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DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®

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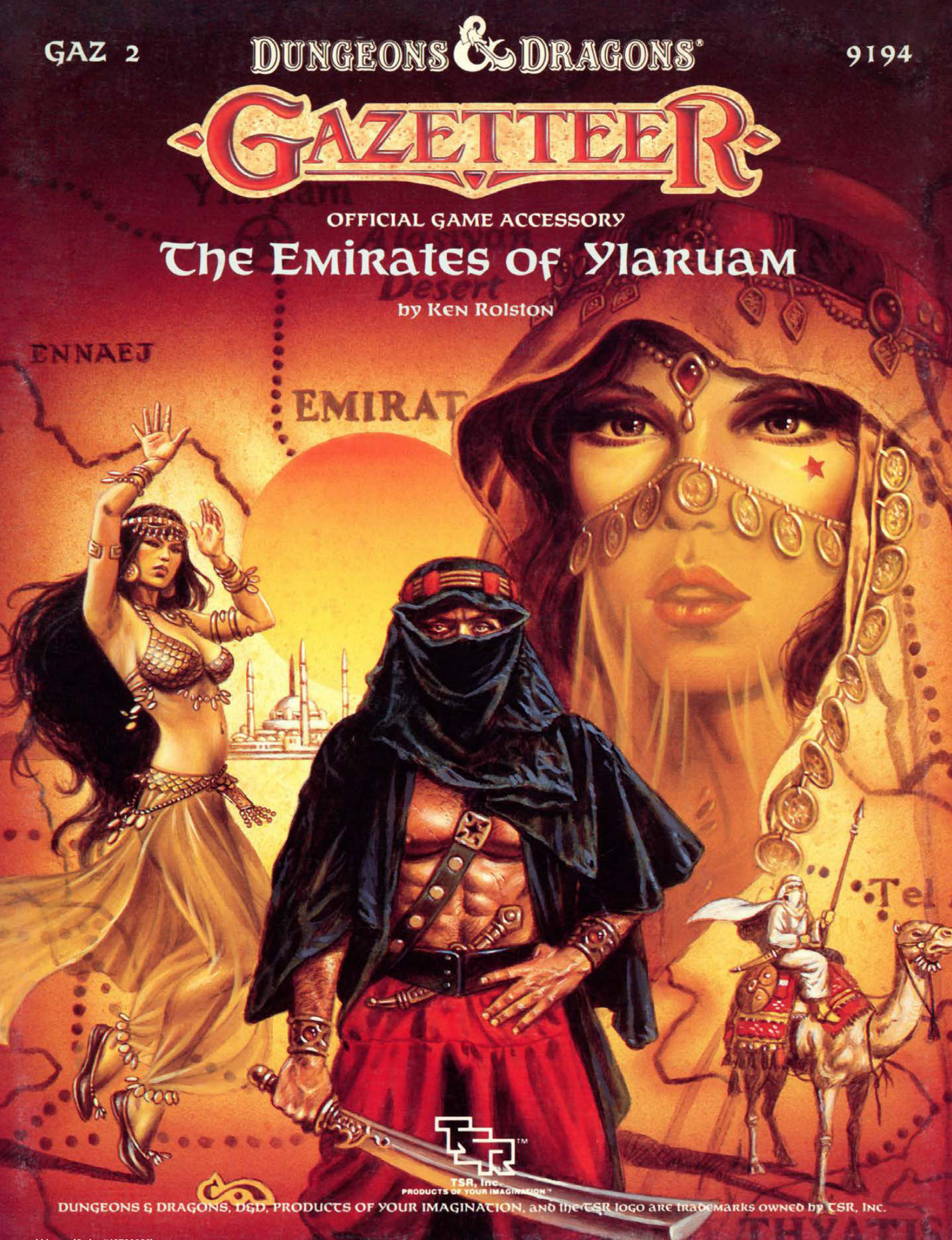
GAZETTEER

OFFICIAL GAME ACCESSORY

The Emirates of Ylaruam

by Ken Rolston



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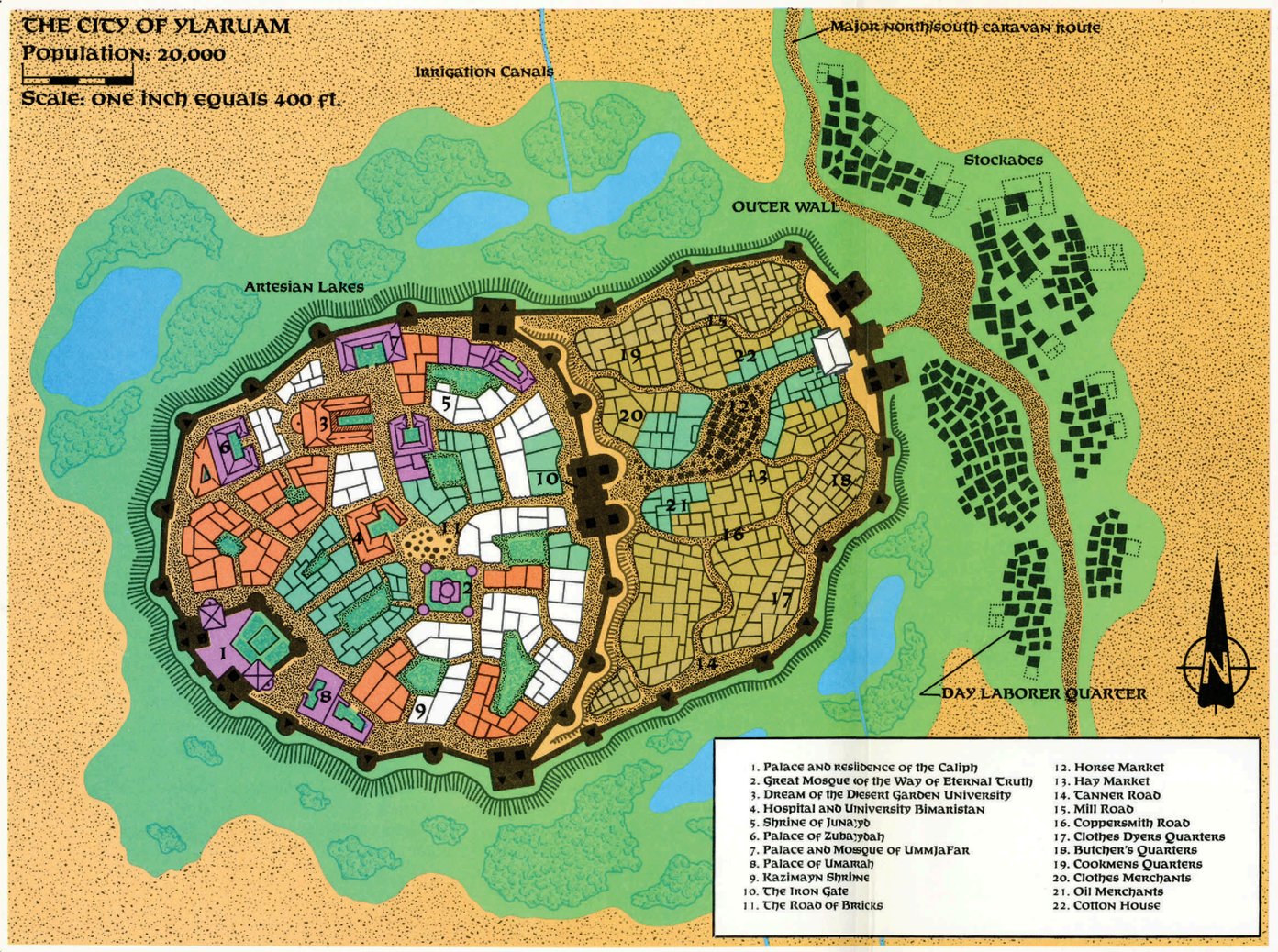
THE CITY OF YLARUAM

