

## CREATING CUSTOM FANTASY RACES

With the release of *Player's Companion*, *Lairs & Encounters*, and *Axioms I*, the *Adventurer Conqueror King System* now provides rules for creating custom classes, custom spells, custom monsters, and custom magic types. What it does not yet provide, however, is a set of rules for creating custom playable fantasy races. This article fills that gap, elaborating on some mechanics we initially presented on the Autarch forums.

Follow these steps to create a custom fantasy race for your campaign:

1. Develop a name and concept for the fantasy race. Is it a sinister race of serpent-men with access to dark magic? Is it a titanic race of giant-sized humanoids? Perhaps it is a race of human-sized talking rabbits. The concept should drive your choice in the remaining steps.
2. Determine the ability score requirements for the race (see Requirements below).
3. Determine any modifications or restrictions that may apply to the race's allocation of build points to the class category values (see Class Category Values below).
4. Select one or more custom powers for the fantasy race and assign them to the racial values of 0, 1, 2, 3, and 4 (see Racial Powers below)
5. Calculate the cost for racial value 0.
  - a. Count the total number of racial powers available at racial value 0. Remember that some racial powers count as negative, half, two, or other variable numbers of powers.
  - b. For each racial power, increase the cost of the race at this value by 40 XP, or more if the power is directly applicable to all of the race's likely classes (see Racial Powers below).
  - c. For each racial power that is a spell-like ability, increase the cost of the race at this value by 65 XP + 5 XP per level of the spell (see Racial Powers below).
  - d. If the race's racial value mimics or stacks with a class category value (such as Elf and Arcane), add the cost of the mimicked class value at that level.
  - e. If the race's racial value mimics or stacks with a negative class category value (such as Halfling and HD), subtract the cost of the mimicked class value.
  - f. Subtract 40 XP from this total to represent the fact that racial classes lose maximum levels of experience.
6. Calculate the cost for racial value 1, 2, 3, and 4 by repeating these steps.
7. Calculate the additional cost per level after 8.
  - a. If the race's racial value mimics a class category value (such as Elf and Arcane), divide the Racial Value XP cost at Value 4 by the cost for elf 4 (2,625) and multiply the result by 50,000. This is the additional cost per level after 8.
  - b. If the race's racial value does not mimic a class category value (such as Dwarf), divide the Racial Value XP cost at Value 4 by the cost for dwarf 4 (1,400) and multiply the result by 10,000 for 2 class types and 30,000 for 3 class types. This is the additional cost per level after 8.
  - c. If the race is monstrous (as determined by the Judge), the cost per level after 8 continues to double. Apply this rule for races that are particularly inhuman and powerful.
8. You're finished. Time to build a class using your new fantasy race!

## REQUIREMENTS

All fantasy races should have at least one ability score requirement of 9 or higher. Races whose racial value mimics the Arcane value should require Intelligence 9 or higher. Races whose racial value mimics the Divine value should require Wisdom 9 or higher. Other ability score requirements are at the Judge's discretion. Fantasy races with higher ability score requirements will tend to be available for play much less often, so setting high requirements is a useful tool to keep some races comparatively rare and exceptional.

Apart from the mechanical effect on the die roll, what does it mean for a race to have ability score requirements? For instance, what does it mean to say that "all gnome classes require a minimum Intelligence and Constitution of 9 or better"? There are many ways of interpreting the requirement. Here's a few:

- G Factor: The natural floor for gnomish intellect and health may simply be higher than it is in humans. The smartest gnome is no smarter than the smartest human, but the least intelligent gnome is as smart as the average human. (Tolkien's elves seem to just not have any weak, dumb, slow, sickly, or unattractive members of their species.)
- GNASA Dungeonauts: Gnomish culture might carefully regulate entry into the adventuring classes. Only the most intelligent and healthy applicants are able to become adventurers. Entire government programs may exist that inflict annoying gnomish tricksters on an unsuspecting host populace.
- No Gnome Left Behind: Gnomish culture might have wonderful public schools with a commitment to education and physical fitness that assures that all gnomes reach a comfortable baseline. Those that drop out of higher education end up as tricksters, obviously.
- This Is GNOME LAND: Gnomes may systematically kill the slow and weak during childhood, allowing only those capable of bare-chested war cries in red cloaks to survive. This seems unlikely, but it's hard to know what these diminutive races are capable of.

