

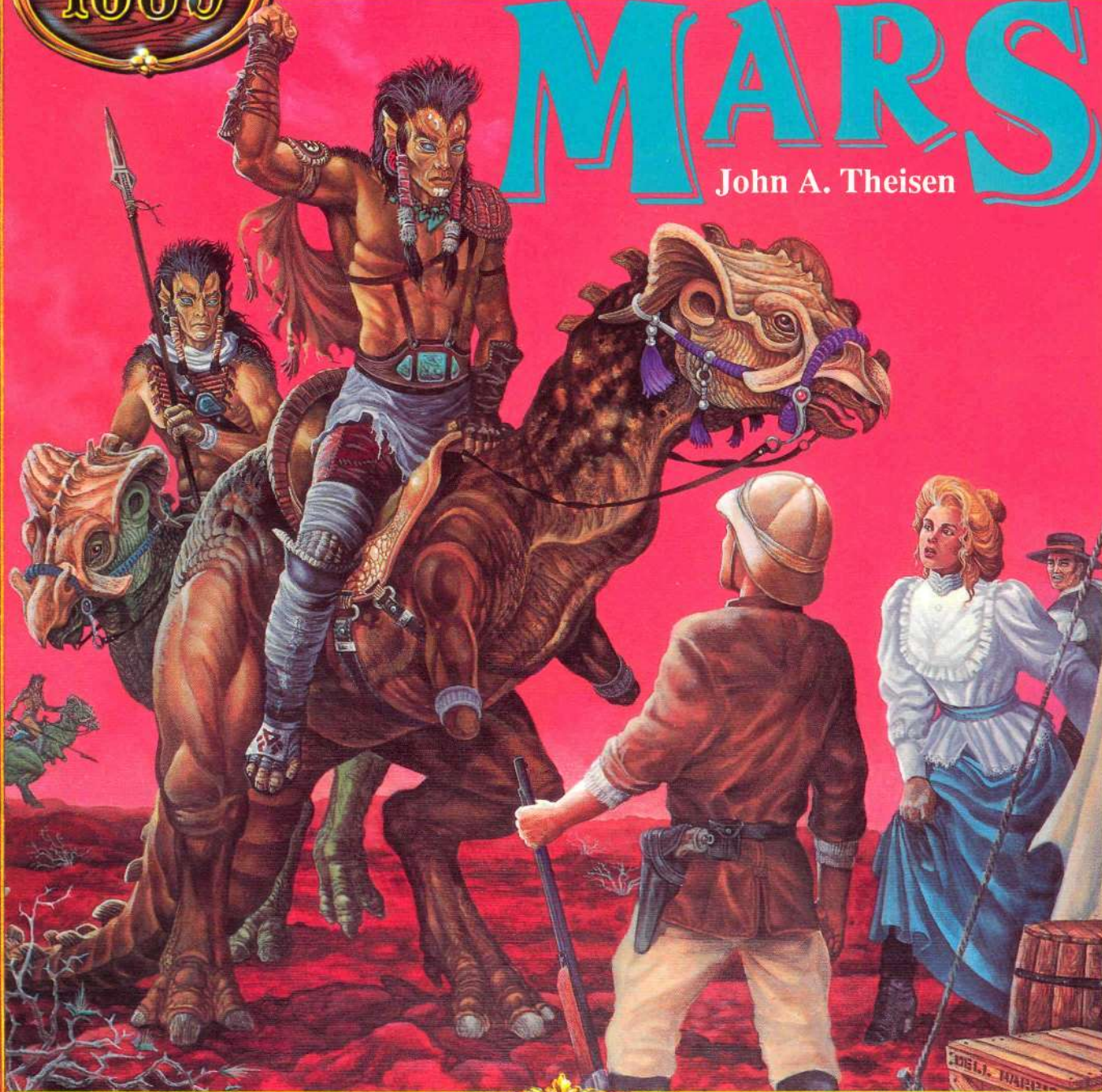
1904

SPACE
TRADE MARK

STEPPELORDS
OF

1889

MARS
John A. Theisen



Proud Warriors...
Epic Battles...

GDW

...On the plains of
the Nepenthes-Thoth.

Science-Fiction Role Playing in a More Civilized Time.

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STEPPELORDS OF MARS

John A. Theisen





STEPPELORDS OF MARS

DEDICATION

To Lori, "because it seemed the logical thing to do. "

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Introduction

STEPPELORDS OF MARS is a source-book of the Nepenthes-Thoth Steppe, a region of vital importance to the continued survival of the British colony on Mars. It also contains an adventure set upon the steppes, dealing with a hunting expedition that turns into something more than beating the bush for steppe tigers.

Since the arrival of the humans, the steppes have been an area of mystery and danger, a place to be crossed by canal or by sky galleon. Recently, however, the steppes and their inhabitants have become more important. This book will explain why.

HISTORY

IN FORMER TIMES, during the Empire of the Seldons, small subsidiary

canals branched off the grand canals and brought enough life-giving water to permit the steppes to be a breadbasket of Martian civilization. Although great, the cities were limited to the canals. The whole region was dotted with small farming towns and villages, and crisscrossed with a network of roads, branching out from the canals for a distance that seems remarkable today.

With the collapse of the empire came the failure of the canal maintenance system. The feeder canals filled up, and the steppes have returned to their former barren state. Where once they produced food for millions, the steppes are now home to a paltry handful of nomadic tribes. Today, the farming towns and villages have been

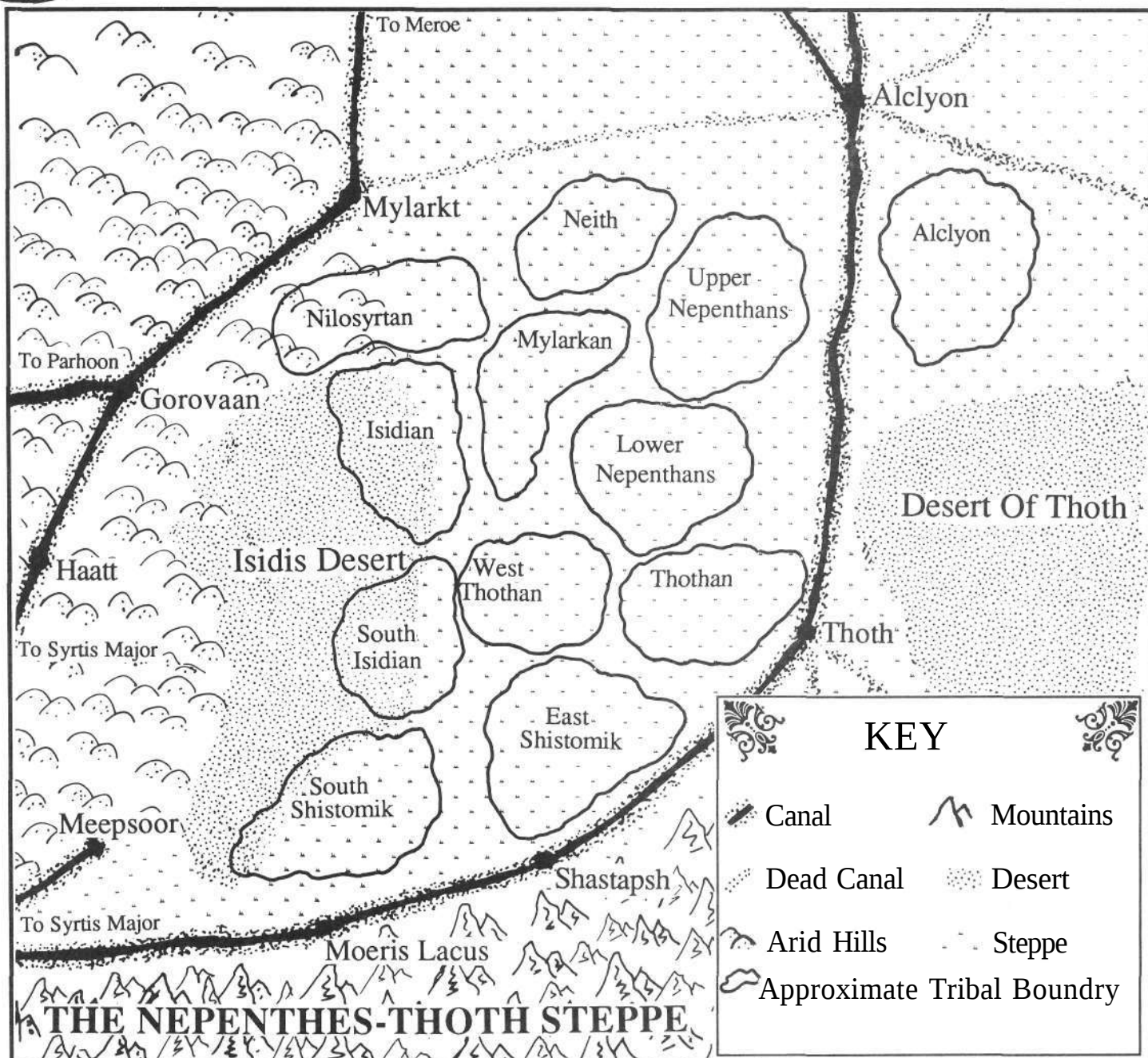
swallowed by the sea of parched grass and low scrub, leaving few surface traces of their presence. Agriculture on the steppes has completely vanished (except a form of semifarming practiced by some of the nomadic tribes). Of the roads, only scattered traces remain, although here and there a faint track can be seen, winding its way through the steppe grass for a few miles before vanishing again.

GEOGRAPHY

STEPPE ARE broad, flat expanses of grassland too dry to support trees, but not dry enough to be desert. On Mars, during the wet season (flow) enough moisture percolates through the soil from the distant canals to allow a short growing season, during which the flora of the steppes (primarily grasses and low scrub) bloom with what passes for luxuriant growth on Mars. At all other times of the year, the plants of the steppes lie dormant. During the hottest part of the year (low flow), the grasses turn brown in the scorching heat, and the parched flora provides little nourishment for plant-eating fauna.

The region called the Nepenthes-Thoth Steppe is bounded on the west by the Isidis Desert, on the south by the mountains of Shistomik, on the east by the Shastapsh/Alclyon canal, and on the north by the equally hostile steppes of Neith. There are over 420,000 square miles of steppe (100-mile hex=8820 square miles per hex, about 48 hexes in Nepenthes-Thoth Steppe, giving approximately 420,000 square miles of steppe)—the region is larger than the terrestrial countries of France and Germany combined, or about half the area of the Arabian Desert. There are no moun-





tains to speak of inside the steppes; only a few arid hills break the monotony. The area is one vast rolling plain stretching unrelievedly from horizon to horizon—rather like the North American great plains.

POLITICAL DIVISIONS

UNTIL 1887, most of the southern half of the Nepenthes-Thoth Steppe was claimed by the prince of Shastapsh, but the city-state had no effective presence beyond a few hundred

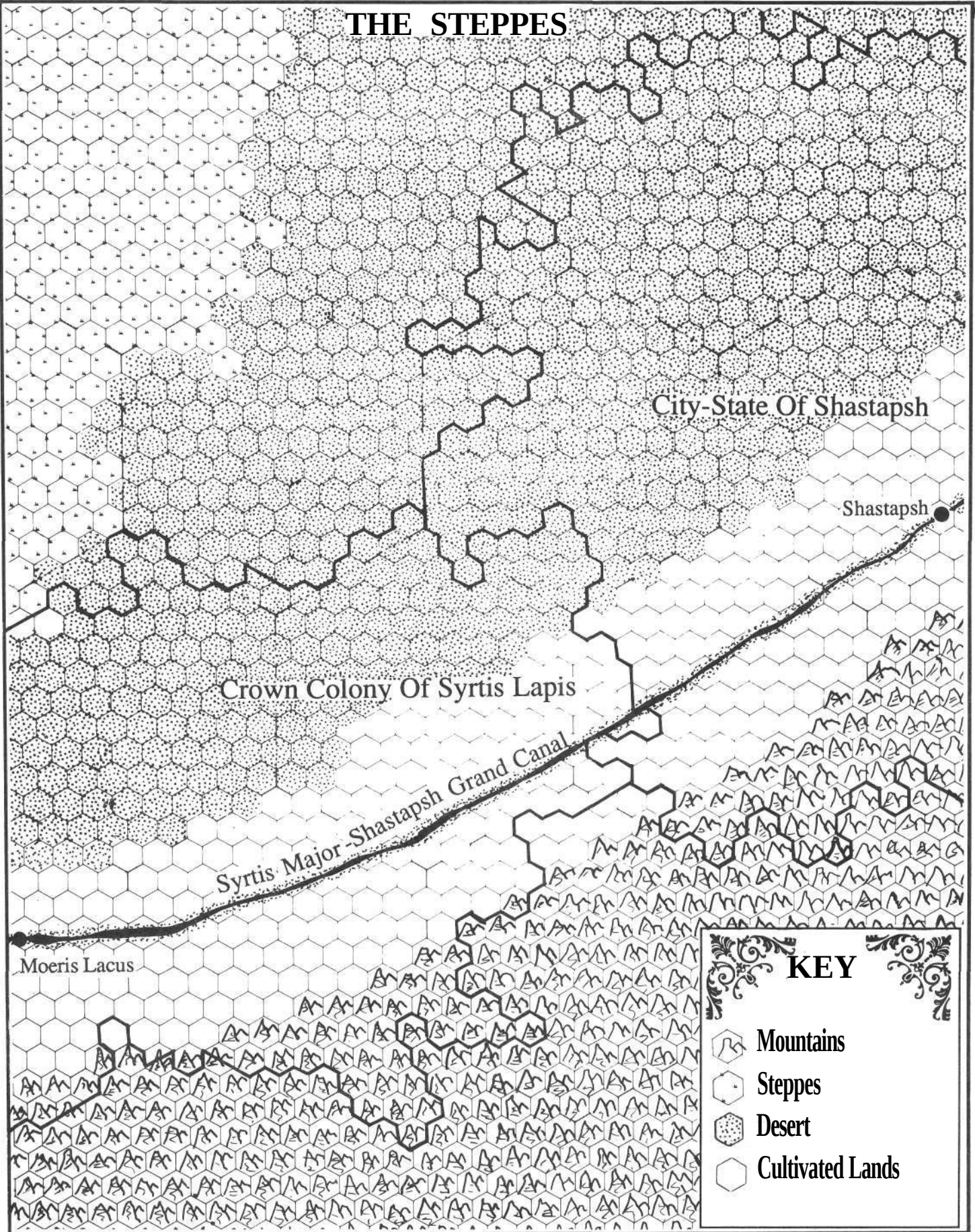
miles from the city. The individual tribes of nomads occupy broad territories (which will be outlined later in this book), but they know nothing of permanent boundaries. Thus, the steppes are essentially unorganized territory. The princes of Thoth and Alclyon make no claims of sovereignty beyond a couple of days' ride from the walls of their respective cities.

In 1887, Shastapsh became part of the British colony of Syrtis Lapis, and

a few hundred square miles of the steppes officially became British territory. At present, however, Shastapsh is a city in rebellion, and British presence in the steppes is nonexistent outside the border area around Moeris Lacus.

The prince of Shastapsh supports the Oenotrians in their present war against the British, but the nomadic tribes have remained largely neutral (a few nomadic warriors serve Shastapsh against the British).

THE STEPPES



KEY

- Mountains
- Steppes
- Desert
- Cultivated Lands

Animals of the Steppes

IN ADDITION to those animals described in **Space: 1889**, numerous other forms of life inhabit the Martian steppes; some of these are described below. Notes on the quality and quantity of meat from each animal come from *Gibson's Camp Life in the Wilds of Mars*. (If the characters do not have the book at hand, this information should only be made available through personal experience—i.e., by catching, cooking, and eating the creatures.)

PREDATORS

THE STEPPE TIGER is only one of the predators on the Martian steppes.

Lurec: A small flying insect, the lurec lands on its intended victim to bite and devour a minute patch of exposed skin. The lurec bears a vague resemblance to the dragonfly, but has hairs on its underside which make a noticeable "swish" sound when in flight. Gashants and ruurnet breehr have hides thick enough to resist the pest, but in clouds of hundreds they can be a tremendous irritation to humans.

Rubbing the skin with coal oil or camphor (available in any medical bag) will repel them.

Notes on Eating: Not edible by civilized peoples. Certain primitive tribes may find them to be an acceptable form of food, in a pinch.



Teshuwaan: A warm-blooded, reptile-like creature, the teshuwaan will instinctively attack any prey roughly its own size or smaller. (This includes humans, Martians, roogies, and the ganz willloi, among others.) Unlike most reptilians, however, the teshuwaan need not hide from temperature extremes, and may be encountered by day or night. It reportedly has fair night vision, but can be blinded by sudden, drastic changes in illumination.

Notes on Eating: Yields about 15 pounds of meat; surprisingly tender; suitable as small filets or for stewing; flavor often compared with frog.



Zonor: This long-legged, quadruped hunter is found near ganz willloi

burrows, whose residents comprise much of its regular diet. The zonor's forefeet have dozens of unretractable claw-like barbs, useful for reaching into burrows and snagging its quarry. It is a territorial hunter, and wherever one is found, ganz willloi burrows cannot be far away.

Notes on Eating: Yields about five pounds of meat; fairly stringy and not very appetizing, but it will sustain life.

SCAVENGERS

WHEN HARDSHIP or misfortune befalls human, Martian, or animal in the steppes, scavengers make sure that nothing goes to waste.



Koljiss: A most distinctive animal, this fur-covered, scavenging biped looks roughly like a cross between an ape and a bear, but with a long, muscular tail which it uses primarily for balance. The koljiss lives mostly on bushes, berries, and similar vegetation, but will eat carrion or even small live game (e.g., a teshuwaan) if other food is scarce.

This is a solitary animal which only takes a single mate for life; many compassionate sportsmen have lowered their gunsights when one has come into view. The koljiss poses little danger to humans unless cornered or wounded. Despite powerful jaws, no koljiss bites have ever been recorded by hunters; their instinct is to fight with claw and tail.

Notes on Eating: Yields about 15 pounds of meat; the tail is the only edible portion, but it is considered a delicacy by Canal Martians.

Rowata: This flying scavenger eats only carrion and is easily frightened off by loud noises or any signs of movement. The rowata is a nocturnal creature, and prefers to eat at dusk and dawn, flying off with its dinner to the nest for an unhurried meal.

Notes on Eating: Yields about two

pounds of semiedible meat; very tough, almost rubbery, with a peculiarly sickening, foul taint. Most humans find the meat distasteful after thinking about the creature's diet for a few seconds.

PLANT-EATERS

PLANT-EATERS of the steppes can often survive on just the sparse grasses and brush which cover the ground.

Ganz Willoi: Americans call them

"prairie rats," and Englishmen call them "Little Willies," but they both speak of the ganz willoi, a rodent-like animal widely found in underground burrows on Mars. They are surprisingly docile and unafraid when approached but will render a nasty nip if roughly handled. During some flood seasons swarms of them will exit their burrows and rush pell-mell across the flat countryside in search of who-knows-what.

Anyone in their path at this time is advised to take cover in something substantial, or else climb the nearest tree or hill.

Notes on Eating: Yields about one pound of meat; unusually flavored, definitely an acquired taste for humans (though Martians love it).



Wocnid: This large, six-legged grazing animal, a frequent prey of the steppe tiger, subsists solely on steppe grass. The wocnid's only other enemies are the Hill Martians (and infrequent human adventurers), who hunt it occasionally for its hide and meat. Despite this, wild wocnid herds remain a common sight on the high steppes, and the wocnid is in no danger of extinction, unlike the American bison (which has been nearly wiped out).

Notes on Eating: Yields 600 to 800 pounds of excellent meat; steaks, chops, and sweetmeats are delicious, if slightly gamey in taste.

ANIMAL CHART: STEPPES OF MARS

Type	#App	Size	Move	Wnds	Save	Wt. (lbs.)	Weapons
Predators							
Steppe Tiger	1	1x2	L50 ¹	10	1	1500	Teeth (2, 4, 0, 2), Claws (3, 3, 1, 1)
Lurec	Swarm	—	F10	1	—	2	Sting (1, 4, 0, 1)
Teshuwaan	1	1x2	L20	2	—	100	Teeth (2, 3, 0, 2)
Zonor	1	1x1	L40	1	—	150	Claws (2, 2, 1, 1), Teeth (1, 3, 0, 1)
Scavengers							
Roogies	1Dx3	1x1	L40	1	-1	100	Teeth (2, 2, 0, 1)
Koljiss	1	2x2	L30	4	—	400	Claws (2, 3, 1, 2), Tail (1, 3, 2, 1)
Rowata	1Dx2	1x1	F50	1	—	25	Talon (2, 2, 1, 1)
Plant Eaters							
Gashant	1Dx10	1x2	L50 ²	6	—	1000	Teeth (1, 2, 0, 1), Tail (1, 2, 2, 1)
Ruumet Breehr	1Dx2	2x3	L20	20	1	5 tons	Crush (1, 1, 3, 5)
Eegaar	1Dx10	1x1	L60 ³	2	-1	200	Horns (1, 2, 2, 1)
Ganz Willoi	1Dx6 ⁴	—	L30	1	-2	10	Teeth (1, 1, 0, 1)
Wocnid	1Dx5	2x2	L30	12	0	2 tons	Crush (1, 1, 2, 2)

Notes: 1: The steppe tiger will only maintain this pace for two actions, after which it will become cautious and retreat or circle for a better chance to attack. It will attack from less than 50 yards so as to immediately close the distance to its prey. 2: Subtract one from the gashant's speed for every 20 pounds of weight carried. 3: The eegaar will tire after one complete game turn of running and slow to half its normal speed. 4: The ganz willoi may appear in numbers of 1Dx50 during the flood season.

Weapons: Characteristics are listed in the following order: number of hit dice, required hit number, reach, wound value.

Traversing the Steppes

FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS in **Space: 1889** for movement and encounters (the specifics will depend upon what mode of transport is used to cross the steppes). The encounter tables below were designed for use in travel on the Nepenthes-Thoth Steppe and are fine-tuned to that region. The referee should roll on the appropriate table and administer its effects twice per day (once for the morning, roughly speaking, and once for the afternoon). From one standpoint, the referee is rolling once for every hex the group enters (the hexes are 10 miles across, and 20 miles a day is a good average rate of movement). However, the referee should roll for an encounter twice per day whether the group moves or not.

Of course, the effects of certain encounters should not take place if the group remains stationary, and the referee should use common sense. In some instances, a mandated encounter is substituted for a random encounter roll. Mandated encounters should be specified by the referee or dictated by the individual adventure (such as the one given later in this module). All other encounter rolls (lost, weather, etc.) apply normally.

Finally, many encounters are substantially different from area to area, and are thus categorized as follows:

- By specific government (e.g., ter-

ritory bordering the steppe-highlands near Moeris Lacus, crown colony of Syrtis Lapis; within the city-state of Shastapsh; or in neutral territory not included elsewhere).

- And by general terrain type (desert, steppe, or cultivated lands). For example, Plant-Eaters (Cultivated) will differ from Plant-Eaters (Desert), and so on. With many encounters bearing similar names, be careful to implement the appropriate encounter based on the ruling government and/or type of terrain.

ENCOUNTER DESCRIPTIONS

FOR STATISTICS OF animals and for animal descriptions, see pages 8-9.

Bandits: A band of 1Dx4+1 bandits preparing an ambush for a caravan. They will immediately attack the characters and attempt to kill or capture them to prevent them from warning any nearby caravans or patrols. A band of such criminals may consist of nomads, deserters from any of several area armies, or human renegades.

Caravan: A group of merchants traversing the desert, either going to or coming from the cities of Thoth, Mylarkt, and points north. They will be swinging wide of the city of Shastapsh to avoid that city's military patrols. This caravan will be as described in the Mars Encounter Charts

of the **Space: 1889** game book.

Ganz Willoi: A pack is found near its burrows, its members eating grass and lazily sunning themselves.

Nomad (Lone): A nomad brave either on his manhood quest or lost will attempt to "count coup" on a member of the party. Once he has done so, he will show no other sign of hostility. He is very curious about

ENCOUNTERS

Crown Colony of Syrtis Lapis

Terrain	Cultivated	Steppe
Die Roll	Encounter	Type
1	Scavengers	Ganz Willoi
2	Bandits	Scavengers
3	Plant-Eaters	Plant-Eaters
4	Patrol	Bandits
5	Plant-Eaters	Predators
6	Predators	Steppe Tiger

Neutral

Terrain	Steppe	Desert
Die Roll	Encounter	Type
1	Predators	Scavengers
2	Scavengers	Predators
3	Plant-Eaters	Plant-Eaters
4	People*	Scavengers
5	Steppe Tiger	—
6	Ganz Willoi	—

*In the case of a People result, roll again: 1-3, lone nomad; 4, nomad party; 5, village; 6, caravan.

Shastapsh

Terrain	Steppe	Cultivated
Die Roll	Encounter	Type
1	Ganz Willoi	Patrol
2	Scavengers	Scavengers
3	Plant-Eaters	Plant-Eaters
4	Patrol	Patrol
5	Predators	Predators
6	Steppe Tiger	—

the characters (he has never seen a human before), but he is not willing to bring them back to his tribe out of natural caution. The specific clan/tribe this brave belongs to is left up to the referee (or it may be specified by the adventure scenario).