Population: 20,000

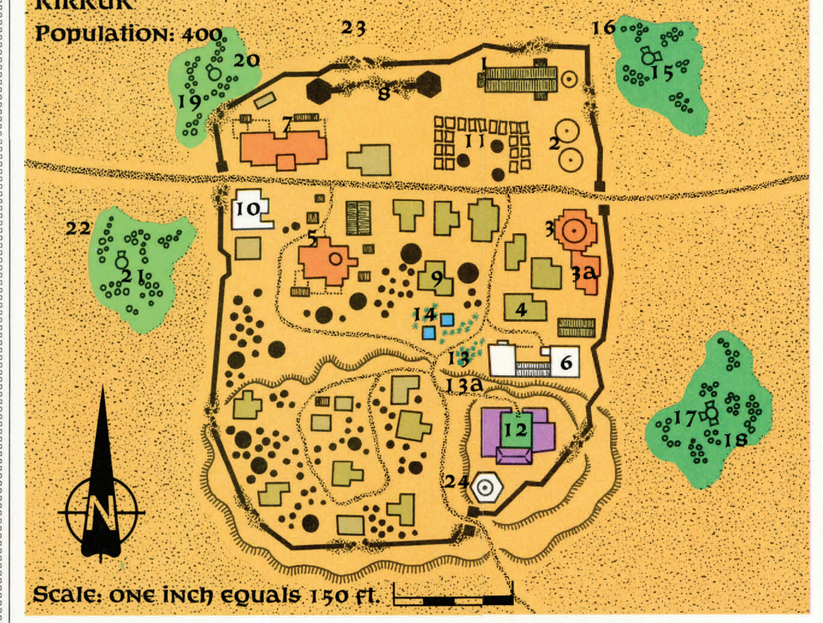
Scale: one inch equals 400 ft.



1. Palace and residence of the Caliph
2. Great Mosque of the Way of Eternal Truth
3. Dream of the Desert Garden University
4. Hospital and University Bimaristan
5. Shrine of Junayd
6. Palace of Zubaydah
7. Palace and Mosque of UmmJaFar
8. Palace of Umarah
9. Kazimayn Shrine
10. The Iron Gate
11. The Road of Bricks
12. Horse Market
13. Hay Market
14. Tanner Road
15. Mill Road
16. Coppersmith Road
17. Clothes Dyers Quarters
18. Butcher's Quarters
19. Cookmens Quarters
20. Clothes Merchants
21. Oil Merchants
22. Cotton House

KIRRUK

Population: 400



Scale: one inch equals 150 ft.

KIRRUK Scale: 1 inch = 200 feet

1. The Village Shed: mill; storage and shelter for community agriculture; wood frame, thatch roof, tent sides.
2. The Granaries: tall stone towers where wheat is stored.
3. The Sanctuary of Abundant Dreams: contemplation, prayer, and religious deliberations.

3a. The Zawiya: hostel/dormitory of the Sanctuary

4. The Banden: herbalist, surgeon, scholar, storyteller, sorcerer, and banker.
5. Hospice of Habib-ibn-Ruholiah: large two-story inn with stable, smithy, and armory.
6. Traveler's Rest (Cahin Al-Farouk): modest two-story inn with stable and smithy.
7. The Merchant's Caravansary: inn, warehouse, outfitter, stable, and smithy.
8. The Rubble: ruined Chyatin fort, built c.500, destroyed 829 by Al-Kalim. Twin towers remain. Stone scavenged for other village dwellings.
9. Brick and Stone (mason: Khaben al-Ghami): home and shop.
10. Emirate Offices: Vouchéries of Taxation, Water, and the Provinces.
11. Village Suq (market): twice weekly, wooden stalls with tent shelters.
12. Bayt Sabbam (the House of Sabbam, qabi of the Wahibah tribe): a modest palace, residence of Qabi Rahman al-Sabbam.
13. Well of the Faithful Prophet (grotto): sacred spring; flooded subterranean passage, apparently natural.

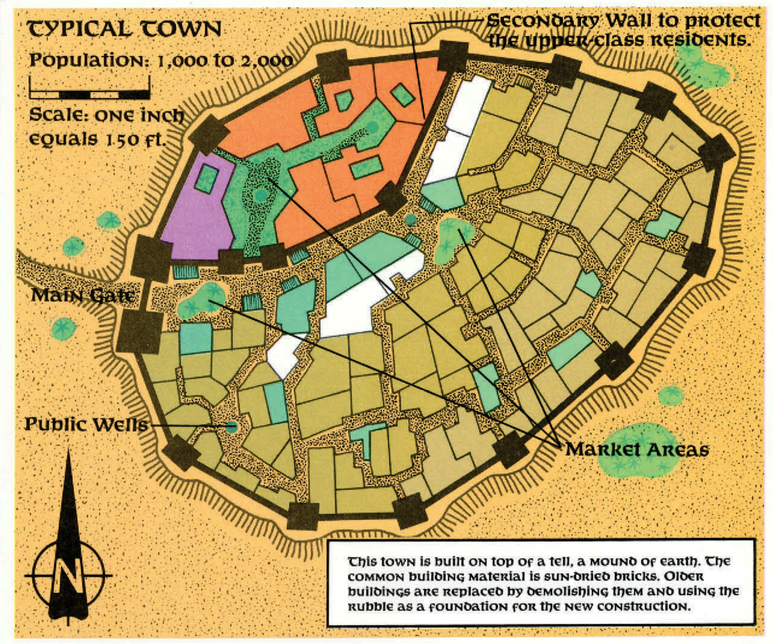
13a. The Caves: ancient catacombs.

14. Cisterns: purified water from grotto.
15. Camp of the Duru tribe.
16. Tent of Qabi Azeezeh ibn-Amar.
17. Camp of the Manahil tribe.
18. Tent of Qabi Mehmet al-Bechir.
19. Camp of the Ujman tribe.
20. Tent of Qabi Rezah al-Anouar.
21. Camp of the Humum tribe.
22. Tent of Qabi Unabi al-Husseih.
23. Ruined Wall: dates from Chyatin occupation, c. 500.
24. Watchtower: Chyatin; rebuilt and manned by the qabi.

TYPICAL TOWN

Population: 1,000 to 2,000

Scale: one inch equals 150 ft.