Which interpretation is "true" is a matter of world-building, not mechanics. For instance, in my own campaign, the Auran Empire, the meaning of the requirements varies from race to race. The ability score requirement for dwarves is because dwarves simply "are" hardier than humans; all dwarven classes require a minimum Constitution of 9 because there are no dwarves with less than that. Conversely, the nigh-impossible ability score requirements for Nobirans represent the rarity of their manifestation. Nobirans are drawn from those humans who have some divine ancestry or blood, but that divine blood only manifests rarely (only when all ability scores 11 or above). The offspring of a dwarf is always going to be a dwarf with a minimum Constitution of 9, but the offspring of a Nobiran is only potentially a Nobiran.

Since the choice of how difficult to make the requirements to meet is a matter of world-building, rather than a matter of mechanics, it does *not* adjust the cost of the class's racial value.

## CLASS CATEGORY VALUES

One of the most effective tools to create a distinct fantasy race is to adjust, modify, or limit the effects of the various class category values.

### FIGHTING VALUE

Races that are less than man-sized, such as gnomes and dwarves, may be prevented from using two-handed swords or longbows. This does not adjust the cost of the class's racial value. If the race is so small that it cannot wield any large weapons at all, and must wield medium weapons with two-hands, this counts as the Short-Statured custom power (-0.5 power cost).

Races that prefer particular weapons might encode these preferences with limitations on choices for narrow or broad weapon selections. For instance, dwarves with narrow or broad weapon selections must include at least four axes, flails, hammers, and/or maces among their selections, while elves with narrow or broad weapon selections must include at least two bows, crossbows, swords, or daggers. Gnomes with narrow or broad weapon selections *must* include arbalests, crossbows, and war hammers among their selections. Halflings with narrow weapon selections are limited to choosing from bola, dagger, darts, hand axe, javelin, sling, short bow, short sword, while halflings with broad weapon selections can also choose battle axe, crossbow, mace, or sword. Racial weapon preferences do not adjust the cost of the class's racial value.

Races that are pacifistic, small, or otherwise ill-equipped for melee combat may have their Fighting Value limited. For instance, Halflings cannot allocate more than 2 points to Fighting.

Races that have extraordinary fighting skills, or who often practice fighting in addition to another profession, might allow build points allocated to the Fighting Value to stack with build points allocated to the racial value for purposes of determining the class's fighting ability. Add the effective values to find the class's spellcasting abilities, up to a maximum of 4 points.

#### DIVINE CATEGORY

Fantasy races that a relationship or devotion to the divine may be forbidden from allocating build points to the Divine value, or limited in the number of points they can allocate. If the race's racial value indicates something like its caste (as in Thrassians, or a hypothetical serpentman race), the race may be limited in the number of points it can allocate to this category by its racial value. Limits on the Divine value do not adjust the cost of the class's racial value.

Races that have an extraordinary relationship or devotion to the divine, or who often practice divine spellcasting in addition to another profession, might allow build points allocated to the Divine Value to stack with build points allocated to the racial value for purposes of determining the class's divine spellcasting ability. Add the effective values to find the class's spellcasting abilities, up to a maximum of 4 points. Stacking increases the cost of the racial value by the equivalent value of the benefit provided. For instance, if Race 4 provides the equivalent of Divine 4, the cost of Race 4 must be increased by the cost of Divine 4.

Races that are mechanically-inclined and worship craftsmanship, such as dwarves, might gain the ability to create divine constructs when they reach 9<sup>th</sup> caster level. This is such a minor benefit that it does not add to the race's XP cost, though such "freebies" should always be used sparingly.

Remember that races whose racial value mimics the Divine value should require Wisdom 9 or higher.