3D6 warriors and as many braves with the village. They will react with suspicion toward the characters but will not attack unless provoked. If the characters offer any gifts or attempt to barter goods, the nomads may gradually become friends. The specific clan/tribe this group belongs to is left up to the referee (or it may be specified by the adventure scenario).

actually do so once he has left.

Plant-Eaters (Cultivated): On a roll of 1-2, this is a gashant herd; on a roll of 3-4, it is a ruumet breehr herd; on a roll of 5-6, it is a wocnid herd. Someone tending the herd may be nearby.

Plant-Eaters (Desert): On a roll of 1-3, this is a lone eegaar; on a roll of 4-6, it is a lone gashant.

Plant-Eaters (Steppe): On a roll of 1-2, it is a gashant herd; on a roll of 3-4, it is an eegaar herd; on a roll of 5-6, it is a wocnid herd. There may be a lone nomad hunter nearby who is stalking the herd.

Predators (Cultivated): On a roll of 1-2, this is a teshuwaan; on a roll of 3-5, it is a lurec flight; on a roll of 6, it is a steppe tiger (roll for its condition under the steppe tiger entry).

Predators (Desert): On a roll of 1-3, this is a teshuwaan; on a roll of 4-5, it is a lurec flight; on a roll of 6, it is a steppe tiger (roll for its condition under the steppe tiger entry).

Predators (Steppe): On a roll of 1-2, this is a lurec flight; on a roll of 3-4, it is a teshuwaan; on a roll of 5-6, it is a zonor.

Scavengers (Cultivated): On a roll of 1-2, this is a roogie pack; on a roll of 3-5, it is a rowata flight; on a roll of 6, it is a koljiss.

Scavengers (Desert): On a roll of 1-3, this is a roogie pack; on a roll of 4-5, it is a rowata flight; on a roll of 6, it is a koljiss.

Scavengers (Steppe): On a roll of 1-2, this is a roogie pack; on a roll of 3-4, it is a rowata flight; on a roll of 5-6, it is a koljiss.

Steppe Tiger: On a roll of 1-2, it is well fed; on a roll of 3-5, the tiger is hungry; on a roll of 6, it is injured or wounded.



Patrol (Shastapsh): 1Dx3+2 Canal Martians (from the city-state of Shastapsh) riding gashants. They will be very unfriendly under the best of circumstances.

Patrol (Crown Colony): A British patrol of Canal Martian auxiliaries under the command of a British officer. The officer will do his best to persuade the group to turn back but has no way of ensuring that the group will

STOCK NPCs

NPC Type	Experience	Marksman	Att.	Arms
Bandit (Canal Martian)	Trn/Exp	2	Phys	Bow, saber
Bandit (Nomad)	Trn/Exp	1	Phys	Spear or axe, bow
Bandit (Human)	Trn/Exp	2	Phys	Musket or rifle
Nomad Brave	Gm/Trn	1	Phys	Club or spear
Nomad Warrior	Exp/Vet	3	Phys	Spear or axe, bow
Nomad Chief/Elder	Vet	2	Phys	Musket
Caravan Guard	Trn/Exp	4	Phys	Rifle, bayonet
Merchant	Gm	1	Ment	Knife
Canal Martian Soldier	Trn/Exp	3	Phys	Rifle, bayonet
Canal Martian Officer/NCO	Trn/Exp	3	Phys	Saber
Human Soldier/NCO	Trn/Exp	4	Phys	Rifle, bayonet
Human Officer	Trn/Exp	4	Ment	Pistol, saber

Riders of the Nepenthes-Thoth

PERHAPS AS MANY as a half dozen separate and distinct nomadic tribes collectively make up the riders of the Nepenthes-Thoth. Customs, language, diet, and daily routine, among other things, may vary slightly between tribes located in different parts of the region. The information provided here is fundamentally correct about many such nomadic tribes, but it specifically describes the tribe the adventuring party has encountered—namely, the Southern Shistomik tribe, as the English have termed it. The Nepenthes name for this tribe, *Haanebencaanish*, roughly translates as "people descended from Nebencaan," a legendary warrior who has achieved demigod status among the nomad tribes. Other tribes have nicknamed them *Haanepencanis* ("grass-burners"), a pun on their genuine name.

COMPOSITION OF THE TRIBE

THE SOUTHERN SHISTOMIK tribe contains perhaps a dozen clans. Each clan has 600 to 800 persons in it, with approximately 150 fighters (warriors and braves combined). Most clans have about a dozen elders. A common mix is three to six chiefs, one or two free-lances, and a healer (rarely two), with the remainder being senior warriors; but this will vary.

Each clan is made up of families,

usually with six to eight adult members (and a number of children), all having some traditional relationship to each other—not necessarily a blood relationship. They may claim descent from some mythic ancestor, for example, or trace their family history back to a battle in which it is said their forebears fought several hundred or 1000 years ago. The head of each family (often the oldest woman) has strict control over who may or may not join her family, and the elders have no say in how that family is run unless its actions or inactions endanger the entire clan.

ROLES IN SOCIETY

MALES AND FEMALES play decidedly different roles in nomadic Martian society. At birth, every nomad is considered to be equal regardless of parentage, and individuals always may aspire to higher stature by performing bravely, skillfully, or enduringly. This is a survival-oriented society, however, with several distinct levels to the Martians' own caste system. Most of these involve changes in a warrior's importance and his social standing within the tribe. It is true that braves, warriors, free-lances, healers, and chiefs are usually male, but females occasionally achieve such positions.

The role of women is a curious one.

In some respects this society is backward and unquestionably primitive, but in others, it is more permissive than the cultures of England and the United States. While it is true that women perform some of the mundane tasks required by everyday living, women also possess limited suffrage and can vote on events that involve how the nomad camp is operated.

Perhaps it can best be expressed by this saying: "The man rules the hunt, and the woman rules the home." When the nomadic clan is on the move, for example, the men are in charge: hunting, fighting, guarding the main body, meeting with other tribes, conducting limited trade, making every major decision. However, when the clan settles down for more than a day and makes camp, the women make many organizational and administrative decisions: the physical arrangement of the camp, the hours meals are to be served, who will perform the noncombatant tasks, and how they are to be performed. In addition, they mediate certain rites and customs that do not involve warfare. By the nomads' standards, complete equality of the sexes exists.

Braves: Incompletely trained, unmarried, adolescent warriors-to-be, braves almost always stay with the clan at least until they have received enough training to be accepted as full-

fledged warriors. While in camp, braves perform many of the menial tasks under the supervision of the women. While travelling, some braves will act as sentries or assist in food-gathering or raiding parties. Some also tend to the needs of the warriors and their mounts, much as squires served the needs of their medieval knights. Braves may speak in general councils, but not vote.

Warriors: The mainstay of the clan, warriors are the tribesmen who support the clan and organize the hunts, make up the bulk of its fighting force, train the braves, and supervise the care of the clan's gashants. Warriors may speak in general or elders' councils, but most may only vote in general councils.

Free-Lances: A free-lance is most often a warrior (or, rarely, a brave) who has left the clan on a self-imposed, all-or-nothing quest to perform heroic deeds and seek fame, and has then returned. The warrior swears a sacred vow that he shall return having accomplished the task he set out for himself or he shall not return at all. Many free-lances never do return, either because they are killed alone on the steppe or because they failed to attain their promised goal. Those who do come back to the clan often tell of their courageous adventures, and some go on to become chiefs. Free-lances may speak and vote in general and elders' councils. Free-lances may marry (after the successful completion of their quest).

Healers: These are the learned men of the clan. Most learn their skills through oral tradition and direct observation of other healers in their clan. A few have lived outside the clan so that they could learn of the out-

side world and the skills it has to offer. These men may simply return to the clan at any time (unlike free-lances) with their increased knowledge benefiting all. The healers may speak in all councils, but they have no vote in any. According to custom, their role is to advise the chiefs, and through the chiefs' vote their own is indirectly cast. Healers are also called shamans in some tribes.

Chiefs: These are the older, more experienced, or most widely respected warriors and free-lances. The clans have no formal elections or induction ceremonies—a warrior or free-lance becomes a chief when he (or rarely, she) has performed many heroic deeds and is accepted as one by the other chiefs and elders. A clan will usually (but not always) have a principal chief who presides over councils, speaking last and voting first (even a chief only has one vote). This is because, according to legend, the last words heard are those most remembered. A principal chief is simply one who all other chiefs respect and honor.

Lord of the Steppes: A partially symbolic title given to the most widely respected chief from any of the tribe's clans. However, a steppelord does have the authority to speak for the entire tribe when conducting any talks with another tribe. A steppelord cannot lead a tribe to war, nor can he keep any warrior or group of warriors from going to war except by force of personality. Steppelords are sometimes called "kings," although it is not an inherited position, nor does a steppelord have any formal power.

Elders: A collective term for chiefs and senior warriors. Elders are usually male. To become an elder, a

person must be respected—someone whose advice people seek.

Children: Nomad children are treated much like children anywhere. They are required to obey their elders, perform light tasks, and learn the ways of their people.

Outcasts: Anyone who brings dishonor to his family or clan can be declared outcast by the elders' council. Members of the clan are tied to one another through tradition and trust; if such trust is violated, the offender must be cast out. If a married clanmember is to be cast out, the spouse is given the choice of remaining with the clan without penalty or becoming an outcast as well and accepting the same judgment. Outcasts are driven from the camp and can be killed if they try to return.

Captives: Occasionally, prisoners will be taken in battle from other tribes or from the Canal Martians (a High Martian will be found as a captive among the nomads very rarely). Captives are worked hard and occasionally subjected to ridicule, but they are seldom physically abused (at least no more than clanmembers abuse each other—it is a rough society, after all). Captives have no rights, and most people pretend not to notice them unless they need to.



FOUNDATION OF SOCIETY

SOME EUROPEANS have said that the British Empire only exists because of its royalty; without Queen Victoria (and her predecessors), England would be nothing but a "mere island." In this sense, then, the symbolic importance of royalty could be described as the foundation of English society.

In comparison, the crucial importance of the gashant is the nomadic equivalent. The nomads' entire lives and society, and much of their culture, revolve around their riding mounts. Tending to the animals (feeding, resting, and grooming) is the most vitally emphasized daily routine in nomadic society, far outranking meals and rest for the warriors themselves or their fellow clansmen. The primary goal of the nomads is to ride, hunt, eat, and sleep so that they may ride again; and to do this, they must have their gashants. This cycle is perpetuated because the Nepenthes-Thoth nomads are hunters, not farmers. For the nomads to survive, they must continue to travel.

TERRITORIES

EACH NOMADIC TRIBE "controls" one general area of the Nepenthes-Thoth Steppe in the sense that it follows herds of game across it. Most of the tribe's clans will be found within the territory its area encompasses, but the borders between tribes are very fuzzy. Tribal territory has no posted borders and is not rigidly defined, leaving room for the possibility of border skirmishes, quick tribal raids, peaceful negotiations and trade, or any other way one tribe might wish to interpret the actions of another.

When a clan of one tribe believes a clan of another tribe may be travelling too far into its land, it has the choice of calling for an elders' council of both clans to discuss the issue, warning the "invading" clan away, or opening warfare. The option actually selected will often depend upon the temperament of the elders involved from both sides. Each territory is large enough to support the tribe that lives

move, the clan will travel for up to two weeks straight. There is a continuous feeling of tension or anticipation in the air, and this is the period when the clan poses some active danger to unfriendly clans, caravans, or adventurers. Clans on the move may ignore others in the area, may attempt to conduct trade, or may even attack. Canal Martian caravans, in particular, are often targets for Hill Martian no-



on it, even if with little to spare. Clans of the same tribe are permitted to travel throughout the entire territory their parent tribe controls, crisscrossing the land at will. Clans will seldom congregate for very long when meeting by coincidence.

THE ROUTINE OF NOMADIC LIFE

NOMADIC CLANS follow the herds of game upon which their existence depends, and thus are either encamped or on the move. When on the

move, the clans ride long hours, as scouting and hunting parties search far and wide for "trespassers" or game. A warrior never leaves his gashant unattended for more than a few minutes, literally bedding down near his mount. The elders are in complete and undisputed control of the clan during this time.

When a clan makes camp, however, its entire routine changes. Hide tents are erected, and families are permitted the brief luxury of partial relaxation. The clan will continue to

hunt, but only in the immediate vicinity and sometimes then on foot. The gashants are permitted to graze freely under the watchful eye of braves and warriors (so none wander off or fall victim to predators). Warriors of an encamped clan will never take offensive action against outsiders or another clan on the move because it is an accepted nomadic custom that "a clan at rest is a clan twice blessed"—

hausts the readily hunted animal life in an area. Nomads also believe any prolonged rest may make their gashants lazy, and thus weak and unfit to ride.

Perhaps the only exception to this pattern of activity is the "grand gathering." This occurs each year, when every clan of a given tribe meets in one location for up to six weeks. At these tribal gatherings, the clansmen

sow seeds of some wild herbs that they gathered at the last grand gathering, distributing them on the spot, then harvest some seeds from this area and transport those seeds with them to be sown on the ground at the next grand gathering (usually held in the same spot) to help the grazing recover in the year or so between gatherings.

GOVERNMENT

DISPUTES BETWEEN parties are handled as simply as possible. When a minor problem occurs, one or both offended parties will find an elder for which both have respect. The elder will listen to each side, then try to come to a decision. If the elder cannot decide, or if one party finds the decision terribly unsatisfactory, the question may be appealed to a general council or solved by a ritual combat.

General councils take place during the evening, after the clan has been on the move for the day. Almost every adult member of the clan may speak at a general council, and these meetings decide such routine matters as exactly which direction the clan should travel in, disputes over personal property or questions of customs, and the assorted nonessential arguments that come up amid any extended family. Chiefs, free-lances, and warriors may speak or vote at general councils; healers and braves may also speak.

At elders' councils, only the most important or most respected members of the clan may decide issues which affect the fate of the entire clan or even the tribe as a whole. Chiefs, healers, free-lances, and warriors may speak; only chiefs, free-lances, and elder warriors may also vote.



once for finding a place worthy of its presence, and once for having hunted so well that it may cease to hunt for a short while. Guards are seldom posted because all clans respect the sanctity of each others' camps. Hunters and braves watching the herds serve well enough as alert and courageous sentries.

The clan generally camps for no more than three or four weeks in one location before moving on. This is partly because gashants eat up all the steppe grass, and the clan soon ex-

address any problems their clans may have, exchange tales of heroism, engage in quasimagical or religious ceremonies, court women from other clans and marry, conduct ritual combats, and generally have a pretty good time. The grand gathering is usually held at some convenient location where there is enough grazing and game to support everyone for the duration. At this event, the women and children also engage in the only "organized" agriculture the nomads perform during the entire year: They

RITUALS

THERE ARE three occasions for which steppe nomads have relatively elaborate ceremonies or celebrations. They mark ascension (when a brave becomes a warrior), marriage, and burial. The first two ceremonies involve songs, storytelling by warriors, invocation of blessings from good spirits, sacrifices to propitiate bad spirits, and auguries by elders.

Ascension is further marked by ritual combats, as described on page 17, although in this case no weapons are allowed, and the fight is stopped when one warrior throws the other out of a circle inscribed in the dust.

Marriage, to nomadic Hill Martians, is polygamous. In theory, any male may have as many wives as he can feed and support, and any female can have as many husbands as she can care for. In practice, more than one spouse is extremely rare. The marriage lasts as long as the wife wants, and if she chooses to end her marriage, she may do so at any time. This does not affect in any way the marital status of the other wives, if any. Members of the same clan may not marry each other. The central part of a marriage ceremony is a ritual escalating gift exchange, in which the bride is one of the last gifts.

Burial ceremonies involve inter-

ring the deceased in a burial mound of rocks and soil, along with his weapons and his favorite mount (which is ritually killed as part of the ceremony). A few chants to ensure the deceased's ghost does not haunt the clan end the ceremony.

CONCEPTIONS OF WAR

NOMADS DO NOT engage in war as modern Europeans understand it. They have no effective chain of command and no organized combat tactics (except for those passed down from warrior to warrior over the generations). There is virtually no emphasis on training troops with specialized skills. Nomads fight well, and they fight enthusiastically, but they also fight very chaotically.

Any clanmember can, at any time, go to war. It is purely an individual decision and obligates no other member of the clan to follow it. The warrior simply announces the fact to the clan in general and leaves after allowing a decent interval for any followers to collect. If a chief decides to fight, those who respect him may choose to follow but are under no duress. By the same token, if an entire clan chooses to fight and a single warrior decides not to go, he suffers no embarrassment or derision; no accusations of cowardice are laid

against him. The only cowardice is in deserting fellow warriors in battle.

Close combat is preferred over missile fire. Little honor is gained in killing an enemy as one would kill an eegaar. Also, it is more honorable to wound than it is to kill. A wound in the right place (such as the head or chest) indicates that you could have killed, but checked the force of your blow as a gift to your enemy, obligating him to you, and causing him to lose face. Greater honor, of course, comes in striking an enemy but receiving no blow in return (usually achieved by knocking the victim senseless). In these practices, the nomads of the steppes share some customs with the plains Indians of North America.

Nomad intertribal or interclan skirmishes are short and leave no lasting animosity. The winners collect some booty, take control of a little more territory, or defend themselves against someone who would do these things to them. The losers lick their wounds, accept their defeat graciously, and then go about making plans to get even—next time. Hill Martians, and nomads even more so than most, respect courage and determination in combat. A brave warrior will gain more esteem in defeat than a cowardly one will in victory.



Warfare against inferior peoples, such as humans and Canal Martians, is different. In such warfare, missile weapons are used, and the restrictions against killing are often ignored, but courage and fighting skill in an enemy are still respected.

RITUAL COMBAT

RITUAL COMBAT is not war, but is fought between two warriors as a means of settling interpersonal or interfamily disputes, or as a demonstration of prowess at grand gatherings. Young braves will often challenge strangers as a means of testing their mettle, and captives will sometimes be challenged as a test of their courage and fighting ability. It is not unknown for captives to become accepted as clanmembers by defeating a local warrior.

Ritual combat is conducted according to the basic **Space: 1889** melee combat rules, but with the following modifications: Only melee weapons may be used, both combatants must use the same melee weapon, and the fight ends when one of the combatants receives a wound (if an NPC) or is rendered unconscious (if a PC). Players may pull their punches if they wish. The effect of this is to reduce the weapon's wound value to 1, regardless of its actual number.

WEAPONS

THE NOMADS are able to make simple weapons such as bows themselves, but they rely on trade or booty for other items. Hand-to-hand weapons such as spears, pikes, axes, clubs, and swords are preferred; missile weapons are used for hunting or for interracial warfare.

Firearms are occasionally found amongst the nomads, and human firearms are prized above Canal Martian weapons. Breechloaders are very scarce in Martian hands, and it is a fortunate chief or elder who owns one. Lever-action or bolt-action rifles are more legends than reality—a steppelord *might own* one and a handful of cartridges for it. Artillery is disdained (and the nomads have none anyway).

DIET

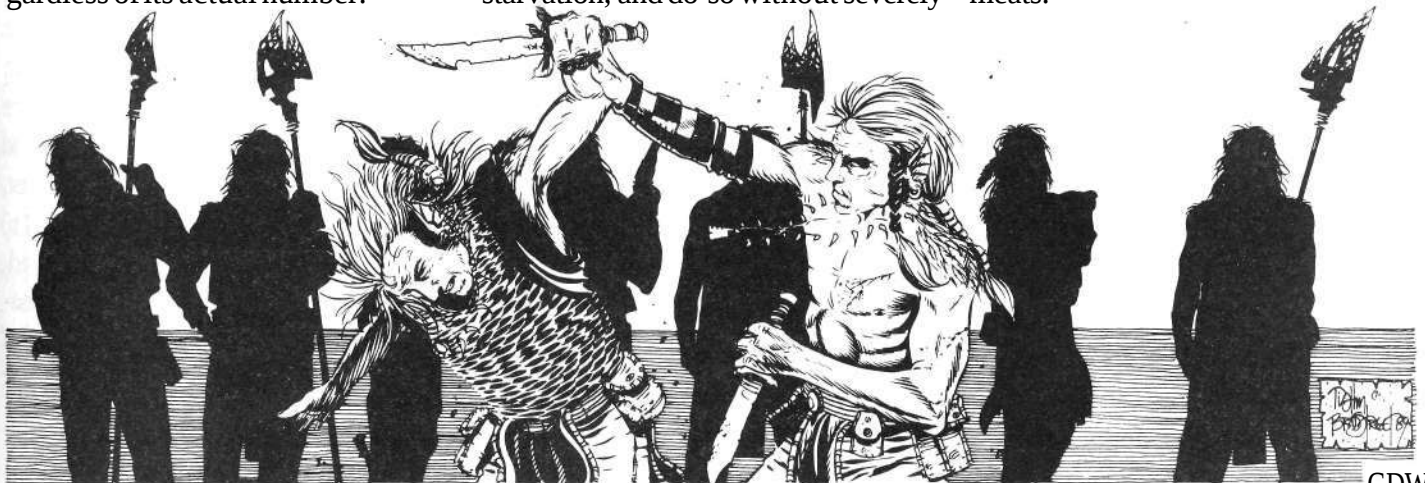
THE NOMADIC DIET heavily emphasizes game meats, such as those which can be found on the steppe. Certain meats (including wocnid, ganz willoi, and teshuwaan) are preferred over others, but a hungry nomad's appetite can only be exceeded by his imagination in determining what might be considered acceptable fare. A nomad, if sufficiently in need, will even tap the blood vessel of his own gashant and drink from it to avoid starvation, and do so without severely

or adversely affecting the animal.

Game meat is almost always cooked (although too rare by most English tastes), and the nomads are very skillful at using fire to prepare and preserve their assorted foods. Women dry extra meat and then pickle it in spices for eating while on the move.

Fruits and berries are necessarily rare on the steppe, although certain berry-producing shrubs can be found in small concentrations and make a delightful addition to the regular diet. When steppe grass is plentiful and more is available than is needed for grazing, cooks in camp may produce small quantities of a baked, bread-like loaf from the hand-harvested grasses. The starchy product has a strong alfalfa-like flavor, but the nomads seem to enjoy it with their meat. On occasion, the nomads also make a weak, fermented "beer" from wild grain; it is usually reserved for ceremonies at grand gatherings.

Many herbs grow wild in the steppe, and these are sought after whenever the clan camps. Two of them are remarkably similar in flavor to ginger root and hot wild mustard, which, when combined, create a form of potent "horseradish"; the nomads enjoy it spread liberally on their meats.



DRESS

THE ILLUSTRATION on page 179 of **Space: 1889** depicts a female who is the head of her family, and a male warrior of moderately high status. However, the attire they are shown wearing is more often worn by nomads in the northerly regions of the Nepenthes-Thoth Steppe. Such elaborate costumes are worn in the south only for ceremonial occasions and councils; far less clothing is worn on an everyday basis.

Many nomads wear a ceremonial bracelet or necklace, which may also signify their social standing. The number of animals' teeth (regardless of animal type) is an important indicator of the male's rank in his clan and is strictly limited by custom. For example, a necklace with a single tooth would belong to a brave; a necklace with two teeth would belong to a warrior, and three and four teeth symbolize a free-lance and a chief, respectively. Many in the tribe have no such necklace, regardless of their standing, of course. Other items of clothing may have ceremonial sig-

nificance, but this varies from clan to clan and from tribe to tribe. An expert in such matters, however, can instantly recognize the tribe and clan of an individual from such details.

HISTORY, MYSTERY, AND HONESTY

THE RIDERS of the Nepenthes-Thoth maintain no written history; all traditions, teaching fables, lessons, and stories of battle are oral, with the most worthy preserved by passing them down from generation to generation (generally by healers). A warrior with artistic talent may decorate his tent, saddle, and weapons with paintings or carvings showing episodes from his career. Items on a necklace may serve as mnemonic devices during a storytelling session, but otherwise there is no written history.

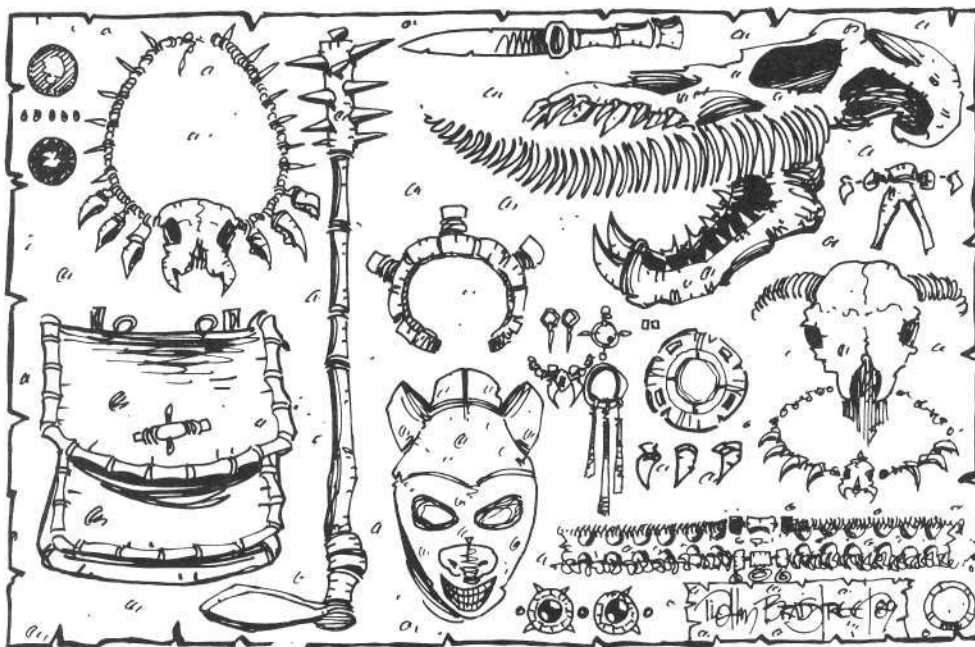
The nomads are also a fundamentally honest people. They have little concept of lying in everyday life and thus have little understanding of, or appreciation for, any form of fiction or deception. It is not unknown for a tale to grow in the telling, and slight

modifications inherent in oral histories often distort stories over the generations. For this reason, the nomads' explanation for their own existence is obscured in myriad myths—part religion, part philosophy, part mysticism—and these are accepted by the nomads themselves as completely and totally true.