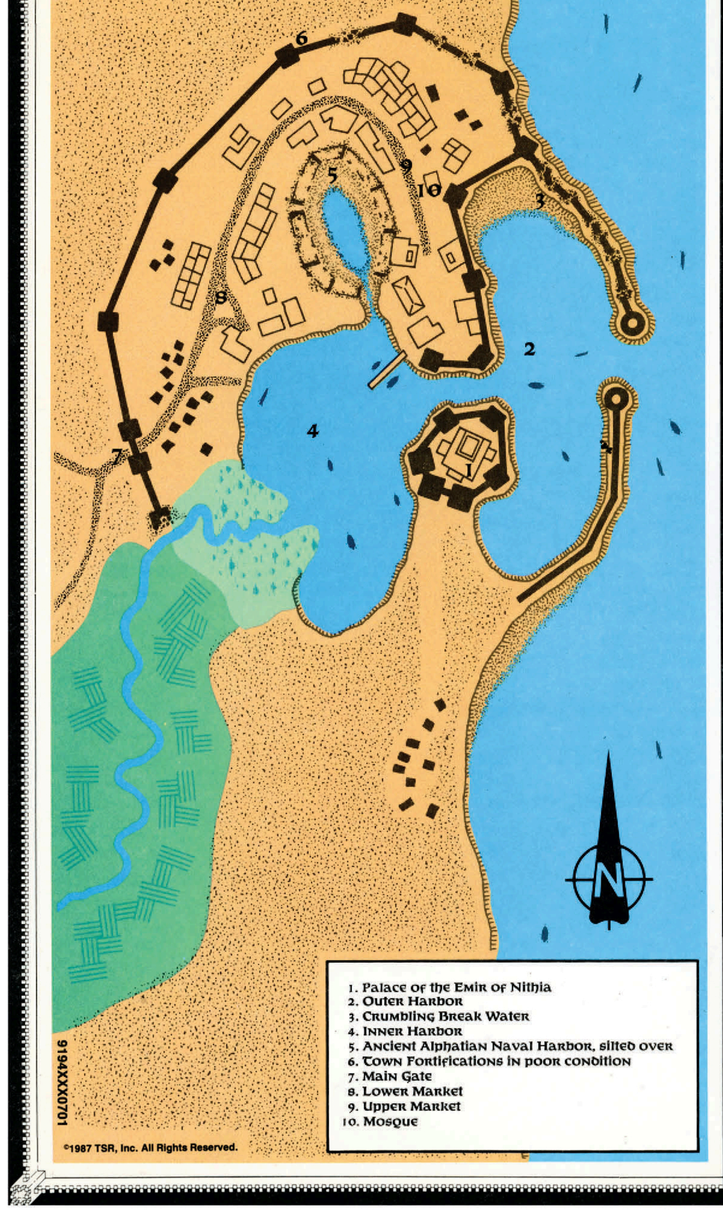


This town is built on top of a tell, a mound of earth. The common building material is sun-dried bricks. Older buildings are replaced by demolishing them and using the rubble as a foundation for the new construction.

SURRA-MAN-RAA

Population: 2,000

Scale: one inch equals 400 ft.



1. Palace of the Emir of Nithia
2. Outer Harbor
3. Crumbling Break Water
4. Inner Harbor
5. Ancient Alphatian Naval Harbor, silted over
6. Town Fortifications in poor condition
7. Main Gate
8. Lower Market
9. Upper Market
10. Mosque

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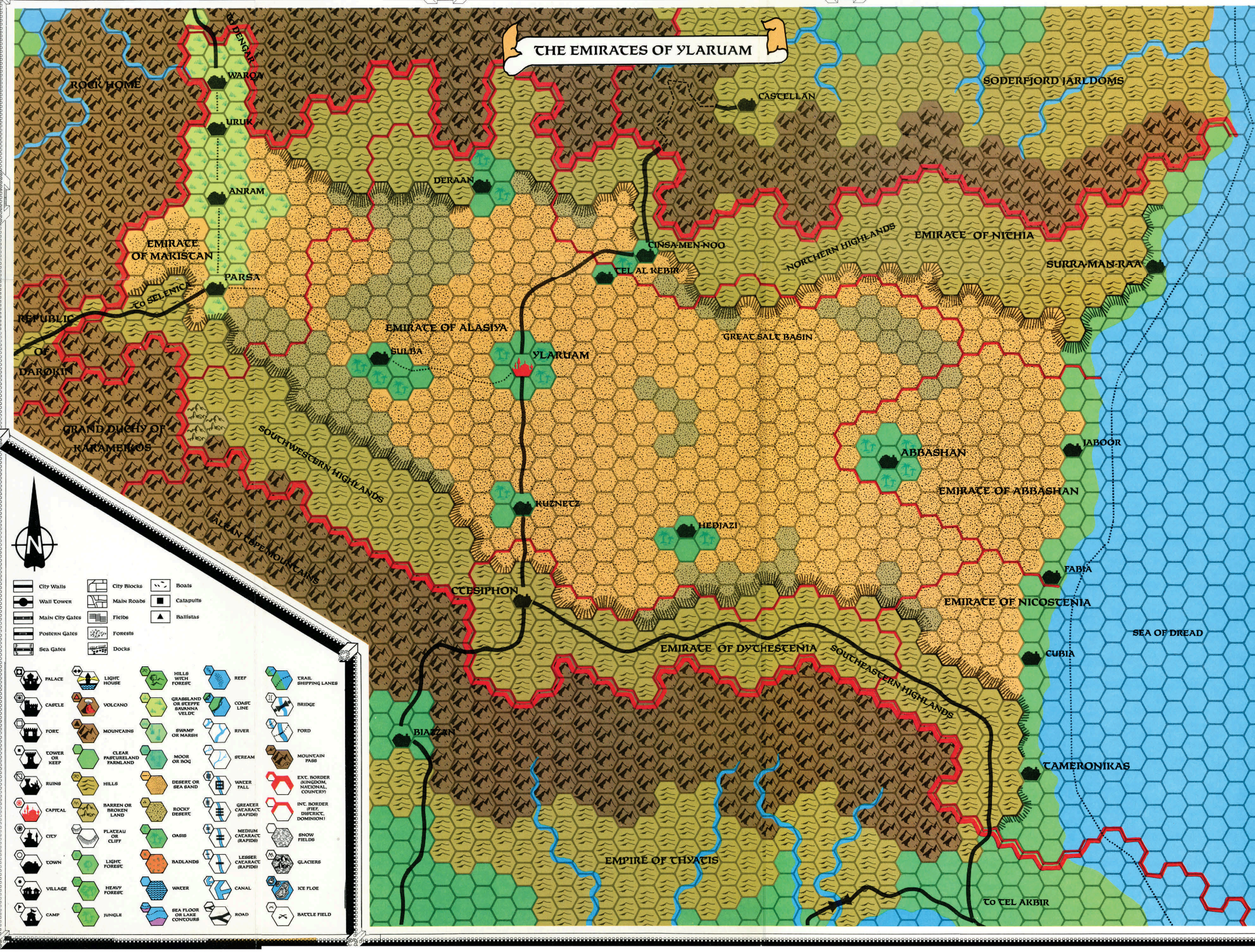
CAMERONIKAS

Population: 4,000

Scale: one inch equals 400 ft.

1. Palace of the Emir of Nicostenia
2. The Great Mosque
3. The Garden Gate
4. The Great Harbor
5. The Silver Gate
6. Palace of Kazimayn
7. Old Thyatian Fortifications in bad condition
8. Restored Fortification in good condition
9. Spice and Honey Market
10. Tanning and Dyeing Quarters

THE EMIRATES OF YLARUAM



City Walls · Wall Tower · Main City Gates · Postern Gates · Sea Gates

City Blocks · Main Roads · Fields · Forests · Docks

Boats · Catapults · Ballistas

PALACE · CASTLE · FORT · TOWER OR KEEP · RUINS · CAPITAL · CITY · TOWN · VILLAGE · CAMP

LIGHT HOUSE · VOLCANO · MOUNTAINS · CLEAR FARMLAND · HILLS · BARREN OR BROKEN LAND · PLATEAU OR CLIFF · LIGHT FOREST · HEAVY FOREST · JUNGLE

HILLS WITH FOREST · GRASSLAND OR DESERT BARRIER VELDT · SWAMP OR MARSH · MOOR OR BOG · DESERT OR SEA BAND · ROCKY DESERT · OASIS · BADLANDS · WADER · SEA FLOOR OR LAKE CONTOURS

REEF · COAST LINE · RIVER · STREAM · WATER FALL · GREATER CATARACT (RAPIDS) · MEDIUM CATARACT (RAPIDS) · LESSER CATARACT (RAPIDS) · CANAL · ROAD

TRAIL SHIPPING LANES · BRIDGE · FORD · MOUNTAIN PASS · EXT. BORDER (KINGDOM, NATIONAL, COUNCIL) · INT. BORDER (FIEF, DISTRICT, DOMINION) · SNOW FIELDS · GLACIERS · ICE FLOE · BATTLE FIELD

GAZETTEER

An Official DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® Game Supplement

The Emirates of Ylaruam

by Ken Rolston

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Introduction

The Gazetteer

This supplement is a reference book primarily for the DM, though at his discretion certain portions may be accessible to players in his campaign.