#### ARCANE CATEGORY

Fantasy races that lack innate magical abilities may be forbidden from allocating build points to the Arcane category, or limited in the number of points they can allocate. If the race's racial value indicates something like its caste (as in Thrassians, or a hypothetical serpentman race), the race may be limited in the number of points it can allocate to this category by its racial value. Limits on the Arcane value do not adjust the cost of the class's racial value.

Races that exceed the spellcasting abilities of humans, or who often practice arcane spellcasting in addition to another profession, might allow build points allocated to the Arcane Value to stack with build points allocated to the racial value for purposes of determining the class's arcane spellcasting ability.

Unlike stacked racial and Divine values, stacked racial and Arcane values can reach values of 5 or greater. If so, apply the following rules. When calculating number of spells available, round fractions of ½ or more up; round any smaller fractions down.

- **Arcane + Race = 5:** The class has the ability to cast spells and engage in magical research as a mage, with the class's spells per level increased by 33%. The class uses its class level for all level-dependent spell ranges, durations, and damages; these are not increased.
- **Arcane + Race = 6:** As above, but the class's spells per level are increased by 50%.
- **Arcane + Race = 7:** As above, but the class's spells per level are increased by 66%.
- **Arcane + Race = 8:** As above, but the class's spells per level are increased by 100%.

Stacking increases the cost of the racial value by the equivalent value of the benefit provided. For instance, if Race 4 provides the equivalent of Arcane 2, the cost of Race 4 must be increased by the cost of Arcane 2.

Note that it is possible for a fantasy race to be forbidden from selecting the Arcane value while simultaneously having a racial value that stacks with Arcane. For instance, gnomes may never allocate build points to the Arcane category, but gnomes may gain the ability to cast arcane spells by allocating points to the Gnome Value.

#### CUSTOM POWERS FOR YOUR FANTASY RACE

Custom powers for your fantasy race can be selected from the **Custom Power Index** in the *Player's Companion* or built using the rules for **Creating New Custom Powers** found in the same chapter. Except as noted below, they function exactly like class custom powers.

#### COST OF RACIAL CUSTOM POWERS

Some Judges will have noticed that, if they calculate the cost per custom power from the Fighting or Thievery value, it typically costs 67 to 150 XP per power. Why, then, is the default cost just 40 XP to acquire a custom power for a race?

The reason is that races are intended to serve as the chassis for multiple classes. Therefore, the racial powers should be more general in nature and less specifically useful to any given class. They are costed with a discount to reflect the fact that a typical character will find its *class* custom powers more important in play than its *race* custom powers.

However, sometimes class powers do apply directly to the class's function. If a particular race tends to specialize in only one type of class, and the racial powers are directly applicable to the function of that class, then the Judge should charge 75, 100, or even 125 XP per racial power to maintain balance. The Halfling Skills gained from Halfling 1 – 4 cost 75 XP each, for instance, as they are specially chosen to compliment the type of classes and functions that halflings fulfill in the game, and for balance purposes cannot be costed at less than equivalent Thievery value skills.

Powers such as Child-Like or Inhuman, which apply both a bonus and a penalty to reactions with specific creatures, are typically costed at 0 custom powers.

#### COST OF RACIAL SPELL-LIKE ABILITIES

A related issue is the cost of spell-like abilities. Spell-like abilities taken as racial powers cost at least 70 XP each, more as the spell level increases. This escalating cost is contrary to the approach taken in the *Player's Companion*, where spell-like abilities count as one custom power each as long as they follow the usage limits (1<sup>st</sup> level spells usable at will with a casting time of 1 turn, etc.).

However, the *Player's Companion* also specifies that “spell-like abilities should generally not appear as a class power at a level of experience lower than the spell’s level.” Racial spell-like abilities violate this rule, as the example of the gnome race shows: 1<sup>st</sup> level gnomes can begin play with 2<sup>nd</sup> level spell-like abilities. The special rules for costing racial spell-like abilities are intended to reflect this.

## EXAMPLES OF RACE CREATION

In order to better illustrate the creation of fantasy races using this system, they are organized from the least complex to the most complex designs.

### NOBIRANS

The Nobiran race is a very simple design that relies on a few racial powers for flavor combined with racial value / Divine value stacking.

