – 0 gp, Magic – 0.

APL 6: Loot – 175 gp, Coin – 0 gp, Magic – 0.

APL 8: Loot – 175 gp, Coin – 0 gp, Magic – 0.

APL 10: Loot – 175 gp, Coin – 0 gp, Magic – 0.

Development: Once the thugs are killed, Aceari (or one of his team mates if Aceari died) will speak to the PCs:

"My friends... you truly are a fine sight to behold. Without your aid, we surely would have met the High Cleric in ways we had not yet wished to pursue. You have forsaken your lead at winning this tournament in order to save our lives. For this, we are humbled. And for this, we now abdicate our lead to you."

If the PCs say that they are no longer in the race, then Aceari will answer:

"Then it would be our honor to walk with you. Will you allow this?"

Continue to Encounter 13: Home Stretch.

ENCOUNTER TWELVE: INTO THE FIRE

If the PCs chose not to undertake the task by Melierias to retrieve the censer of Al'Akbar, or did not spot the temple in the first place, and continued on to the final Challenge of Al'Akbar, read this:

The sun continues to beat down upon you. Though it seems impossible, the heat continues to increase, and the smell of cooking meat wafts up your nostrils. Then the realization dawns upon you that the smell emanates from the roasting flesh of yourself and your companions.

Clearing the next shallow ridge, you notice streaks of volcanic fire and fury pulsing from the scorched ground into the afternoon sky. The landscape is dotted with these molten geysers projecting upwards into the heavens. Beyond the array of blazing wellspring, your eyes manage to make out the shimmering outline of Abar Nur-Ter'I, perhaps no more than an hour's distance away.

Terrain Hazard (EL 2): The PCs may cross the furnace zone without incident providing they stay away from the fire spouts. Each flame spout delivers 2d6 fire damage directly. Anyone standing within 10 feet of the eruption takes 1d6 damage. The spouts erupt each round on initiative 0.

There are no other obstacles here. The orc thugs remain hidden behind some scorched rocks off and behind the PCs. They will not attack as per orders from the Bey. Their orders are to kill only the other parties.

ENCOUNTER THIRTEEN: HOME STRETCH

There are no more obstacles in the PCs' way. They will make it to Abar Nur-Ter'I without incident.

The town of Abar Nur-Ter'I grows ever closer. As you approach, you begin to make out the shapes of people looking on at you. Getting closer, you notice them waving at you and urging you on to your final destination. A banner is strung across two buildings by the edge of town, reading 'Welcome Victors'.

As you cross the finish line, the throng of people push past the guards and swarm over you. Their cheers overlap and converge. All you can make out is their enthusiasm and glee at your arrival.

CONCLUSION A: THE WINNERS!

If the PCs did not partake in the retrieval of the censer of Al'Akbar, read this:

The crowds part as uniformed guards of Zinn-i-Bey-ibn'Zinn al'Ceshra push their way forward. The Bey himself steps forward once the assembly has been pushed back. His smile extends from ear to ear, and he extends his arms to full width and silences the crowd with a wave.

"Al'Akbar has made his choice today," he announces. "He has shown his favor and we are all the more blessed for it. These people have shown their courage, their tenacity and their ingenuity in overcoming the same adversity faced by the High Cleric himself. Perhaps we stand in the company of those who may one day ascend as he did, and perhaps one day their names will be as revered as his. Let us express our reverence for them with our hearts and souls."

The Bey of Elyan motions to one of his troopers, who brings forth a large sack. The orc steps up and holds it out to you.

"But the stomachs of all cannot live on adoration alone. And for this we offer these heroes a humble tribute."

The bag is passed on to you, and you feel the heavy weight of coin inside. The gold shifts and clanks in the fine cloth sack. Indeed, you have been favored this day, and this is indeed a good day to be a warrior.

Treasure:

APL 2: Loot – 0 gp, Coin – 367 gp, Magic – 0 gp.

APL 4: Loot – 0 gp, Coin – 359 gp, Magic – 0 gp.
APL 6: Loot – 0 gp, Coin – 609 gp, Magic – 0 gp.
APL 8: Loot – 0 gp, Coin – 801 gp, Magic – 0 gp.
APL 10: Loot – 0 gp, Coin – 759 gp, Magic – 0 gp.

Following this, the PCs are free to leave.

The End

CONCLUSION B: THE SAVIORS!

If the PCs did retrieve the censer of Al'Akbar and helped the Oeridians survive the orc attack, read this:

The crowds part as uniformed guards of Zinn-i-Bey-ibn'Zinn al'Ceshra push their way forward. The Bey himself steps forward once the assembly has been pushed back. His smile almost seems forced to your eye, and there appears to be a discernable furrow upon his brow as he casts his gaze upon you. He extends his arms to full width and silences the crowd with a wave.

"It would seem your efforts, valiant as they might be, have not served you well this day. I have been informed that you and your comrades did not follow the rules and did not make it to all the designated camps. This is... regrettable. While I do not know the exact route you took, it is unfortunate that it was not the correct one. Thus, you have been disqualified from winning. This would leave..." The Bey's voice trails off as he looks fixedly upon the remnants of Aceari Romaro's team.

"Al'Akbar has made his choice today," he announces. "He has shown his favor and we are all the more blessed for it. These people have shown their courage, their tenacity and their ingenuity in overcoming the same adversity faced by the High Cleric himself. Perhaps we stand in the company of those who may one day ascend as he did, and perhaps one day their names will be as revered as his. Let us express our reverence for them with our hearts and souls." Zinn-i-Bey-ibn'Zinn al'Ceshra's voice remains even, though it is obvious his joy is merely a facade. The Bey of Elyan motions to one of his troopers, who brings forth a large sack. The soldier steps up to Aceari Romaro's companions, and holds it out for them to take.

"But the stomachs of all cannot live on adoration alone. And for this we offer these heroes a humble tribute."

"We would willingly and gratefully take this," Aceari Romaro leans forward, bowing his head. "But we must offer it to these champions, for without them, we would have surely perished at the hands of traitorous knaves who would have seen fit to complete the trial without honor."

There is a nearly indiscernible twitch from the Bey as Aceari finishes speaking. "Indeed. This prize is yours to do with as you so choose. Your generosity is exceptional." Zinn-i-Bey-ibn'Zinn al'Ceshra's eyes return to you and your party. "It is most fortunate that you have made the acquaintance of such selfless people such as these. It is all too troubling that people such as they are so few and far between. It would be in your best interest to ensure that you do not cross the paths of those whose own actions would not be nearly as altruistic."

The PCs may tell the Bey of their adventures in the desecrated temple of Al'Akbar. He will coax as much information out of them as possible. Should they show him the censer, he will insist that his men take it to ensure that it is safely deposited at the town's temple to Al'Akbar. This is of course a lie and he will have it disposed of. If the PCs reveal the censer, the townspeople will fall upon their knees once they see it and cry out in praise and worship.

The PCs may also state that they want to put the censer into the temple themselves. The townspeople will cheer them on, and Zinn-i-Bey-ibn'Zinn al'Ceshra will reluctantly, albeit with joyous pretence, allow them to do so. The crowd will walk with the PCs to the temple, some of the younger ones grabbing hold of the PCs' clothes and pulling at them to move faster, cheering them on as they walk.

The Bey will not dare try anything on the PCs now; however, he will do what he can to ensure that life will be harder for them at a later time.

Once at the temple, the PCs can easily enter and see an altar near the back of the room near the pulpit. If the PCs place the censer of Al'Akbar upon the altar, the following happens:

As you place the simple dusty censer upon the stone altar, a vague vibration begins to emanate from it. The vibration grows in strength until the walls of the temple itself begin to vibrate with a low rumble. The rumble itself continues to expand, until it seems like the entire structure should collapse from the reverberation. Then as quickly as the resonance began, it ends, and all is silent once more in the temple, but now there is a light coming from the altar, springing forth from the now gleaming censer which rests there. The stone tiles of the building

flicker in its brilliance, and the townspeople again fall to their knees. This temple is now clean, and the devout people of this land may now truly pay homage to the Restorer of Righteousness without intervention.

Following this, the PCs are free to leave.

The End

CONCLUSION C: THE PIOUSLY EXPEDIENT!

If the PCs did retrieve the Censer of Al'Akbar but did not assist the team of Aceari Romaro, read this:

The crowds part as uniformed guards of Zinn-i-Bey-ibn'Zinn al'Ceshra push their way forward. The Bey himself steps forward once the assembly has been pushed back. His smile almost seems forced to your eye, and there appears to be a discernable furrow upon his brow as he casts his gaze upon you. He extends his arms to full width and silences the crowd with a wave.

"It would seem your efforts, valiant as they might be, have not served you well this day. I have been informed that you and your comrades did not follow the rules and did not make it to all the designated camps. This is... regrettable. While I do not know the exact route you took, it is unfortunate that it was not the correct one. Thus, you have been disqualified from winning. The next team that arrives will be the rightful winners."

With this, the Bey makes a brisk motion with his hand, and guards escort you away from the masses but with a fine view of the crossing line itself. Time passes, and the gathered crowds face the sandy wastelands once more. The afternoon sun sets and the purple reddish haze of evening arrives. The blazing sun disappears, and the warmth gives way to a cool desert breeze.

After what seems like hours, figures appear on the horizon. Growing closer, you can manage to tell by the build and shape of the travellers that it is the team of full and half orcs making their way to the finish line. The crowd cheers once more, although perhaps not nearly as vigorously as when you arrived.

The Bey of Elyan steps towards them as they cross past the landmarks indicating the end of the tournament.