The *Gazetteer of the Emirates of Ylaruam* is a complete campaign reference, detailing the history and culture of Ylaruam, a culture similar to the medieval desert kingdom of the Near East. The Gazetteer offers a plethora of adventures and adventure elements for characters of Basic, Expert, Companion, and Master levels, and gives the DM plenty of practical advice and strategies for presenting this material in adventure sessions.

The Emirates of Ylaruam

The Emirates is a large nation north of Karameikos and Thyatis, bordered on the east by the Sea of Dawn, the west by Darokin, and the north by Rockhome and the Soderfjord Jarldoms. This confederation of six emirates is renowned for its superb military divisions and its fierce and noble warriors of desert nomadic heritage.

How to Use the Gazetteer

In the center of the Gazeteer is the Player Handout which is an introduction to the history and culture of Ylaruam, and to special rules and procedures needed for a Ylari campaign. Give this to your players. Information presented in italics throughout the Gazeteer is for the DM only.

History of the Emirates of Ylaruam

The History: The Local Version

As related by Yussef al Mussa, Scribe and Register to the Shellyh of Kuznetz, in recitation to the sons and daughters of the sheik, so they might be instructed as the Nahmeh directs.

"In the annals and legends, oh my children, there are many stories of bygone men and things, of antique races, departed rulers, vanished cities, and mysteries without end—many stories indeed, but this is all that I might tell you, so that my wisdom does not show thin and so that your suppers do not grow cold.

"In the beginning there was the sand and the wind, and into that sand and wind came the nomad—the man of the swift steed, the white tent, and the restless herd. From whence he came, none might know but the Eternal. Some say he came from the north, from the grassland-without-end that stretches to the top of the world. Some say he came from across the sea, exiled from distant continents and unimagined empires. Some say he has always been here.

"But here the nomad came, and he found sand and wind, but he also found the winter grazing land, and the spring rains, and the summer grottos, the watering holes of the fall, and his herds thrived, and he was happy. And many of the nomad settled in the grazing land, around the oases and spring rivers, and they became the hazar—the house dweller, the cultivator, and the builder of cities.

"For many years the bold nomad and the diligent hazar viewed one another with scorn, for the hazar saw the nomad as cruel and crude, and the nomad saw the hazar as soft and cowardly. And many chiefs and emirs ruled these nomad and hazar tribes, and they were each the enemy of the other—nomad against nomad, for they fought for the grazing land, hazar against hazar, for they fought for water, and nomad against hazar, for they fought for food and for the hate of one another. And this war lasted forever, or at least so long that only the Eternal might have witnessed it.

"Then into the south came the Thyatian. And into the east came the Alphatian. They built great cities, and they fought for the land, and pushed aside the nomad and the hazar whom they enslaved and stole the fruit of his labor.

"For bitter centuries the foreigner ruled our land, and though we were proud and mighty in arms, we were not united, and the foreigner crushed our rebellions and scattered us before them. Your forefathers sought sanctuary in the deep desert, where the foreigner may not go, and nursed for generations a hatred of these cruel foreign lords, and a yearning for revenge.

"And then came Al-Kalim, the Prophet, author of the Nahmeh, and bearer of the Word of the Eternal Truth. And he said, 'Put aside your hatred for one another, take up your love for justice and honor, and none shall stand before your swords.'

"And the chiefs and emirs of all the tribes stood before him, and were ashamed, and they put aside their hatreds for one another. Together they raised their voices in a single cry, and they brought our people together, tribe with tribe, nomad with hazar, brigand with merchant, farmer with warrior. They raised their swords as one, and as one they fell upon the foreigner, and where they came, none could stand before them. The land was ours once again, praise the Eternal, whose will is All-Powerful.

"But once the foreigner was vanquished, the chiefs and emirs would have had their tribes fall upon one another again, as it was before, but Al-Kalim spoke to them, saying, 'You have seen what you might do together for the Dream of Justice and Honor. Such dreams are still great, but I challenge you with a still greater dream—the Dream of the Desert Garden—where the sand shall bring forth ripe grain and lush grass for grazing, and where the rock shall spill water in plenty, and free as the air.'

"And Al-Kalim gave us the Nahmeh, which teaches us the Way and the Dream. And the chiefs and emirs shared the Nahmeh, and they revered it, seeing that it truly showed them good, and a dream to own together, tribe and tribe, nomad and hazar. And the chiefs and emirs beseeched Al-Kalim that he might set himself as a chief above them, to order their wisdom and direct them in their Dream.

"And he acceded, saying, "To hear is to obey," and they named him sultan, Chief among Chiefs. And he built a great capital, Mighty Ylaruam of the Glittering Spires, from which he might order the chiefs and emirs according to their request, and that they might visit him and his university, so they, too, might learn the great wisdom of the Eternal.

"And the prophets and sages of Al-Kalim searched the writings of philosophy, science, and magic for the means of making the desert bloom as a garden and the rock to flow with clear springs. What they learned they shared with the chiefs and emirs, and they with their tribes, and the people grew in wealth and comfort.

"And in Al-Kalim's time Ylaruam grew to be a mighty nation and confederacy of tribes. The people flourished, and the land put forth lush green growth, and the herds grew tall and sleek, and there was much wealth and happiness.

"And even as yet today our leaders are reckoned in the councils of the mighty, and our armies are the finest in the world. The roads and tracks of the Alasiyan desert are strung with caravans bearing goods from our renowned craftsmen and from distant lands, and many foreign ports swarm with our seaman-merchanters, laden with exotic wares.

"And Al-Kalim's successors, the sultans of Ylaruam, have proved to be wise and generous princes, and their scholars and advisers as shrewd and cunning as Farid, Al-Kalim's clever companion. And even as your mother, the honored Shellyh, rules our tribe with wisdom and generosity, so do the other chiefs and emirs rule their tribes, guided by the Word of the Eternal and the counselors of the sultan.

"So that, my children, is how it has been and how it is, and, by the will of the Eternal, so it shall be. And that ends your lesson for today.

"Now, rise up and brush the dust from your skirts, and hurry in to your supper, or surely Jamila will snatch the beard from my chin for keeping you young whelps from your untidy feasting. Go!"

The History: As the Dungeonmaster and the Immortals Know It

Yussef al Mussa's account is fairly accurate of Ylaruam history as oral traditions of the Alasiyan desert peoples would tell it. The other major cultural groups might tell a different story. Only the Alphatians and Thyatians have reliable records dating back to about 150 AC (After Crowning of Emperor Thyatis), and those records cover only the regions colonized by the respective empires, the northern and central coast of Alphatia, and the southern coast and neighboring highlands of Thyatis. The Makistani of the fertile northern plateau are a nomadic culture related to the peoples of the modern Ethengar Khanate. They have oral records confined to their own past and considerably less detailed than the oral records of the Alasiyan desert tribes.

The Nithian Empire: For the most ancient surviving culture, the Nithians, there are no records at all. Even magical research and communion with Immortals yields little information about these people, for they are cursed by the Immortals to obscurity for the crimes of

their rulers and their Immortal patron Thanatos.

This culture flourished between 1500 and 500 BC along a Nile-like River Nithia running from the mountains of Rockhome in the west to the Sea of Dawn in the east. Among the factors causing the empire's decline around 500 BC (see *Peoples of the Emirates of Ylaruam*) was the geologic uplift of the northern uplands and the subsidence of the Alasiyan Basin, which diverted the headwaters of the Nithia into the underground reservoirs of the Alasiyan Desert and precipitated the collapse of the Nithian Empire's agricultural base.

Degenerate elements of the culture survived along the eastern coastal plain long enough to be conquered and obliterated by the Alphatian colonization around 250 AC. Descendants of the dark-skinned Nithians may still be found among the populations of northeastern coastal cities and in isolated upland settlements, but they have forgotten their heritage. Even the most knowledgeable scholars know nothing more than the name and general location of the culture, and that it vanished utterly in ancient times.