**Requirements:** Since Nobiran value mimics Divine value, the race must have a minimum Wisdom requirement. Here the rule is moot, as we decided that Nobiran classes require a minimum 11 or better in *all* ability scores. This requirement makes Nobiran racial classes exceptionally difficult to qualify for. Nobirans aren’t limited in number because they have especially powerful racial powers (they don’t), but simply to reflect an in-world conceit that they are rare, divinely-touched, descendants of the gods.

**Nobiran 0:** The race receives Divine Blessing (1 power), Blood of Kings (1 power), Heroic Spirit (1 power), and Longevity (1 power), for a total of 4 powers. None of these are spell-like abilities, so the cost for them is  $4 \times 40 = 160$  XP. However this is reduced by 40 XP in step 3(c). Therefore the cost for Nobiran 0 is 120 XP, which rounds to 125 XP.

**Nobiran 1:** The race’s racial value mimics Divine 1, so we add the cost of the mimicked class value at that level to the total. Divine 1 costs 250 XP, so the cost is 375 XP. The value in *Player's Companion* is listed as 250 XP, but this is incorrect! The editor responsible for this error have been sentenced to indenture in the salt mines of Alakyrum.

**Nobiran 2:** The race’s racial value mimics Divine 2, so we add the cost of the mimicked class value at that level to the total. Divine 2 costs 500 XP (i.e. an additional 250 XP over Divine 1), so the cost is 625 XP.

**Nobiran 3:** The race’s racial value mimics Divine 3, so we add the cost of the mimicked class value at that level to the total. Divine 3 costs 1000 XP (i.e. an additional 500 XP over Divine 2), so the cost is 1,125 XP.

**Nobiran 4:** The race’s racial value mimics Divine 4, so we add the cost of the mimicked class value at that level to the total. Divine 4 costs 2000 XP (i.e. an additional 1000 XP over Divine 3), so the cost is 2,125 XP.

### ZAHARANS

The Zaharan race is another very simple design. It relies on a few racial powers for flavor combined with racial value / Arcane value stacking. This parallels the design of the Elf value (see below) and was intended to showcase an “evil elf” type race such as the Drow, Melnibonéans, or Black Numenoreans.

**Requirements:** Zaharans require Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma of 9 or higher. Since Zaharan value mimics Arcane value, the race had to have a minimum Intelligence requirement. Having two more requirements makes the race considerably more difficult to qualify for than more common races like dwarf or elf, but not nearly so difficult as Nobiran.

**Zaharan 0:** The race receives Ancient Pacts (1 power), Zaharan Tongues (1 power), Inexorable (1 power), Dark Soul (-1 power), and After the Flesh (3 powers). None of these are spell-like abilities, so the cost for them is  $5 \times 40 = 200$  XP. This is reduced by 40 XP in step 3(c). Therefore the cost for Zaharan 0 is 160 XP, which rounds to 150 XP. The value in *Player's Companion* is listed as 200 XP.

**Zaharan 1:** The race's racial value mimics Arcane 1, so we add the cost of the mimicked class value at that level to the total. Arcane 1 costs 625 XP, so the cost is 825 XP.

**Zaharan 2:** The race's racial value mimics Arcane 2, so we add the cost of the mimicked class value at that level to the total. Arcane 2 costs 1,250 XP, so the cost is 1,450 XP.

**Zaharan 3:** The race's racial value mimics Arcane 3, so we add the cost of the mimicked class value at that level to the total. Arcane 3 costs 1,875 XP, so the cost is 2,075 XP.

**Zaharan 4:** The race's racial value mimics Arcane 4, so we add the cost of the mimicked class value at that level to the total. Arcane 4 costs 2,500 XP, so the cost is 2,700 XP.

## GNOMES

With the gnome, we begin to introduce spell-like abilities, custom powers that accumulate over the various racial values, and partial-level stacking with Arcane. It's a complex design but it all adds up.

**Requirements:** All gnome classes require a minimum Intelligence and Constitution of 9 or better. In the Auran Empire setting, gnomes are a relatively rare hybrid descended from dwarven and elven stock, so it made sense to impose the elf's Intelligence and dwarf's Constitution requirement.