"Al'Akbar has made his choice today," he announces. "He has shown his favor and we are all the more blessed for it. These people have shown

their courage, their tenacity and their ingenuity in overcoming the same adversity faced by the High Cleric himself. Perhaps we stand in the company of those who may one day ascend as he did, and perhaps one day their names will be as revered as his. Let us express our reverence for them with our hearts and souls."

The Bey of Elyan motions to one of his troopers, who brings forth a large sack. The soldier steps up to one of the orcs, and holds places the sack into outstretched hands.

"But the stomachs of all cannot live on adoration alone. And for this we offer these heroes a humble tribute."

The orc and his team-mates bow to Zinn-i-Bey-ibn'Zinn al'Ceshra, and walk through the crowd, which now begins to disperse.

The PCs may tell the Bey of their adventures in the desecrated temple of Al'Akbar. He will coax as much information out of them as possible. Should they show him the censer, he will insist that his men take it to ensure that it is safely deposited at the town's temple to Al'Akbar. This is of course a lie and he will have it disposed of. If the PCs reveal the censer, the townspeople will fall upon their knees once they see it and cry out in praise and worship.

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As you place the simple dusty censer upon the stone altar, a vague vibration begins to emanate from it. The vibration grows in strength until the walls of the temple itself begin to vibrate with a low rumble. The rumble itself continues to expand, until it seems like the entire structure should collapse from the reverberation. Then as quickly as the resonance began, it ends, and all is silent once more in the temple, but now there is a light coming from the altar, springing forth from the now gleaming censer which rests there. The stone tiles of the building

flicker in its brilliance, and the townspeople again fall to their knees. This temple is now clean, and the devout people of this land may now truly pay homage to the Restorer of Righteousness without intervention.

Following this, the PCs are free to leave.

The End

EXPERIENCE POINT SUMMARY

To award experience for this adventure, add up the values for the objectives accomplished. Then assign the experience award. Award the total value (objectives plus roleplaying) to each character.

Encounter Five

Crossing the sand basin by using the rocks:

All APLs 60 XP

Encounter Six

Destroying or outrunning the Topiary:

APL 2	90 XP
APL 4	150 XP
APL 6	210 XP
APL 8	270 XP
APL 10	390 XP

Encounter Nine

Figuring out the combination for the floor lock:

APL 2	60 XP
APL 4	60 XP
APL 6	90 XP
APL 8	120 XP
APL 10	180 XP

Encounter Ten

Obtaining the censer from the reliquary:

APL 2	60 XP
APL 4	120 XP
APL 6	180 XP
APL 8	240 XP
APL 10	270 XP

Encounter Eleven

Saving Aceari Romaro's party from the Bey's thugs:

APL 2	90 XP
APL 4	150 XP
APL 6	210 XP
APL 8	270 XP

APL 10 390 XP

OR

Encounter Twelve

Surviving the furnace:

All APLs 60 XP

Discretionary roleplaying award

APL 2	90 XP
APL 4	135 XP
APL 6	180 XP
APL 8	225 XP
APL 10	270 XP

Total possible experience:

APL 2	450 XP
APL 4	675 XP
APL 6	900 XP
APL 8	1,125 XP
APL 10	1,350 XP

TREASURE SUMMARY

During an adventure, characters encounter treasure, usually finding it in the possession of their foes. Every encounter that features treasure has a "treasure" section within the encounter description, giving information about the loot, coins, and magic items that make up the encounter's treasure.

The loot total is the number of gold pieces each character gains if the foes are plundered of all their earthly possessions. Looting the bodies takes at least 10 minutes per every 5 enemies, and if the characters cannot take the time to loot the bodies, they do not gain this gold. If you feel it is reasonable that characters can go back to loot the bodies, and those bodies are there (i.e., not carted off by dungeon scavengers, removed from the scene by the local watch, and so on), characters may return to retrieve loot. If the characters do not loot the body, the gold piece value for the loot is subtracted from the encounter totals given below.

The coin total is the number of gold pieces each character gains if they take the coin available. A normal adventuring party can usually gather this wealth in a round or so. If for some reason, they pass up this treasure, the coin total is subtracted from the encounter totals given below.

Next, the magic items are listed. Magic item treasure is the hardest to adjudicate, because they are varied and because characters may want to use them during the adventure. Many times characters must cast identify, analyze dweomer or similar spell to determine what the

item does and how to activate it. Other times they may attempt to use the item blindly. If the magic item is consumable (a potion, scroll, magic bolts, etc.) and the item is used before the end of the adventure, its total is subtracted from the adventure totals below.

Once you have subtracted the value for unclaimed treasure from each encounter add it up and that is the number of gold pieces a characters total and coin value increase at the end of the adventure. Write the total in the GP Gained field of the adventure certificate.

Loot = Looted gear from enemy; Coin = Coin, Gems, Jewellery, and other valuables; Magic = Magic Items.

Encounter 6: Yes, it's a Gazebo

APL 2: Magic – *replenishing skin* (83 gp each).

APL 4: Magic – *replenishing skin* (83 gp each), *ring of sustenance* (208 gp each).

APL 6: Magic – *replenishing skin* (83 gp each), *ring of sustenance* (208 gp each), *spellsight spectacles* (208 gp each).

APL 8: Magic – *replenishing skin* (83 gp each), *ring of sustenance* (208 gp each), *spellsight spectacles* (208 gp each).

APL 10: Magic – *replenishing skin* (83 gp each), *ring of sustenance* (208 gp each), *spellsight spectacles* (208 gp each), *sceptre of obedience* (1042 gp each).

Encounter 7: Perching Angel, Hidden Temple

APL 2: Magic – Medium *+1 anti-impact chainmail* (275 gp each), *badge of valor* (83 gp each).

APL 4: Magic – Medium *+1 anti-impact chainmail* (275 gp each), *badge of valor* (83 gp each).

APL 6: Magic – Medium *+1 anti-impact chainmail* (275 gp each), *badge of valor* (83 gp each).

APL 8: Magic – Medium *+1 anti-impact chainmail* (275 gp each), *badge of valor* (83 gp each).

APL 10: Magic – Medium *+1 anti-impact chainmail* (275 gp each), *badge of valor* (83 gp each), *tunic of steady spellcasting* (208 gp each).

Encounter 10: The Reliquary

APL 4: Magic – *potion of resist energy (fire)* 30 (92 gp each).

APL 6: Magic – *potion of resist energy (fire)* 30 (92 gp each).

APL 8: Magic – *potion of resist energy (fire)* 30 (92 gp each), *sacred scabbard* (367 gp each).

APL 10: Magic – *potion of resist energy (fire)* 30 (92 gp each), *sacred scabbard* (367 gp each).

Encounter 11: Out of the Frying Pan

APL 2: Loot – 75 gp.

APL 4: Loot – 75 gp.

APL 6: Loot – 175 gp.

APL 8: Loot – 175 gp.

APL 10: Loot – 175 gp.

Conclusion A: The Winners!

APL 2: Coin – 367 gp.

APL 4: Coin – 359 gp.

APL 6: Coin – 609 gp.

APL 8: Coin – 801 gp.

APL 10: Coin – 759 gp.

Total Possible Treasure (maximum treasure that PCs can get is on the AR)

APL 2: Loot: 75 gp; Coin: 367 gp; Magic: 441 gp; Total: 883 gp.

APL 4: Loot: 75 gp; Coin: 359 gp; Magic: 741 gp; Total: 1175 gp.

APL 6: Loot: 175 gp; Coin: 609 gp; Magic: 949 gp; Total: 1733 gp.

APL 8: Loot: 175 gp; Coin: 801 gp; Magic: 1316 gp; Total: 2292 gp.

APL 10: Loot: 175 gp; Coin: 759 gp; Magic: 2566 gp; Total: 3500 gp.

APPENDIX 1

APL 2

ENCOUNTER SIX: YES, IT'S A GAZEBO

Boar Topiary* Guardian; CR 3; Medium plant; HD 5d8+10 hp 32; Init +3; Spd 40 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +6; Atk +6 melee (2d6+4, gore); Full Atk +6 melee (2d6+4, gore); SA Ferocity, merciful; SQ Damage reduction 10/slashing, freeze, low-light vision, plant traits, tremorsense 90 ft., vulnerability to fire; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 17, Dex 16, Con 14, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Move Silently +11

Freeze (Ex): A topiary guardian can hold itself so still that it appears to be a normal sculpted shrub. An observer must succeed on a DC 30 Spot check to notice that a topiary guardian is actually an animated creature.

Ferocity (Ex): A boar topiary guardian continues to fight without penalty even while disabled or dying.

* see Appendix 2: New Rules Item

ENCOUNTER TEN: RELIQUARY

Spellstitched* Ghoul; CR 2; Medium undead; HD 2d12 hp 13; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC +14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d6+1 plus paralysis, bite); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6+1 plus paralysis, bite) and +0/+0 melee (1d3 plus paralysis, 2 claws); SA Ghoul fever, paralysis, spell-like abilities; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., undead traits, +4 turn resistance, spell resistance 16; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +7; AL CE; Str 13, Dex 15, Con -, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Balance +6, Climb +5, Hide +6, Jump +5, Move Silently +6, Spot +7; Multiattack

Languages: Common.

Ghoul Fever (Su): Disease—bite, Fortitude DC 12, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d3 Con and 1d3 Dex. The save DC is Charisma-based.

An afflicted humanoid who dies of ghoul fever rises as a ghoul at the next midnight. A humanoid who becomes a ghoul in this way retains none of the abilities it possessed in life. It is not under the control of any other ghouls, but it hungers for the flesh of the living and behaves like a normal ghoul in all respects. A humanoid of 4 Hit Dice or more rises as a ghast, not a ghoul.