The Alasiyan Desert Peoples: The dominant racial group in the Emirates is descended from a Nithian subject race originally from the Isle of Dawn, a continent to the east of Thyatis, a fact known only by the Immortals. They were the first people to inhabit the Alasiyan Desert, and so they think they have always been there. Their oral records in stories and folklore can be traced back only as far as the earliest Thyatian and Alphatian colonies, though some tales are apparently much older.

The Makistani: In the First Century AC the descendants of the Makistani peoples emigrated from the region of the modern Ethengar Khanate into the Ust-Urt Valley. The region was uninhabited at the time, and the region's isolation from the other Ethengar tribes and the fertility and tranquility of the Ust-Urt Valley may account for their having mostly avoided the belligerent and warlike attitudes of their northern steppes ancestors.

Alphatian and Thyatian Colonies: The first Alphatian and Thyatian colonists arrived around 250 AC. The Alasiyani nomad (migrant tent dwellers) and hazar (settled house dwellers) occupied the great desert basins and the cultivated regions around oases and along the coastal plain at this time. The more sophisticated Alphatian and Thyatian cultures easily conquered the disorganized nomadic peoples, taking advantage of their tribal feuds and romantic notions of heroic warfare. The Alphatians concentrated along the northern and central coastal plain, while the Thyatian colonists concentrated along the southeastern coast and in the nearby uplands along the foothills of the Altan Tepe mountain range.

In the succeeding centuries there were alternating periods of war and uneasy commerce and communication between the Alasiyan desert tribes and the Alphatian and Thyatian empires. Despite their deep resentment of their colonial overlords, the Alasiyans benefited from the cultural and technological interchange.

However, around 500 AC, a series of bitter colonial disputes developed between Alphatia and Thyatis. Various tribes allied themselves with each colony in the disputes, with the Alasiyans bearing the brunt of the war, often serving to intensify already-bitter tribal hostilities. The colonial governments became increasingly cruel and repressive, further feeding the bitterness of the Alasiyan subjects, as the survival of the colonies was imperiled by the ceaseless warfare and the threat of invasion.

Suleiman Al-Kalim: Some tribes withdrew from contact with the strife-torn eastern colonies into the isolation and peace of the interior deserts. It was into one of these isolated tribes that the great religious, political, and military leader of the Alasiyan people was born—Suleiman al-Kalim. The first period of his momentous life starts with his tribe's capture of the insignificant village of Ylaruam in 825 AC, continues through his uniting of the numerous Alasiyan tribes and Makistani clans under one banner, through his successful campaigns and sieges of 827 and 830 against the erstwhile Alphatian and Thyatian colonies, and ends with his central role in the establishment of the Confederated Tribes of the Emirates of Ylaruam in 831.

As significant as was this first part of his life, it is the second half of his life that insured the legacy of the first half. His legendary pilgrimage-quest to petition the Immortals on the behalf of the peoples of the Alasiyan desert is recorded in the Nahmeh, an allegorical account of this journey by Al-Kalim and his faithful companion, Farid. This book is the cornerstone of the Way of Eternal Truth, the path of spiritual enlightenment, and incidentally one of the most cogent commentaries on politics and ethics in modern history.

Also in the Nahmeh is Al-Kalim's most lasting gift to his people, the Dream of the Desert Garden. This aspiration, to turn the Alasiyan desert into a fertile land as a legacy to future generations, is the foundation of the Emirates of Ylaruam, the inspiration that makes tribal leaders and peoples set aside their traditional enmities and work together to a common goal. Without this unifying ideal, this confederation of nomadic and agricultural tribes would be impossible.

Al-Kalim caused Ylaruam, the Emirates' capital, to be made into a cosmopolitan city and a renowned center of learning, and focus of the Emirates' cultural identity. His original concepts of mounted archer and magician skirmishers and his skillful exploitation of the mounted desert warrior are still decisive elements in the acknowledged supremacy of the Emirates' armies. In these things, and in many others, Al-Kalim is veritably the father of the Emirates of Ylaruam.

Al-Kalim's Descendants: Al-Kalim was the first Sultan. There are two rival groups that claim to be the true descendants of Al-Kalim. The first group, the Preceptors ("teachers of moral truth"), claim that descent from Al-Kalim is traced through his selection of the most wise to succeed him. The Preceptors, a council of wise men and scholars, are situated in the capital of Ylaruam, and they aid the current sultan in the selection of his succession. The current Sultans of Ylaruam are traced through this line of descent. Through these Preceptors, the Emirates of Ylaruam has remained faithful to the ideals of Al-Kalim through the century following Al-Kalim's death in 900 AC.

The rival claim to succession is traced through the family descendants of Al-Kalim. This faction, the Kin as they call themselves, claims the Abbashan oasis as its cultural center, and preserves the more radical and fanatic elements of Al-Kalim's ministry, particularly in its warlike philosophy and its aggressive proselytising of the Eternal Way through ministry, diplomacy, and the sword. In the century following Al-Kalim's death the Kin have politely acknowledged the political authority of the Ylaruam faction, but have strongly contested the issue of religious authority.

The Modern Era: In the two centuries following Al-Kalim's birth, the Emirates of Ylaruam has grown to be a respected mercantile nation and a military force to be reckoned with. Its people enjoy an ever-improving economy, a rapidly expanding population, and a remarkable degree of political stability and security. Though the peoples of Ylaruam are somewhat isolated from the rest of the world, and perhaps often ignorant of its ways, the typical peasant farmer or nomadic herder of Ylaruam enjoys a higher standard of living than the peasants of neighboring nations, and the scholars and wizards of Ylaruam's urban universities can honorably claim peerage with the pundits and sorcerers of far-older and well-established empires like Alphatia and Thyatis.

DM's Historical Synopsis

The items in italics are known only to Immortals and the DM. The items in boldface indicate other relevant D&D® game references in abbreviated form; see *Readings*, for full citations.

Year Event

3000 BC The Great Rain of Fire; Blackmoor culture obliterated; planet shifts its axis, freezing the Blackmoor continent and causing ice sheets to recede from regions of modern D&D® world. (*See DA1.*)

2000 BC Bronze and Iron Age cultures in D&D® world. Early agricultural settlements along River Nithia.

1500 BC Rise of Nithian Empire.

1000 BC Peak of Nithian Empire. Monumental architecture, large urban complexes in delta, conquest of neighboring states and remote colonies, culture.
Rise of Alphatian Empire across the Sea of Dawn.

500 BC Abrupt decline of Nithian Empire. Shifting climate patterns, diversion of River Nithia headwaters and disappearance of river, social unrest, treacherous elemental beings, and the curse of the Immortals cause empire to vanish utterly. Ancestors of modern Alasiyan peoples withdraw to desert basins and establish a nomadic culture.

0 AC First Emperor of Thyatis crowned.
Early Alasiyan agricultural settlements along coastal plain and interior desert oases.

100 AC Descendants of Makistani tribal nomads enter from north and settle Ust-Urt Valley.

150 AC Early Thyatian colonies along modern Ylaruam's SE coastal plain and foothills of Altan Tepe range. Alasiyan populations driven into desert, enslaved, or assimilated.

250 AC Thriving Thyatian colonies. Early Alphatian colonies along northern and central coastal plain. Alasiyans driven out or enslaved.

500 AC Intermittent warfare between Alphatian and Thyatian colonies in following three centuries. Constant feuding among Alasiyan tribes. Colonies in decline.

800 AC Birth of Suleiman Al-Kalim

825 AC Al-Kalim captures village of Ylaruam, establishes it as his tribal seat.

826 AC Al-Kalim captures Cinsa-Men-Noo, Parsa, and Ctesiphon, unites Makistani and Alasiyan tribes under banner of the Eternal Truth.

827 AC Campaign against Alphatian overlords ends with successful siege of Jaboor, removing Alphatian presence in region.

828-830 AC Campaign against Thyatian overlords ends with the successful siege of Tameronikas, driving Thyatian influence from region.