**Gnome 0:** The race receives Nose for Potions (2.5 powers), Gnome Tongues (1 power), Gnomish Infravision (2.5 powers), and Resistance to Illusions (1 power), for a total of 7 racial powers. None of these are spell-like abilities, so the cost for them is  $7 \times 40 = 280$  XP. However this is reduced by 40 XP in step 3(c). Therefore the cost for Gnome 0 is 240 XP, which rounds to 250 XP.

**Gnome 1:** The race receives gains **faerie fire** (level 1), **ventriloquism** (level 1), and **speak with animals** (level 2). These are spell like abilities which increase the cost for Gnome 1 by 70 XP, 70 XP, and 75 XP, or 215 XP total. The cost for Gnome 1 is therefore (240 XP + 215 XP) or 455 XP, which rounds to 450 XP.

**Gnome 2:** The race gains the abilities of a mage of  $\frac{1}{2}$  the character's class level. This is the equivalent of Arcane 1, so it increases the cost by 625 XP to 1,080 XP. That rounds to 1,075 XP.

**Gnome 3:** The race gains **mirror image** (level 2) and **phantasmal force** (level 2). These are spell-like abilities which increase the cost of Gnome 3 by 75 XP each. In addition, the race gains access to all magic items usable for thieves (1 power). Collectively this increases the cost of Gnome 3 to (1,080 XP + 150 + 40) to 1,270 XP, which rounds to 1,275 XP.

**Gnome 4:** The race gains the abilities of a mage of  $\frac{1}{2}$  the character's class level. This is the equivalent of Arcane 2, so it increases the cost by another 625 XP. In addition, the race gains Innate Illusion Mastery (1 power), as well as the ability to use magic items usable by mages (1 power). The cost for Gnome 4 is therefore (1,270 + 625 + 40 + 40) 1,975 XP.

## HALFLINGS

The halfling design is unusual in that its racial values run negative – in other words, halfling classes cost less XP than human classes. The reason for the negative XP cost of the halfling value is the class's Weak custom power, which imposes a HD type reduction. Since increasing HD by one type increases a class's XP cost by 500 XP, reducing HD by one type is modeled by reducing the race's XP cost at each point by 500 XP.

Another unusual aspect of the halfling design is that the halfling value affords the race a series of "halfling skills" which are especially suited to halfling adventures. Therefore these powers are costed at 75 XP each rather than the usual 40 XP.

**Requirements:** Halfling classes require a minimum Dexterity 9 or better. The halfling race is easy to qualify for without any special rules.

**Halfling 0:** The race receives Child-like (0 powers), Demi-Human Ancestry (0.5 powers), Difficult to Corrupt (1 power), Easily Encumbered (-1 power), Halfling Tongues (1 power), Heroic Breakfast (1 power), Underfoot (1 power), Short-Statured (-0.5 powers), and Weak (-1 power), for a total of 2 custom powers. None of these are spell-like abilities, so the cost for them is  $2 \times 40 = 80$  XP. However, this is reduced by 40 XP in step (3)c) to 40 XP. In addition, the Weak power imposes a HD type reduction, which is the equivalent of a -1 value in the HD category (-500 XP). Therefore the cost for Halfling 0 is -460 XP, which rounds to -450 XP.

**Halfling 1:** The race receives one halfling skill. Halfling skills cost 75 XP each, so the cost for Halfling 0 is increased to -375 XP.

**Halfling 2:** The race receives one halfling skill. Halfling skills cost 75 XP each, so the cost for Halfling 0 is increased to -300 XP.

**Halfling 3:** The race receives one halfling skill. Halfling skills cost 75 XP each, so the cost for Halfling 0 is increased to -225 XP.

**Halfling 4:** The race receives one halfling skill. Halfling skills cost 75 XP each, so the cost for Halfling 0 is increased to -150 XP.