CARAVANS

CARAVANS PASSING through the steppes are viewed as a natural resource, to be tapped as an individual or clan finds necessary. The nomads intend no malice toward the caravans—they just feel that they deserve a few gifts in return for allowing the strangers to cross their hunting grounds. Experienced caravan guides, upon entering a tribe's territory, will often leave a few trinkets in a position where they can be easily picked up. Sometimes a formal meeting with a clan's elders is necessary, in which case the escalating gift exchange described in **Space: 1889** comes into effect.

On occasion, a caravan will be subject to a full-fledged attack by a large number of warriors. These attacks are usually in response to some crime the caravan has committed: violating one of the "gods' tombs" or provoking a blood feud (by killing a clanmember without cause). Such attacks are pressed home with fanatical furor. More commonly, caravan attacks are the result of a warrior and a small band of followers seeking honor and loot. Such raids (a better word than attacks) are usually desultory and short-lived. The raiders will break off after something of value has been taken and a few blows have been exchanged for the sake of honor.



THE LANGUAGE OF THE DESERT NOMADS

Professor R. L. Forbes-Hamilton, The British Museum

THERE ARE four principal families of Hill Martian languages: Tempes, Alaanawaak, Moabite, and Rugoraant. The first two of these can be quickly disposed of, as each consists of but a single language of the same name as the linguistic family. Tempes is spoken in the Tempe region, from the area around Medtis Palus and Ruumitia east to the western escarpment of the Mare Acidalium. Alaanawaak is the language of the aboriginal hunters of the southern polar cap, as well as the nomads of the broad, arid region lying between Electris and the Thaumasian Mountains.

The Moabite family of languages is more widely spoken and consists of three similar but distinct languages: Merovangian, Aerian, and Edenti. The first of these is the language of the fascinating Wagon Masters of Meroe, whose bands range as far west as Cydonia. Aerian is the language of the violent and insular tribesmen of the Aerian Hills, whose mastery of guerrilla warfare and ambush tactics has frustrated the efforts of both the Oenotrian and British empires to subdue them. Edenti is spoken by the predatory bands of desert wanderers who sparsely inhabit the desolate badlands that stretch from the western slopes of the Aerian Hills to the eastern foothills of the Chryse Mountains.

Most widespread of all the families of Hill Martian languages, and richest from a cultural point of view, is Rugoraant. It is spoken by the tall, handsome inhabitants of the north country from the Nepenthes-Thoth Steppe clear across to Tempe. Three distinct languages make up the family: Nepenthes, Amaash, and Aethani. The first is the language of the steppe nomads who inhabit the area between the Umbran-Syrthan Grand Canal in the west and the Polodaar-Syrian Grand Canal in the south and east. Amaash is spoken by the warlike tribes inhabiting the steppes and deserts of Amazonia, Mesogaea, Memnonia, and Arcadia, excepting only a few scattered bands in Amazonia, which speak a pidgin of that old Arcadian tongue, Euxine. However, within the vast, sandy desert which stretches from Aetheria east to the foothills of the majestic Amazonian Mountains, the lingua franca among the desert nomads is Aethani.

As these desert nomads are closely related, racially and culturally, to their steppe nomad brothers to the west, it is not surprising that Aethani and Nepenthes are quite similar in grammatical structure, and they share a considerable number of words. For example, the Aethani word "GOF-lont" is clearly descended from the same root as is the Nepenthes "GOS-hont" (which has even penetrated the totally unrelated Canal Martian Parhooni language as "ga-SHAANT"). While knowledge of Nepenthes is hardly sufficient to communicate effectively on a social level in Aethani, any speaker the Nepenthes tongue should be able to make himself understood on a simple, basic level as far east as the slopes of Amazonia.



NOMAD ATTITUDES TOWARD HUMANS

THE ATTITUDES OF the steppe nomads toward humans are very much tied up with their views of strangers generally. Most nomads do not draw a distinction between Canal Martians and humans; both are seen as non-nomads. As nonnomads, both are inferior, weak, and corrupt compared to the people of the steppes. Such feelings toward nonnomads in general, however, are often outweighed by personal curiosity and individual circumstances. Also, the difference between tribes is often seen as greater than the difference between a particular stranger and a particular nomad.

Strangers from other clans of the same tribe or from friendly tribes are treated as guests. This custom arose out of the necessity of welcoming strangers as potential additions to the clan. Because of the relatively small size of the individual clans, and the rather ill-defined standards of what constitutes a family, a clanmember is required to seek a mate from other clans or tribes. This type of addition to the clan occurs normally at the annual grand gathering, but a stranger occasionally is taken into the clan in a ceremony almost identical to the ascension ceremony described on page 16. By this means, individuals from other tribes are "adopted." On occasion, Canal Martians have proven themselves worthy of adoption, and likewise (albeit more rarely) High Martians have done the same. One or two humans have been adopted by nomad clans, but this is a truly rare event.

The specific question of nomad/human relations is also complicated. Because the nomads are naturally

curious and because so many interesting, almost unbelievable tales are told of the red men (one legend says they come from a light in the sky!), it is almost impossible to completely predict how a given nomad will treat a given human. Certain broad generalizations are possible.

First of all, a great deal depends upon demeanor. Strangers who appear strong and confident will be treated differently than the ill at ease and weak. A straightforward, direct approach will be met in kind. Dishonesty or treachery will be met with disdain (or violence). Showing fear or attempting to flee is a bad sign. Violating some taboo (these vary greatly from tribe to tribe and from clan to clan) is virtually guaranteed to result in a hostile reception.

The geographical location of the encounter also makes a difference. Tribes isolated from extensive contact with outsiders (such as the Eastern Nilosyrrians, or the Isidians of the west) will be more variable in their behaviors, depending upon what legends they have heard and how they were treated by the last batch of strangers they encountered. Tribes with closer contact with the canal cities and with humans (the Nepenthans north of Shastapsh, or the Southern Shistomiks) are more likely to be able to distinguish between humans and Canal Martians, and may even draw distinctions between members of different city-states (the Nepenthans are more friendly toward Shastapsh than the other nomad tribes, which maintain a slight distrust of city-dwellers).

Numbers are also an important factor. Large groups (outnumbering the nomads contacted), especially

military ones, will be trailed and watched. Individuals and small groups are likely to be contacted immediately.

Finally, the individual feelings of the particular nomads who make contact are most important. An individual nomad may be more inclined to friendship (or at least nonhostility) than others of the same clan or tribe.

TABOOS

VIOLATING A TABOO offends the gods, and the nomad religion requires that the offender make amends. Pleading ignorance of the taboo will not suffice. The following are a few examples of general taboos (those common to all tribes) and the proper action that must be taken to propitiate the offended deity or deities. Until the gods are satisfied, an offender is considered an outcast.

Desecrating a God's Tomb: The tombs of the prenomadic culture that occupied the steppes thousands of years ago are viewed as the tombs of the gods by the nomads of all tribes. Entering such a tomb, and especially removing anything from one, shows a lack of respect for the gods and offends them deeply. The gods are propitiated by returning anything that was stolen and by making the gods a present of equal value. If it is not possible to return to the tomb, the items must be surrendered to the clan elders, and the offenders must undergo a ritual combat in order to purify themselves.

Marrying Within a Clan: Mates must be chosen from outside the clan. If the characters in describing the culture of Earth liken countries to clans, and the party contains a married couple, the pair will be deemed

to have violated this taboo. To propitiate the gods, the pair must divorce themselves (by clan ritual, which has no effect on human law, of course) and seek forgiveness by undergoing a purification rite at the hands of the clan elders.

Water Taboo: Water must not be wasted. Use of water for purposes other than drinking or food preparation (such as bathing or laundry) is an offense. The offenders must replace the water that has been wasted three times over, presenting it to the clan elders for the clan's general use.

Gift Exchange: The principles of the escalating gift exchange are explained in the **Space: 1889** book. Failure to properly complete the exchange once begun is an offense. To propitiate the gods, the offender must undergo a ritual combat with the other party in the exchange.

TREATMENT AND ACCEPTANCE

NONNOMAD STRANGERS may temporarily be treated as guests or slaves while their permanent status is debated by the clan elders. Slaves are enemy tribesmen or nonnomads who have been taken captive and put to work by the clan. They have no formal rights among the nomads, but may be elevated to higher status because of some heroic act. Clanmembers who have disgraced themselves but do not become outcasts often become slaves. Guests are welcome to come and go as they please and can count on food and shelter for as long as they need them (although long-term guests are expected to pull their weight in society by hunting to bring in food, etc.). If the characters have been befriended

by a nomad, they will be treated as guests until a decision on their permanent status can be made. Likewise, if they have been captured by a nomad and brought in as slaves, they will be temporarily treated as slaves. Characters who are not made slaves but who are not accepted as guests will be turned out and sent on their way (there is no stigma attached to being turned out; these characters have merely not been found worthy of guest status). Characters who have committed some offense (violated a taboo, etc.) will be challenged to a ritual combat by one of the clan warriors.

Permanent status is determined based on the statements of any clanmembers who have something to say about the strangers at a meeting of the clan elders (decisions affect only that clan, of course). Humans who know how to behave (that is, who violate no taboos, and act with courage and confidence), who may have some renown from previous contacts (in previous adventures), or who have been formally accepted into a tribe (or any of its constituent clans) will automatically rate guest status. Characters without renown or status who arrive in camp will be rated according to the clan's first impression. Characters who meet one or more nomads and are conducted into a camp will be rated according to the impression they give those nomads. Statements of outcasts and nonclanmembers have no beneficial effect on the outcome and may well be detrimental to the cause. Winning a ritual combat is cause for a reevaluation of status, as is performance of a heroic act in defense of the clan or a clanmember.

No formal rules are given to guide

the referee in administering a council meeting. As a rule of thumb, if the characters have more friendly witnesses than unfriendly ones, they will be accorded guest status; otherwise they will be made slaves or turned out.

ADOPTION

ACCEPTANCE AS a guest is not the same as being adopted into the clan. This is a rare event and recognizes that the characters have shown themselves to be the equal of a nomad in all respects. It will occur as the result of a particular notable action. One such action is described in the adventure section of this book. Characters will need to perform some equivalent act in order to rate adoption. The ceremony of adoption is simply a slight variation on the ascension ceremony where a juvenile is recognized as an adult member of the clan (as described on page 16).

RENOWN

RENOWN AMONG the steppe nomads is kept track of separately from renown among humans. Renown among the nomads is awarded separately for Heroic Acts, Combat, and Hunting Prowess. Heroic Acts are as defined in **Space: 1889**, except that the act must be done to benefit a nomad in some way. Combat can refer to winning a ritual combat, or it can refer to dealing with an enemy in a particularly competent fashion (remember, however, that the nomad ideal of combat differs slightly from the human one). Hunting Prowess is the act of killing a large, dangerous animal, preferably at close quarters and with a melee weapon (a nomad must witness the act—anyone can skin a dead steppe tiger).

Into the Steppes

THE REMAINDER OF **Steppelords of Mars** is an adventure set in the Nepenthes-Thoth Steppe. Most of the material contained within this adventure is for the referee's use. However, certain sections—such as maps, background information, newspaper accounts, and so on—should be made available to the players.

This adventure is set during the flow season on the surface of Mars in the eastern regions of the crown colony of Syrtis Lapis, the Nepenthes-Thoth Steppes, and the Canal Martian city-state of Shastapsh. All travel will be on land; characters must possess a minimum skill level of 1 in Riding for whatever beasts the expedition uses. There are no other specific skill requirements.

A TEMPTING OFFER

THE CHARACTERS have recently travelled east through the crown colony of Syrtis Lapis, from Syrtis Major to their current location in Moeris Lacus. At present, they are staying at the Red Lion, a moderately priced bed-and-breakfast on Shaftesbury Avenue in the British Quarter. They are somewhat low on funds and should be looking for employment or, possibly, a patron. They can find one (the Grimes family) in one of several ways.

First, while looking around Moeris

Lacus and seeing the sights (those which are free), the character with the highest Observation skill will be the first to notice several large placards (three feet by two feet) prominently posted on several buildings and at several street corners, mostly within the British Quarter and Trade Quay. The placards (written in large letters) are advertisements or, more accurately, offers of employment:

*Seeking Exciting Adventure?
Voyage Beyond Syrtis Lapis!
Excellent Opportunity for Explorers!
Fine Pay, Expenses Covered, &c.*

*Contact:
T. E. Grimes
c/o Explorer's Club
Glasshouse Street, Moeris Lacus*

The players know the Explorer's Club is a reputable organization (for its sort), and the offer is most likely genuine. Upon the players' arrival at the Explorer's Club, a manservant will open the door. He is Brookes, the batman to Major Reginald Robinson, Royal Engineers, KCIE (rtd.). Major Robinson acts as the local host-cum-sponsor for the club. Unfortunately, Major Robinson is not in at the moment, and neither is Mr. T. E. Grimes. However, Mr. Grimes is expected later today.

If anyone in the party is a dues-paying member of the club, then the entire group can wait in a drawing room. Otherwise, Brookes will take some convincing to let them stay, with each player rolling against Eloquence to accomplish the Difficult task (if one player succeeds, he succeeds for all).

If the group is not permitted to wait, Brookes will take a message and see that Messrs. Grimes and Robinson receive it; the group will be contacted in due time at the bed-and-breakfast where they are staying. If the group is allowed to wait, Thomas Grimes will arrive at the Club in less than two hours.

MOERIS LACUS

MOERIS LACUS is located on the Syrtis Major/Shastapsh Grand Canal, until recently serving as a convenient halfway point for canal traffic between the two cities. Lately, however, the rebellion in the city of Shastapsh has cut off traffic on the canal, and trade between the British colony and points east of the Shistomik Mountains now passes through Meepsoor, the gateway to the caravan routes through the Nepenthes-Thoth Steppe. Moeris Lacus is a treaty dependency of the British crown colony of Syrtis Lapis and is ruled by its native prince, but he has no control over the large military forces in the city, which are under British command. British residents, who jokingly call themselves "Far Easterners" (as Moeris Lacus is the easternmost city in the colony), perceive their town as a frontier outpost not unlike those in the American West.

The major points of interest in Moeris Lacus are shown and detailed below.

Trade Quay: This area serves as a combined portside facility for loading and unloading canal boats and for selling their wares directly to the public. Locally produced goods can also be found here, though the prices are slightly higher than those of Syrtis Major, and the selection not nearly as good.

Embassy Row: This is a single thoroughfare running parallel to the Trade Quay, along which are new, human-built buildings. A curious arrangement, the street is a dead end (accessible from only one direction), and all entrances of all buildings face onto it. At the entrance to the street is an 11-man honor guard composed of soldiers from each of the delegations residing here. This honor guard maintains its vigilance throughout the day and night, changing shifts at both dawn and dusk. Three nations maintain consular offices here: the United States of America, the Republic of France, and the Empire of Germany. There are presently four vacant buildings on the Row, providing room for expansion.

Colonial Compound: The local site of the Colonial Office, this is also where the deputy governor (who administers the treaty dependency on Her Majesty's behalf) makes residence.

The British Quarter: The quarter is a large, boisterous part of town, with a mixture of new and old buildings. Perhaps the most interesting features of this area are the signposts on the major streets, which are named after the streets intersecting Piccadilly Circus in central London: Regent, Lower Regent, Haymarket, Glasshouse, and Coventry streets, Shaftesbury Avenue, and Piccadilly proper. It is a popular tourist attraction, as visitors can return home to report they strolled down Piccadilly or Haymarket while vacationing on Mars.

The Explorer's Club: Though the Explorer's Club on Glasshouse Street is substantially smaller than its counterpart in Syrtis Major, it is a pleasant little building, tastefully refurbished by its newest tenants.

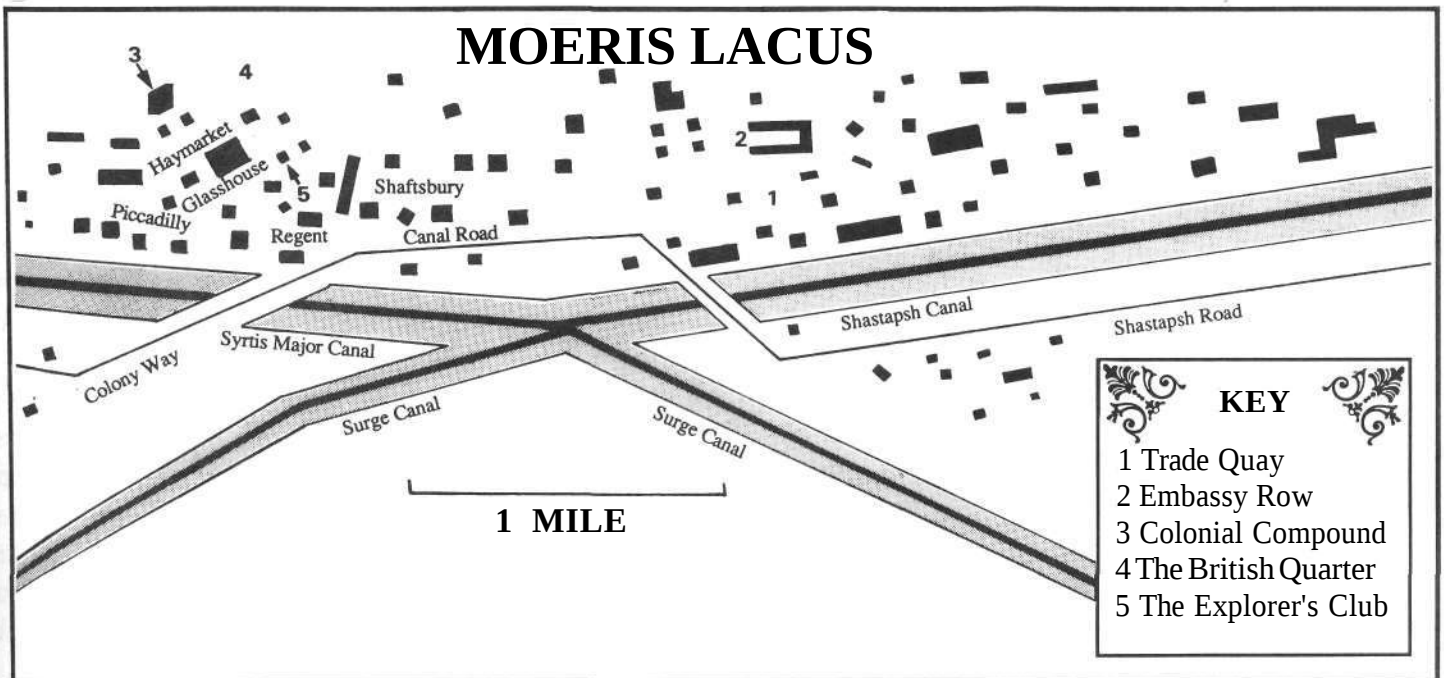
Surge Canals: Surge canals are small diversion canals that are some-

times used during the surge season to keep the grand canal from overflowing its banks. Water is channeled through the surge canals, where the runoff can be more easily controlled.

Local Conditions

THE WAR had little impact on Moeris Lacus until recently. There are no direct canal routes with the cities of the Oenotrian Empire, and the western Shistomik Mountains discourage aerial travel. The human and Martian populations here got along well, and crime was not a major problem. With the outbreak of rebellion in Shastapsh and the interruption in commerce through the city, Moeris Lacus has entered the economic doldrums. Unemployed barge crews roam the streets, making trouble for lone human pedestrians, and acts of vandalism against human properties have increased considerably. Nevertheless, the local British garrison is sufficient to maintain order in all but the depths of the Martian slums, and the streets of Moeris Lacus remain fairly safe for those who are prudent.

MOERIS LACUS



IN A BIT OF A FIX

"I AM SO PLEASED to see that I have gotten a response from my signs with the arrival of you fine (ladies and) gentlemen," Thomas Grimes begins after his arrival and brief introductions. Everyone in the party is comfortably seated in the Explorer's Club library. "You see, the three of us—that is, myself, my brother James, and his wife, Alexandra—have planned to venture into the Nepenthes-Thoth Steppe for a bit of game hunting.

"Unfortunately, word has just come in the last few days that the governor-general has discouraged travel for small groups—fear of marauding Martians like wild Indians, or some such rot—and others who were to join us withdrew at the last moment. A reporter of our acquaintance, Whittington Cartwright-Lloyd, is here in Moeris Lacus, but he did not care to go and is only one, regardless. So that has got us in a bit of a fix. We need a few more to round out our number. Besides, the more the merrier on a hunt. We would like your help and hope you come—it should be fine sport."

Thomas goes on to say, "We shall

not expect to be gone for more than a month or six weeks. That should be long enough to find a steppe tiger and bring it back for mounting. I have heard of a splendid taxidermist in Meepsoor, an old fellow from Manchester, so I understand."

If the characters are interested (as well they should be), Thomas will make his offer.

TERMS OF PAYMENT

TO BEGIN WITH, Thomas will provide every character with a gashant and riding gear after confirming that everyone can ride, plus paid dues for a one-year membership in the Explorer's Club (or alternately, a one-year membership extension for current members). The players may keep their mounts after the conclusion of the hunt, if they so choose. For actual cash payment, Thomas will enter into negotiations with a single character spokesperson (to be chosen among the players) and start off with an initial "bid" of £50 to hire the group. This bargaining process should be roleplayed as genuinely as possible.

Thomas' final offer will be £120,

to be divided equally between all the players. If the player negotiating is especially good or bad at role-playing the discussion, the referee may wish to alter payment a few pounds either way. Once the characters shake hands on the terms (no written contract is needed between gentlemen), Thomas will provide half the money in advance and the balance at the conclusion of the hunt. There should be no expenses for the group after leaving Moeris Lacus.

At the referee's option, Thomas Grimes may ask the characters to see to the hiring of a proper guide. This will be discussed later.

ULTERIOR MOTIVES

EVERYTHING THOMAS GRIMES has told the group is wholly honest and correct, so far as it goes. However, Thomas has a second, somewhat less frivolous objective in mind. He has determined (on his own, and without government backing) to explore the Nepenthes-Thoth Steppe on a three-fold assignment:

- To gather cultural, political, and military information about the Hill Martian steppelords and their tribes.
- To determine the military presence and offensive motives, if any, of Shastapsh toward the Nepenthes-Thoth region.
- To determine whether the steppelords intend to side with their fellow Martians against the British as part of the Oenotrian War.

As an employee of the competing Foreign Office, it is in Thomas' best interests to make the Colonial Office look inefficient, as the rivalry between the two branches over control of Mars continues. If Thomas is able to make any meaningful discoveries on this



trip, they may show a potential problem that the Colonial Office has overlooked. Thomas has told (and will tell) no one in the group of his hidden motives, though Cartwright-Lloyd may become suspicious in time. Even James does not know.

EQUIPAGE

IF CHARACTERS in a continuing campaign have any equipment or money with them, they may take the equipment along on the hunt or use the money to buy supplies, with the referee's consent. Otherwise, they will only have Thomas' advance with which to buy necessary gear. Subject

to the referee's approval, any equipment may be purchased on page 26 of this module, or on pages 52 through 59 of **Space: 1889** with the following price adjustments: scientific equipment, 25 percent higher; all reference materials (books), 100 percent higher; explosives, 50 percent higher; all firearms, 25 percent higher; all melee weapons, armor, and primitive missile weapons, 50 percent lower. Artillery is simply not available. Players may spend no more money than they have (credit is not possible). The referee should equip the Grimes family and Cartwright-Lloyd ahead of time.

Regarding food, the party is expected to live off the land for much of the time. Nevertheless, Thomas will gladly give every character as much tinned food as he wants to haul. (However, Thomas will not provide any additional gashants to be used as riderless pack animals, nor will he furnish supplies for any such character-purchased mount.)

Encumbrance may become important when preparing one's load. Gashants can carry 300 pounds over an extended period, minus the weight of saddle and bridle (10 pounds). So the combined weight of rider and gear should not exceed 290 pounds.

Thomas Elias Grimes Jr. (Green NPC)

THOMAS GRIMES had been a Foreign Office diplomat and subsequently an aide to a member of Parliament (House of Commons) until his employer lost in a recent election. Shortly thereafter, Thomas' wife drowned in a boating accident while vacationing, and he spent several months in mourning.