Paralysis (Ex): Those hit by a spellstitched ghoul's bite or claw attack must succeed on a DC 12 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d4+1 rounds. Elves have immunity to this paralysis. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Spell-like Abilities: 2/day—*chill touch* (+2 melee touch), *grease*, *darkness*, *fog cloud*; 1/day—*lightning bolt*, *vampiric touch* (+2 melee touch). Caster level 2.

* see Appendix 2: New Rules Item

ENCOUNTER ELEVEN: OUT OF THE FRYING PAN

Team Aceari Romaro: male human Barbarian 1; CR 1; Medium humanoid (humanoid); HD 1d12+2 hp 14; Init +1; Spd 40 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp +3; Atk +5 melee (2d6+3, masterwork greatsword) or +3 melee (1d4+2, dagger) or +2 ranged (1d8, composite longbow); Full Atk +5 melee (2d6+3, masterwork greatsword) or +3 melee (1d4+2, dagger) or +2 ranged (1d8, composite longbow); SQ Fast movement, rage 1/day (already used); AL NG; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +5, Intimidate +2, Jump +3, Listen +6, Survival +6; Armor Proficiency (light), Armor Proficiency (medium), Power Attack, Shield Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Weapon Focus (greatsword).

Languages: Common (literate).

Possessions: masterwork greatsword, composite longbow with 20 arrows, dagger, masterwork scale mail, climber's kit, *potion of cure light wounds*.

Physical Description: Battered, but jovial, the Oeridian contingent sport tanned skin and large muscles.

Bay of Elyan's Thug: male orc Warrior 2; CR 1; Medium humanoid (orc); HD 2d8+2 hp 12; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 10, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +2; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (2d4+4/18-20, falchion) or +5 melee (1d4+3/19-20, dagger) or +2 ranged (1d6+3, javelin); Full Atk +5 melee (2d4+4/18-20, falchion) or +5 melee (1d4+3/19-20, dagger) or +2 ranged (1d6+3, javelin); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will -2; Str 17, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 7, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Jump -2; Power Attack.

Languages: Common, Orc.

Light Sensitivity (Ex): Orcs are dazzled in bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell.

Possessions: splint mail, buckler, falchion, dagger, 8 javelins.

Physical Description: Beetle-browed and ugly, with a menacing disposition and the brawn to back it up.

ENCOUNTER SIX: YES, IT'S A GAZEBO

Boar Topiary* Guardians (2): CR 3; Medium plant; HD 5d8+10 hp 32; Init +3; Spd 40 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +6; Atk +6 melee (2d6+4, gore); Full Atk +6 melee (2d6+4, gore); SA Ferocity, merciful; SQ Damage reduction 10/slashing, freeze, low-light vision, plant traits, tremorsense 90 ft., vulnerability to fire; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 17, Dex 16, Con 14, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Move Silently +11

Freeze (Ex): A topiary guardian can hold itself so still that it appears to be a normal sculpted shrub. An observer must succeed on a DC 30 Spot check to notice that a topiary guardian is actually an animated creature.

Ferocity (Ex): A boar topiary guardian continues to fight without penalty even while disabled or dying.

* see Appendix 2: New Rules Item

ENCOUNTER TEN: RELIQUARY

Spellstitched Ghast*: CR 4; Medium undead; HD 4d12+3 hp 29; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk +5 melee (1d8+3 plus paralysis, bite); Full Atk: +5 melee (1d8+3 plus paralysis, bite) and +3/+3 melee (1d4+1 plus paralysis, 2 claws); SA Ghoul fever, paralysis, stench, spell-like abilities; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., undead traits, +2 turn resistance, spell resistance 16, damage reduction 5/magic; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +8; AL CE; Str 17, Dex 17, Con -, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Balance +7, Climb +9, Hide +8, Jump +9, Move Silently +8, Spot +8; Multiattack, Toughness.

Languages: Common.

Ghoul Fever (Su): Disease—bite, Fortitude DC 15, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d3 Con and 1d3 Dex. The save DC is Charisma-based.

An afflicted humanoid who dies of ghoul fever rises as a ghoul at the next midnight. A humanoid who becomes a ghoul in this way retains none of the abilities it possessed in life. It is not under the control of any other ghouls, but it hungers for the flesh of the living and behaves like a normal ghoul in all respects. A humanoid of 4 Hit Dice or more rises as a ghast, not a ghoul.

Paralysis (Ex): Those hit by a spellstitched ghast's bite or claw attack must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d4+1 rounds. Even elves can be affected by this paralysis. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Stench (Ex): The stink of death and corruption surrounding a spellstitched ghast is overwhelming, and living creatures within 10 feet must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or be sickened for 1d6+4 minutes. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same spellstitched ghast's stench for 24 hours. A *delay poison* or *neutralize poison* spell removes the effect from a sickened creature. Creatures with immunity to poison are unaffected, and creatures resistant to poison receive their normal bonus on their saving throws. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Spell-like Abilities: 3/day—*darkness*, *magic missile*, 1/day—*flame arrow*, *Melf's acid arrow* (+5 ranged touch), *obscuring mist*, *vampiric touch* (+5 melee touch). Caster level 4.

* see Appendix 2: New Rules Item

ENCOUNTER ELEVEN: OUT OF THE FRYING PAN

Team Aceari Romaro (3): male human Barbarian 2/Ranger 1; CR 3 Medium humanoid (humanoid); HD 2d12+4 plus 1d8+2 hp 30; Init +1; Spd 40 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk +7 melee (2d6+3, masterwork greatsword) or +5 melee (1d4+2, dagger) or +4 ranged (1d8, composite longbow); Full Atk +7 melee (2d6+3, masterwork greatsword) or +5 melee (1d4+2, dagger) or +4 ranged (1d8, composite longbow); SQ Fast movement, rage 1/day (already used), uncanny dodge, favored enemy (dragons), wild empathy; AL NG; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +5, Intimidate +2, Jump +4, Knowledge (Geography) +3, Knowledge (Nature) +4, Listen +6, Survival +7; Armor Proficiency (light), Armor Proficiency (medium), Cleave, Power Attack, Shield Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Track, Weapon Focus (greatsword).

Languages: Common (literate).

Possessions: masterwork greatsword, composite longbow with 20 arrows, dagger, masterwork scale mail, climber's kit, 2 *potions of cure light wounds*.

Physical Description: Battered, but jovial, the Oeridian contingent sport tanned skin and large muscles.

Bey of Elyan's Thugs (3): male orc Warrior 3; CR 2; Medium humanoid (orc); HD 3d8+3 hp 18; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 10, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +3; Grp +6; Atk +6 melee (2d4+4/18-20, falchion) or +6 melee (1d4+3/19-20, dagger) or +3 ranged (1d6+3, javelin); Full Atk +6 melee (2d4+4/18-20, falchion) or +6 melee

(1d4+3/19-20, dagger) or +3 ranged (1d6+3, javelin); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 17, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 7, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Jump -1; Power Attack, Improved Bull Rush.

Languages: Common, Orc.

Light Sensitivity (Ex): Orcs are dazzled in bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell.

Possessions: splint mail, buckler, falchion, dagger, 8 javelins.

Physical Description: Beetle-browed and ugly, with a menacing disposition and the brawn to back it up.

ENCOUNTER SIX: YES, IT'S A GAZEBO

Lion Topiary* Guardian; CR 7; Large plant; HD 10d8+40 hp 85; Init +2; Spd 40 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +7; Grp +18; Atk +13 melee (1d6+7, claw); Full Atk +13/+13 melee (1d6+7, claw) and +8 melee (1d8+3, bite); SA Improved grab, merciful, pounce, rake 1d6+3; SQ Damage reduction 10/slashing, freeze, low-light vision, plant traits, tremorsense 90 ft., vulnerability to fire; AL N; SV Fort +11, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 25, Dex 14, Con 18, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Move Silently +10

Freeze (Ex): A topiary guardian can hold itself so still that it appears to be a normal sculpted shrub. An observer must succeed on a DC 30 Spot check to notice that a topiary guardian is actually an animated creature.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a lion topiary guardian must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking attacks of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can rake on subsequent rounds.

Pounce (Ex): If a lion topiary guardian charges a foe, it can make a full attack, including two rake attacks.

Rake (Ex): Attack bonus +13 melee, damage 1d6+3.

* see Appendix 2: New Rules Item

ENCOUNTER TEN: RELIQUARY

Spellstitched* Ghosts (2); CR 4; Medium undead; HD 4d12+3 hp 29; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC +17, touch 13, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk +5 melee (1d8+3 plus paralysis, bite); Full Atk: +5 melee (1d8+3 plus paralysis, bite) and +3/+3 melee (1d4+1 plus paralysis, 2 claws); SA Ghoul fever, paralysis, stench, spell-like abilities; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., undead traits, +2 turn resistance, spell resistance 16, damage reduction 5/magic; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +8; AL CE; Str 17, Dex 17, Con -, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Balance +7, Climb +9, Hide +8, Jump +9, Move Silently +8, Spot +8; Multiattack, Toughness.

Languages: Common.

Ghoul Fever (Su): Disease—bite, Fortitude DC 15, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d3 Con and 1d3 Dex. The save DC is Charisma-based.

An afflicted humanoid who dies of ghoul fever rises as a ghoul at the next midnight. A humanoid who becomes a ghoul in this way retains none of the

abilities it possessed in life. It is not under the control of any other ghouls, but it hungers for the flesh of the living and behaves like a normal ghoul in all respects. A humanoid of 4 Hit Dice or more rises as a ghoul, not a ghoul.