## ELVES

The elf race was not so much designed as it was reverse engineered from the elf class in *ACKS's* predecessor games (*Classic Dungeons & Dragons*). The result was that, although its similar to the Zaharan design, elfen classes enjoy a 125 XP discount for the Arcane Value, a necessity to keep the Elven Spellsinger at 4,000 XP for 2<sup>nd</sup> level. This mechanic in turn led to the cost of the Elf 4 value being reduced by 125 XP to avoid an asymmetry (Elf 3 + Arcane 1 costing less than Elf 4). Judges who wish to "play by the meta-rules" should raise the cost of Elf 4 by 125 XP and eliminate the 125 XP discount for Arcane points.

**Requirements:** All elfen classes require a minimum Intelligence 9 or better. Since Elf value mimics Arcane value, the class must have a minimum Intelligence requirement.

**Elf 0:** The race receives Attunement to Nature (0.5 powers), Elf Tongues (1 power), Keen Eyes (1 power), Connection to Nature (1 power), and Animal Friendship (0.5 powers), for a total of 4 racial powers. None of these are spell-like abilities, so the cost for them is  $4 \times 40 = 160$  XP. However this is reduced by 40 XP in step 3(c). Therefore the cost for Elf 0 is 120 XP, which rounds to 125 XP.

**Elf 1:** The race's racial value mimics Arcane 1, so we add the 625 XP cost of the mimicked class value to the total, bringing it to 750 XP.

**Elf 2:** The race's racial value mimics Arcane 2, so we add the 1,250 XP cost of the mimicked class value to the total, bringing it to 1,375 XP.

**Elf 3:** The race's racial value mimics Arcane 3, so we add the 1,875 XP cost of the mimicked class value to the total, bringing it to 2,000 XP.

**Elf 4:** The race's racial value mimics Arcane 3, so we add the 2,500 XP cost of the mimicked class value to the total, bringing it to 2,625 XP. At this point, we take the unusual step of *reducing* the cost of Elf 4 to 2,500 XP. The reason for this reduction is that otherwise it creates an asymmetry in the build point cost for two otherwise-identical classes. HD 1, Fighter 2, Arcane 1, Elf 3 costs 4,000 XP, while HD 1, Fighter 2, Elf 4 would cost 4,125 XP.

## DWARVES

Like the elf race, the dwarf race was not designed so much as reverse engineered from the dwarf class in *ACKS's* predecessor games (*Classic Dungeons & Dragons*). Unlike the elf, which in B/X was built as the equivalent of HD 1, Fighting 2, Arcane 1, Elf 3, the B/X dwarf was built with HD 2, Fighting 2, Dwarf 0, meaning it offered no guidance as to what the higher Dwarf value should offer. If the most elven elves are arcane casters, what are the most dwarven dwarves? The choice of cumulative additional proficiencies and bonuses to proficiency throws was intended to reflect the trope of superior dwarven craftsmanship.

The tricky question for evaluating the dwarven design is to how to cost the +1/+2/+3/+4 bonus to proficiencies and thief skills. In general, a +4 bonus to a proficiency throw counts as a custom power, so a +1 bonus should equate to 0.25 custom powers. Since the bonus is applicable so widely, it should be costed at 75 XP rather than 40 XP per power. But the bonus applies to *all* proficiencies and thief skills, so the cost needs to be 75 XP x 0.25 *per* +1 *per* proficiency or thief skill. How many is that?

Calculating the average number of proficiencies or thief skills requires making some assumptions. We know every character will have two proficiencies at 1<sup>st</sup> level. Let's assume a typical class build of HD 1, Fighting 2, Thievery 0 with two Fighting Value trade-offs. The class could have another five proficiencies or thief skills. It will gain another proficiency at 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> level, which (using trade-off mechanics) is worth a bit more than two proficiencies. The class might have one or more bonus proficiencies from Intelligence. This suggests around 10 proficiencies is a serviceable baseline, and is used for the suggested costs below.

**Requirements:** All dwarven classes require a minimum Constitution 9 or better. The dwarf race is easy to qualify for without any special rules.

**Dwarf 0:** The race receives Sensitivity to Rock (0.5 powers), Dwarf Tongues (1 power), Detect Traps (1 power), and Hardy People (2.5 powers), for a total of 5 racial powers. None of these are spell-like abilities, so the cost for them is 5 x 40 = 200 XP. However this is reduced by 40 XP in step 3(c). Therefore the cost for Dwarf 0 is 160 XP, which rounds to 150 XP. The value in *Player's Companion* is listed as 200 XP.