The elder son of Thomas Grimes Sr., a country squire from Sussex, young Grimes is now taking advantage of his freedom and few remaining responsibilities to explore the wilds of Mars. (With difficulty, Thomas persuaded his half-brother and wife to come along on this trip.)

A skilled mountain-climber, Thomas also fancies himself an outdoorsman, though he knows little of riding and less of firearms. One of his life's goals is to help "bag" a steppe tiger as a trophy for his mantle.



Motives: Wise, Adventure-some, Ambitious.

Appearance: Born from "hearty farm stock," Thomas looks more the part of a hard-drinking day laborer from London's East End than an educated gentleman, with his massive shoulders and forearms and Herculean stamina. Despite the best efforts of tailors, his trousers and jackets are always near to bursting, and he seldom wears a waistcoat. In addition to his hat, Thomas always wears one black item of clothing, in remembrance of his departed wife, Mary.

Attributes Skills

Str:	6	Fisticuffs 5, Throwing 3
Agl:	4	Stealth 3
End:	6	Wilderness Travel 6 (mountaineering)
Int:	6	Observation 6, Science 1 (biology)
Chr:	3	Eloquence 3, Theatrics 1, Bargaining 2, Linguistics 3 (French, German, High Oenotrian)
Soc:	3	Riding 3 (ruumet breehr)

EQUIPMENT

THIS EQUIPMENT conforms to the categories and prices contained in **Space: 1889** and may be made available for purchase by characters. A fantastic source of prices, weights, and other data on myriad everyday items can be found in the reprint edition of the Sears, Roebuck and Company catalog for 1895. Prices in the catalog should be doubled for goods purchased at the most likely point of sale (the company usually sold goods for about half of what a comparable product would cost over the counter in a normal store). Prices should be adjusted upward according to the time and place of the purchase. The farther one gets from civilization, the more expensive things become.

Tools

Drawing Instruments, Set: Tools used for drafting. Set includes drawing compasses, pen and pencil points and leads, dividers, a ruling pen, protractors, a divided rule, a triangle, and an irregular curves template. This set is almost a requirement for any serious inventor. Comes in a mahogany or rosewood case. *Wt:* 2 lb *Price:* £25/—.

Travelling Gear

Belt, Money: Worn under clothing to conceal currency (up to £100 in gold coins). *Wt:* Negligible *Price:* 2/8.

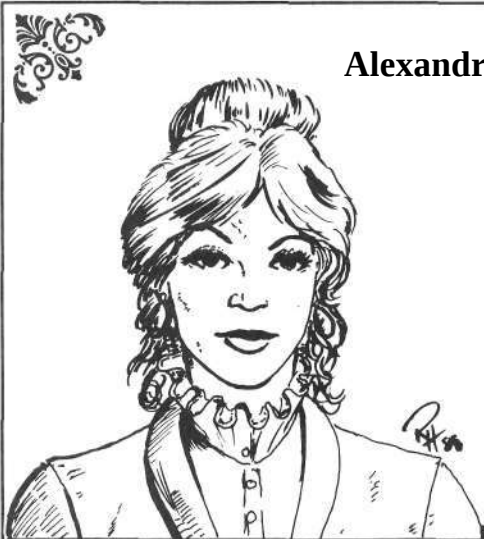
Compass, Pocket: *Wt:* Negligible *Price:* £1 8/—.

Wessely's Martian Dictionaries: Concise, easy-to-read translating

pocket dictionaries, with English and Martian words, and many useful phrases for travellers. Now available in Koline, Oenotrian (High and Low), Parhooni, Syrtan (High and Low), and Umbran editions. *Wt:* Negligible *Price:* 4/—.

GUIDE

BEFORE THE EXPEDITION departs, the characters will need to locate a suitable guide. Finding such a guide can be role-played out, with the final result determined in such a fashion. A more interesting adventure session can be had by all, however, if Thomas Grimes' choice for a guide is used. It seems that Thomas has made the acquaintance of a charming local Martian (one Kaaraahn Kaashneek), who just happens to have a cousin



Alexandra Elizabeth "Sally" Grimes (Green NPC)

Thomas than her husband, and she had to coax James into accepting his half-brother's offer to visit Mars.) Independently wealthy in her own right (some whisper her fortune to be as much as £10,000!), Sally has enjoyed the life of dilettante traveller. Unbeknownst to James, she has taken piloting lessons and is an accomplished student.

Motives: Frugal, Mercantile, Honest.

Appearance: Sally is of average

height and weight, with pleasing features and fashionably styled hair. Her wardrobe is extensive, ranging from wasp-waisted gowns to safari garb; she loves colored scarves. Despite her breeding, Sally prefers the straightforward approach and rarely accepts the need for propriety. She often speaks her mind with the devil to pay. However, she does not seek danger, and she often remains blissfully unaware when it is near.

ALEXANDRA GRIMES, or "Sally" as dear friends know her, is the pretty and well-bred wife of James Grimes, the inventor. For Sally's marriage, opposites obviously attracted: In contrast with James, she is highly born, moderately charismatic, delicate of constitution, and not overly intellectual. (Sally actually shares more interests with

Attributes Skills

Str: 1	
Agl: 3	Stealth 2, Crime 1 (pickpocket), Marksmanship 2 (pistol)
End: 4	Wilderness Travel 4 (mountaineering), Swimming 2
Int: 2	Observation 1, Science 2 (astronomy)
Chr: 4	Eloquence 3, Linguistics 6 (French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Hindi, Parhooni)
Soc: 6	Riding 6 (horse), Piloting 3 (aerial flyer)

who is perfectly suited to do the job....

Of course, Thomas' guide will desert the party after a couple of days on the trail, probably taking several items of value with him. Depending on how well the players did in seeking a guide, the same thing may happen after a couple of days with theirs. Frankly, the expedition will be more exciting if the guide either leaves at the first opportunity or proves to have a great deal less experience with the steppes than the characters were led to believe.

THE FAMILY GRIMES

IF THE CHARACTERS should ask to meet James or Alexandra Grimes before accepting Thomas' offer or before acquiring their equipment, Thomas will politely decline. Hiring the party to go along on the expedition is intended as a surprise for James; he does not even know Thomas had signs made. Indeed, James has holed up in his room for the last four days, where he has been poring over various technical diagrams of unfinished inventions. Alex-

andra is with him, not because she feels her place is beside her husband, but because there is little else to do until Thomas can find a suitable hunting party (she does know of his efforts to hire a group, but nothing else).

After spending a day purchasing supplies, and another day or two arranging the load into packs for transport by the group's gashants, Thomas will invite the group to meet his brother and his brother's wife at the Excelsior Inn.

James Alexander Grimes (Green NPC)

JAMES GRIMES, Thomas' younger half-brother, is a somewhat egocentric, if skilled, inventor, who is well known throughout southern England and Wales. An explorer and mountain climber (like his brother) when the mood suits, James will "take to a notion" and retreat to his workshop for days on end, refusing all comers. Thus he is more than a slight embarrassment to the family name, with his peculiar vocation and unsocial behavior. His most ambitious project to date is an aerial flyer of his own design called the *Pride of Sussex*; half-completed blueprints and architectural plans now overflow several workbenches in his father's converted barn in Chithurst. There is nothing James would like more than a quick end to this excursion on Mars so he might return to his work.

Any characters who show a genuine or enthusiastic interest in James's inventions (blueprints for all manner of machines and strange

devices litter his quarters) will earn his grudging friendship (the only sort he offers); those who find the subject tedious or are polite only for the sake of politeness will be dismissed in James's own mind as "mere ignorant fools."

Motives: Cautious, Boastful, Frugal.

Appearance: Slightly shorter than his brother, James is nonetheless a powerful man in his own right. He has curly hair, muttonchop whiskers, and a sizable burn scar on his neck from a steam explosion in his youth. His demeanor is brusque rather than unfriendly, abrupt more than rude. He always dresses informally. His experience in the wilderness was completely on Earth—he has not been on Mars for long.



Attributes Skills

Str: 5	Fisticuffs 4, Throwing 2
Agl: 4	Stealth 3, Marksmanship 2 (bow), Mechanics 2 (steam)
End: 6	Wilderness Travel 6 (mountaineering), Fieldcraft 1, Swimming 1
Int: 6	Observation 5, Engineering 3 (naval architecture), Science 3 (physics)
Chr: 2	Eloquence 1, Linguistics 2 (German, Latin)
Soc: 1	Riding 1 (gashant), Leadership 1

ENTER THE GADFLY

AFTER COMPLETING all necessary preparations for the trip, Thomas and Alexandra (with James' unvoiced consent) will invite the group to join them for an elaborate supper at the Excelsior Inn. The banquet this evening, Thomas promises, will consist of traditional English fare, perhaps their last chance to have some for several weeks (and there is no possible reason why anyone in the group should decline the offer). Even if some characters are lacking formal attire, they are still welcome.

Just as everyone is about to be seated at the table, Whittington Cartwright-Lloyd strolls in, suitably dressed in his style for the occasion. With a flourish, he pauses to introduce himself and pass out calling cards to each member of the group. The gilt-edged cards read as follows:

Whittington Cartwright-Lloyd, Esq.

*Journalist Extraordinaire
c/o The White Hart Public House
Fleet Street, London*

Should any character comment on the unusual nature of Cartwright-Lloyd's address (that of a famous London pub), he will laugh and say, "But you see, that is the only place where I am always sure I am welcome. And only then if my tab is not too lengthy." At this point, employees of the inn will serve the first supper courses, and everyone will begin eating. The meal is as promised.

Later in the evening, after everyone has gotten acquainted, Whittington proceeds to tell several amusing stories about his career as a reporter. Once, after completing a well received expose on the House of Commons (so he relates), he was even featured prominently in a *Punch* cartoon. In it, his head was affixed to the body of a fly, which was carrying a fountain pen and a rolled-up sheet of paper. The fly was entering the House of Parliament through a broken window (marked, "Liberal Party Unity"), and the caption read, "Gad, who let that fly in?"

After many pleasantries, talk turns to the hosts' upcoming hunt, and all find that Whittington has a few com-

ments on the subject.

"Certainly it will be interesting. Nevertheless, I do not feel a pressing urgency to leave Moeris Lacus. The articles I am now writing can be inspired by events here, at least for the time being. Still, if given sufficient motivation, I would not be averse to joining your party if you would have me."

Thomas and Alexandra express their support and invite Whittington to come if he chooses. The party breaks up, and everyone retires for the evening. All are agreed that tomorrow could be a long and tiring day.

A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

DURING BREAKFAST the next morning, a letter is delivered to Whittington Cartwright-Lloyd (the post came by canal boat from Syrtis Major during the night). He pauses midmeal to open it and begins to read excitedly.

"What incredible luck!" Whittington exclaims. "They want me to—hmmm. You did say there are Hill Martians inhabiting the steppes for which you are destined? Yes, but of course." As everyone looks on curiously, he hastens to explain. "The Royal Geographic Society was notified of my presence here, presumably by my editor. They offer me £100 to witness and document the tribal ceremonies of the Nepenthes-Thoth nomads. There also would seem to be a bonus for any usable photographs. Ladies and gentlemen, I hold in my hand suitable motivation for joining your party!"

Whittington will require less than an hour to pack the possessions he is bringing, which will include the portable photographic laboratory described in the basic game.



AN UNEXPECTED PARTING GIFT

BEFORE LEAVING Moeris Lacus, Thomas goes back to the Explorer's Club for one final, brief visit, to give his thanks to Major Robinson. Any characters who wish to join him may do so, as Thomas has already paid everyone's club dues. When Thomas arrives, Brookes offers Major Robinson's compliments and adds that a package has been left for Messrs. Grimes. It is a wooden box, perhaps one foot wide by one and a half feet long by six inches deep, and it weighs approximately 15 pounds. The box has a lock on it, and Brookes hands

Thomas two identical keys. A note is affixed to the box, written in Major Robinson's hand. It reads simply:

"This is my parting gift to you, Thomas, as you are about to embark on your journey. You are a fine Whist player, and I have enjoyed our games. I really should not be letting you have this, but then I sincerely hope that you will never have occasion to use it. I trust your judgment, lad. Good luck on your hunt, use this with prudence if at all, and God save the Queen."

Under no circumstance (regardless of any efforts to persuade him) will Thomas open the box at this time, though it is clear that he does not

know the nature of its contents. As soon as Thomas returns to the Excelsior Inn, he will give one key to James and keep the other for himself. Neither will open the box to examine its contents until much later in the adventure, if then, and the box will be given to Alexandra, who will carry it on her gashant. The hunting expedition should now have all the equipment it needs, and thus is free to leave.

Upon examination, the box will be found to contain exactly 24 half-pound sticks of dynamite carefully wrapped in newspaper. (Robinson is a Major retired from the Royal Engineers.)

Whittington Cartwright-Lloyd (Green NPC)

WHITTINGTON Cartwright-Lloyd, Esquire (formerly of the Manchester *Guardian* and the London *Times*, now pursuing a career as a free-lance journalist) is something of a celebrated gadfly. When interviewing notable persons he scarcely seems to pay attention, then suddenly starts asking pointed questions to take his worthy quarry by surprise. His sense of justice and ruthlessness rarely show themselves beyond the printed page, however. When he is asked a question, he often answers it with a question (Thomas has called him "Half-Witty"). Whittington has

written numerous incisive political and social commentaries and is now working on a series of stories on Mars and Martians. Perhaps the most interesting development is that this newest assignment has revealed an unsuspected and nearly sentimental side to Cartwright-Lloyd's penetrating nature.

Motives: Just, Ruthless, Eccentric.

Appearance: Whittington is tall and of wiry build, and has neatly groomed hair, a strong jaw, and a waxed moustache. He dresses most oddly, often wearing a disheveled ascot and an overcoat two sizes too large. He rarely goes anywhere with-

out a well stoked pipe, billowing clouds of smoke behind him. He is a likable scoundrel and just a bit of a blackguard.

Attributes Skills

Str:	3	Fisticuffs 2, Throwing 1
Agl:	2	Stealth 1
End:	2	Wilderness Travel 2 (mapping)
Int:	4	Observation 4, Science 2 (chemistry)
Chr:	6	Eloquence 6, Theatrics 2, Linguistics 2 (French, Italian)
Soc:	1	Riding 1 (horse)



THE FIRST WEEK

THOMAS WISHES to pursue a northeasterly course from Moeris Lacus, and he will lead the group that way unless some character has strenuous objections or exceptionally good reasons why another course would be preferable (use Eloquence skill for any debating, if necessary; the first character to fail a Moderate task loses the argument). Of course, any radical departure from this general direction

will bring admonishing words ("Remember why we are going? To find a steppe tiger. Steppe tigers are found on the steppes more often than elsewhere. Do try to keep this in mind, please!")

If this course of travel is followed scrupulously, the group should be very near the northern border of the crown colony by the end of the first week. (The day the group leaves Moeris Lacus will be referred to

hereafter as day one; all future dates are measured from this point.) It will be about this time that the expedition's guide should vanish, possibly taking a gashant or two with him.

As described on page 10, the referee should roll twice daily for random encounters, elaborating on them as they take place and attempting to avoid the appearance that they are random. If a steppe tiger is randomly rolled during this time, treat the result

SKETCHPADS, SIXPENCE, AND MOERIS LACUS

By Whittington Cartwright-Lloyd

A HIGH-SPIRITED young gentleman and his fairer half stroll with their rosy-cheeked child down an uncrowded lane on a fine, warm day. They pause but a moment to buy a drawing from a corner artist, who has drawn the majestic scene of a palace.

A silver sixpence is dropped into a brightly colored cloth at his feet, clinking gently as it strikes the ground, and they continue on their way. As they cross an intersecting thoroughfare, a uniformed officer nods politely to them.

Such a scene seems ordinary enough on the surface, except for a minor detail: This is not August in Hyde Park, the palace is not Buckingham, and the three-fingered artist who crafted the delicately pencilled sketch is not human.

For this is Moeris Lacus, an ancient city and easternmost outpost of the crown colony of Syrtis Lapis. It is a mesmerizing land, filled with more mystery than the deepest provinces of India, more intrigue than the darkest regions of Africa.

Here, a race of Martians lives a life of reasonably docile coexistence with fellow Englishmen, Welshmen, Scotsmen, and even an Irishman or two. From Cornwall, Cork, and Cumbria they have travelled, from Glasgow and Gloucester; they came merely to visit and have decided to make a go of it.

What is the attraction? To most, it is because Mars is, in its own peculiar way, romantic. Here is high adventure, with lives to be risked for fortunes to be won. Curiously flavoured spices, unforgettable gems, magical liftwood—all these and much more make the land worth settling. Fantastic tales are spun of endless underground chambers, high mountain kraags, and ice-covered caves guarded by strange, dangerous beasts and filled with untold riches. Martian storytellers living in Syrtis Major, the center of "British Mars," weave many such fabled webs; a precious small handful have proven at least partially true.

This is not, by and means, to call the red planet a Utopia. Not every na-

tive in the capital holds his new red-skinned (for so we appear to them) neighbors in the highest esteem. The reverse may also be true. Tribes of unfriendly nomads wander where they please on unbordered lands. Some city-states have made dire threats against emissaries from Her Majesty's government. Conflicts have broken out in the past and will, in all likelihood, break out once more someday. Nevertheless, anything truly worth having entails a reasonable element of risk, and Mars is certainly no exception.

The average Englishman has yet to discover the exotic charms to be found here, but no man remains a stranger long in this strange and awesome land. Perhaps a few hundreds leave Mother Earth each year to see the sights; perhaps a few scores remain. It may not be many more years, however, before this distant part of the mighty British Empire becomes as popular a resort spot as Lyme Regis or the Lakes District.



as "no encounter." The referee must also have the characters roll once during this and every future week for the possibility of fever, as described on page 115 of **Space: 1889**. (This ailment has not been included on the encounter tables). Nothing else of particular interest occurs in the first week.

THE SECOND WEEK

ON DAY EIGHT or nine (assuming the group is in a steppe hex), the referee

should bring a steppe tiger in as a mandated encounter; the exact day and time of the encounter are at the referee's discretion.

The tiger should be seen running free on the steppe well beyond weapon range and heading north or northeast; it is simply too far away for the group to have any hope of catching it. This is nothing more than a teaser, whose purpose is to convince the group that there really are steppe tigers in the region and to entice them

deeper into the Nepenthes-Thoth.

Later during the second week (any time between days nine and 14, inclusive, to be precise), the group will encounter a small underground Martian burial tomb, as described on pages 32-38. Ideally, this encounter should take place the day after a random nomad encounter; however, if no nomad encounter occurs by the afternoon of day 13, then this should be used as a mandated encounter for the morning of day 14.



A HOLE IN THE GROUND

IT HAS BEEN a pleasant day, all in all, although there are the earliest signs that a windstorm may be developing some distance off. The group has been travelling along without incident when Whittington's gashant unexpectedly swerves slightly, rousing its passenger back to full awareness. Without instruction, the gashant has sidestepped a circular ring of stones, perhaps 20 feet in diameter and piled from two to three feet in height. Surprised, Whittington calls the party to a halt.

Upon closer examination it is discovered that the stones, individually several inches to a foot across, are not the result of a natural formation or random animal activity; there is no question but that they were placed and arranged by hand. If anyone attempts to dislodge any stone from those which make up the ring, he will be unable to do so; every stone appears to be fused to every other, as if by Portland cement.

In the center of the stone ring is a perfectly cylindrical hole or shaft in

the ground, approximately three feet in diameter. Beside the hole is a stone disc, of a size that could have blocked the hole. One side is heavily weathered and the other is only slightly dusty, indicating that the hole was only recently opened. By shining a lantern or other bright light through the opening its depth can be estimated at 30 to 40 feet, though the base appears to extend underground beyond the size of the opening, as if enlarging into a chamber not fully in view.



Going Below

THE WALLS of the shaft appear unnaturally smooth and featureless. Since climbing is therefore out of the question, it is apparent that the only obvious way a character might enter and exit is via a length of rope. (One of the NPCs can be assumed to have brought a sufficient length if the PCs didn't think of it.) The ring of stones may be used as an anchor for the rope, as could a gashant or the weight of the adventurers themselves (they could gradually lower a character down).

James will be the first to go down unless someone else volunteers. When it becomes obvious there is an underground chamber, he will immediately call up for a second and third character to join him below, preferably player characters. Thomas will not go down willingly. (He has claustrophobia, a secret weakness of which he is ashamed; his family will know of it and not press him.)

Any character entering the shaft by rope should make a quick roll against Agility to avoid any mishap (this only applies on the way down). If the roll fails, the character slips the last few feet, lands unexpectedly hard, and wrenches an arm or leg slightly (there is no wound, however). This injury will not impede the character's ability to exit, and the sprain, however painful, will mend of its own accord in time with minimal treatment.



A Fearsome Encounter

PROVIDED NO mishaps occur, characters are slowly lowered to approach the bottom, which is approximately

35 feet below the surface. Enough light comes through the hole to illuminate the chamber, which is about six yards square with the shaft coming down exactly in the center. Dirt, small, well gnawed bones of a number of animals, and other debris litter the floor directly under the shaft. A close examination will show a length of rope, one end broken, lying among the detritus. On one wall two exits can be dimly discerned; another is on the opposite wall. The poor light reveals something on the floor between the two doorways. Closer investigation will show it to be the remains of a Martian: clothing torn torags, possessions strewn about. The PCs also make a chilling observation: The bones are well gnawed and scattered about as if by an animal.

At this juncture, the referee should announce that the players now hear a noise from the single doorway. They will turn to see a lone teshuwaan, one leg badly injured, approaching them with a hungry gleam in its eyes. For reasons that will be explained later, the animal has been trapped underground for quite some time, is injured, and is very weak. It is also nearly mad from hunger and will attack immediately. Because of its injuries, however, the creature's movement becomes L10 instead of L20, and its wound rating becomes 1 instead of 2.

Once the teshuwaan has been dealt with, the following can be deduced: The Martian must have come upon the hole, pried the lid off the shaft, and lowered himself down into the hole to investigate. He must have been a Canal Martian, from his clothing and equipment. The rope evidently broke, stranding him here. At some point after he fell in, perhaps after he

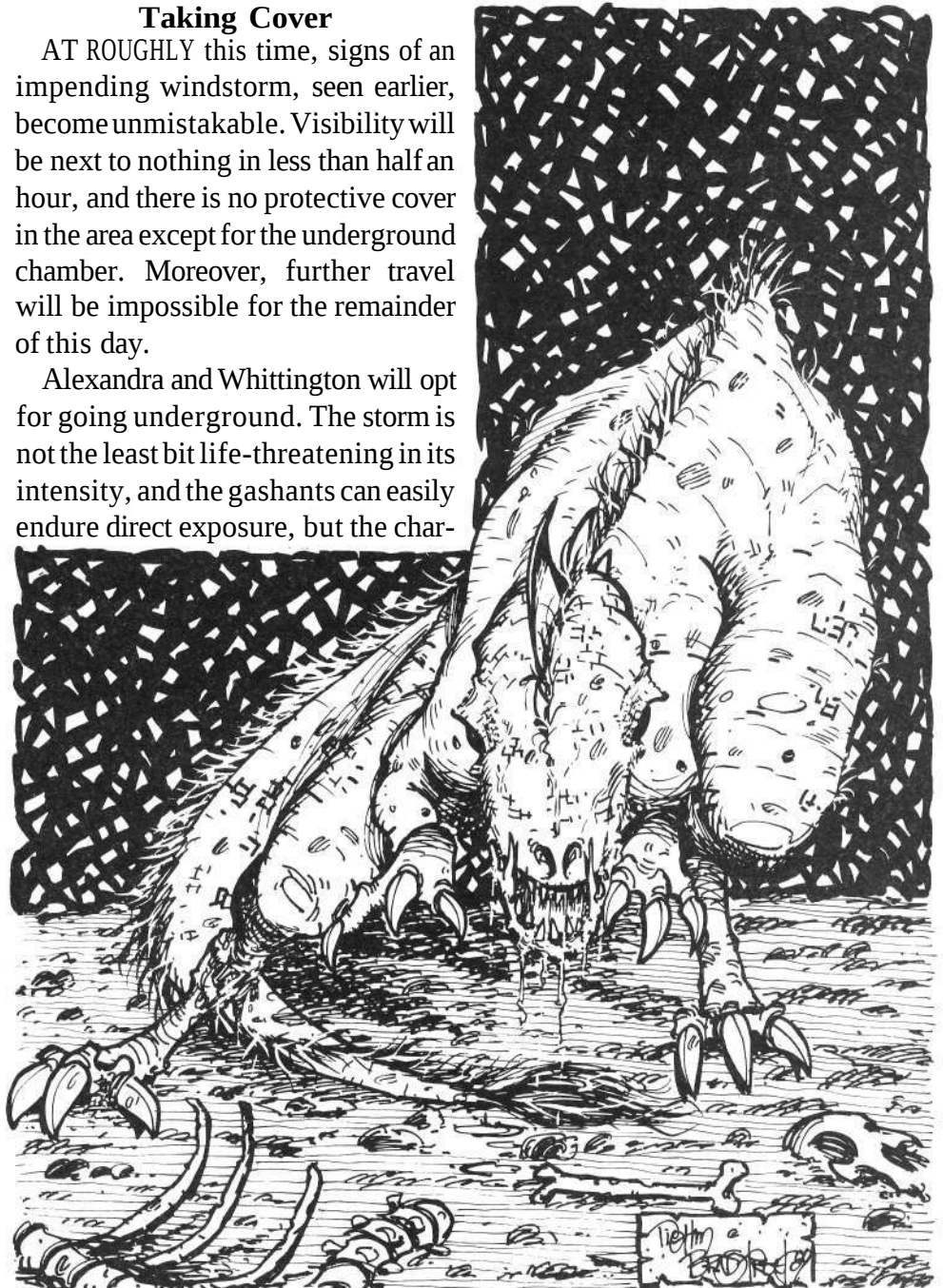
starved to death, the teshuwaan smelled him and fell into the shaft while investigating, breaking its leg from the fall. The Martian and the few small animals that happened to fall into the newly opened hole would have satisfied its hunger for a while, but for the teshuwaan to be so weak it must have been in the hole almost a month.