Paralysis (Ex): Those hit by a spellstitched ghost's bite or claw attack must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d4+1 rounds. Even elves can be affected by this paralysis. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Stench (Ex): The stink of death and corruption surrounding a spellstitched ghost is overwhelming, and living creatures within 10 feet must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or be sickened for 1d6+4 minutes. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same spellstitched ghost's stench for 24 hours. A *delay poison* or *neutralize poison* spell removes the effect from a sickened creature. Creatures with immunity to poison are unaffected, and creatures resistant to poison receive their normal bonus on their saving throws. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Spell-like Abilities: 3/day—*darkness*, *magic missile*, 1/day—*flame arrow*, *Melf's acid arrow* (+5 ranged touch), *obscuring mist*, *vampiric touch* (+5 melee touch). Caster level 4.

* see Appendix 2: New Rules Item

ENCOUNTER ELEVEN: OUT OF THE FRYING PAN

Team Aceari Romaro (3): male human Barbarian 3/Ranger 2; CR 5; Medium humanoid (humanoid); HD 3d12+6 plus 2d8+4 hp 46; Init +1; Spd 40 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +5; Grp +8; Atk +10 melee (2d6+5, +1 *greatsword*) or +8 melee (1d4+3, dagger) or +6 ranged (1d8, composite longbow); Full Atk +10 melee (2d6+5, +1 *greatsword*) or +8 melee (1d4+3, dagger) or +4/+4 ranged (1d8, composite longbow); SQ Fast movement, rage 1/day (already used), uncanny dodge, trap sense +1, favored enemy (dragons), wild empathy; AL NG; SV Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +8, Hide +0, Intimidate +3, Jump +7, Knowledge (Geography) +3, Knowledge (Nature) +4, Listen +6, Search +2, Spot +5, Survival +9; Armor Proficiency (light), Armor Proficiency (medium), Cleave, Power Attack, Rapid Shot, Shield Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Track, Weapon Focus (greatsword).

Languages: Common (literate).

Possessions: +1 *greatsword*, composite longbow with 20 arrows, dagger, masterwork scale mail, climber's kit, 3 *potions of cure light wounds*.

Physical Description: Battered, but jovial, the Oeridian contingent sport tanned skin and large muscles.

Bey of Elyan's Thugs (3): male orc Warrior 5; CR 4; Medium humanoid (orc); HD 5d8+5 hp 30; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +5; Grp +9; Atk +9 melee (2d4+6/18-20, falchion) or +9 melee (1d4+4/19-20, dagger) or +5 ranged (1d6+4, javelin); Full Atk +9 melee (2d4+6/18-20, falchion) or +9 melee (1d4+4/19-20, dagger) or +5 ranged (1d6+4, javelin); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 18, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 7, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Jump +2; Power Attack, Improved Bull Rush.

Languages: Common, Orc.

Light Sensitivity (Ex): Orcs are dazzled in bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell.

Possessions: half-plate, buckler, falchion, dagger, 8 javelins.

Physical Description: Beetle-browed and ugly, with a menacing disposition and the brawn to back it up.

ENCOUNTER SIX: YES, IT'S A GAZEBO

Lion Topiary* Guardians (2): CR 7; Large plant; HD 10d8+40 hp 85; Init +2; Spd 40 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +7; Grp +18; Atk +13 melee (1d6+7, claw); Full Atk +13/+13 melee (1d6+7, claw) and +8 melee (1d8+3, bite); SA Improved grab, merciful, pounce, rake 1d6+3; SQ Damage reduction 10/slashing, freeze, low-light vision, plant traits, tremorsense 90 ft., vulnerability to fire; AL N; SV Fort +11, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 25, Dex 14, Con 18, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Move Silently +10

Freeze (Ex): A topiary guardian can hold itself so still that it appears to be a normal sculpted shrub. An observer must succeed on a DC 30 Spot check to notice that a topiary guardian is actually an animated creature.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a lion topiary guardian must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking attacks of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can rake on subsequent rounds.

Pounce (Ex): If a lion topiary guardian charges a foe, it can make a full attack, including two rake attacks.

Rake (Ex): Attack bonus +13 melee, damage 1d6+3.

* see Appendix 2: New Rules Item

ENCOUNTER TEN: RELIQUARY

Spellstitched* Ghasts (4): CR 4; Medium undead; HD 4d12+3 hp 29; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC +17, touch 13, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk +5 melee (1d8+3 plus paralysis, bite); Full Atk: +5 melee (1d8+3 plus paralysis, bite) and +3/+3 melee (1d4+1 plus paralysis, 2 claws); SA Ghoul fever, paralysis, stench, spell-like abilities; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., undead traits, +2 turn resistance, spell resistance 16, damage reduction 5/magic; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +8; AL CE; Str 17, Dex 17, Con -, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Balance +7, Climb +9, Hide +8, Jump +9, Move Silently +8, Spot +8; Multiattack, Toughness.

Languages: Common.

Ghoul Fever (Su): Disease—bite, Fortitude DC 15, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d3 Con and 1d3 Dex. The save DC is Charisma-based.

An afflicted humanoid who dies of ghoul fever rises as a ghoul at the next midnight. A humanoid who becomes a ghoul in this way retains none of the

abilities it possessed in life. It is not under the control of any other ghouls, but it hungers for the flesh of the living and behaves like a normal ghoul in all respects. A humanoid of 4 Hit Dice or more rises as a ghoul, not a ghoul.

Paralysis (Ex): Those hit by a spellstitched ghast's bite or claw attack must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d4+1 rounds. Even elves can be affected by this paralysis. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Stench (Ex): The stink of death and corruption surrounding a spellstitched ghast is overwhelming, and living creatures within 10 feet must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or be sickened for 1d6+4 minutes. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same spellstitched ghast's stench for 24 hours. A *delay poison* or *neutralize poison* spell removes the effect from a sickened creature. Creatures with immunity to poison are unaffected, and creatures resistant to poison receive their normal bonus on their saving throws. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Spell-like Abilities: 3/day—*darkness*, *magic missile*, 1/day—*flame arrow*, *Melf's acid arrow* (+5 ranged touch), *obscuring mist*, *vampiric touch* (+5 melee touch). Caster level 4.

* see Appendix 2: New Rules Item

ENCOUNTER ELEVEN: OUT OF THE FRYING PAN

Team Aceari Romaro (3): male human Barbarian 4/Ranger 3; CR 7; Medium humanoid (humanoid); HD 4d12+8 plus 3d8+6 hp 62; Init +1; Spd 40 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +7; Grp +10; Atk +12 melee (2d6+5, +1 *greatsword*) or +10 melee (1d4+3, dagger) or +8 ranged (1d8, composite longbow); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (2d6+5, +1 *greatsword*) or +10/+5 melee (1d4+3, dagger) or +6/+6/+1 ranged (1d8, composite longbow); SQ Fast movement, rage 2/day (both already used), uncanny dodge, trap sense +1, favored enemy (dragons), wild empathy; AL NG; SV Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +9, Handle Animal +2, Heal +4, Hide +2, Intimidate +4, Jump +7, Knowledge (Geography) +3, Knowledge (Nature) +4, Listen +7, Search +2, Spot +5, Survival +10, Swim -1, Use Rope +2; Armor Proficiency (light), Armor Proficiency (medium), Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Endurance, Power Attack, Rapid Shot, Shield Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Track, Weapon Focus (greatsword).

Languages: Common (literate).

Possessions: +1 *greatsword*, composite longbow with 20 arrows, dagger, masterwork scale mail, climber's kit, 3 *potions of cure light wounds*.

Physical Description: Battered, but jovial, the Oeridian contingent sport tanned skin and large muscles.

Bey of Elyan's Thugs (3): male orc Warrior 7; CR 6; Medium humanoid (orc); HD 7d8+7 hp 42; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +7; Grp +11; Atk +11 melee (2d4+6/18-20, falchion) or +11 melee (1d4+4/19-20, dagger) or +7 ranged (1d6+4, javelin); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (2d4+6/18-20, falchion) or +11/+6 melee (1d4+4/19-20, dagger) or +7 ranged (1d6+4, javelin); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will 0; Str 18, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 7, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Jump +2; Power Attack, Improved Bull Rush, Shock Trooper*.

Languages: Common, Orc.

Light Sensitivity (Ex): Orcs are dazzled in bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell.

Possessions: half-plate, buckler, falchion, dagger, 8 javelins.

Physical Description: Beetle-browed and ugly, with a menacing disposition and the brawn to back it up.

* see Appendix 2: New Rules Item

ENCOUNTER SIX: YES, IT'S A GAZEBO

Lion Topiary* Guardians (3): CR 7; Large plant; HD 10d8+40 hp 85; Init +2; Spd 40 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +7; Grp +18; Atk +13 melee (1d6+7, claw); Full Atk +13/+13 melee (1d6+7, claw) and +8 melee (1d8+3, bite); SA Improved grab, merciful, pounce, rake 1d6+3; SQ Damage reduction 10/slashing, freeze, low-light vision, plant traits, tremorsense 90 ft., vulnerability to fire; AL N; SV Fort +11, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 25, Dex 14, Con 18, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Move Silently +10

Freeze (Ex): A topiary guardian can hold itself so still that it appears to be a normal sculpted shrub. An observer must succeed on a DC 30 Spot check to notice that a topiary guardian is actually an animated creature.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a lion topiary guardian must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking attacks of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can rake on subsequent rounds.

Pounce (Ex): If a lion topiary guardian charges a foe, it can make a full attack, including two rake attacks.

Rake (Ex): Attack bonus +13 melee, damage 1d6+3.