**Dwarf 1:** The race gains one extra proficiency (1 power), for a cost of 40 XP. The race gains a +1 bonus to all proficiency throws. Above we calculated a baseline of 10 proficiencies for the typical dwarven class, so the +1 bonus must cost  $[(10 + 1) \times (1 \times 0.25)]$  2.75 powers. Those powers cost another  $(2.75 \times 75)$  206 XP. Therefore the additional cost for Dwarf 1 is  $(160 + 206)$  366 XP, which rounds to 375 XP. The value in *Player's Companion* is listed as 400 XP.



**Dwarf 2:** The race gains an additional proficiency (1 power), for a cost of 40 XP. The race gains an additional +1 bonus to all proficiency throws. Again using a baseline of 10 proficiencies for the typical dwarven class, the +2 bonus must cost  $[(10 + 2) \times (2 \times 0.25)]$  6 powers. Those powers cost another  $(6 \times 75)$  450 XP. Therefore the additional cost for Dwarf 2 is  $(160 + 450)$  610 XP, which rounds to 600 XP. The value in *Player's Companion* is listed as 600 XP.

**Dwarf 3:** The race gains an additional proficiency (1 power), for a cost of 40 XP. The race gains an additional +1 bonus to all proficiency throws. The cumulative +3 bonus must cost  $[(10 + 3) \times (3 \times 0.25)]$  9.75 powers. Those powers cost another  $(9.75 \times 75)$  731 XP. Therefore the additional cost for Dwarf 3 is  $(160 + 731)$  891 XP, which rounds to 900 XP. The value in *Player's Companion* is listed as 900 XP.

**Dwarf 4:** The race gains an additional proficiency (1 power), for a cost of 40 XP. The race gains an additional +1 bonus to all proficiency throws. The cumulative +4 bonus must cost  $[(10 + 4) \times (4 \times 0.25)]$  14 powers. Those powers cost another  $(14 \times 75)$  1050 XP. Therefore the additional cost for Dwarf 3 is  $(160 + 1050)$  1,210 XP, which rounds to 1,200 XP. The value in *Player's Companion* is listed as 1,400 XP.

From the above analysis, we can see that the Dwarf class has been over-charged at Dwarf 0, Dwarf 1, and Dwarf 4. The proper XP costs are shown in the accompanying table. However, adopting this XP Cost progression would cause the dwarven vaultguard to lose its backwards compatibility with the B/X and BECM dwarf class.

Value	Dwarf	XP Cost
4	Dwarf +4 proficiencies	1,200
3	Dwarf +3 proficiencies	900
2	Dwarf +2 proficiencies	600
1	Dwarf +1 proficiencies	375
0	Dwarf	150

## THRASSIAN

The Thrassian race is probably the most controversial in *ACKS*. With its high armor class and powerful attack routine, it can dominate a party's melee capabilities.

**Requirements:** All Thrassian classes require a minimum Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution of 9 or better. This makes the class relatively difficult to qualify for. In-world, it reflects the fact that Thrassians are born into slavery, and sickly Thrassians are killed as hatchlings or die in training.

**Thrassian 0:** The race receives Claws 1d2 and Bite 1d4 (2 powers), Infravision 30' (1 power), Scaly Hide +1 AC (1 power), and Swimming 60' (2 powers), for a total of 6 powers. None of these are spell-like abilities, so the cost for them is  $6 \times 40 = 240$  XP. However this is reduced by 40 XP in step 3(c). Therefore the cost for Thrassian 0 is 200 XP, just as listed in *Player's Companion*.

**Thrassian 1:** The race receives Claws 1d3-1 and Bite 1d6-1 (3 powers), Infravision 45' (1.5 power), Scale Hide +2 AC (2 powers), and Swimming 90' (2.5 powers), for a total of 9 powers. None of these are spell-like abilities, so the cost for them is  $9 \times 40 = 360$  XP. However this is reduced by 40 XP in step 3(c) to 320 XP, which rounds to 325 XP. The value in *Player's Companion* is listed as 400 XP.