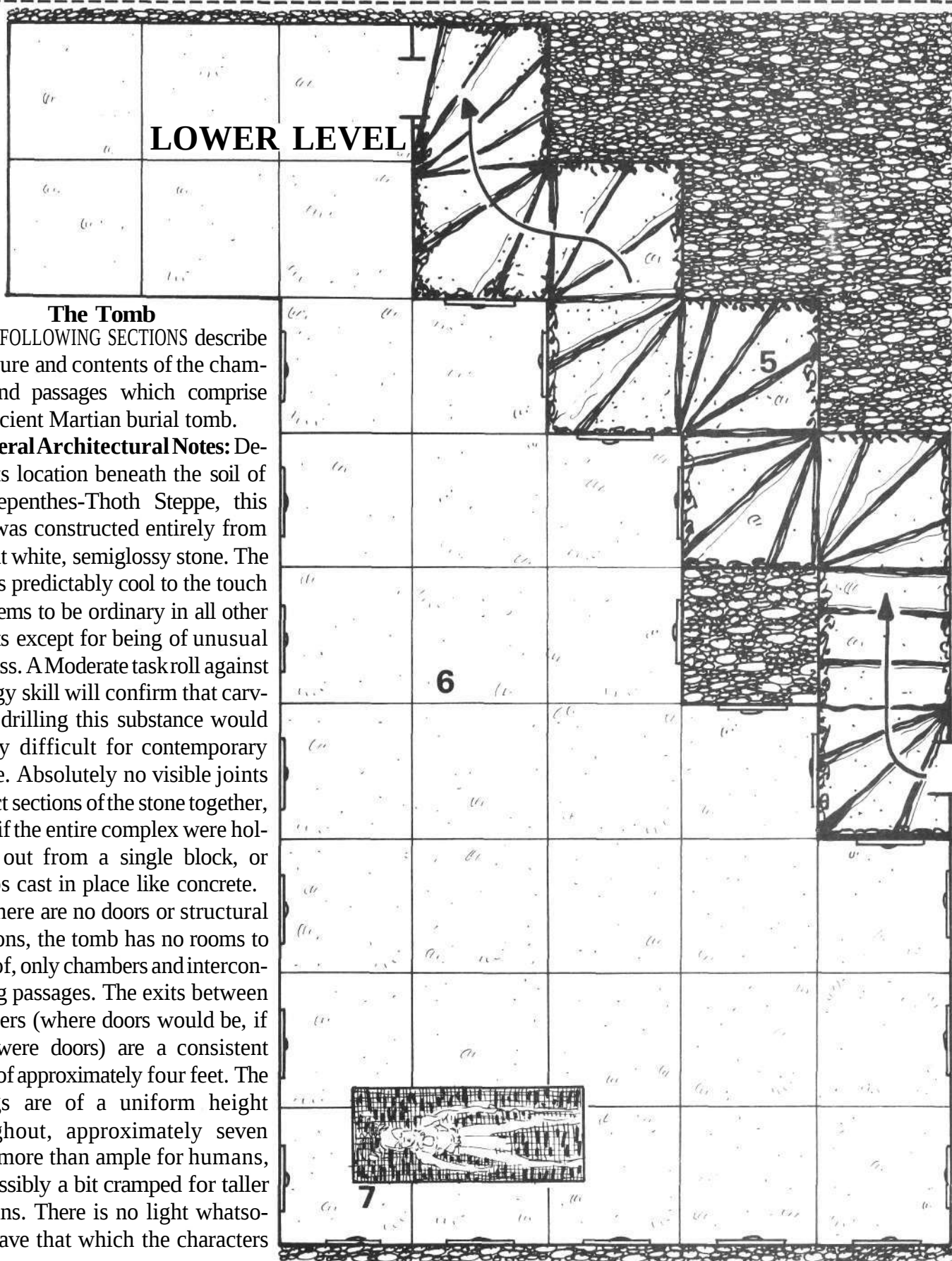
Taking Cover

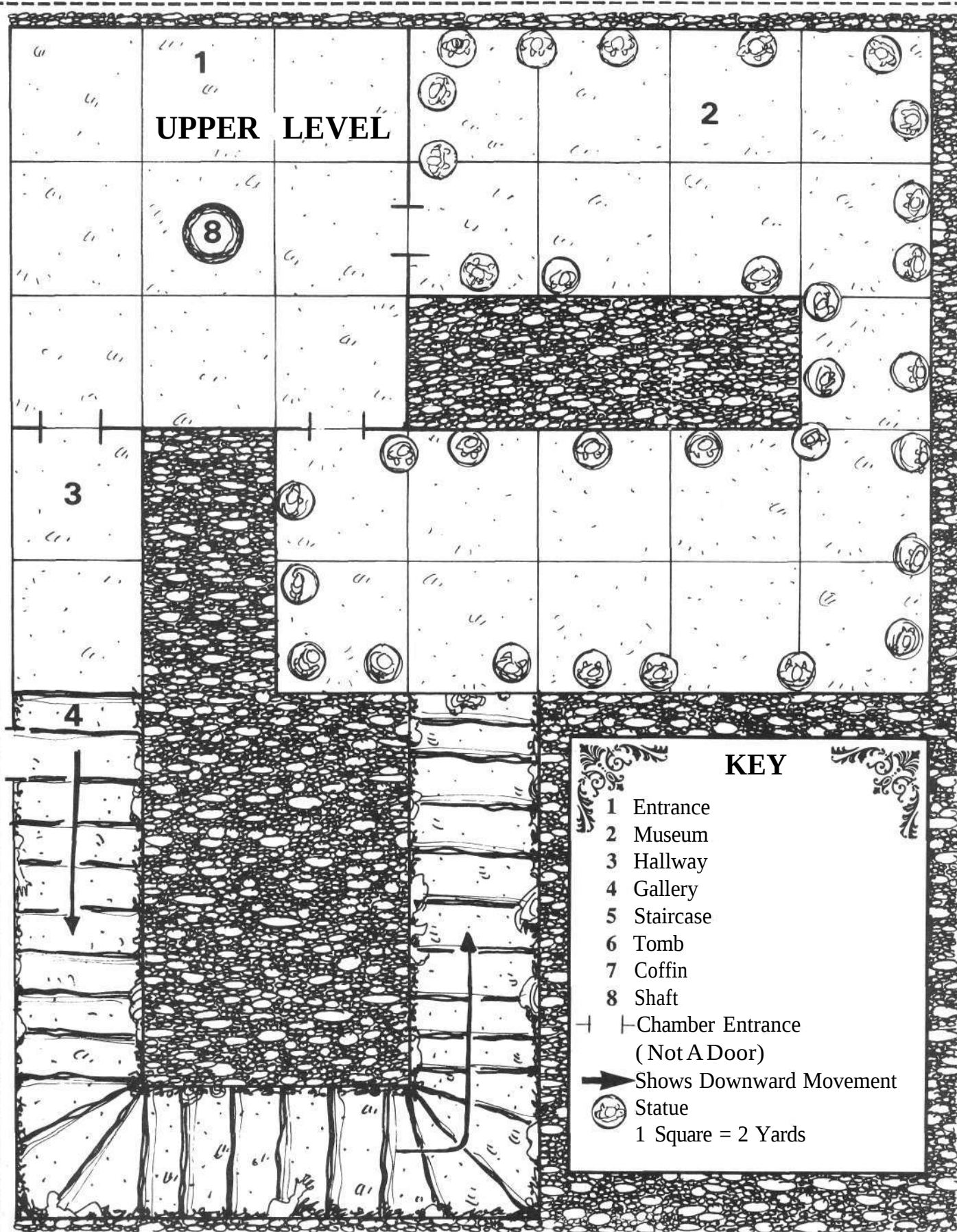
AT ROUGHLY this time, signs of an impending windstorm, seen earlier, become unmistakable. Visibility will be next to nothing in less than half an hour, and there is no protective cover in the area except for the underground chamber. Moreover, further travel will be impossible for the remainder of this day.

Alexandra and Whittington will opt for going underground. The storm is not the least bit life-threatening in its intensity, and the gashants can easily endure direct exposure, but the char-

acters would simply be more comfortable physically if they retreated from the wind. Thomas will adamantly refuse, preferring the awkward partial shelter provided by huddling in between the group's closely herded mounts. James will offer to return to the surface also to help Thomas hold onto the mounts. The player characters are free to stay above or go below, as they wish.









Upper Chamber and Passage Descriptions: The unusual physical layout of the tomb can be roughly divided into three chambers and three passages, with a human term assigned to each. The entrance, museum, and hallway are on the upper level.

The Entrance (Chamber): This chamber, six yards square, is where the characters first enter. The shaft, seven feet above the floor, is located in the exact center of the room's ceiling. The room is completely unadorned. There are three exits, two leading into the museum and the third opening into the hallway.

The Museum (Chamber): This U-shaped chamber is two yards by 12 yards in one "arm," and two yards by 10 yards in the other, with a four-yards-square section connecting the two. The entire chamber is filled with 32 life-sized stone sculptures, placed randomly about the chamber and individually mounted on raised pedestals. The statues, in perfect condition, are brightly painted and show no signs of deterioration through age. The statues bear likenesses of Canal Martians,

though the figures are dressed oddly by modern standards of Martian attire, with elaborate headdresses and metallic necklaces. One ornamented statue bears a ceremonial cane.

None of the likenesses look the least bit familiar, though all bear what could be regal or aristocratic features and expressions. Several words are hand-painted on the pedestal of each statue. Though not written in Parhooni, a successful Difficult task roll against Linguistics (Parhooni) skill will reveal a recognizable word or two which are part of a person's proper name—presumably that of the person portrayed.

The statues are fixed immovably into place and seem to be made of the same extremely hard material as the rest of the tomb. They are impossible to remove without explosives, which would likely damage them. The only exit leads back into the entrance. There is nothing else of significance here.

The Hallway (Passage): This short passage connects the entrance with the staircase. Past the staircase jun-

ture, the hallway begins to slope downward and becomes the gallery. There is nothing of significance here.

Lower Chamber and Passage Descriptions: The gallery, staircase, and tomb proper make up the "lower level."

The Gallery (Passage): Another U-shaped structure, the gallery is two yards wide by 20 yards long overall. The floor (and corresponding ceiling) assume a steady but easily negotiated slope, with the end of the gallery being the deepest point in the tomb. Both walls along the gallery are covered with elaborate relief sculptures. Any character making a successful Easy task roll against Geology skill or a Moderate task roll against Observation skill will recognize one series showing the entire grand canal network on Mars. Some canals which are now dry are depicted here as part of the functional grand canal system.

The very end wall of the gallery bears a different set of drawings. A successful Easy task roll against Astronomy skill or a Moderate task roll against Observation skill will confirm that they are symbolic drawings of the Solar System.

The only exit is at the uppermost end of the gallery, at the juncture of the staircase and the hallway. There is nothing else of any significance here.

The Staircase (Passage): Like the gallery, this passage also leads downward—following a zigzag plan. Instead of being on a downward slope, however, it consists of several hundred discrete steps, each an inch or so lower than the one preceding it. The walls along the staircase are covered with murals which show scenes from everyday Martian life (or

an artist's portrayal, in any event), with the equivalent of still-life paintings, and with similar uncomplicated but pleasing subjects. These are not framed art objects, but scenes painted directly onto the walls themselves. One end of the staircase leads to the tomb, while the other opens onto the hallway. There is nothing else of significance here.

The Tomb (Chamber): This oddly-shaped chamber, 10 yards by 14 yards at its widest dimensions, contains a large stone coffin located in a relatively recessed corner. This coffin, weighing nearly 1000 pounds, is a separate and distinct block of stone (unlike the museum's statues), with a lid and base. The coffin lid bears a painted likeness of a Martian wearing an elaborate headdress and metallic necklace, and carrying a cane. Making a successful Moderate task roll against Observation verifies that this is the same likeness as the ornamented Martian statue in the museum. (Failure only indicates the face is vaguely familiar in some way.)

Lifting the lid requires an Impossible task roll against Strength, though up to four characters may make the attempt jointly (success means the lid has been lifted off; failure means those characters failed). The very instant the lid is lifted off, there is a sudden, brief, completely unexpected, noiseless rush of wind through the tomb, up the staircase, past the hallway, and into the entrance, where it instantly dies down. It is momentary and will not be repeated. There is no possible explanation for it, though the characters are free to hazard any guesses they like. The tomb is not haunted, and no other bizarre or supernatural events will

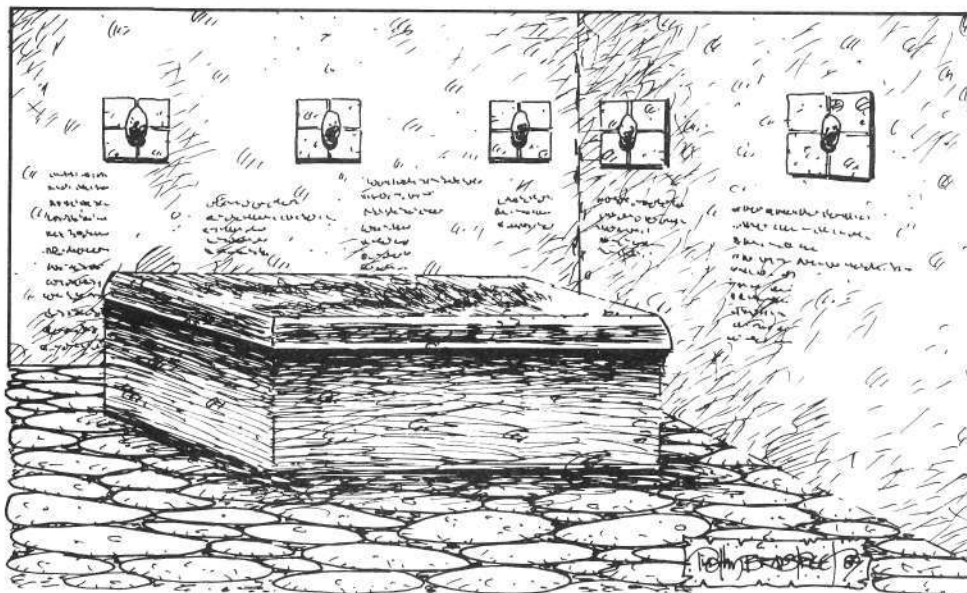
happen to the group—this gust is purely "for atmosphere" (potential grave robbers on an alien world really should expect nothing less). The referee may dispense with this special effect if desired.

The coffin contains the preserved body of a Canal Martian. The headdress shown in the likeness on the coffin is not present, but the metallic necklace and cane are; both artifacts may be removed (if any character has sufficient courage after that ghastly breeze). To the untrained eye, the necklace would seem to have the most worth because of the semiprecious metals from which it is made. The necklace weighs 15 pounds, and the cane is five feet long and weighs 10 pounds.

Several dozen gemstones of roughly identical size are also embedded in the walls of the tomb. Any character with a small blade (such as a jackknife) may attempt to free a stone. The character's Strength is not a consideration in removing gemstones. In addition, a larger blade or pickaxe tip will not fit into the recess,

and no other tool will be of any use. (Remember that the jackknife shown in the equipment list has two blades.) Roll two dice per attempt: On a roll of 11 or 12, the stone comes free; on a roll of 2 through 4, the blade breaks and becomes unusable. Any other result is a simple failure, and the player must try again on a different jewel. The number of attempts made is limited only by the number of knives the group has, and/or the number its members are willing to break in the process.

Finally, large portions of the walls in this chamber are covered with finely inscribed writings, quite possibly in the same language as that used on the museum statues. (The complete translation, a process far beyond the scope of this adventure, describes the life of a relatively minor Martian ruler from several thousands of years ago. His life, properties, accomplishments—in short, a biographical summary—were etched onto these walls.) The only exit is through the staircase. There is nothing else of significance here.



MARTIAN BURIAL TOMBS

A Synthesis of Their Construction Features, and An Examination of Their Relationships to Certain Myths

By Sir A. A. Athington, CIE

THE THESIS this article proposes is that certain aspects of ancient Martian mythology may have dictated the method of construction for burial tombs used by those peoples. The findings offered here are based on research into ancient (pre-Seldon) Martian mythology and the archaeological findings from three excavated Martian burial tombs located in the plains of Memnonia (and one in the Nepenthes-Thoth region). Information is necessarily incomplete, but a partial hypothesis can now be formulated, subject to additional facts.

It is important to remember that, according to Martian mythology, the being entombed may revive periodically to walk within the confines of his tomb. Now by no means

are Martian burial tombs identical, but certain key components have been discovered in more than one tomb which may indicate some sort of underlying principle of construction at work. These aforementioned components include:

1. An area containing numerous statues of full-sized Martian figures. These may represent friends or persons close to the deceased, and are present so he might always be with their images.

2. A lengthy hallway area bearing mathematical symbols, notations, or other scientific concepts of personal interest to the deceased. The long hallway permits ample space for his body to roam, while the information allows his mind to remain equally active.

3. A multitude of extremely short

steps leading into the tomb itself. According to certain fables in Martian mythology, demons who would come to haunt the deceased tire easily when forced to descend stairs slowly; the steps make such demons easy to defeat in battle.

4. The walls of the tomb describe the most significant events in the life of the deceased so he might recall what he has accomplished if he should forget upon awakening. In addition, the actual tomb is usually located in the deepest part of the facility. This may be as a result of one Martian belief that the Martian equivalent of "Heaven" is deep within the center of Mars.

5. There are no doors of any kind, as they could hinder movement of the deceased within the tomb.

Finishing Up

A QUICK PRELIMINARY SEARCH of the underground tomb will only require two or three hours. As the characters slowly take in the awe-inspiring sights, however, the windstorm will show no signs of abating, and the group might as well plan on remaining in this immediate vicinity for the rest of the day and night. Whittington, in any event, will refuse to leave until he has photographed everything of interest and taken down page after page of detailed notes—personal observations, opinions, estimated dimensions, all the minutiae he can record. For him, at least, this trip has just become an unqualified success no matter what may transpire later.

Sometime during the exploration process, the referee might wish to have all characters make a quick roll against Intellect. Every character who makes the roll successfully should be reminded of an article that was recently published by the Royal Geographic Society on the subject of Martian burial tombs. The contents of this article, of some possible interest to the adventuring group, are reproduced above.

As an alternative, the referee may wish to hold back release of this article until the adventure is nearly ended. In this way, the characters may have the opportunity to "assist in the research," based on their own findings and hypotheses.

THE THIRD AND FOURTH WEEKS

BY THE NEXT MORNING, the wind will have died back down to normal, and the skies will once again be clear. Thomas spent a fairly uncomfortable, but otherwise uneventful, night outside, and the group should be prepared to continue on with the journey.

As long as the group members have yet to encounter and kill a steppe tiger, Thomas will require no excuse to continue with the expedition. At the point when the group bags its trophy, however, the question may come up as to why the group is proceeding to head deeper into the Nepenthes-Thoth Steppe. Depending upon player character reactions, Thomas may offer no

explanation. Alternately, he may present some extremely feeble excuse about trying to catch a second tiger ("We've got one, but wouldn't a matching pair look smashing over the fireplace?") or possibly stumbling onto the riches of another burial tomb (especially appropriate if the group came away with the Martian king's necklace, cane, or gems). Alexandra agrees with the possibility of acquiring more wealth, and James is silently miserable (he still wants to go home); Whittington will not care either way, though he now grumbles good-naturedly about running low on photographic plates.

In any event, Thomas will desire to push on ("Until we catch our tiger, or for just another few days" as the case may be), remarking, "This is my adventure, after all." If harassed, he will add: "We have not yet been gone six weeks, and that is for how long your wages were based." As the group continues northeast and travels nearer

to the limits of the map on page 5, Thomas will gradually shift to an easterly or southeasterly course toward the city-state of Shastapsh. The terrain in this area is still steppe, and he may find a tiger here.

From this day (the day after the tomb's discovery) through day 28, the referee should resume rolling random encounters in much the same fashion as during the first week. Upon rolling any nomad encounter after day 14, ignore the specific type and implement in its place the mandated encounter described below.

Note: If the players themselves (not the characters, mind you) should become restless, the referee may secretly initiate this encounter at any time, just to preserve continued interest in the story.

ONE LITTLE INDIAN BOY

A LONE NOMAD BRAVE, riding on a gashant, approaches within several hundred yards of the group. He does

not seem outwardly hostile, but he will continue to move in. He will neither initiate nor respond to communication. As he rides near, one hand is in clear sight holding the reins; the other is holding what looks like a four-foot javelin with a dull point and ratty-looking feathers at its tail end.

Any character who makes a successful Difficult task roll against Throwing skill will recognize the javelin as a Martian "coup stick," a wooden throwing spear with a deliberately blunted tip and feathers near the rear end for stabilization in flight (a peculiar artifact limited to the Southern Shistomik tribe of nomads). It looks much like an oversized arrow but flies very poorly and will do no damage except for a nasty bruise if it hits someone end-on. Its effective range is barely 20 yards, and that assumes a healthy tailwind and a skillful thrower (which this brave is not, though the characters will not know that fact beforehand).



One, Coup, Three

As RANIX comes even closer, he will try to maintain what would appear to be a defiant expression. Any character making a successful DifficulttaskrollagainstObservation skill will realize that he is more afraid of the group than they possibly could be of him (the task is so difficult because reading Martian body language should not be made too overly easy for non-Martians, and vice versa).

When the brave is within 10 yards of any male character (player or non-

player), he will throw his coup stick at the character. Roll a die. If the targeted character declares he is taking evasive action, then subtract one from the die roll. On a roll of 1, the brave spears the ground with his stick; on a roll of 2, he throws short and just misses the character's gashant; on a roll of 3, he hits the gashant on the rump; on a roll of 4, he strikes the character a grazing blow but makes definite contact; on a roll of 5-6, his aim is true, and the character is struck squarely in the chest but not seriously wounded.

An Invitation

RANIX'S NEXT ACTION will vary depending upon his success in the mock-attack, ranging from visible dejection to an ecstatic whoop of joy. Regardless of how successful Ranix's attack might have been, however, or the group's own response, he will bear absolutely no feelings of animosity or lasting hostility toward them, nor will he understand any such feelings directed toward him. In excited (or dejected) tones, Ranix jubilantly (or sadly) explains his reason for the attack.



Ranix (Green NPC)

haps because of it), Fazuck the Healer has been teaching him a little on the sly (Tarn'k would not like it if Ranix pursued this as a career; the sons of other men may be healers but his son is to be a warrior).

Young, smart, and quick-witted, Ranix is popular with his peers and favored by many elders, but his charm is no adequate substitute for mediocre skill. Caught on the horns of a dilemma, Ranix is determined to make his mark on the clan. He is desperately in love with Odora, widowed daughter-in-law of Lopkan, one of the clan's revered elders. Ranix's only chance to win her hand is through some heroic deed; he just does not know

whether it will be as a cowardly warrior or a half-trained healer.

Ranix's native language is Nepenthes.

Motives: Cowardly, Love, Proud.

Appearance: Ranix is a short youth for a Hill Martian, but exceptionally agile. He smiles often and is pleasant to be around (no doubt he will become more sour of disposition as he grows older). He always wears tan breeches and a necklace with one steppe tiger tooth, a warrior's luck charm given to him by his father. When hunting, Ranix is armed with a bow, a couple of knives, and his coup stick.

RANIX, a nomad brave, is the son of Tarn'k, a courageous warrior of above-average abilities and some slight reputation. As a brave, Ranix is trying to prove himself worthy to be a full-fledged warrior, but he is very much the coward. In his heart he would like to be a healer for the clan, but he does not have what it takes. Despite this (or per-

Attributes	Skills
Str: 2	Fisticuffs 1, Throwing 1
Agl: 6	Stealth 3, Marksmanship 1 (bow), Marksmanship 1 (pistol)
End: 5	Wilderness Travel 3 (foraging)
Int: 2	Observation 1
Chr: 6	Eloquence 3, Theatrics 1, Bargaining 1
Soc: 2	Riding 2 (gashant), Medicine 1

As Ranix rides closely by to tell his tale (the referee should paraphrase from Ranix's NPC description), his steppe tiger-tooth necklace may catch someone's attention. Every character should make a quick roll against the lower of his Observation or Tracking skills to identify Ranix's necklace.