831 AC Founding of Confederated Tribes of the Emirates of Ylaruam.

?835 AC Al-Kalim's pilgrimage to the Immortals. Al-Kalim begins quest on the Path of the Dynast.

?855 AC Composition of the Nahmeh.

858 AC Establishment of the Eternal University and Council of the Preceptors in Ylaruam.

860 AC Al-Kalim retires from public life.

900 AC Death of Al-Kalim. *Falsely reported to conceal his disappearance. Al-Kalim continues his quest for Immortality.*

1000 AC Modern period under governance of sultans from Preceptors faction of Al-Kalim's descendants. Culture and economy flourishes.

1050 AC Ylaruam falls under the rule of Kin faction sultans. Culture and economy flourishes, but values in decline, and resurgence of traditional tribal enmities.

1200 AC Rise of Master of Desert Nomads in distant Sayr Ulan. Embassies of Republic of Darokin and Desert Nomads court Ylaruam's alliance. The Great War. (*See X4, X5, and X10.*)

BC refers to "before crowning" and AC to "after crowning" (of Emperor of Thyatis).

The Lands and Ecology of the Emirates

A Nicostenian merchant briefs his recently-arrived Thyatian cousin on the eve of his first overland caravan.

"First, natives do not refer to this country as "Ylaruam." It is "the Emirates," when speaking specifically of the entire Confederation of Tribes. Ylaruam is simply the capital of a single province, albeit one of great symbolic importance. Natives are more likely to refer to themselves according to their emirate; these provinces are more closely related to the regions that various ethnic and social groups identify with...

"...Makistan, centered in the fertile Ust-Urt Valley and extending into the Alasiyan basin, peopled by tribesmen akin to the nomads of the Ethengar Khanate...

"...Nithia, a wasteland along the foothills of the northern mountains, and a short strip of fertile coastal plain populated by mixed desert tribes and descendants of Alphatian colonists...

"...Dythestenia, a highlands populated by tribal nomads, and in the fertile wadis, by civilized people of Thyatian descent...

"...Nicostenia, where we reside, a former Thyatian colony heavily influenced by contact with the Alasiyan nomad and farming cultures...

"...Abbashan, a growing province centered on an interior oasis, but recently expanded to the coast, dominated by Alasiyan nomads intensely hostile to foreigners, certainly no place for you, my sharp-tongued cousin...

"...and Alasiya, the largest province, encompassing the Alasiyan desert basin from south to north, east to west, a vast wasteland inhabited by primitive tribes, yet graced in its center by Ylaruam, a small but lovely city, cultured and elegant, and full of rich chiefs, merchants, and scholars eager for your wares, my shrewd cousin, and safe, even for an ignorant foreigner like you."

Geology and Topography

The Emirates is like a great scoop open to the eastern sea. The northern highlands form one upper rim of the scoop; the southern Altan Tepe range forms the lower rim. The northern spur of the Altan Tepe rises in the west, forming the third rim of the scoop. The Alasiyan desert basin dips down sharply from this northern spur of mountains as it extends east, almost down to sea level in the salt flats west of Ylaruam, then sloping gently upwards again, becoming a high desert plain until it reaches the sea, where it drops several hundred feet in the last few miles before it reaches the coastline.

All precipitation and groundwater flows downhill from the north, west, and south, draining into the vast subterranean reservoirs of the Alasiyan basin. Only in the Ust-Urt Valley is there any significant surface water, and all the rivers of that region drain into the basin at the southern end of the valley. However, in the wet winter and spring, many seasonal rivers (wadis) run down from the mountains for several months, nourishing the fields and grazing lands; these wadis all dry up in the summer and early fall.

All the significant mountains lie outside the Emirates. The rugged highlands and foothills that slope into the desert basin are quite fertile, though often severely eroded or depleted by centuries of intensive agriculture. Both the northern and southern highlands contain valuable mineral deposits, particularly the high-carbon iron ores used in making the Emirates' famous steel weapons.

The Alasiyan Desert Basin itself is slowly subsiding, while the northern uplands are being uplifted. Scholars have observed that someday this basin may become an inland sea. The northern uplands are subject to periodic, violent earthquakes. Between these earthquakes and the constantly shifting dunes, much of the monumental architecture of the ancient Nithian culture has been reduced to rubble, then buried by hundreds of feet of sand. Small wonder so little is known of the Nithians.

Climate

The Desert: Most of the Emirates, the Alasiyan desert basin, receives 10 inches of rainfall yearly or less. Some sections of the desert may receive little or no rain in a year. Temperatures range from the low fifties in the winter to the hundreds in the summer during the day, falling sharply at night by as much as 20 degrees.

Half of this region supports hardy grasses and specially adapted vegetation, while spring and summer rainstorms provide enough moisture for seasonal pasturage the nomads require for their herds. These rainstorms are often quite awesome, with high winds, hail and sleet, violent lightning, and blinding rain.

Another fearsome meteorological phenomenon is the sandstorm. Normal sandstorms last for a few hours, and though eyes and mouth must be protected to avoid blindness or asphixiation, the desert people cope with them by seeking shelter, even if it is no more than crouching behind a camel with a cloak as a shield from driving sand and dust particles, and waiting out the storm.

More dangerous are the severe sandstorms of longer duration. Winds reach gale velocities, often accompanied by tornadoes, and may last for two or three days. Travelers stranded in the desert in such circumstances are in desperate straits. The screaming winds and driving sand may drive a traveler insane, and entire caravans are sometimes lost in these conditions.

Waterholes and wells provide enough water for small settlements and limited agriculture. The visions of Al-Kalim have encouraged many technological and magical ventures in producing water for new settlements, some of which have been quite successful; the settled population of this region has tripled in the last century.

The other half of this region is a desert of sand dunes, salt flats, and barren rock, almost completely without any vegetation or ground water. The large salt basin to the west of Ylaruam and the deep deserts along the southern margin of the Nithian highlands are particularly forbidding. Even here, however, water may be found 10 or 15 feet beneath the surface; the desert people have of necessity become skilled at locating these water sources.

The Semi-Arid Highlands: The highlands that surround the Alasiyan basin receive more rainfall, a consistent 10 to 15 inches in the winter and spring, and they also benefit from seasonal runoff from the surrounding mountain ranges. These wadis are like part-time rivers; in winter and spring there is enough water for some irrigation and in the summer and fall they are dry washes. This water is only barely adequate to support agriculture, but is quite enough to provide good pastures for the nomads. As in the desert, the rainfall often comes in the form of violent storms, and flash flooding is a risk for the unwary traveler. The temperatures here range from the thirties in the winter to the nineties in the summer during the day, falling 10 to 20 degrees in the evening.

The Sub-Humid Coastal Plain: Along the eastern coast is a narrow strip of coastal plain varying from one to five miles wide. To the west it is bounded by an escarpment of 200 to 500 feet in elevation. This region receives up to 30 inches of rain yearly which is enough for prosperous agriculture, and the springs and streams that rise along the escarpment flow down to the sea, providing surface water for irrigation. Winter and spring are the rainy seasons which are traditionally poor times for warfare, since communications and supply are slowed greatly on muddy roads and the speed and effectiveness of cavalry is greatly reduced;

the peasantry is also more profitably employed in agriculture at these times, so military campaigns in this region generally must wait for the summer and fall. Temperatures range from the high fifties in the winter to the eighties in the summer during the day, with a moderate drop of 10 degrees or less in the evening.

The Coastal Winds: The winds blow from the south along the coast in the winter and spring, and from the north in the summer and fall. This primarily affects the seagoing merchant traders, who must arrange their voyages to take advantage of favorable winds. It also means that land transportation of valuable or perishable goods can be competitive for caravaners who travel to northern lands in the winter and spring and return in the summer and fall.

Terrain and Climate Types

The following is a brief summary of the primary terrain types found in the Emirates, keyed to the emirates where those terrain types may be found. Refer to the fold-out map of the Emirates and locate each region as it is described. For more detail on the geographies of emirates, see specific listings in this gazetteer.