**Thrassian 2:** The race receives Claws 1d3-1 and Bite 1d8-1 (4 powers), Infravision 60' (2 powers), Scale Hide +3 AC (3 powers), and Swimming 120' (3 powers), for a total of 12 powers. None of these are spell-like abilities, so the cost for them is  $12 \times 40 = 480$  XP. The race's racial value mimics Fighter 1, so we add the 500 XP cost of the mimicked class value to the total, bringing it to 980 XP. However this is reduced by 40 XP in step 3(c) to 940 XP, which rounds to 950 XP. The value in *Player's Companion* is listed as 1,000 XP.

**Thrassian 3:** The race receives Claws 1d4-1 and Bite 1d8-1 (5 powers), Infravision 90' (2.5 powers), Scaly Hide +4 AC (4 powers), and Swimming 120' (3 powers), for a total of 14.5 powers. None of these are spell-like abilities, so the cost for them is  $14.5 \times 40 = 580$  XP. The race's racial value mimics Fighter 1, so we add the 500 XP cost of the mimicked class value to the total, bringing it to 1,080 XP. However this is reduced by 40 XP in step 3(c) to 1,040 XP, which rounds to 1,050 XP. The value in *Player's Companion* is listed as 1,250 XP.

**Thrassian 4:** The race receives Claws 1d4-1 and Bite 1d10-1 (6 powers), Flying (5 powers), Infravision 120' (3 powers), Scaly Hide +5 AC (5 powers), and Swimming 120' (3 powers), for a total of 22 powers. None of these are spell-like abilities, so the cost for them is  $22 \times 40 = 880$  XP. The race's racial value mimics Fighter 2, so we add the 1,000 XP cost of the mimicked class value to the total, bringing it to 1,880 XP. However this is reduced by 40 XP in step 3(c) to 1,840 XP. The value in *Player's Companion* is listed as 2,300 XP.

The Thrassian race is therefore actually *over-costed* at Thrassian 1, 2, 3, and 4. But is that a fair assessment? Arguably, the Thrassian's racial custom powers should cost 75 XP each, rather than 40 XP each. It's hard to argue that an attack routine, armor class bonus, infravision, or flight aren't uniquely valuable to all classes. If the Thrassian race is designed using a cost of 75 XP per power, the racial value costs work out as follows:

**Thrassian 0:** The cost is  $6 \times 75 = 450$  XP. However this is reduced by 40 XP in step 3(c). Therefore the cost for Thrassian 0 is 410 XP, which rounds to 400 XP.

**Thrassian 1:** The cost is  $9 \times 75 = 675$  XP, reduced by 40 XP in step 3(c) to 635 XP, which rounds to 650 XP.

**Thrassian 2:** The cost is  $12 \times 75 = 900$  XP. The race's racial value mimics Fighter 1, so we add the 500 XP cost of the mimicked class value to the total, then subtract 40 XP in step 3(c), for a total of 1,360 XP. That rounds to 1,350 XP.

**Thrassian 3:** The cost is  $14.5 \times 75 = 1087$  XP. The race's racial value mimics Fighter 1, so we add the 500 XP cost of the mimicked class value to the total, bringing to 1,587 XP. This is reduced by 40 XP in step 3(c) to 1,547 XP, which rounds to 1,550 XP.

**Thrassian 4:** The cost for them is  $22 \times 75 = 1,650$  XP. The race's racial value mimics Fighter 2, so we add the 1,000 XP cost of the mimicked class value to the total, bringing it to 2,650 XP. This is reduced by 40 XP in step 3(c) to 2,610 XP, which rounds to 2,600 XP.

Several years of *ACKS* playtesting certainly don't support the idea that the Thrassian race is underpowered and should have a lower XP cost. For Judges who wish to re-evaluate the race as potentially being more expensive than in *Player's Companion*, we present the costs for here.

Value	Thrassian	XP Cost
4	Thrassian 4	2600
3	Thrassian 3	1550
2	Thrassian 2	1350
1	Thrassian 1	650
0	Thrassian 0	400