If Ranix did actually hit someone, he would very much like that person to come back with him to his clan as firsthand evidence of his success (finally, proof that he might yet become a real warrior). Such an offer would make both Thomas and Whittington ecstatic, though for completely different reasons. Thomas would secretly kill for the opportunity to check out Ranix's clan (well, not kill, perhaps, but maim at the very least). Besides, who better to know how to hunt steppe tigers but steppe nomads? Indeed, this is working out with his plans perfectly.

Meanwhile, Whittington wants to win that prize from the Royal Geographic Society for a successful assignment.

If Ranix missed, the referee should make a Moderate task roll against Ranix's Theatrics skill for every character (except Thomas and Whittington). For every successful roll, that person may feel some genuine pity for Ranix's dramatic plight. Thomas and Whittington, of course, feel sympathy for Ranix and will do whatever they can to make the trip to Ranix's village possible. However, there is one complication: To save honor, Ranix cannot go back to his clan unless he "counts coup" on a male character first (females do not count as they are not seen as potential combatants, and there is no honor in striking them).



Ranix cannot lie about his failure, and he cannot lie about having seen the group; lying, in fact, would seem to be contrary to his way of life. Nevertheless, any effort the group makes to accommodate Ranix's need to "count coup" will be rewarded by Rank's loyalty to the group (even if the "attack" must be reenacted several times until Ranix is successful at last). After this is accomplished, he will gladly lead them back to his village.

A SHORT RIDE INTO NIGHT

THE JOURNEY to Ranix's nomad village will require the remainder of the day, and Ranix and the group will reach their destination some time after dusk. The scene in camp is quiet; a few cooking fires are burning down, and everyone seems to be in their own tents for the night.

By his own preference, Ranix would like to wake up the entire camp immediately and tell them of his success. However, the adventurers can ask Ranix not to alert the camp (they will have an opportunity to "shush" him before he shouts out a greeting, provided they react promptly). If the group does not mind disturbing the elders and stirring up a fuss, then skip the following section and proceed directly to the adventure section entitled A Sudden Alarum.

If the group would prefer to keep any commotion to a minimum, at least for this evening, Ranix will propose to take them to Fazuck the Healer, a wise man and (Ranix admits in confidence) a personal mentor. If this is what the group would like to do, continue with the section entitled Is There a Medicine Man in the House?

Fazuck the Healer (Trained NPC)

BY HILL MARTIAN standards, Fazuck is an experienced man of the world and perhaps overly curious. He has left the clan voluntarily on several occasions to experience life on his own in faraway places, where he has learned many things, including the art of lying. (Some say he has been to Shas-tapsh, while others whisper that he has been all the way to Alclyon and Thoth. On his part, he will only smile briefly and say nothing.)

In fact, leaving the clan one time too many has put him in disgrace with a few of the clan's other elders, something that does not trouble him too deeply. He knows he is too important to cast out lightly. He is an expert on survival in the wild, and very little escapes

his attention or surprises him. He does not speak often, but what he says is listened to, even by elders who are displeased with him. He likes children and young braves, who love to hear the tales he tells all too infrequently. He is particularly fond of Ranix.

Fazuck's native language is Nepenthese.

Attributes Skills

Str: 4	Fisticuffs 3, Throwing 2
Agl: 1	Crime 1 (pickpocket), Marksmanship 2 (bow)
End: 6	Wilderness Travel 7 (foraging)
Int: 6	Observation 5
Chr: 4	Eloquence 3, Bargaining 1, Linguistics 2 (Parhooni, Koline)
Soc: 3	Riding 3 (gashant 3, ruumet breehr 3), Medicine 1

Motives: Disgraced, Stubborn, Wise.

Appearance: Fazuck is large even as Hill Martians go, with an unusually wide chest and a muscular build. He bears a deep scar on his right arm, a souvenir from a hungry teshuwaan. He also wears a belt made from teshuwaan hide (another souvenir of the same incident). Fazuck is strong, smart, and hearty, if very clumsy. He does not smile often, but when he does it is sincere.

IS THERE A MEDICINE MAN IN THE HOUSE?

RANIX LEADS the group around the edge of the camp to where Fazuck's tent has been set up. Fazuck is standing by the entrance even as Ranix arrives, and before the group has been properly introduced, Ranix whispers that he has brought strange visitors. Fazuck acknowledges him, speaking in accent-free Parhooni to the characters (this healer is clearly a learned man). "Welcome. I heard Ranix coming," he explains to the party, "and with more than one person following."

Fazuck is a polite, if reserved, host. He does not seem terribly surprised by the group's presence in camp, and he will offer everyone a simple beverage made from a partially fermented wild grain. Fazuck speaks slowly and with great deliberation, but he is very much excited in his own way at the group's arrival. He seems perfectly willing to entertain his unexpected guests throughout the night.

It may take the group awhile before they realize Fazuck will be happy to answer many questions about his clan, its living conditions, and whatever else the group might like to know, in exchange for something the group has of value. The greater the value of the gift chosen by the players, the more Fazuck is willing to tell. (This willingness to sell information for goods is not a clan custom, nor is it extortive in intent; it is simply Fazuck's own way of obtaining possessions not available on the steppes. Under certain conditions, he would also be willing to buy information in the same way.)

The referee should make sure this conversation is role-played to the

fullest by giving pieces of background information as the players ask for them and not by photocopying the appropriate pages from this booklet and passing them out. This is meant to be an oral presentation of native customs; if the players really want to record the customs and background, permit some player (and not his character) to take notes. Fazuck will answer questions as long as the group wants to listen; as soon as the group members have had enough, Fazuck will quietly make arrangements for them to stay the night. The referee should proceed to the adventure section entitled When Afternoon Comes.

If any player character should mention the Martian burial tomb or talk about Martian kings, strange holes in the ground, or exotic gems and riches, Fazuck will seem almost mesmerized by the sudden turn in the conversation, though he will profess no knowledge of such things himself ("perhaps the chiefs know more than

I"). However, if any player character should make the mistake of showing Fazuck any valuable artifacts retrieved from the tomb, or even worse, try to offer any of them in trade for information, Fazuck will politely decline. He will add that he is very tired and that everyone should get some rest before morning. The referee should proceed to the adventure section entitled When Morning Comes.

A SUDDEN ALARUM

RANIX HEADS for the largest cooking fire near the center of the village. He rummages around on one side, finds the bone horn he was apparently looking for, and then blows into it with all his might.

The hideous sound (not unlike a moose groaning in pain) quickly awakens the entire camp. The clan's warriors, half-asleep but with bows in hand, stream out of their tents and form a rough semicircle immediately facing the group. Not everyone's face

is illuminated, but those bearing lit torches do not look pleased.

Weapons are now aimed at the adventurers, and some warriors are holding ropes. They make gestures to indicate they intend to bind the hands of everyone in the group. The group is clearly outnumbered (by a factor of three), and several warriors will pull back their bowstrings if the group needs additional inspiration. The more the characters resist, the rougher the treatment they will receive. After being bound and having their weapons removed, the characters will be given a place to sleep. Once they are in a tent for the night, the ropes will be removed, and the nomads will place armed guards near the entrance; the characters are not permitted to leave. The players should realize the nomads were firm in their handling of the characters, but they were neither deliberately rough nor callously cruel. The referee should proceed to the section entitled When Morning Comes.



IMPORTANT DETAILS

REGARDLESS OF whether the characters arise in the morning or the afternoon after the night's events, certain conditions will exist. The group's gashants are grazing near the edge of the village with the clan's own mounts. No packs have been disturbed, and nothing will be found missing. Also, the first time any character leaves a tent or looks through its opening, he should be momentarily surprised, suddenly realizing how little the nomads generally wear (Alexandra, at least, would seem properly shocked).

WHEN MORNING COMES

THE BREAK of day may arrive with the party members in one of two classes: unwelcome visitors (because the group came in unexpectedly last night and had Ranix set off the village's alarm), or prisoners (because the group revealed too much to Fazuck about the taboo subject of Martian tombs or treasure). In either case, the group's obvious weapons (rifle, pistol, bow, etc.) have been removed and are now located in Fazuck's tent, where they shall remain for safekeeping. In the former case, the weapons were not returned; in the latter, the weapons were secretly removed during the night.

As Unwelcome Visitors

AFTER EVERYONE has awakened, Fazuck comes by the group's tent. He introduces himself stiffly, then explains that he has spoken briefly with the elders of the clan, and with Ranix and his mother. The characters, the nomads now realize, did nothing truly wrong; Ranix is the one to blame for bringing outsiders back to camp.

Nevertheless, the characters are not really welcome here. However, Fazuck is curious about them and is available to spend the morning answering any reasonable questions the group might have, as well as asking a few of his own. The group is not free to roam about the village, but one or two of them may be escorted to where their gashants are, if they should require any provisions from their packs. Fazuck's question-and-answer period will fill most of the day, and the referee should use the guidelines given in *Is There a Medicine Man in the House?* (except the group will have to provide its own refreshments).

Fazuck's questions include: Where has the group been travelling and for how long? What has the group seen in the way of animal life? Where were "outsiders" spotted in the Nepenthes-Thoth, particularly caravans? Has the group discovered any oasis or notable food supply of any sort? (The referee may make up any additional questions that come to mind.) If the taboo subject of tombs or treasure is raised at this time, Fazuck will end his questioning very quickly and then leave. As a result, the characters will be immediately recategorized as "prisoners" by the nomads, and the restrictions described in *As Prisoners*, below, go into effect as soon as Fazuck walks out of the tent. Otherwise, after the group has been briefed and Fazuck has had his own questions answered, it will be late afternoon. The referee should proceed directly to the adventure section entitled *Evening Council*.

As Prisoners

AFTER THE CHARACTERS have awakened, they may attempt to leave



their tent. There will be 2D6 guards, each armed with a bow and arrows, at the tent entrance or in the immediate vicinity and within easy range. When any character pokes his head out, a guard will order (in Nepenthes) the person back inside, adding that the characters will have their opportunity to speak at the elders' council this coming evening. The characters will be unable to sneak out, and they will have no visitors except for three guards (with armed escort) who bring in some food around midday; the group members will simply have to bide their time and hold their tongues until the meeting. The referee should proceed directly to the section entitled *Evening Council*.

WHEN AFTERNOON COMES

THE GROUP, thoroughly tired out by yesterday's events and last evening's lengthy talk, sleeps well past midday despite the typical noises of the nomad village. When the adventurers finally awaken, they realize where they are: in a simple nomad tent

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hastily prepared for them during the middle of last night by Fazuck the Healer. (No, Fazuck's beer was not drugged!)

Shortly thereafter, Fazuck pops his head through the opening and politely inquires of the group's needs, particularly food, water, and a private location to tend to personal essentials. If the group asks about their gashants, they will be told the animals are grazing (exactly as described in Important Details). Fazuck explains that the group's presence here will be discussed at an elders' council to be held tonight. Until that time, the characters are to be treated as members of a visiting clan. He also makes it clear to the group members that if they accept any of the nomads' food or water, they are placing themselves under limited obligation to the clan. (Fazuck's beer from last night does not count.)

The group is free to accept or decline Fazuck's offer of food with-

out insult. Whatever its choice, the entire group must abide by the same decision. Thomas suggests letting the majority rule: He and Whittington are in favor of eating the food and working; James and Alexandra would rather eat their own food. (The votes of the player characters will decide the outcome, and a tie means everyone will eat nomadic food and work, because Thomas' choice takes priority.)

If the group accepts the food, then its members will have to perform work during the remainder of the afternoon, just as a nomadic guest would. The tasks are mundane but not too difficult and resemble domestic work one could find anywhere. Meals need to be prepared, gashants tended, tents kept relatively debris-free, and so forth.

If the group members do not accept Fazuck's offer, then they can eat their own food and do whatever they like to fill the few hours left of the afternoon, provided they do not interfere with anyone else's work.

In either case, Thomas and Whittington would like to observe the routine goings-on as much as they can; the reporter may even try to take some photographs.

BLINDED BY THE FLASH

As DUSK FALLS, the villagers have their evening meal. Since the fate of the characters happens to be the major item on tonight's council agenda, they will be fed with the nomads, regardless of whether they are prisoners or guests.

Fazuck explains that this meal likewise does not obligate the group to the clan.

(Depending upon the characters' current status, Fazuck may whisper wryly that the group is in enough trouble as it is.)

Immediately after eating, the referee should make a quick roll against Whittington's Intellect. If the roll is not successful, Whittington will realize, with great sadness, that he cannot bring his photographic tent and camera along to the elders' council even if it means missing an opportunity to collect on the Royal Geographic Society prize for genuine photos of a Martian ceremony. (The referee should skip the remainder of this section and continue with Evening Council.)

If the roll is successful, however, Whittington will rush back to his gashant (as inconspicuously as possible), get his photographic tent, camera, and some photographic plates, and return.

When he enters the evening council, several Martians will look curiously at his assortment of bulky gear, but he will comment insistently that it is a necessary component of his "religion," and he must take it in with him.

After giving the question some thought, the Martians will let him enter with it. If any player character should want to convince Whittington

not to bring his equipment, that character will have to make a successful Difficult task roll against Eloquence skill. "Half-Witty" is pretty stubborn on this point.

The council will scarcely be underway (even before introductions have been completed), when Whittington will take his first (startling and noisy) photograph.

The sudden flash and the smoke of the photographic powder create an instant reaction among the elders present, and the reaction is not a positive one.

Several warriors will make threatening comments or gestures at the "lightning in the box," and Whittington is given two choices: either remove his camera from the council, or leave the council entirely and take his camera too. If Whittington removes his camera and then returns, as asked, he will be free to make written notes on the proceedings without interference.

On the other hand, if Whittington quickly tries to take a second photograph while supposedly in the act of putting his things away (he will make the attempt on a successful quick roll against the lower of his Agility or Intellect score), the warriors will rush him and utterly destroy the camera. Aside from a couple shoves, he will not be hurt in any way, but he will be forced to leave the council immediately.

EVENING COUNCIL

AFTER THE SUN has set, the group will be admitted to the elders' circle around the largest fire in the village. In due course the group is formally introduced to the three chiefs, the eldest of the elders; as they vote (it is

said), so will the others. Once they have made up their minds, for good or ill, the group's fate is a certainty. Every elder in the clan, wearing ceremonial dress, is gathered into a small circle around the fire.

The chiefs, Jekuyaz, Lopkan, and Zardan, begin the meeting with a lengthy, soberly conducted ritual: Moving from person to person, they wave a thin, smoldering bundle of steppe grass about each person's body while singing an incantation in peculiar, dissonant tones.

Then the characters get their chance to speak. If the subject of tombs or treasure has not been raised during conversations with Fazuck, the chiefs are primarily interested in answers to two questions:

- Why are the characters here?
- What makes the characters believe they are worthy to be guests of the clan?

The latter question may catch the characters off guard, as well it should.

If Fazuck knows of the group's tomb encounter, a third question is posed:

- How dare the characters trespass on sacred ground—not even where the clan's own ancestors are buried, but into the tomb of a deity from long ago?

Each character will be given sufficient time to answer each question in turn, and the referee should see that this melodrama is role-played to the fullest.

Each character should make a quick roll against Intellect to realize that any talk of bravery or brave deeds might weigh slightly in the group's favor, while the subject of ancient Martian tombs and antique treasures will work against them.

YOUNGEST of the three chiefs, Jekuyaz is also the most forceful, least charismatic, least experienced, and least intelligent. Jekuyaz believes the only way to survive on the steppes is to skulk around, letting others do the work while he takes the credit. Unfortunately, Jekuyaz does not accept the fact that an agile body is no competent replacement for an ineffective mind; however,

Jekuyaz (Experienced NPC)

many warriors still seem to like him.

Jekuyaz's native language is Nepenthes.

Motives: Eccentric, Proud.

Appearance: Jekuyaz is an ugly Martian, with closely cropped brown hair on one side of his head and unkempt shaggy hair on the other (the shaggy side conceals a scar). The coloration of his skin is unusually splotchy, with patches of yellow.



Attributes Skills

Str:	1	Fisticuffs 1
Agl:	6	Stealth 5, Marksmanship 2 (bow)
End:	2	Wilderness Travel 2 (foraging), Tracking 1
Int:	2	Observation 1
Chr:	1	Eloquence 1
Soc:	6	Riding 6 (gashant), Leadership 3

THE OLDEST chief, Lopkan, is quite conservative in his approach to leadership. A fair outdoorsman and fantastic gashant rider, Lopkan will not get on a mount he has not checked personally. By the same token, he will not make a decision until every consideration has been made, every possibility evaluated. His thinking could be described as methodical if it were not so painfully slow. However, Lopkan has a

Lopkan (Veteran NPC)

vile temper (born of ego) and should not be riled.

Lopkan's native language is Nepenthes.

Motives: Proud, Arrogant, Steady.

Appearance: Lopkan is a grizzled Martian, old-looking but still in full control of his faculties. His face is gaunt and drawn, his hair a peculiar red and gray (not totally unlike a salt-and-pepper beard), his gait just a little unsteady.



Attributes Skills

Str:	2	Fisticuffs 1, Throwing 1
Agl:	2	Stealth 1, Marksmanship 2 (bow)
End:	3	Wilderness Travel 3 (foraging), Tracking 3
Int:	3	Observation 2
Chr:	2	Eloquence 1
Soc:	6	Riding 7 (gashant), Leadership 4

REACHING A VERDICT

THE PERSUASIVE ARGUMENTS each character makes may convince one or more chiefs to permit the group to join the clan since this seems to be the option open (the obvious alternative is to be cast out). The referee should make a series of secret task rolls, using the highest of each character's Eloquence, Bargaining, or Theatrics skill. The referee will eventually roll three times for every character, with one attempt for influencing each chief.

The difficulty of convincing the

chiefs, and thus the task roll difficulty, will depend largely on the group's course of action prior to the elders' council. If the characters met with Fazuck during the middle of the night (as in *Is There a Medicine Man in the House?*), it will be a Moderate task (because Fazuck spoke privately to the elders on the group's behalf). If the characters came in with Ranix and awoke the village (as in *A Sudden Alarum*), the task will be Difficult (for disturbing the tranquillity of the village). If the characters casually

mentioned tombs and treasure to Fazuck without going into great detail, the task will be Formidable (even brief talk of such things is taboo). Finally, if the characters openly described being inside the tomb, talked about specific treasures, or showed any such treasures to Fazuck, the task will be Impossible (the alien red men openly commit heresy!).

During the council itself, if a character should offer to challenge any warrior to a duel, the duel need not be fought; after all, this is an elders' council, and a certain sense of decorum must be preserved. The offer alone will be sufficient proof of the character's courage (and thus score points in the character's favor). On the other hand, if the character talks openly of tombs and treasure at the council, being cast out from the clan is virtually assured; pressing the subject may even result in arrows flying during the meeting to silence the heretic. Other little incidents, such as Whittington's unwelcome behavior with the camera (if it should take place), may likewise tip the balance of favor one way or another.

The referee will have to keep secret records of each persuasion task roll, noting which character's roll is being made and which chief the roll is being applied to. If any character makes a successful task roll and convinces a chief the group should belong, the referee would not have to roll again for any other character to convince that particular chief. If a task roll fails by only a point or two, and the player was especially determined in his efforts at role-playing or careful in his speech, the referee may elect to "fudge" the results so the attempt is made successful (and vice versa).

Zardan (Veteran NPC)



ZARDAN is perhaps the fairest of them all, physically, intellectually, charismatically, and judicially. He believes in giving everyone "a fair shake," and will take pains to avoid any prejudice toward humans. He wants to be a tribal steppelord, and he believes the group's presence might provide the moment of crisis needed to prove himself a worthy leader.

Zardan's native language is Nepenthes.

Attributes	Skills
Str: 1	
Agl: 2	Stealth 1, Marksmanship (bow 1, pistol 1)
End: 4	Wilderness Travel 4 (foraging), Tracking 1
Int: 3	Observation 4
Chr: 6	Eloquence 5, Theatrics 1, Linguistics 1 (Koline)
Soc: 6	Riding 6 (gashant), Leadership 3

Motives: Just, Ambitious, Driven.

Appearance: Slight of build and with an oval (rather than square) jaw, Zardan is more of a thinking nomad's chief. He has long, thick, wavy, brown hair, neatly tied into the Martian equivalent of a ponytail, and he maintains a stiffly erect posture.

At this point, before the votes are actually cast, the elders order the characters to be removed from the council and escorted back to their tents. Physical force will be used, if necessary. Fazuck will assure the characters that this action is customary and bears no relationship to the likely outcome of the vote (whatever it might be). The tribal elders will inform the group of their decision sometime before midday tomorrow. The group members will remain in their tents under guard for the night,

and they may not attempt to escape.

After every character has attempted to convince every chief, the referee secretly examines the records and totals up the number of chiefs who were duly convinced. Remember, it only takes one character to convince a chief on the entire group's behalf, and there are as many rolls to con-

vince each chief as there are characters. If two or three chiefs have been convinced, the group is allowed to stay with the clan. If only one chief has been convinced, the group will be kept as captives (slaves, really). If no chief is convinced (after all those rolls!), the group is cast out; if they ever return to the clan, they shall be killed. Whatever the verdict might be, all present at the council agree it should be revealed to the characters immediately after the morning meal, and the council is adjourned.



PASSING SENTENCE

AT THE TIME indicated previously, the chiefs render their verdict. After a few brief comments on how the characters arrived in the nomad's camp (mostly the characters' own statements from last night on how their presence here came about), each chief will state how he voted: in favor of the group being admitted to the clan or opposed. After a lengthy pause, Lopkan will interpret what the final results of this vote mean for the characters, in terms of acceptance, slavery, or a casting-out (as described in *Reaching a Verdict*).

Fazuck will then explain the results of the final verdict: If the characters are to be cast out, they must be gone by nightfall and may not return to any clan of the Southern Shistomik tribe upon penalty of death. However, they may spend the remainder of the daylight hours packing to leave. For his part, Fazuck will hate to see the characters go; they were interesting, if admittedly alien, company.

If the characters are to become slaves, their change in status will become official tomorrow. Fazuck quietly tells them that they may stay and accept their new status (of indefinite duration), or they may pack up this evening and make their escape during the night.

Finally, if the characters are to become guests, throughout the day individuals and small numbers of nomads will approach members of the group and make solemn gestures of welcome and nomadic brotherhood.

THE SCOUTING PARTY

DURING THE AFTERNOON, roughly halfway between the midday and evening meals, three Martians riding

gashants enter the center of the village. Any character who sees them should make a successful Easy task roll against Observation skill to recognize them as Canal Martians, "a Martian of a different color," so to speak. They are wearing some sort of uniforms, carrying knives (in scabbards) and bows, and seem in excellent spirits. They do not speak if spoken to, but will laugh, make many animated gestures, and speak to each other. If any character makes a successful Formidable task roll against Observation skill, he recognizes their uniforms as military in nature and possibly similar to those worn by cavalry scouts from Shastapsh (for Thomas only, the difficulty is Moderate, due to an orientation session he took prior to beginning the adventure). Fazuck and the elders are not near; besides the characters, only a few nomadic workers see the scouts.

The scouts, speaking softly among themselves, may be overheard if any character makes a successful Difficult task roll against Observation skill and a quick roll against Linguistics (Parhooni). If only the first roll is successful, then the character will realize they are conversing but not in a recognizable language; if only the second roll is successful, then the character knows they are speaking in Parhooni, but they are speaking too softly to make out anything meaningful. If both rolls are successful, the character learns that the scouts:

- Are very surprised and pleased to find this nomad camp here.
- Are anticipating a promotion or other substantial favors when they get word back to the rest of the unit.
- Are not very far away from a much larger force.

After looking around for a few minutes, the scouts ride off toward the southeast. If armed, the characters may shoot at them (though nothing could possibly justify taking such an action based solely on what the scouts have done so far); the scouts will only draw weapons if they are threatened. The referee can set up the attack as desired. If unarmed, the PCs will have no possible way of stopping them.

Once the scouts have left, Fazuck can be found in his tent. When he hears about the scouts he will become quite disturbed. Cavalry from Shastapsh, he relates, has attacked other nomadic clans without provocation, and there certainly is no love lost between the two races of Martians. He will tell an elder immediately, but there is little else he can do; nomads, by custom, rarely post guards while in camp. Besides, most of the warriors and braves are out on hunting parties. In the meantime, if the nomads are still holding the group's weapons, they will continue to do so. Fazuck will not reveal where the weapons are being kept (they are actually in his own tent, buried under a pile of hides).

ATTACK OF

THE CANAL MARTIANS

THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS describe a major attack against the nomad village committed by cavalry from the (Canal) Martian city-state of Shastapsh. Before refereeing this encounter, it is important to verify the location of the group's weapons: Were they confiscated by the nomads shortly after the group's arrival (as in *When Morning Comes*) or does the group have them (as in *When Afternoon Comes*)? If the weapons were never taken away, then the referee

must establish whether the characters have them near at hand or not.

After The Main Wave begins, the entire nomad camp will become embroiled in a large melee. The referee has the option of handling this combat by using conventional **Space: 1889** rules, by the abstract method included with this book, or by the **Soldier's Companion** miniatures rules. If the conventional rules are used, the referee will wish to use the map of the nomad camp provided later in this book on page 53.