Desert (wilderness): Arid terrain. Receives less than 10 inches of rainfall yearly. Exposed rock, sands dunes, and barren plains with sparse vegetation, clustered mostly around oases, water holes, and wadis. Populated by nomadic tribes which travel from pasture to pasture according to the seasons. Agricultural settlements near permanent and seasonal water sources. Population: one person or fewer per square mile. (All emirates around border of Alasiyan Basin, though Alasiyani and Abbashani emirates are predominantly of this terrain type.)

Desert (borderlands): Arid, with major permanent water sources (i.e., oases and water holes). Less than 10 inches of rainfall yearly. Substantial intensive agriculture with careful water management and irrigation supports modest urban settlements. Population density: 30 to 60 persons per square mile; higher in large towns and cities. (Parsa in Makistan; Ylaruam in Alasiya; and the city of Abbashan in Abbashan Emirate; and other minor agricultural and urban settlements in these emirates.)

Coastal Plain (settled): Semi-arid, with substantial seasonal precipitation. About 20 to 30 inches of rain yearly. Hardy native grasses, shrubs, and trees, good pastures, and fertile intensive agriculture. Supports larger urban populations (10% to 20% of population in urban settlements). Population density: 40 to 70 per square mile; higher in large towns and cities. (Nithian, Abbashan, and Nicostenic coasts.)

Grassland (settled): Semi-arid, with yearround surface water. About 10 to 20 inches of rainfall yearly. Excellent pasture and adequate agriculture to support nomadic tribes and modest urban settlements. Population density: 10 to 20 persons per square mile. (Ust-Urt Valley in Makistan.)

Upland Plateau (settled): Semi-arid, with seasonal surface water. About 10 to 20 inches of rainfall yearly. Adequate pasturage, poor agriculture. Modest settlements only along trade routes and in mining regions. Population density: five to ten persons per square mile. (Dythestenian and Nithian emirates, primarily along caravan routes.)

Upland Plateau (borderlands): Semi-arid, with seasonal surface water. About 10 to 20 inches of rain fall yearly. Adequate pasturage, poor agriculture. Nomadic tribes and sparse agricultural settlements along seasonal watercourses. Population density: five or fewer persons per square mile. (Nithian and Dythestenian highlands.)

Upland Plateau (wilderness): Arid. Ten or fewer inches of rainfall yearly. High deserts and badlands. Almost no vegetation. No permanent population. Population density: Fewer than one person per square mile. (Southwest highlands of Alasiya, central highlands of Nithia.)

Native Flora and Fauna

Plant Life: Except for the minor stands of conifers in the southern highlands of Nicostenia and the scrub junipers and wild olives of the Nicostenian and Dythestenian, there are no forests in the Emirates.

In the arid and semi-arid deserts and highlands, short drought-adapted shrubs and flowering plants, like the saltbush, the yellow-flowered acacia, the desert camomile, and the scarlet-fruited abal, dot the landscape. The ground between the shrubs is green for a few months of the year, or after a major rainfall. Even in the deep deserts, areas that are barren for years will flower and bloom after a rare rainfall. Only the salt flats and rock-floored deserts will not support any life.

The coastal plain, where it is not under cultivation, supports hardy scrub conifers and shrubs, and wild grasses suitable for pasturage grow in abundance. In the Ust-Urt Valley, the plains are covered with tall grasses similar to those of the American Midwest, with small shrubs growing along the water courses.

Mammals: Apart from the domestic herds of camel, horse, goat, sheep, and mule, there are few large mammals in the Emirates. Wild antelope and gazelles are common in the upland wilderness, but elsewhere they cannot compete with the nomads' herds for the scarce forage. In the upland wilderness the cheetah, lion, wolf, and jackal prey on the wild herds, and occasionally on nomad herds; hunting these creatures is a popular sport for chiefs and emirs. Baboons are common in the Nicostenian highlands and coastal plain, where they occasionally raid croplands.

Birds: Varied species of water birds live along the coastal plain, and many colorful song birds migrate seasonally along the coast. The ostrich may be found in less populous southern coastal regions.

Birds are more restricted in number and species in the interior and highlands, including the sandgrouse and the sweet-songed dunes whippoorwill. Quail and doves are popular game birds, and tribal nomads train eagles and hawks to catch hares and other game birds. The giant roc is rarely sighted in the highlands or desert; it makes its home in the high peaks of the Altan Tepe and fortunately seldom ventures into the lowlands.

Reptiles: Large lizards and several varieties of serpents are common in the highlands and considered delicacies by the nomads. The deadly dunes viper and black cobra are found in the highlands and deserts. Monstrous forms are reported in the southwestern upland wilderness; giant bones of these creatures may be viewed at the Eternal University Museum in Ylaruam. Blue dragons have been sighted throughout the Emirates, but seldom at close range; these creatures are solitary, they fly at great altitudes, and little is known of their lairs or habits.

Marine Life: Coastal inhabitants eat a variety of fish netted in local waters. Sharks, dolphins, and whales (called "dendan" by the Ylari) are common, and monstrous serpents and sea-going reptiles occasionally attack fishermen and trade vessels.

Insects: Stinging insects and locusts occasionally swarm in wet, warm weather. The scorpion and desert spider are found in the desert basin and highlands, and giant forms of these creatures are hunted in the southwestern deserts. Other giant insects are occasionally reported here, and the dreaded sandworm, a seldom-sighted terror of the western salt basin, is a popular feature of heroic legend.

Peoples of the Emirates of Ylaruam

Overheard from a crowded lecture hall at the Eternal University—a night class for foreigners.

"...though the Emirates is now host to peoples of various cultural stocks, as is clearly evidenced by the dwarves, halflings, northmen, southern islanders, and elves among you tonight, the peoples of the region can be traced back primarily to five cultural groups: the Alasiyani, the Makistani, the Alphatians, the Thyatians, and the Nithians. Of these cultural groups, the most obscure is the Nithian, about which next to nothing is known, save what may be conjectured from fragments of orally-transmitted tales and legends..."

The Nithians

Once a great river like the Nile ran all the way from the northwestern plateau to the eastern coast. Its headwaters were in the mountains of Rockhome, its mouth at a great delta in the Sea of Dawn. Along this river grew the Nithian Empire, similar to the Egyptian empire of a parallel world familiar to our readers.

The lands along the river and in the delta were fertile and watered by floods and irrigation; the climate and conditions were perfect for intensive agriculture. Great urban complexes grew up in the delta and at the mouths of important tributaries. Arts and sciences developed to a high level of sophistication, and the military might of the empire brought rich tribute from lesser states and colonies. But great though the culture was, it contained the seeds of its own destruction.

First, the Nithian economy depended on slave labor, and most peasants were held in conditions of near-slavery. The slave revolts that finally toppled the empire were the result of this evil social order.

Second, a disruption in global climatic patterns caused a gradual decline in the rainfall in the region, while tectonic shifts caused an uplift of the northern Alasiyan plateau and a subsidence of the central Alasiyan desert. The headwaters of the great River Nithia were diverted through what is now the Makistani Plateau, finally disappearing into the great subterranean reservoirs of the Alasiyan drainage. The rest of the River Nithia dried up, and the Nithian culture along with it.

Third, the official religion of the Empire, the Magian Fire Worshippers, revered powerful beings from the Elemental Plane of Fire. Conflicts between these fire beings and beings from the Elemental Plane of Water resulted in an imbalance in the availability of these elements in this region, intensifying the effects of the increasingly arid climate. Further, these fire beings, treacherous and unfaithful to their followers, ultimately abandoned them when the empire had begun to fall.

Finally, the rulers of this culture worshipped an Immortal loyal to the Sphere of Entropy, Thanatos. Thanatos was not unfaithful to his followers; indeed, he was too faithful in his attempt to save them from the fate decreed by the balance of the Opposed Spheres of the Immortals.