* see Appendix 2: New Rules Item

ENCOUNTER TEN: RELIQUARY

Spellstitched* Salt Mummy*: CR 9; Medium undead; HD 12d12+48 hp 126; Init -1; Spd 30 ft.; AC +18, touch 9, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +6; Grp +13; Atk +9 melee (2d6+17 plus dehydrating impact*, slam); Full Atk +9 melee (2d6+17 plus dehydrating impact*, slam); SA Dehydrating impact, spell-like abilities; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., fast healing 10, undead traits, unholy toughness, water weakness, damage reduction 5/magic and silver, spell resistance 13, turn resistance +2; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +8; AL CE; Str 27, Dex 8, Con -, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 16.

* Includes adjustments for Power Attack feat.

Skills and Feats: Hide +6, Listen +9, Move Silently +7, Spot +9; Alertness, Cleave, Improved Natural Weapon (slam), Improved Toughness, Power Attack.

Languages: Common.

Dehydrating Impact (Su): Each time a spellstitched salt mummy touches a living creature, the creature must make a DC 19 Fortitude save or take 4d6

points of damage as moisture is evaporated from its body. This impact is especially devastating to plants and creatures with the water subtype (such as water elementals), which take 4d8 points of damage. Even on a successful save, a creature still loses moisture, taking half damage. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Water Weakness: All water deals damage to a spellstitched salt mummy as if it were holy water.

Unholy Toughness (Ex): A spellstitched salt mummy gains a bonus to its hit points equal to its Charisma modifier x its Hit Dice.

Spell-like Abilities: 3/day—*chill touch* (+14 melee touch); 1/day—*grease*. Caster level 12.

* see Appendix 2: New Rules Item

ENCOUNTER ELEVEN: OUT OF THE FRYING PAN

Team Aceari Romaro (3): male human Barbarian 5/Ranger 4; CR 9; Medium humanoid (humanoid); HD 5d12+10 plus 4d8+8 hp 78; Init +1; Spd 40 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +9; Grp +12; Atk +14 melee (2d6+5, +1 *greatsword*) or +12 melee (1d4+3, dagger) or +10 ranged (1d8, composite longbow); Full Atk +14/+9 melee (2d6+5, +1 *greatsword*) or +12/+7 melee (1d4+3, dagger) or +8/+8/+3 ranged (1d8, composite longbow); SQ Fast movement, rage 2/day (both already used), uncanny dodge, trap sense +1, improved uncanny dodge, favored enemy (dragons), wild empathy, animal companion (not present), spells; AL NG; SV Fort +10, Ref +6, Will +4; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +10, Handle Animal +3, Heal +4, Hide +2, Intimidate +5, Jump +8, Knowledge (Geography) +4, Knowledge (Nature) +4, Listen +8, Move Silently +0, Search +4, Spot +6, Survival +10, Swim +0, Use Rope +2; Armor Proficiency (light), Armor Proficiency (medium), Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Endurance, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Rapid Shot, Shield Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Track, Weapon Focus (greatsword).

Languages: Common (literate).

Spells Prepared (1; base DC = 12 + spell level): 1st—*jump*.

Possessions: +1 *greatsword*, composite longbow with 20 arrows, dagger, masterwork scale mail, climber's kit, 4 *potions of cure light wounds*.

Physical Description: Battered, but jovial, the Oeridian contingent sport tanned skin and large muscles.

Bey of Elyan's Thugs (3): male orc Warrior 11; CR 10; Medium humanoid (orc); HD 11d8+1 hp 66; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +11; Grp +15; Atk +15 melee (2d4+6/18-20, falchion) or +15 melee (1d4+4/19-20, dagger) or +11 ranged (1d6+4, javelin); Full Atk +15/+10/+5 melee (2d4+6/18-20, falchion) or +15/+10/+5 melee (1d4+4/19-20, dagger) or +11 ranged (1d6+4, javelin); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL NE; SV Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 19, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 7, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Jump +6; Improved Bull Rush, Improved Overrun, Power Attack, Shock Trooper*.

Languages: Common, Orc.

Light Sensitivity (Ex): Orcs are dazzled in bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell.

Possessions: half-plate, buckler, falchion, dagger, 8 javelins.

Physical Description: Beetle-browed and ugly, with a menacing disposition and the brawn to back it up.

* see Appendix 2: New Rules Item

APPENDIX 2: NEW RULES ITEMS

NEW CREATURES

Spellstitched Template

Monster Manual II

Spellstitched creatures are undead that have been powerfully enhanced and fortified by arcane means. They are more difficult to attack in melee and more resistant to being turned, and they gain the ability to cast spells. The process is much more effective when applied to intelligent undead than those that are mindless, since intelligent undead can discharge their spells tactically.

A spellstitched undead can be identified by the runes that cover its body, either carved into its skeletal remains or tattooed onto its rotting flesh. Under casual observation or while in combat, the runes can be noticed only with a DC 15 Spot check, otherwise simply appearing to be cracks in the creature's bones or wrinkles in its skin.

Spellstitched creatures can be created only by a wizard or sorcerer with the Craft Wondrous item feat and of sufficient level to cast the spells to be imbued within the undead's body. The creation process takes a number of days equal to the Wisdom score of the undead creature being spellstitched (so a minimum of 10 days) and requires the expenditure of 1,000 gp for carving or tattooing materials in addition to 500 XP x the undead creature's wisdom score.

Undead with arcane spellcasting abilities can spellstitch themselves.

Creating a Spellstitched Creature

"Spellstitched" is an acquired template that can be added to any corporeal undead with a Wisdom score of 10 or higher (referred to hereafter as the base creature).

A spellstitched creature uses all the base creature's statistics and abilities except as noted here.

Special Attacks: A spellstitched creature retains all the special attacks of the base creature and gains the following special attack.

Spell-Like Abilities: A spellstitched creature can be imbued with spell-like abilities according to its wisdom, as indicated on the table below. Any spells selected must be from the conjuration, evocation, or necromancy school. The number of spell-like abilities is cumulative; for example, a spell stitched undead with a wisdom of 12 can cast two 2nd-level spells four times per day and two 1st-level spells four times per day. Caster level equals the creature's Hit Dice.

Wisdom	Example Undead	# Spells	Times/Day
10	Skeleton, zombie	Two 1st	4
11-12	Bodak	Two 2nd	4
13-14	Ghoul, ghast	Two 3rd	2
15-16	Devourer	Two 4th	2
17-18	Some lichs	Two 5th	2
19+	Nightshade	One 6th	1

The creator of a spellstitched creature decides how to allocate the spells known against the number of times per day spells of each level can be cast, and once made, this determination cannot be changed. For example, if a spellstitched skeleton has *cause fear* usable once per day and *shocking grasp* usable three times per day imbued as its 1st-level spell-like abilities, its creator cannot later change either the spells or how frequently each can be used (to two times per day each, for example).

Special Qualities: A spellstitched creature retains all the special qualities of the base creature and gains the following special qualities.

Damage Reduction (Ex): Spellstitched creatures with 1-3 HD have no damage reduction, those with 4-11 HD have damage reduction 5/magic or silver, and those with 12 or more HD have damage reduction 5/magic and silver.

Spell Resistance (Ex): A spellstitched creature has spell resistance equal to 10 + the base creature's Charisma modifier.

Turn Resistance (Ex): A spellstitched creature gains +2 turn resistance (added to the base creature's turn resistance, if any).

Saves: Spellstitched creatures get a +2 profane bonus on all saving throws.

Challenge Rating: Same as the base creature +1.

Topiary Guardians

Monster Manual III

A topiary guardian is a shrub or bush sculpted into the shape of an animal and then animated by arcane magic. As much decoration as defence, these creatures guard the courtyards of kings and nobles, blending in seamlessly among ordinary hedge sculptures. The

guardians spring to life only when an intruder enters the garden.

Topiary guardians are as much construct as plant. They are not naturally mobile plant creatures; like golems, their animating force is a spirit from the Elemental Plane of Earth that has been bound to the body via magic. As a result, druids find them distasteful at best, and an abomination at worst. The wealthy landowners who keep the creatures in their gardens rarely worry about such issues, however. They consider the extra security of having a topiary guardian patiently waiting to spring on thieves or assassins more important than the shrub's "feelings."

A topiary guardian is the same size as the creature it imitates, so a lion topiary guardian would have a lion's dimensions. However, a guardian is composed mostly of tiny branches and leaves, making it much lighter than a flesh-and-blood creature of the same size; it weighs only one-quarter as much as its flesh-and-blood counterpart. Topiary guardians do not speak, but do rustle slightly as they move. Captured intruders can then be arrested and interrogated by the local guard.

Topiary guardians sense vibrations through the ground, making them excellent sentries. When a topiary guardian spots an intruder, it stays perfectly still until the intruder comes within 30 or 40 feet. The animated bush then simply charges, often catching the foe off guard.

A topiary guardian follows the orders of its creator if he is within 90 feet. If uncommanded, it continues to follow the last order it received to the best of its ability, though it attacks any creature that attacks it. The guardian's creator can leave simple orders, such as "Attack any creature entering the garden at night," that the guardian can follow. If a guardian is protecting the home of an important government figure, it is often given orders to pin opponents rather than kill them.

Merciful (Ex): A topiary guardian can deal nonlethal damage with any of its attacks without taking the standard -4 penalty on attack rolls. The creature chooses whether to deal lethal or nonlethal damage depending on the orders it is given by its creator. Orders to capture or subdue enemies cause the topiary guardian to use nonlethal attacks; any other attack order causes the creature to deal lethal damage.

Freeze (Ex): A topiary guardian can hold itself so still that it appears to be a normal sculpted shrub. An observer must succeed on a DC 30 Spot check to notice that a topiary guardian is actually an animated creature.

Skills: A topiary guardian has a +8 racial bonus on Move Silently checks.