The Main Wave

ABOUT AN HOUR and a half after the scouts departed, a detachment of Shastapshan cavalry proceeds to enter the nomad camp at full gashant-gallop. The quickest way for the charac-

ters to get the camp's attention is to find the bone horn left on the ground near the center campfire.

A small lead cavalry party, numbering 1D6+5 in all, slows to a stop by the campfire near the center of the village. One cavalryman bears a standard; the rest are obviously officers. Meanwhile the other riders continue to surround the camp.

If the characters sounded the alarm and a nomad fighting party (1D6+2 nomads) has been summoned, the cavalry will attack them immediately. If the characters are armed and open fire, the cavalry will return fire (the sounds of gunfire will also bring the fighting party if they have not already entered the fray). This skirmish will be strictly limited to the characters, nomad fighting party (who fight side

by side with the characters), and the lead cavalry party; the other troops will not interfere unless the lead party is wiped out.

If the characters did not sound the alarm, are not armed, or do not open fire, the cavalry will seem to be waiting for someone or something to happen. After about 10 minutes, however, several of the cavalrymen will fire their muskets. Once there is gunfire, everyone in the nomad camp will realize what is going on. At this point Fazuck will get the characters' attention and draw them toward his tent. Once there, he will return all their weapons and wish them good hunting. He confesses he should not be doing this, but the other warriors have not returned yet, and his people will need their help to survive.



Abstract Combat Results

IF THE REFEREE and players intend to role-play the entire battle or to fight it out using the **Soldier's Companion** miniatures rules, then this section should be skipped (or the referee could use these results as a source of inspiration for the ongoing attack, even if it is conducted in detail).

As the main attack begins, seven primary courses of action are possible. Individuals may declare that they are staying to fight in the open, staying to fight from behind cover, hiding in a village tent, hiding among the bodies of fallen nomads (later in the battle), trying to run away on foot, trying to get to the gashants and ride away, or offering to surrender.

PCs should be given only a brief time to discuss their options (perhaps two minutes of real time), and not all characters need perform the same action. Each character should record his particular course of action before the result of any character's action is revealed. Of the NPCs in the group, James and Thomas will fight from cover, Alexandra will hide in a tent (and fight if discovered), and Whittington will hide in a tent (and run if discovered). The referee should let these four NPCs withstand as many wounds as player characters can (i.e., they die from wounds greater than the sum of their Strength and Endurance, and not merely from three or more wounds.) It is also suggested that if any character should openly consider surrender as an option, Fazuck advises strongly against it.

Fighting in the Open: On a successful quick roll against Agility, the character survives uninjured; if not, then roll a die: On a roll of 1-3, the character receives 1D+1 wounds

from arrows; on a roll of 4-5, he receives 1D/2 (rounded up) wounds; on a roll of 6, he receives one wound. He kills or incapacitates cavalry equal to 1D times one-half his Marksmanship skill level (rounded up) times the wound value of his weapon.

Fighting From Cover: If the character makes a successful quick roll against either Agility or Fieldcraft skill (make two separate rolls), the character survives uninjured; if not, then roll a die: On a roll of 1, the character receives 1D+1 wounds from arrows; on a roll of 2-3, the character receives 1D/2 (round up) wounds; on a roll of 4-6, the character receives one wound. The character kills or incapacitates a number of cavalry equal to 2D6 times one-half his Marksmanship skill (round up).

Hiding in Tents: On a roll of 1-2, the tent is undisturbed, and the character survives undetected and uninjured. On a roll of 3-4, the tent is knocked over, and the character is exposed (but not immediately observed—treat as Running Away on Foot or Fighting in the Open, player's choice). On a roll of 5-6, the tent is torched by a cavalryman; the character has the option of sitting it out as long as possible and taking 1D burn wounds while letting the cavalry pass, or of getting out and Running Away on Foot or Fighting in the Open (player's choice).

Hiding Among the Fallen: If the character makes a successful quick roll against either Stealth skill or Theatrics skill (make two separate rolls), the character goes undetected among the other bodies; if not, the character flinches at some inopportune moment and is detected; proceed as if the character were Fighting in the

Open and reroll. If the character survives, he makes it to safety rather than causing casualties.

Running Away on Foot: If the character makes a successful quick roll against Endurance *and* a second successful quick roll against his Stealth skill level, he gets away and reaches cover, where he will be completely safe until ready to return to the village. If either roll is unsuccessful, then treat this option as if the character were Fighting From Cover and reroll for effects (the character only causes half as many enemy casualties, however). If both rolls are unsuccessful, then proceed as if he were Fighting in the Open and reroll. If the character survives, he makes it to safety rather than causing casualties.

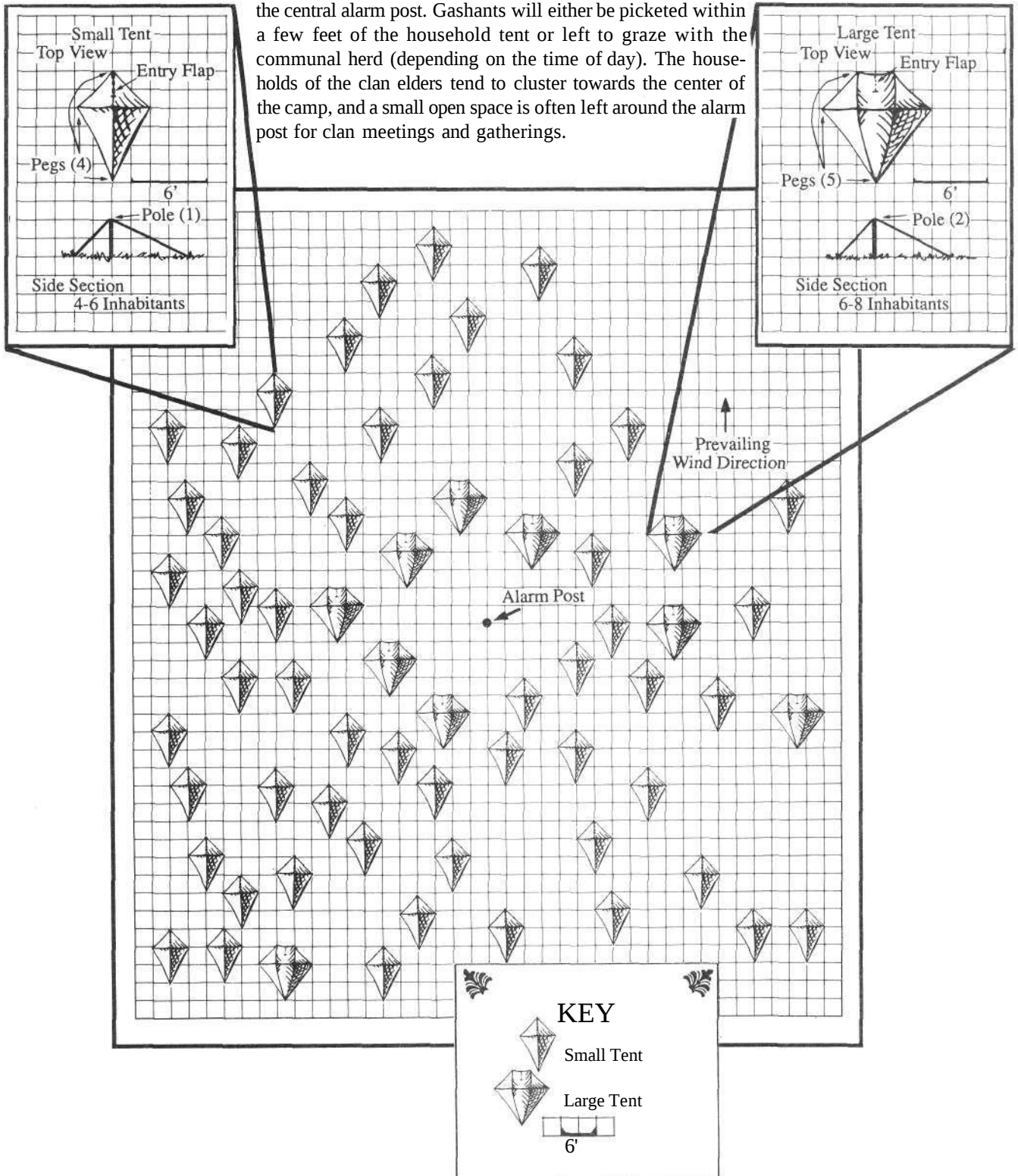
Riding Away on a Gashant: If the character makes a successful quick roll against Agility and a second successful quick roll against his Riding skill level, he gets away and reaches cover, where he will be completely safe until ready to return to the village. If either roll is unsuccessful, then treat this option as if the character were Fighting From Cover and reroll for effects. If both rolls are unsuccessful, then proceed as if he were Fighting in the Open and reroll. If the character survives, he makes it to safety rather than causing casualties.

Offering to Surrender: Given the current political situation in Shastapsh, the cavalrymen will be surprised to find humans among the nomads. They are unlikely to take human prisoners, but they may if the referee desires. Prisoners will be bound and taken back to the main camp for questioning, after which they will ultimately be returned to Shastapsh unless rescued.

NOMAD CAMP

TYPICAL NOMAD CAMP

THE LAYOUT of nomad camps varies from campsite to campsite. Family groups will pitch the household tent or tents wherever is convenient in a circle within a few hundred feet of the central alarm post. Gashants will either be picketed within a few feet of the household tent or left to graze with the communal herd (depending on the time of day). The households of the clan elders tend to cluster towards the center of the camp, and a small open space is often left around the alarm post for clan meetings and gatherings.



Pillaging the Village

FROM A PRACTICAL STANDPOINT, the surviving nomads have little alternative but to abandon their village and flee. Between the size of the attacking force and the untimely absence of most warriors, they simply do not have any chance of putting up an effective defense, even with the group's help. A few warriors will charge on foot, while others will try to get to their gashants for a cavalry counterattack of their own, but it is basically a hopeless situation. As ill-afforded casualties mount by the minute, individual members of the clan (mostly workers) will mount up and scatter with only what they can carry, leaving many of their meager possessions behind.

A few of the Shastapshan cavalry light torches and begin to burn some of the huts down, but the attack is neither thorough nor systematic. They do not loot for valuables; the acts of violence against the nomads more closely resemble wanton vandalism than organized warfare. As a result, despite the extensive damage and casualties, the cavalry has been comparatively merciful in its destruction. No doubt several dozen nomads have been killed and many more are wounded, but the troops of marauding attackers are not even bothering to pursue those who have fled. Only taunts and jeers follow the nomads in their desperate haste.

The Shastapshan cavalry officers express a cavalier attitude toward life: Wounded nomads and cavalymen alike are left for dead. They are not taking nomad prisoners, either. They have expressed an interest in one category of villager, however: at least three dozen females, in the process of making their escape, are swept up by some of the Canal Martians and carried off.

One Thin Soldier

AFTER WHAT AMOUNTS to a single quick attack through the center of the village and a few dozen huts set aflame, the cavalymen leave, heading toward the southeast from whence they came. The cries of the wounded mingle with the smell of burning grass and burnt hides. The entire attack took less than 15 minutes.

There are a number of non-fatal casualties on both sides, abandoned throughout the village. One such wounded Martian, a member of the lead cavalry unit, is particularly young, unusually slender, and extremely boastful. While gritting his teeth from the pain, he taunts those near him with threats of the cavalry's return. He also claims, probably with complete accuracy, that his wing

could have wiped out the entire village if it wanted to, but doing so was really not worth the bother. Wait until the entire regiment moves through, he adds. Nothing will remain standing in its path. With a successful Moderate task roll against Theatrics skill a character can trick this vain, yet naive, warrior into revealing the location and status of the Shastapshan cavalry regiment. It is currently on the move, but within three days it should be encamped about 20 miles to the southeast, where it will remain for the next week or 10 days before moving deeper into the Nepenthes-Thoth Steppe.

MEMBERS OF A SMALL CLAN

A HANDFUL of stunned and exhausted nomads start to pick through what remains of their village. At this point, the referee should roll once each for Fazuck, Jekuyaz, Lopkan, and Zardan: On a roll of 1-2, the NPC has been killed in combat (except for Fazuck, who is also wounded on a roll of 1-2); on a roll of 3-4, the NPC has been wounded; on a roll of 5-6, the



NPC is unhurt. Ranix, hunting with a warrior party, was not in camp during the attack, but his beloved, Odora, was (she will prove to one of those kidnapped by the cavalry).

The nomad elders (those who are still alive) meet briefly with the characters in the center of their charred camp. One comments wryly about how things have changed so drastically since the morning. Regardless of whether the characters were supposed to be accepted as guests, enslaved, or cast out, several fought bravely (and may have been injured) for the nomads' cause. This proves the group's honorable intentions far better than any words could; those heroic, if ultimately futile, deeds have convinced even the most devout nomad elder of their sincerity. Without the characters' valiant assistance, even more nomads would have joined the dead, and it is hard to show respect for old deities when one is not among the living. Perhaps as importantly, many of those who are still alive have fled and are now scattered across the steppes; the elders need everyone they can get who can fight, even if this

means humans. Any mention of Martian burial tombs or taboos is immediately forgotten.

One elder silently goes through some of the unburned huts and returns with a handful of necklaces, each bearing one tooth from a steppe tiger, teshuwaan, or koljiss. He moves slowly, placing one necklace around the neck of each character (even females) who actively fought against the cavalry. These characters are now members of the tribe, with full rights and privileges (the others will be tolerated). This is not the normal initiation ceremony, Fazuck explains, but it will do under the circumstances; many things have not been normal on this day.

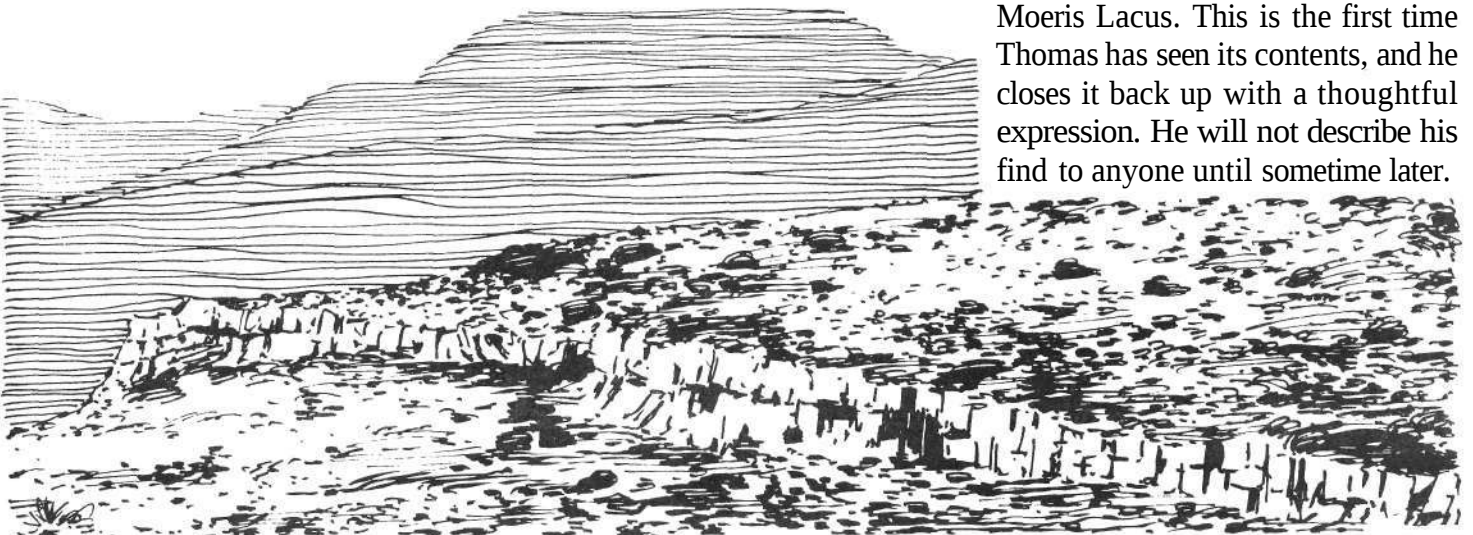
The warrior hunting parties return over the course of the next hour, too late to be of any value in pursuing the Shastapsh cavalry. All that is left to do for the moment is tend to the wounded and perform burial rites for the dead.

GOING FOR HELP

IT IS an abbreviated group of nomads which meets at that evening's elders' council. The characters, though not permitted to vote, have status as warriors and may speak

openly at the meeting. The surviving chiefs, no longer having much of a clan to lead, angrily suggest moving deeper into the steppe to find other clans of the tribe. The chiefs will send messengers to call for an emergency tribal gathering so that many elders can meet, formulate some kind of plan, and then attack the Canal Martians. Since one clan (at least) has already been attacked and scattered, the entire tribe should want to seek revenge. Of course, now that the characters are sworn members of the tribe, they are expected by custom to stay with what is left of the clan and fight alongside their "brothers." By the end of the council, it is the consensus of the clan to travel north (or west, depending upon the clan's location) for several days and locate another nomad village, then send out to all clans a call to arms.

Just before everyone retires for the evening, Thomas silently goes outside and takes a brief walk; he says he will be back in just a few minutes. In actuality, he goes to Alexandra's gashant (surprisingly, the cavalry did not cut the gashants loose or otherwise tamper with the clan's stock) and opens the box of dynamite Major Robinson gave him when they left Moeris Lacus. This is the first time Thomas has seen its contents, and he closes it back up with a thoughtful expression. He will not describe his find to anyone until sometime later.



A NEW GATHERING

FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS, the surviving members of the clan (including the character-warriors) will travel. Their general course will be north or west, with the referee directing the movement (through the will of the NPC elders) in such a way that they do not leave the portion of the Nepenthes-Thoth Steppe shown on the small-scale area map on pages 6-7. The referee should roll random encounters twice daily as before but should mandate a village encounter during the second day.

Once a nomad village is encountered, the clan will rest, and the combined elders of both clans will meet secretly (the characters are not invited to this council). Several dozen messengers on especially swift gashants are dispatched, and a tension begins to fill the air. This clan is larger than the characters' "own" clan ever was, even before the attack, and a sense of despair gives way to a glimmer of vengeful hope.

Scouting Reports

NORMAL NOMADIC ROUTINE has been virtually ruined, as an elders' council runs continuously save for sleeping and meal periods. Tension continues to mount as nomadic messengers and scouts fulfill their duties and return with reinforcements or recent news. Over the next four days, several entire clans of the Southern Shistomik tribe move into the area where the PCs are now making camp.

Scouts bring back descriptions of other sporadic cavalry raids, mostly against clans already on the move. One or two clans have suffered worse attacks than the characters' clan, but most were not hit as hard; nomad

warriors put up a stiff defense when they are travelling. However, additional reports have come in that a large force of enemy cavalry had been massing roughly where the boastful warrior claimed, but it has moved unexpectedly. "Where?" everyone asks. Approximately 30 miles south of the

like cloth rather than animal skins, and a pack train hauls the unit's heavy supplies from place to place; the train does not take part in attacks but remains behind in comparative safety.

When the fighting troops of a Shastapshan cavalry regiment deployed in nomad territory leave their camp,



tribe's current location. "How large a force?" the elders demand to know. The answer: Perhaps as much as two or three regiments, though youthful scouts often tend to exaggerate.

The Enemy Camp

ACCORDING to the best reports, a Shastapshan cavalry regimental camp is not unlike a nomad camp, except it is somewhat larger and more elaborately furnished—and contains a far higher percentage of combatants (roughly three-fourths, compared to less than one-fourth for nomad clans). The camp tents are made of a canvas-

fewer than 10 percent are left to guard it. This is primarily because the Shastapshan cavalry has some respect for the nomads as an individual fighter, but no respect whatsoever for nomads as tacticians; the cavalry simply does not believe that nomad elders could ever think far enough ahead to formulate an effective plan for attacking an armed camp (and actually, this criticism is a pretty accurate assessment). There are, of course, very few women and no children travelling with a Shastapshan cavalry regiment. This is, after all, a professional military unit out in the field—it's not just a

haphazard group of wandering Hill Martian "gypsies."

Snap Election for Steppelord

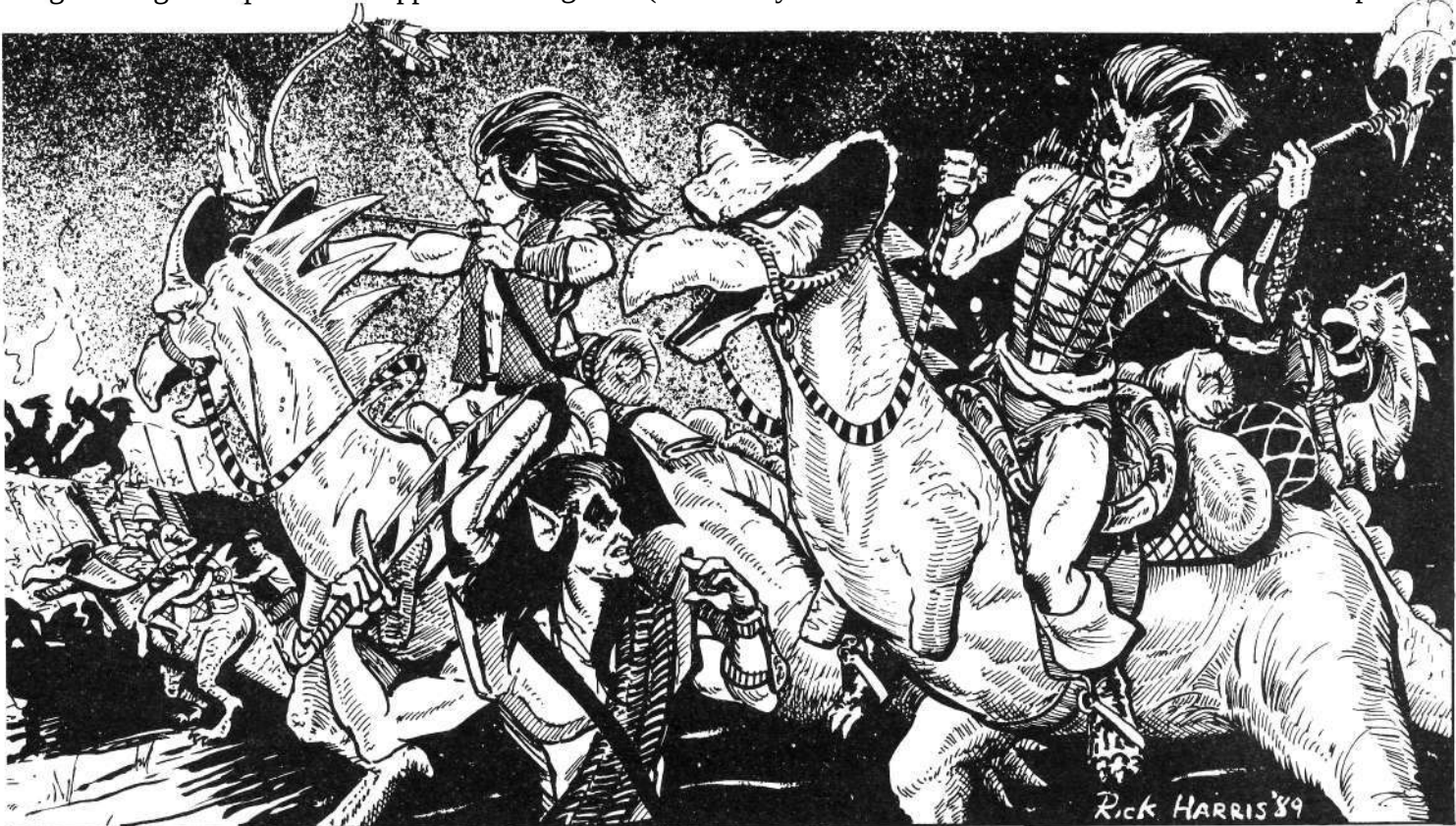
As IF EVENTS were not going badly enough, another shocking message comes in during the fifth morning of this gathering: The previous steppe-

clan, an elder whom the characters have never heard of before (naturally enough), becomes steppelord.

Tribal Hue and Cry

Now THAT the clans of the Southern Shistomik tribe have been gathered together (or as many as could be

encampment. Some of the other possibilities include retreating into the steppe and drawing the cavalry further away from their city-state, conducting a direct frontal assault against the camp at night, and challenging each cavalryman to single combat until all of one side has been incapaci-



lord of the Southern Shistomik tribe is announced to be dead, reportedly killed during another cavalry attack. The tribe is now without a leader. Heated debate begins even before the midday meal, and rages throughout the afternoon and evening. Who will be the next chosen steppelord?

If Zardan is still alive, he will be nominated. Some time shortly before dawn of the next day (the "election" council will continue straight through the night), he is selected by the elders and a general vote of the entire tribe to hold the title. If Zardan was killed earlier, another chief from a different

with such short notice), they must decide upon a course of action. If the tribe's elders felt angered by the attacks against individual clans, news of a huge force within a day's ride has struck in them a chord of rage. Unfortunately, the nomads can only gather a few hundred trained warriors from all the clans combined, while best estimates would indicate the enemy has at least twice that number.

Opinion is strongly divided on the best course of action, but in characteristic nomad fashion, the largest group supports a quick, hastily arranged raid against the Shastapshan

tated (the cavalry is unlikely to cooperate in this last).

Even with the best intentions the nomads have, most of their attack plans are impractical given the odds favoring the defenders. Any hastily organized, poorly coordinated, or haphazardly launched offensive will almost certainly fail, and its effect will be to leave the nomads in worse shape than they were in.

Instead, one or more characters should propose an alternative plan of attack. If the player characters have no specific ideas, Thomas will propose one of his own.

A Simply Dynamite Plan

THOMAS' ATTACK PLAN, which he describes enthusiastically, is to form the nomads and characters into three separate groups. The first group, the main force, will contain perhaps three-quarters of the tribe's warriors and braves. They will ride near the Shastapshan encampment, make as if to attack, and coax the cavalry regiment to follow, a fairly commonplace nomad tactic. As soon as the regiment mounts up and pursues, the nomads will gradually draw it a reasonable distance away from its camp. The first group's attack must be vicious enough to lure the entire unit, leaving only a skeleton force to guard the encampment.

The second group, the strike force, will contain almost all the remaining nomads. Its assignment, once the regiment is clear and away, is to come into the encampment from the opposite direction, proceed to cut the ruumet breehr herd and most of the gashants loose from their ties, and then spook them into stampeding, scattering the regiment's only means of transporting heavy goods. Gashants cannot haul some of the provisions the regiment requires, and so it must have its ruumet breehrs.

The third group, consisting of the characters themselves and perhaps a half-dozen seasoned warriors as protection against stragglers, will move into the encampment from a third direction and destroy as much of it as possible by fire, using the dynamite if it encounters major resistance. Then both the second and third group will withdraw as quickly as they can (before the regiment returns), and the entire force will regroup at a safe distance.

This plan has some advantages: It may be one way to even out the already uneven odds; it lets every warrior fight; it will be an unexpectedly complex tactic for nomads, so there is a good chance the cavalry will "swallow the bait"; and through its use the nomads may be able to inflict a meaningful setback should Shastapsh have any grandiose plans to expand its city-state into the steppe region. Naturally, Thomas admits, there are also some disadvantages to the plan: The main force may suffer very heavy casualties in luring the entire regiment away from camp while keeping it at bay, and the timing could go afoul, causing the forces to work at cross-purposes.

The nomads are extremely skeptical about the power of dynamite. ("It is hard to believe in the destructive power of a narrow, little stick"). Fazuck will speak on the characters' behalf, saying that they have kept their word before, and he trusts them now. (Fazuck has seen dynamite, but that is his own little secret). If Zardan is the current steppelord, he, too, will accept the characters' word at face value, but the only way any other steppelord will believe it is to have a live demonstration.

Thomas, if absolutely forced to, will reluctantly light a single, half-pound stick of dynamite in a cleared area and prove what he has said. After that, everyone will be utterly convinced, and the group's plan will be adopted by the entire tribe without reservation. The attack, the steppelord will announce, will begin tomorrow.

Of course, the PCs may have another plan, and if so Thomas will acquiesce to it. He will distribute his dynamite bombs in any case.

KEY



Tent



Baggage Wagon



Gate and Outwork



Abatis

One square=6'

CAVALRY COLUMNS

The central wagon-laager contains the column's supplies and the tents of the higher officers. If the outer works of an encampment are overwhelmed, this "citadel" offers a place for the soldiers to take shelter for a last stand.

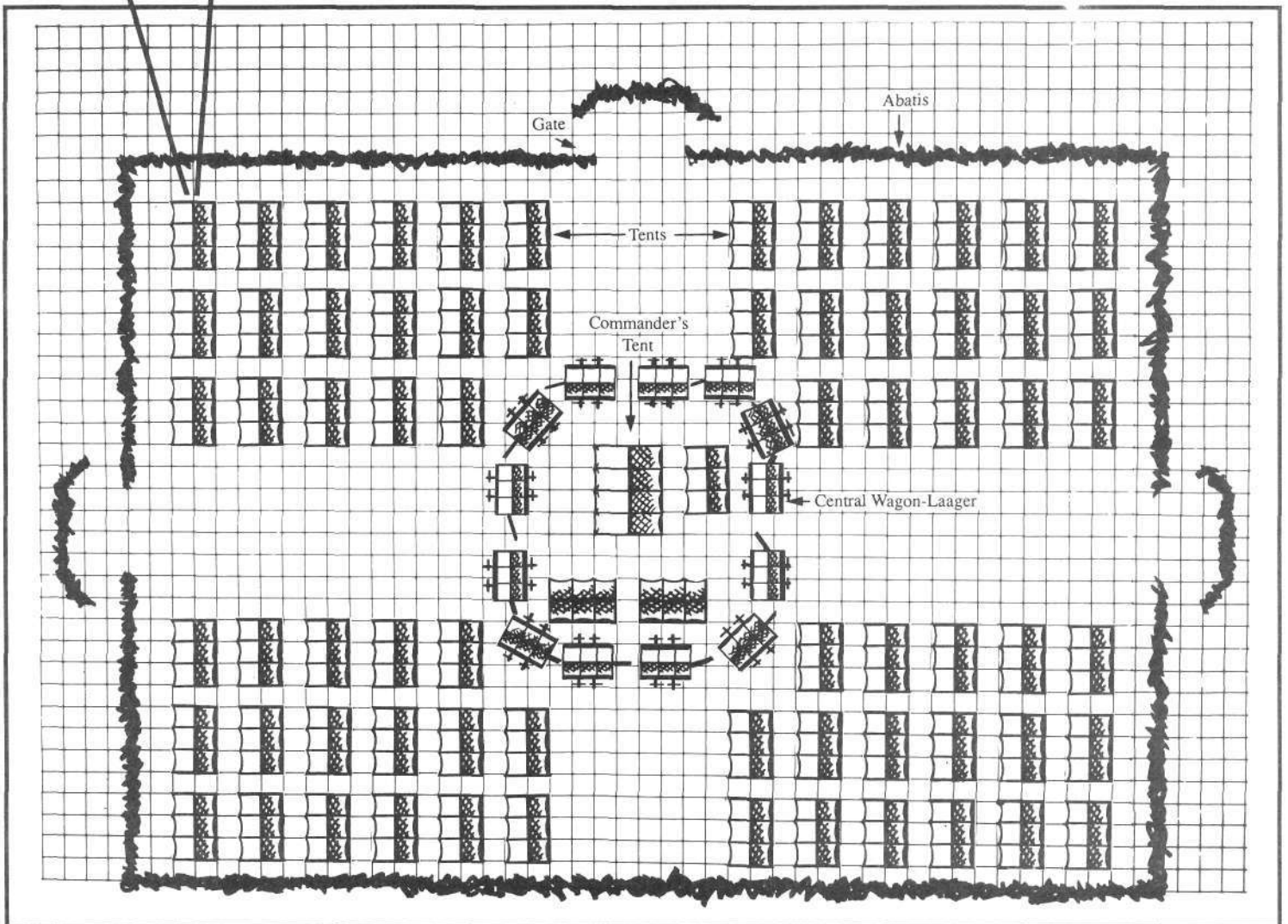
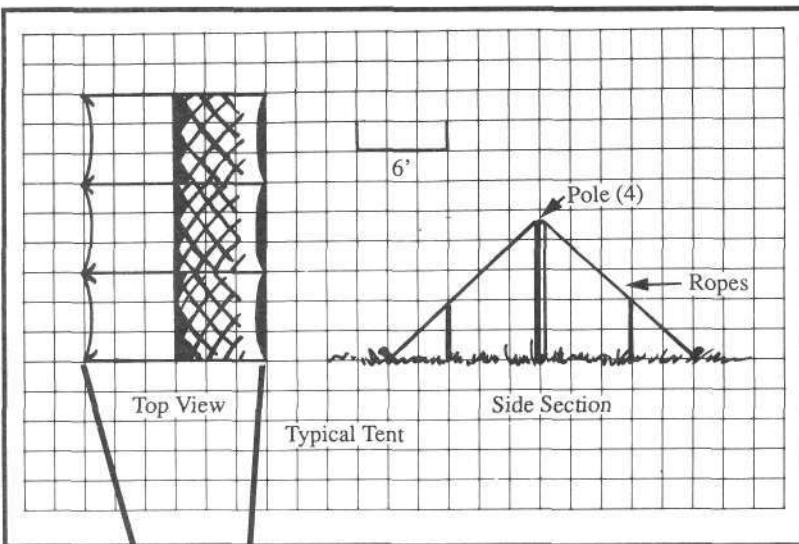
If the column is accompanied by artillery, this will either be deployed to cover the gates and/or posted at the four corners of the camp. Cavalry columns in action against the steppe nomads are not normally assigned artillery contingents.

CAVALRY CAMP

MARCHING CAMPS

LIKE THE ARMIES of other Canal Martians, the forces of the city-state of Shastapsh often construct marching camps when in enemy territory if they plan on occupying the same site for more than a day or so. These camps are usually surrounded by an abatis of thorn brush, sharpened stakes, rocks, and other obstacles gathered at the site. In recent years, small supplies of an American product called barbed wire have come into increasing use with city-state armies, but the supply of this material available to Shastapsh is small, and it is not supplied to units operating against the nomads.

A camp normally contains three gates or gaps in the abatis, each protected by a small outwork. The center of the camp consists of a wagon-laager formed from the column's baggage wagons. The outer perimeter of the camp will be patrolled by sentries, who will give the alarm in case of trouble. The soldiers inside the camp will respond by manning whatever side of the camp is threatened or by retreating to the central laager if the enemy is too powerful.



AFTERMATH

ASSUMING THE RAID ended in victory, it will have caused the destruction of the regiment's supplies and baggage train. Any prisoners in the camp can be rescued, and weapons can be "liberated" for use by the nomads. The raiders will split up, as agreed, and return to the tribal camp; another day and a half later, the characters' group will reach the village without incident and arrive to a heroes' welcome. Sadly, the main force suffered heavy casualties at the hands of the cavalry. Nevertheless, the tribe as a whole has survived, and it seems unlikely that it will be attacked in the near future. Scouts already report the regiment is preparing to move, and every indication is that it will return to its side of the Shatapshan border. For this, the characters are to be thanked.

FURTHER REVENGE

WITH ITS SUPPLIES gone, the Shatapshan cavalry will have to withdraw back to its main base. During this

process, it will be vulnerable to small, hit-and-run raids by the nomadic warriors, and it is possible that more casualties can be inflicted in this way than during the original attack on the cavalry camp.

The defeat of this cavalry regiment can be expected to hurt the efforts of the city-state in this region and force it to devote more troops to the supposedly secure steppes. Consequently, pressure will be taken off the British forces operating further to the west.

INITIATION

ONCE THE CHARACTERS have been given time to rest and recuperate fully from their ordeal, the steppelord will personally conduct formal initiation ceremonies.

Pledges of nomadic brotherhood are exchanged, and vows of courage and fortitude are sworn. Every character is asked to turn in his "old" necklace (the one given before the raid against the enemy camp), and each receives a new one bearing three teeth

and two small, hand-carved bones dyed bright red.

The bones, Fazuck explains, are a symbol of their bravery and martial ability.

The characters will be given nomad names, and their exploits will be added to the tribal songs of valor. From now on the characters will be respected as free-lances, able to come and go from the camp of any of the tribe's clans whenever they choose, and always able to call upon their friends in the tribe for assistance.

THE ADVENTURE'S CONCLUSION

WITH THE MASSACRE of the nomad village avenged, the characters reach the end of this specific adventure, but they are still in the middle of the Nephthes-Thoth Steppe, north of the rebellious city of Shastapsh, and must decide on their next course of action.

Two basic courses of action are open: The characters can stay on the steppes, or they can return to the British colony.

REWARDS

THE CHARACTERS will be paid by the Grimes family (or the survivors thereof). Characters in search of further monetary rewards will want to consider the possibility of writing articles for various periodicals and organizations.

The Royal Geographic Society has already offered £100 to Cartwright-Lloyd for details of the steppe nomads, and he will probably give the characters 10 to 15 percent, especially if they have saved his life at some point during

the adventure. Almost any newspaper or a magazine such as *Scribner's* or *Harper's* will be willing to pay £5-10 for the story of a heroic epic such as the characters have just been through.

The characters can sell artifacts they may have acquired to various merchants for whatever the market will bear. The cane, necklace, and jewels from the tomb (assuming the characters have successfully hung onto them) may be sold for the following prices: 2D6x£10 for the necklace and 1D6x£5 for the cane. The

jewels will fetch 1D6x£3 each.

Amongst less tangible rewards, the characters may have earned the friendship of Cartwright-Lloyd and the members of the Grimes family, depending on what has transpired. Some characters may have been adopted into the Southern Shistomik tribe, with a special necklace as proof. Producing such a necklace during future encounters with nomads will impress the warriors somewhat and smooth the path toward friendly relations.

The Grimes family and Cartwright-Lloyd will choose to return to the colony, and will ask the characters to return with them. If the characters stay and help the nomads, Thomas will pay the characters what they are owed, and all will bid them a fond and tearful farewell. Whoever goes back will receive an escort of nomads to the edge of the steppes.

FURTHER ADVENTURES ON THE STEPPES

IF THE CHARACTERS return to Moeris Lacus and civilization, they now have considerable experience travelling on the steppes in addition to a number of valuable contacts among the Southern Shistomik tribe. They are in a position to offer their services to Her Majesty's government as guides and go-betweens. If the British ever try to sway the steppe nomads to fight against Shastapsh, the characters can help with the negotiations. If military aid to the tribes is contemplated, the characters are ideally suited to guide any such expedition.

If the characters decide to remain on the steppes and help the Southern Shistomik tribe against the city of Shastapsh, everything will not be rosy. Many weapons and supplies of war were captured from the cavalry, and if the characters have military expedience, they might try to train the nomads in the use of these weapons and attempt to form a potent fighting force from the disorganized bands of warriors. They will find converting the nomads into trained cavalry to be an uphill fight against stubbornness, rigid adherence to tradition, and a conservative unwillingness to depart from proven way, but what's life without a challenge?



Appendices

APPENDIX I: THE CITY-STATE OF SHASTAPSH

SHASTAPSH IS a rarity among Martian city-states in that it came about as a result of relatively recent events. Most of the cities along the grand canals date from the Empire of the Seldons, but Shastapsh is of more recent construction. Because of the recent unpleasantness, opportunities for archaeological excavations have been few, and little is known about any previous habitation.

History

TRADITION IN Shastapsh itself holds that the city was established by a rival of the original Seldon, Idaan Shastapshaan, and conquered after a long and bitter campaign that left the city a mound of rubble. This is impossible considering that not a single building in Shastapsh dates from even the last period of imperial construction. The tall spires typical of so many canal cities are completely absent, and it is difficult to see how a city could have existed since the time of the early empire and not have had any major construction take place. Neither of the excavations that were undertaken before the present rebellion found any trace of buildings below levels associated with three to four centuries before the present. The city's dock

facilities are obviously not original constructions (the style and materials used are not consistent with those used by the builders of the grand canals). It is difficult to date the city with accuracy, but it seems to have been founded within the last three to five centuries of the present era.

The contention that the founder was a rival of the empire may not be completely mistaken, however, as it is possible that Idaan Shastapshaan was a rebellious local government official or (more likely) military officer who decided to strike out on his own. The present prince (Omahundaan II) retains the family name as a link with the city's "historic" past. Human historians believe the city began life as a brigand's camp, where a robber baron (like those who inhabited the Rhine River in Earth's medieval times) began extorting "tolls" on canal barges as a more profitable means of earning a living than raiding them. After a time, the camp became a town, the town a city, the city a minor mercantile center—and the tolls became taxes for the maintenance of the canal. Soon, except for its more modern architecture, Shastapsh was like every other Martian canal city.

Annexation

OMAHUNDAAN II ASSUMED the title of prince of Shastapsh upon the death

of his father in 1878. Neither he nor any other member of his court were fond of humans, but they managed to maintain peaceful (if not exactly warm) relations with the British until 1884, when six members of an anti-British secret society attacked and killed two British subjects (one of them a Methodist missionary) outside the Temple of the Water Monks in Shastapsh. The incident would have blown over if it had not become the subject of an opposition speech in the House of Commons, causing the P. M. some discomfort, and consequently bringing demands for action. When the governor-general of Syrtis Lapis demanded that the murderers be bound over for trial in Syrtis Major, the prince of Shastapsh refused. Public opinion demanded that the city be taught a lesson, and a gunboat squadron was sent to bombard the city in 1884. The prince turned the brigands over (or at least six Martians he said were the brigands), but he nursed a seething hatred of the British from that moment on.

In 1887, repeated pressure by British merchants, angry over the high tariffs and continual harassment of the growing human trade through the city, resulted in a military expedition and the subsequent annexation of the colony in that same year. A British military governor was appointed (the place was a conquered territory), and the prince was retired to private life on an estate outside of the city.

The Rebellion

THE PRINCE DID NOT stay inactive, however and began plotting to recover his throne. After the outbreak of the Oenotrian War in 1889, Omahundaan II, aided and abetted by

Oenotrian weapons and perhaps by German funds, led a rebellion that retook the city and trapped the governor and a party of humans in the government house at Shastapsh. The humans held out for several weeks, hoping for rescue either by aerial flyer or by an overland relief column. But Omahundaan's forces blocked attempts at relief by air and by land and weight of numbers eventually overwhelmed the tiny garrison. The relief column fell back on Moeris Lacus, where it has remained on the defensive. The effort seems to have damaged the forces of Shastapsh as well, since, aside from a few desultory attacks, they have not been active either. A stalemate seems to have been reached. Disquieting rumors of further human assistance to the rebels have recently reached the British colony, and a renewal of active hostilities may be expected soon.

APPENDIX II: SOLDIER'S COMPANION ORGANIZATIONS

THIS APPENDIX is provided for those who wish to make use of the **Soldier's Companion** miniatures rules for the battles in this adventure, or for a campaign game covering the nomads' fight against Shastapsh.

Southern Shistomiks

THE FORCES of the Southern Shistomik tribe consist of whatever warriors choose to follow a particular war leader for a single raid. Unit size is, therefore, extremely variable, and units may consist of as many as 12 warriors or as few as two, plus a like number of younger braves. All nomads are mounted on gashants and armed with a melee weapon of some

sort plus a bow. One warrior in 10 (and every third chief) will be armed with a captured Martian firearm, either a muzzle-loading musket or muzzle-loading carbine, in addition to a bow. Only war leaders and player characters may have terrestrial firearms (at the referee's option).

Each clan in a tribe has only one NPC war leader, but any PC may act as a war leader at the referee's discretion.

When a war leader wishes to lead a raid, he can raise war bands equal in number to his leadership plus one. A war band consists of a three leaders (one chief and two free-lances) and 2D6 warriors, plus one brave for each warrior (but never more than 20 warriors and braves combined). A war leader's personal warband is UV: V3; all others are UV: X2.

A village will be defended by 1D6 mounted war bands (size determined above), plus an equal number of dismounted braves and women armed only with melee weapons. These groups represent those warriors and braves who happen to be in camp. The dismounted fighters are UV: G1. All nomads are irregulars.

Army of Shastapsh

THE ARMY OF SHASTAPSH is a hastily raised citizens' army built around the cadre of the old city-state's municipal guard. The locally raised forces are organized in flags of two infantry war bands (three chiefs or leaders, plus 17 fighters), one cavalry warband (three chiefs or leaders, plus 17 fighters), and one gun section each (one teamster, one leader, and as many crewmen as the gun requires). The first five listed flags have heavy gun sections; the second five have light

gun sections. About half the men in each infantry warband have muskets or bows; the rest have only swords or spears. The Black Flag, however, appears to be entirely equipped with rifle muskets.

The details of the individual units are as follows:

Black Flag UV: V2

Red Flag UV: X2

Star Flag UV: X2

Blue Flag UV: T1

Striped Flag UV: T1

Green Flag UV: T1

Yellow Flag UV: T1

Orange Rag UV: T1

Sun Flag UV: T1

Quartered Flag UV: G1

The units assigned to the Shastapshan frontier consist primarily of city cavalry and nomad mercenaries (below), but an outlying border fort will have a small infantry garrison. At present, no artillery is deployed against the nomads.

Mercenaries

THERE ARE 10 bands of mercenary steppe nomad cavalry in Shastapsh service. One is UV: E3; six are UV: V3; and three are UV: X3. All are irregulars and are primarily failed free-lances and outcasts.

The Attack

THE ATTACK on the nomad camp in the adventure is undertaken by a mounted flag consisting of two brigade bands of cavalry, plus a baggage train (left in camp). This is 40 figures, representing about 400 actual fighters on the role-playing scale. The number and type of defenders will depend on the circumstances of the adventure up to the raid and will have to be determined by the referee.

Now HERE'S THE PLAN...

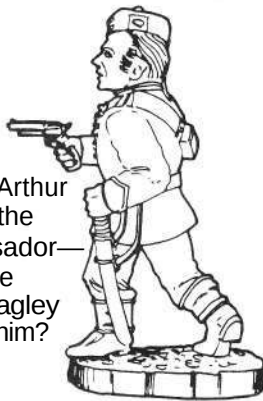
FLY QUIETLY THROUGH the mountains and locate the *kraag* of the brutish King Gnaashriik. Then you (and a hand-picked team) stealthily enter, search, and make your rescue. If you are silent enough, and quick enough, you will be out before the High Martians discover you.

THERE IS no way you could know that others will be here too, each looking for his own treasure. The invasion of their domain stirs the beastmen to a blood frenzy. Now you wonder if you'll ever leave the Temple of the Beastmen alive.

IN THE TEMPLE of the Beastmen boardgame, each player is one of 10 different adventurers intent on rescuing slaves and treasures from the clutches of the wicked Martian king. Random map tile layout and card sequence make the temple, its treasures, and its dangers different with every game. Stealth and strategy are essential to winning.

TEMPLE OF THE BEASTMEN can be learned in under half an hour and can be played in under two hours—it's the perfect game for an idle evening. A well developed set of optional rules allows more elaborate strategies and lets the players themselves decide on the level of complexity they want to play. Even solitaire play is possible, and complete rules for it are provided. And while Temple of the Beastmen stands on its own as a fast-paced, fun-filled boardgame, it is also a great introduction to the Victorian science fiction of the Space: 1889 role-playing game.

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Can Lt Arthur
rescue the
ambassador—
before
Major Bagley
gets to him?

Lieutenant Arthur (Army Officer with Revolver).

Goal: Rescue the ambassador.

Major Bagley (Army Officer with Sword).

Goal: Rescue the ambassador.

Sir Colton-Haynes (Gentleman in Top Hat). Finds secret doors.

Goals: Visit the temple. Recover the ancient Tablets.

Dr. Eberwein (Inventor). Finds secret doors. Uses the artifact as a weapon.

Goal: Recover the ancient artifact.

Mrs. Gates (Lady with Revolver). Can conduct ranged combat.

Goal: Rescue her boy.

Miss Lucy (Lady in Travelling Clothes). Finds secret doors.

Goal: Traverse the kraag.

Reverend Phelps (Missionary). Loses victory points for killing beastman.

Goal: Speak with King Gnaashriik.

Slippery John Grimes (Thug). Can steal other characters' items.

Goal: None.

Captain Timmons (Navy Officer).

Goal: Take liftwood from the shipyard.

Uumotaak the Bold (Hill Martian Nomad).

Goal: Destroy beastmen.



Can
Mrs. Gates
rescue
her son?

TEMPLE OF THE BEASTMEN. Boardgame of 19th century Mars. Die-cut map tiles. Character cards. Object cards. Counters. Rules. Charts. Boxed. \$28.



TEMPLE OF THE BEASTMEN

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Since the arrival of the humans on Mars, the steppes have been an area of mystery and danger, a place to be crossed by canal or by sky galleon as quickly as possible. Recently, however, the steppes and their inhabitants have become more important.

Steppelords of Mars is a sourcebook of the Nepenthes-Thoth Steppe, a region of vital importance to the continued survival of the British colony on Mars. It also contains an adventure set upon the steppes, dealing with a hunting expedition that turns into something more than beating the bush for steppe tigers.

Once the breadbasket of Martian civilization, the canals are silted up, and the steppes have returned to their former barren state. Where once they produced food for millions, the steppes are home to a paltry handful of nomadic tribes roaming a sea of parched grass and low scrub.

The region called the Nepenthes-Thoth Steppe is bounded on the west by the Isidis Desert, on the south by the mountains of Shistomik, on the east by the Shastapsh/Alclyon canal, and on the north by the equally hostile steppes of Neith. Possessing over 420,000 square miles of steppe, the region is larger than the Earth countries of France and Germany combined. There are no mountains to speak of inside the steppes—only a few arid hills break the monotony. The area is one vast rolling plain stretching from horizon to horizon—rather like the North American great plains.

Other princes on the steppe's edges make no claims of sovereignty beyond a couple of day's ride from their cities' walls, but the ruler of Shastapsh claims the steppes as his own. When Shastapsh became part of the British colony, a few hundred square miles of the steppes officially became British territory. But Shastapsh is now in rebellion, and British presence in the steppes is nonexistent. The prince of Shastapsh supports the Oenotrians against the British, but the nomadic tribes have remained largely neutral. Your actions may determine what happens next: Can the steppe tribes be persuaded to join with the British, or will they become a dagger pointed at the heart of the British colony?

STEPPELORDS OF MARS



SPACE 1889

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