Boar Topiary Guardian: CR 3;

Medium Plant

Hit Dice: 4d8+10 (32 hp);

Initiative: +3;

Speed: 40 ft. (8 squares);

Armor Class: 17 (+3 Dex, +4 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 14

Base Attack +3

Grapple: +6;

Attack: Gore +6 melee (2d6+4);

Full Attack: Gore +6 melee (2d6+4);

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.;

Special Attacks: Ferocity, merciful;

Special Qualities: Damage reduction 10/slashing, freeze, low-light vision, plant traits, tremorsense 90 ft., vulnerability to fire;

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +;

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 16, Con 14, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1

Skills: Move Silently +11

Environment: Any

Organization: Solitary or garden (2-8)

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always neutral

Advancement: -

Level Adjustment: -

A boar topiary guardian stands 3 feet high at the shoulder and is 4 feet long. It weighs about 100 pounds.

Combat

A boar topiary guardian has the following special attack:

Ferocity (Ex): A boar topiary guardian continues to fight without penalty even while disabled or dying.

Lion Topiary Guardian: CR 7;

Large Plant;

Hit Dice: 10d8+40 (85 hp);

Initiative: +2;

Speed: 40 ft. (8 squares);

Armor Class: 17 (+2 Dex, +6 natural, -1 size), touch 11, flat-footed 15;

Base Attack +7

Grapple: +18;

Attack: Claw +13 melee (1d6+7);

Full Attack: 2 claws +13 melee (1d6+7) and bite +8 melee (1d8+3);

Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.;

Special Attacks: Improved grab, merciful, pounce, rake 1d6+3;

SQ Damage reduction 10/slashing, freeze, low-light vision, plant traits, tremorsense 90 ft., vulnerability to fire;

Saves: Fort +11, Ref +5, Will +3;

Abilities: Str 25, Dex 14, Con 18, Int-, Wis 10, Cha 1

Skills and Feats: Move Silently +10;

Environment: Any
Organization: Solitary or garden (2-8)
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always neutral
Advancement: - Level Adjustment: -

A lion topiary guardian is up to 8 feet long and weighs about 100 pounds.

Combat

A lion topiary guardian has the following special attacks:

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a lion topiary guardian must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking attacks of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can rake on subsequent rounds.

Pounce (Ex): If a lion topiary guardian charges a foe, it can make a full attack, including two rake attacks.

Rake (Ex): Attack bonus +13 melee, damage 1d6+3.

Salt Mummy

Monster Manual III

Salt Mummy: CR 8;

Medium undead;

HD 12d12 plus 48;

hp 126; Init -1;

Spd 30 ft.;

AC 18, touch 9, flat-footed 18;

Base Ark +6;

Grp +13;

Atk +9 melee (2d6+17 plus dehydrating impact, slam);

Full Atk +9 melee (2d6+17 plus dehydrating impact, slam);

SA dehydrating impact;

SQ darkvision 60 ft., fast healing 10, undead traits, unholy toughness, water weakness;

AL CE;

SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +8;

Str 27, Dex 8, Con-, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Hide +7, Listen +9, Move Silently +7, Spot +9; Alertness, Cleave, Improved Natural Weapon (slam), Improved Toughness, Power Attack.

Dehydrating Impact (Su): Each time a salt mummy touches a living creature, the creature must make a DC 19 Fortitude save or take 4d6 points of damage as moisture is evaporated from its body. This impact is especially devastating to plants and creatures with the water subtype (such as water elementals), which instead take 4d8 points of damage. Even on a successful save, a creature still loses moisture, taking half damage. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Unholy Toughness (Ex): A salt mummy gains a bonus to its hit points equal to its Charisma modifier times its Hit Dice.

Water Weakness: All water deals damage to a salt mummy as if it were holy water.

NEW EQUIPMENT

Anti Impact Armor, as presented in *Complete Warrior*

Armor with the anti-impact quality is designed to cushion the blow from massive blunt traumas. This armor doesn't give any extra protection against weapon damage, beyond AC bonus, but bludgeoning damage that affects all or most of the entire body such as constriction and falling damage is halved.

Badge of Valor, as presented in *Complete Adventurer*

This golden brooch provides its wearer with a +2 morale bonus on saves against fear effects. This bonus improves to +4 on level checks made to avoid being intimidated.

Replenishing Skin, as presented in *Sandstorm*

This unremarkable waterskin is made from the hide of a camel. Whenever the skin becomes empty, it slowly refills with pure water over a period of 1d4 hours. Smaller quantities of water can be drained from the skin after a shorter time.

Spellsight Spectacles, as presented in *Complete Adventurer*

These spectacles grant the wearer a +5 competence bonus on Spellcraft checks made to decipher scrolls and a +5 competence bonus on Use Magic Device checks made to use scrolls. Spectacles occupy the same space on the body as a pair of eye lenses or goggles.

Tunic of Steady Spellcasting, *Complete Adventurer*

The wearer of this tunic gains a +5 competence bonus on Concentration checks. Despite the item's name, its bonus applies on all Concentration checks, not just those made to cast spells. Cost: 2,500 gp,

Sceptre of Obedience as presented in *Miniatures Handbook*

This sceptre grants a +5 competence bonus on the bearer's Charisma checks and Charisma based skill checks. Cost: 12,500 gp

NEW FEATS

Shock Trooper [Tactical] as presented in *Complete Warrior*

You are adept at breaking up formations of soldiers when you rush into battle.

Prerequisites: Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack, base attack bonus +6.

Benefit: The Shock Trooper feat enables the use of three tactical maneuvers.

Directed Bull Rush: To use this maneuver, you must make a successful bull rush attempt as part of a charge. For every square you push your foe back, you may also push that foe one square to the left or right.

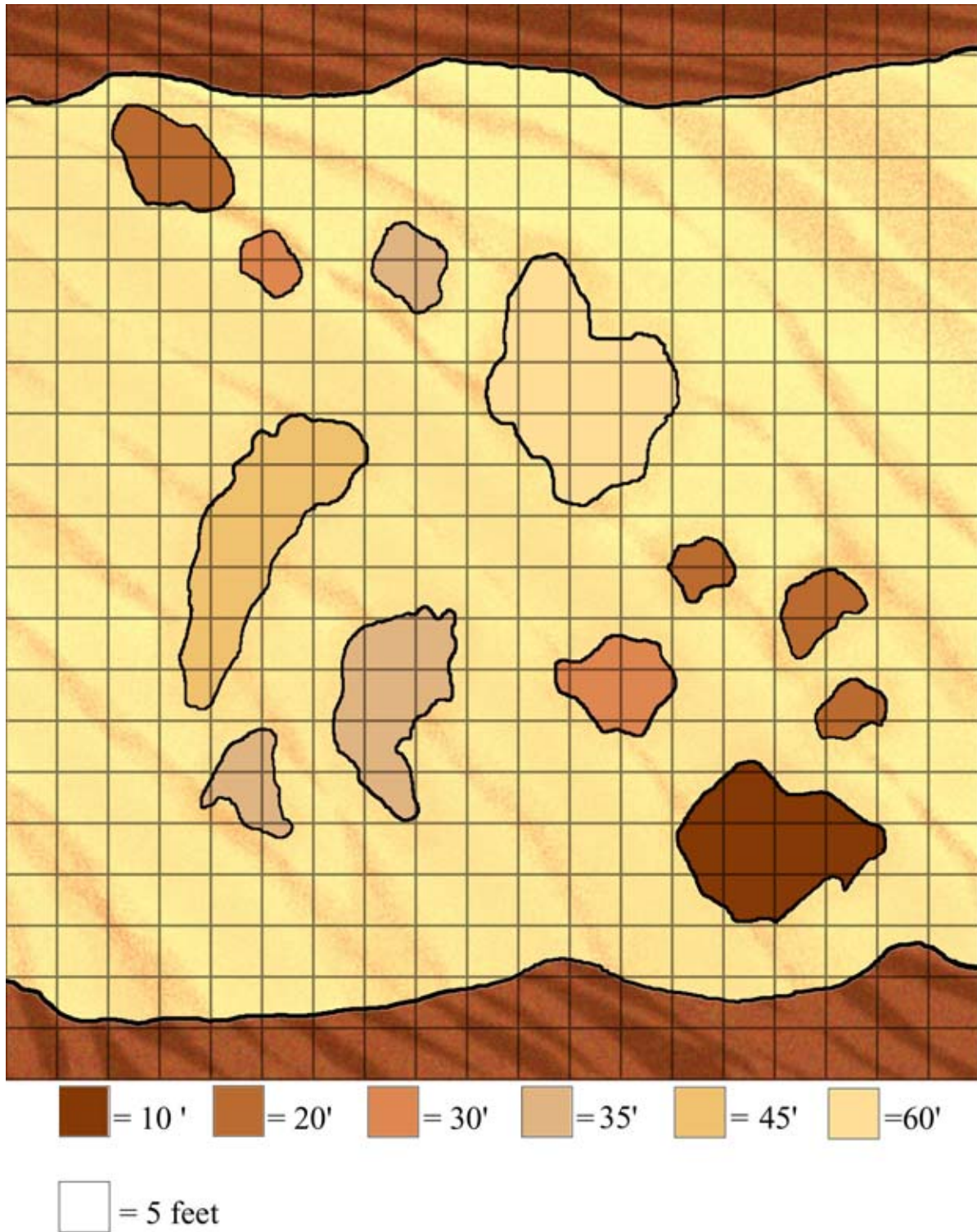
Domino Rush: To use this maneuver, you must make a successful bull rush attempt that forces a foe into the same square as another foe. You may make a free trip attempt against both foes at the same time, and neither foe gets a chance to trip you if your attempt fails.

Heedless Charge: To use this maneuver, you must charge and make the attack at the end of the charge using your Power Attack feat. The penalty you take on your attack roll must be -5 or worse. In addition to normal charge modifiers (which give you a -2 penalty to AC and a +2 bonus on the attack roll), you can assign any portion of the attack roll penalty from Power Attack to your Armor Class instead, up to a maximum equal to your base attack bonus.

Special: A fighter may select Shock Trooper as one of his fighter bonus feats.

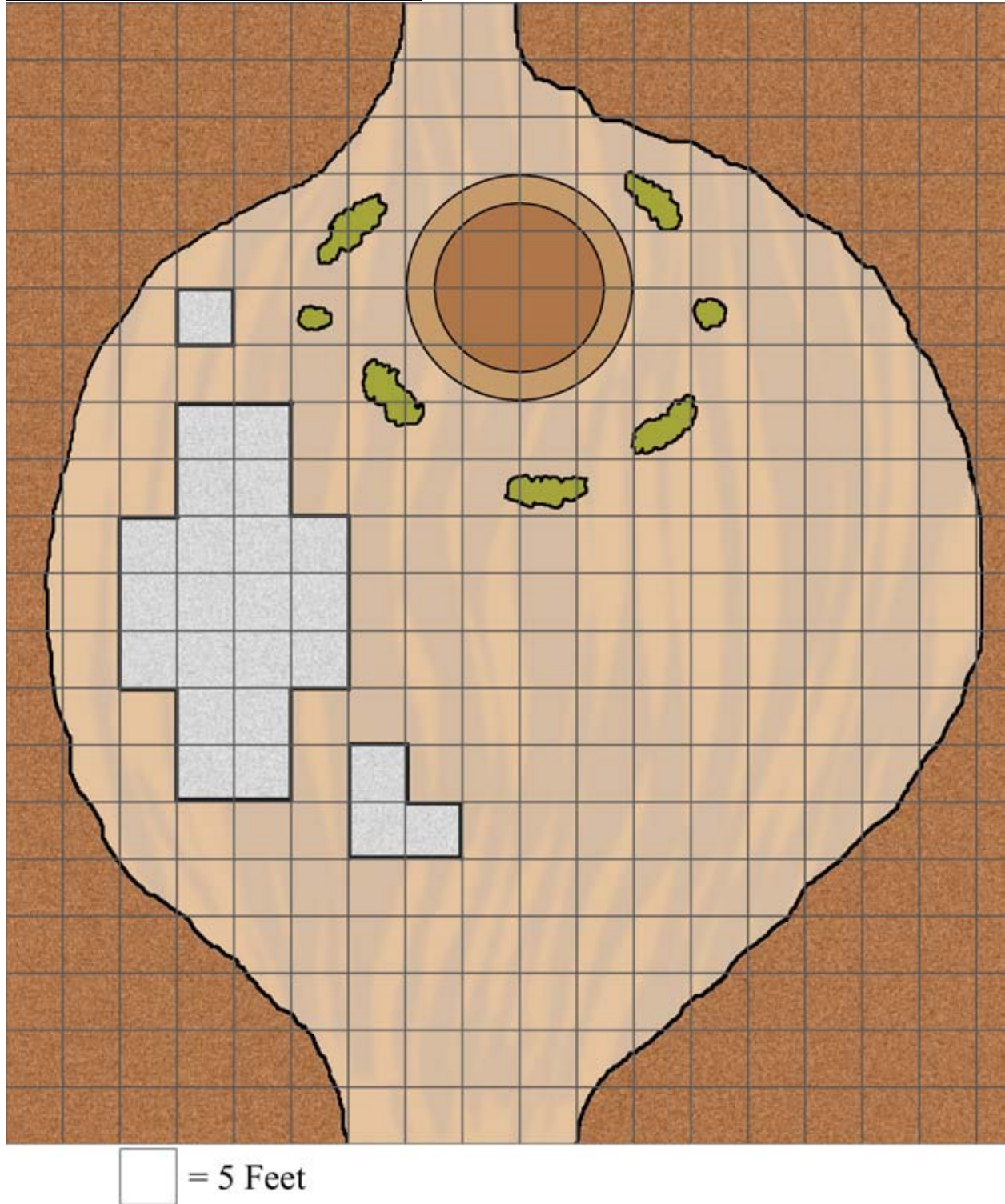
MAP 1:

MAP OF THE SAND VALLEY:



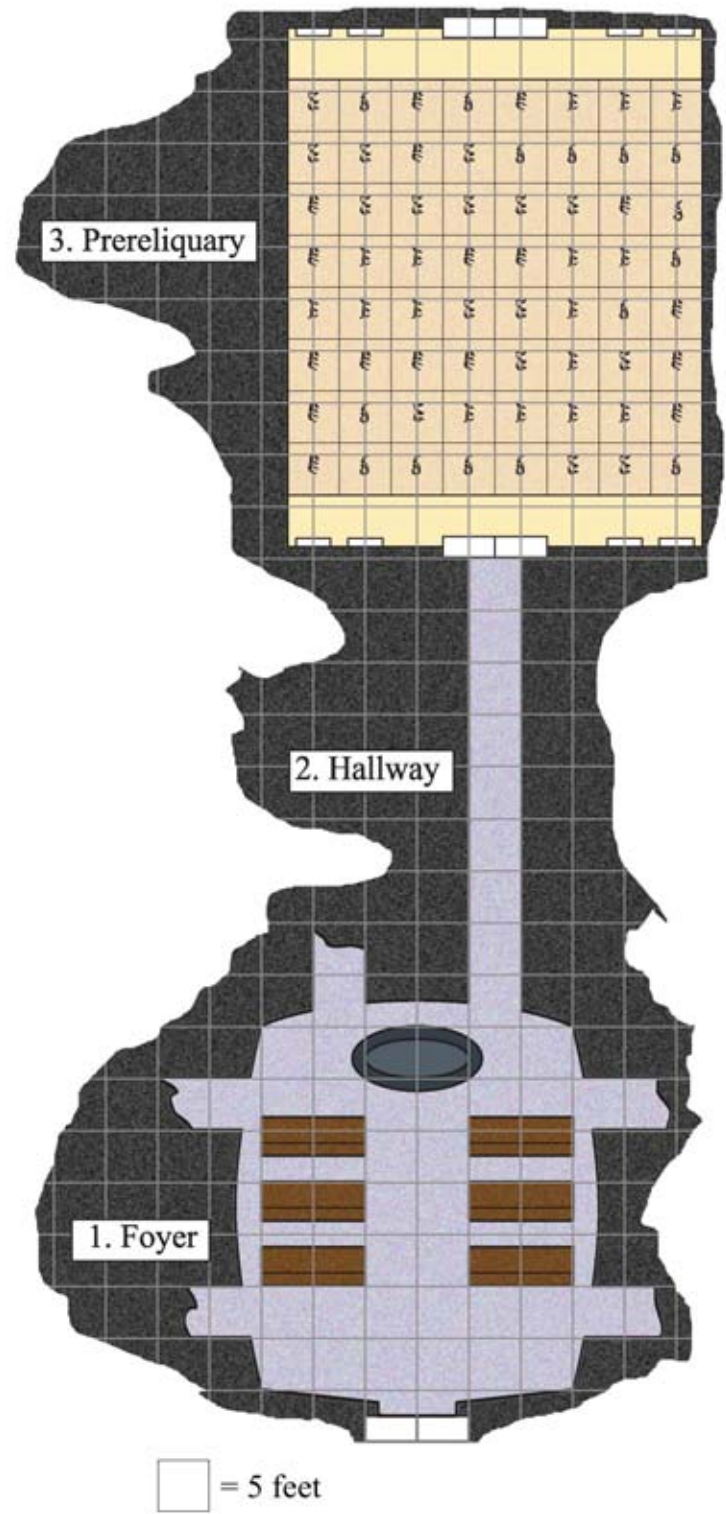
MAP 2:

MAP OF THE ESTATE AND GAZEBO



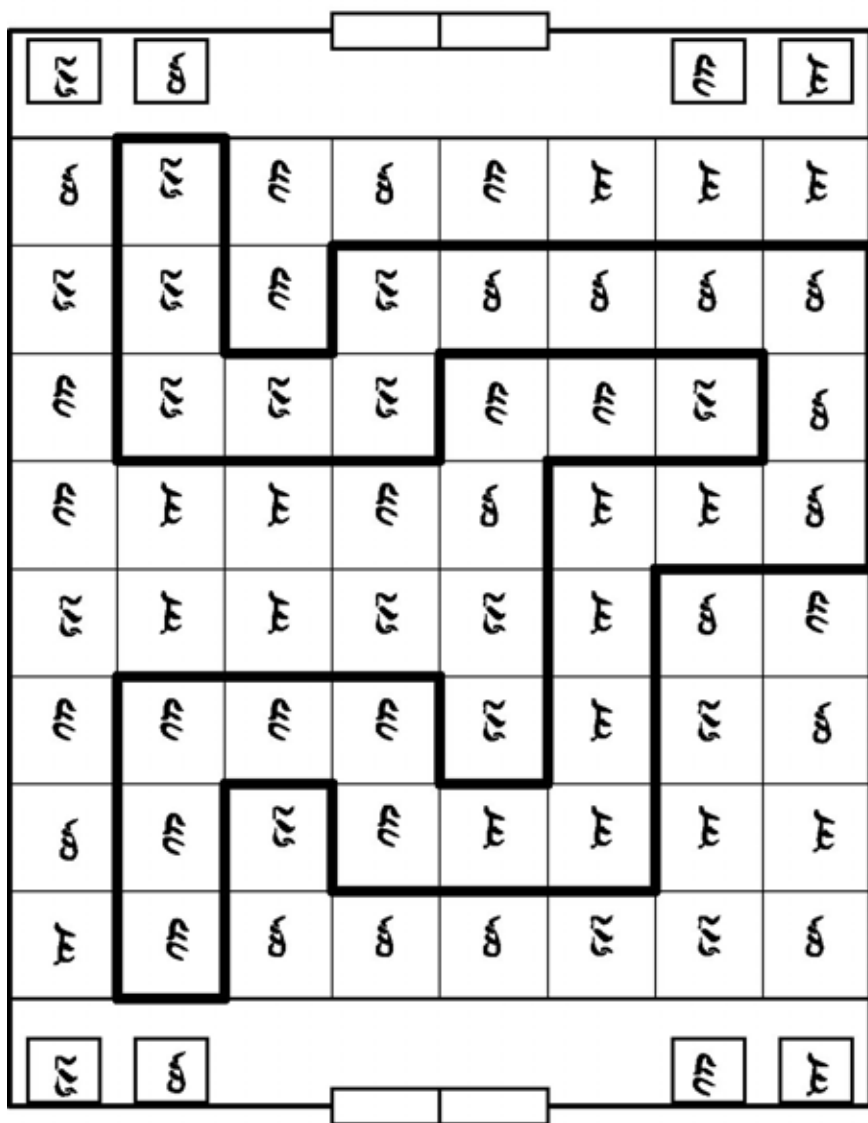
MAP 3:

THE DESECRATED TEMPLE OF AL'AKBAR



MAP 4:

DM'S MAP OF THE PUZZLE ROOM:



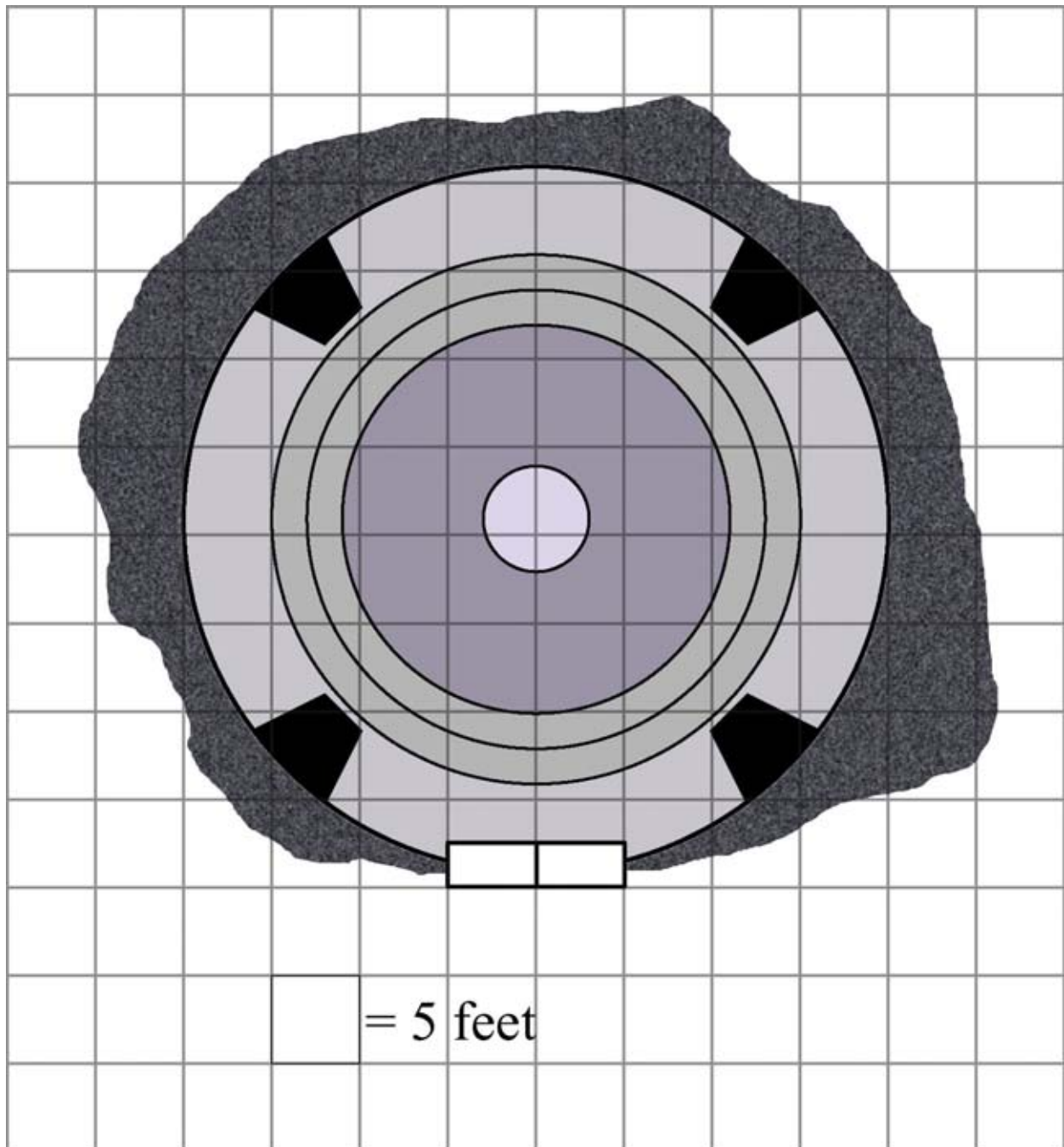
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- 1 8
- 2 7
- 3 8
- 4 2

Start from this side of the room.

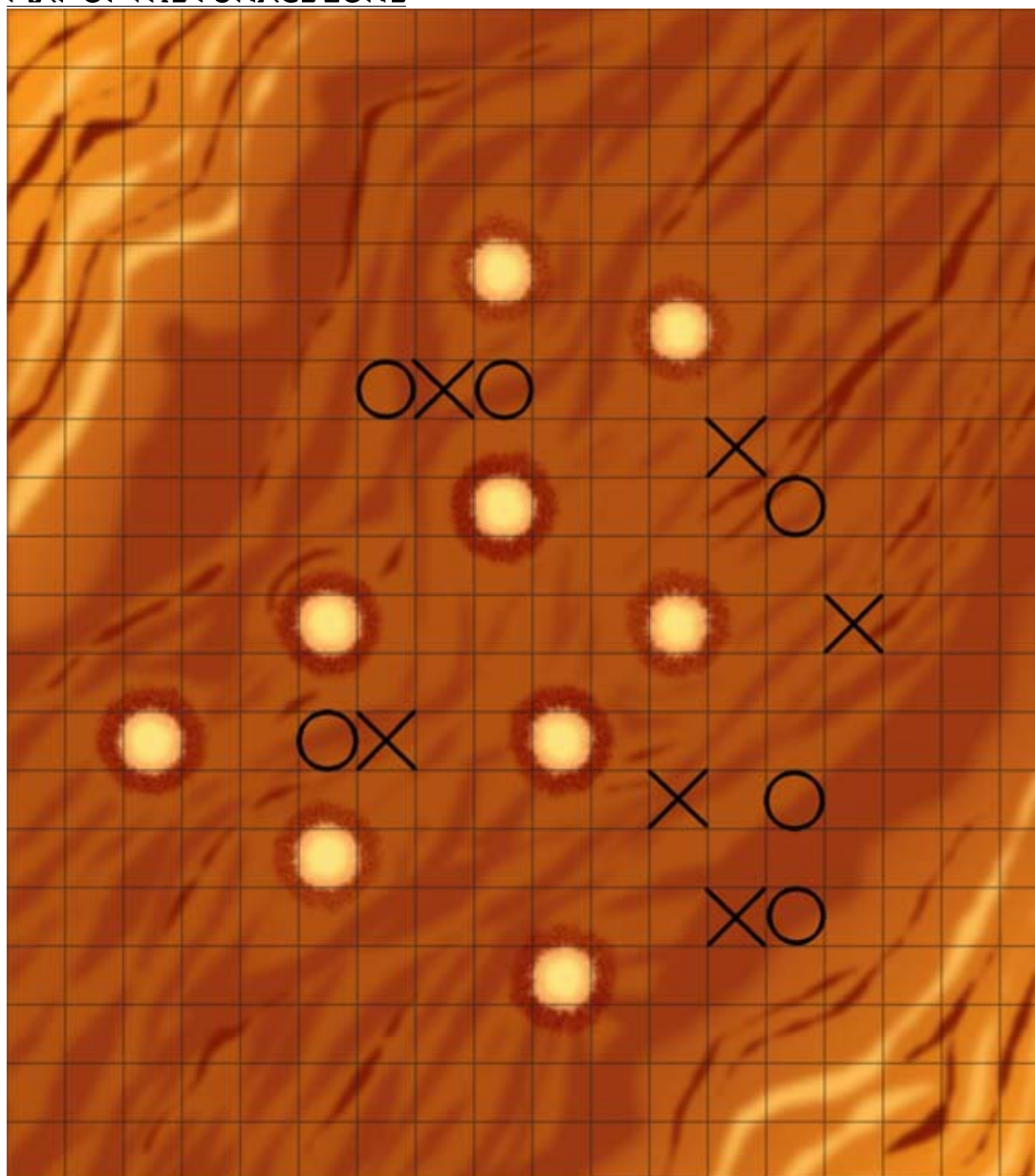
MAP 5:

MAP OF THE RELIQUARY




MAP 5:

MAP OF THE FUNACE ZONE



PC's arrive by this side.

 = 5 feet

X= Aceari Romaro and his team.

O= The Thugs of Bey Elan.

These positions are starting point suggestions depending on the number of combatants for the APL

PLAYER HANDOUT 1 PLAYER'S HANDOUT 1: THE PUZZLE ROOM

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Start from this end of the room.