He attempted to personally intervene in the events which were eroding the power of the Nithian Empire—to encourage the Pharaohs, the rulers of the culture, to establish an Empire of Undeath despite the needs of the Nithian peoples. As a result, other Immortals banded together to destroy this errant Immortal, and set about expunging the Nithian culture from memory of man.

An artifact in Surra-Man-Raa, buried in ancient catcombs concealed by shifting sand dunes, causes those who pass within range of the artifact (a 24-mile hex) to forget what they know of Nithia. Since most fugitives from the empire's collapse, and most modern visitors to this region, must pass through Surra-Man-Raa on the way to the interior, this magical device is quite effective in obscuring the Nithians' past. In addition, Servants of the Immortals are occasionally sent to those who have learned too much about the Nithians, and these servants have ways of making one forget.

Evidence of the culture remains in its peoples and in occasional place names. Tel Akbar, for example, was once a Nithian city, though all traces of the original culture lie buried under layers of more recent occupations.

As for the surviving descendants of the Nithians, most have been thoroughly assimilated into the Alasiyan tribal cultures and the urban cultures of the former Alphatian colonies. Only in the arid highland wastes of the Nithian Emirate may pure Nithian types be found, marked by their short stature, dark complexion, light bone structure, sparse body hair, and typically dark-red wavy facial and head hair.

These Nithians are seldom seen by foreigners, and Al-Kalim's injunctions against discourse with these "evil" people prevents natives from interacting with them, so even scholars know almost nothing about them. The few recorded tales and legends of these primitive tribal people hint of dark ancestral powers and lingering worship of fire beings.

Staging: The primitive Nithians of the central highland wastes are "boogie men" to bedevil characters who search for ancient Nithian tombs, who accompany archaeological, trade, or mining expeditions, or who wander the deserts in these regions. Nithians may appear as nomads or in small, ancient mudbrick fortified settlements, or may be associated with ancient Nithian ruins and their underground catacombs.

Against low level characters, the Nithians are savage primitives with the almost supernatural ability to come and go without being seen, and therefore are most dangerous in ambush. Against mid-level characters, these savages are supported by evil, powerful shamans who summon undead spirits and shades, the relics of the Pharaonic necromantic teachings of Thanatos. Against high-level characters, these shamans may become solitary, powerful sorcerers combining undead command with magic and summonings from the Elemental Plane of Fire.

Planar travel, magical devices, and dungeonmaster fiat may also permit adventurers to travel back to the heyday of the Nithian Empire for ancient-Egyptian-style role playing.

The Makistani

The Makistani are relatively peaceful and settled descendants of Ethengar tribes from the steppes beyond the northern spur of the Altan Tepes and the kingdom of the dwarves. Their Ethengar ancestors were a group of weaker tribes, the Makistan clans, who were forced out of the steppes and into the mountains during the reign of a particularly crude and autocratic khan. These weaker tribes were politely but firmly hustled southeastward through the valleys by wary dwarves, finally arriving in the then-unpopulated Ust-Urt Valley.

These Makistani clansmen were relatively weak in the art of war, but were durable and perseverant in character, and, for the Ethengar, unusually comfortable cooperating with one another. The Ust-Urt Valley provided excellent pasturage for these nomadic herders, and, in time, with lore purchased from dwarven scholars, the Makistani learned to till the fertile valleys. Many clans settled in sod and stone houses near the best farmland. The other nomadic clans continued to expand into the desert basin in search of pasturage, eventually discovering the oasis at Parsa, a small village of Alasiyan hazar at the time, but soon to grow to be a minor city along a popular caravan route between Ethengar and Rockhome to the north, Darokin and Karameikos to the south and west, and Thyatis, its colonies, and Alphatian colonies to the southeast.

A combination of military genius, shrewd diplomacy, and pure luck enabled Al-Kalim

to ally himself with these clans wing the capture of Parsa in 826. Tales of an enlightened hero and his shrewd adviser figure in many Makistani legends, and Al-Kalim and Farid's exploits and fervent exhortations immediately struck the fancy of the Makistani. Also, Al-Kalim shrewdly played on the belligerent ancestral values of the Ethengar, challenging the Makistani to regain the warlike renown of their forefathers. Makistani cavalry, archers, and infantry played an important part in Al-Kalim's success against the Alphatian and the Thyatian, and remain a central element in the Emirates' military might. Makistani retired from military service also hire out as mercenaries, guards, and expedition escorts, and are encountered throughout the Emirates.

Contemporary Makistani identify themselves with Al-Kalim, the Eternal Way, and the Emirates more than with their Ethengar ancestors. The emir of Makistan is still known locally as the "khan," the nomadic tribesmen still tend their herds in the desert borderlands, but the Makistani are an increasingly settled and civilized people, relying on agriculture, native crafts, and trade to support their growing urban cultures. Makistani scholars and sorcerers are common sights in the cosmopolitan towns of the Emirates, and are respected more for their exotic lore than for the hostility of their warlike ancestors.

The Makistani physical type is similar to that of the horsemen of the central Asian steppes. Short, heavy-boned, dark, with epicanthic eye folds, the Makistani still wear their hair in the traditional Ethengar manner with long black hair and beards braided or bound together with bits of leather. The Makistani are a cheerful and friendly people, free with their hospitality and generous with advice and information. Their impulsive good humor makes them charming traveling companions, but their lack of restraint may give offense to their more formal Alasiyan neighbors.

Staging: Makistani are similar to halflings in temperment and for adventure encounters. Though they are fierce fighters and expert horsemen and archers, they are seldom belligerent; a playful nomadic tribe may charge and circle a character group, hooting and firing arrows into the air, but they mean no harm, and will in time invite the characters to feast with them in their tent and share tales and jokes.

Travel along caravan routes through Makistan is pleasant and uneventful. The Makistani are friendly with dwarves, and full of misinformation they will eagerly share with all travelers. They chatter pleasantly about the ferocity and atrocities of their ancestral Ethengar khans. Generally the tales are hair-raising, and completely true. Almost all Makistani are followers of the True Faith, but blandly indifferent to opposing viewpoints.

Generally the Makistani are nice folks, an may be played for laughs and as willing and usually reliable informants for the characters. Makistani also make excellent NPC sidekicks on adventures, offering the DM many opportunities for mischief and light-hearted impulses. When pressed, they are deadly warriors, and their sorcerers often use exotic and bewildering spells unfamiliar to PCs.

The Thyatians

Those of Thyatian descent now living in the Emirates are generally thoroughly absorbed into the Alasiyan desert culture. Those Thyatians not sympathetic with the ways of the Alasiyan tribes left during Al-Kalim's expulsion of foreign imperial powers in the 800's. Almost all Ylari Thyatians are followers of Al-Kalim.

Thyatians are short in stature, of light complexion, with dark, curly hair, and easily distinguished from the taller Alasiyans with dark complexions. Only from isolated desert tribesmen and the intolerant Abbashan fanatics can people of Thyatian descent expect racial hostility; in cities and settled countryside they are thought of as natives.

Many of Thyatian descent are found in administrative positions in government and in mercantile organizations, a legacy of their culture's experience with imperial bureaucracy. That they are generally not resented by native Alasiyans in these positions of status is a measure of their reputation for competence and fair-mindednessness.

Staging: Thyatians may be played as identical to Alasiyans, or may be played as marginally sympathetic to foreigners, in memory of their own foreign origin. Some few Thyatian may be foreign spies for Thyatis or for Thyatian mercantile interests, or freelance native agents for other nations, but don't overdo it. Thyatians are infamous for diplomatic treachery, but have not maintained an effective intelligence network in the Emirates.

The Alphatians

Those of Alphatian descent in the Emirates live in the coastal cities of Nithia and Abbashan, and are thoroughly absorbed into the Alasiyan desert culture. Those Alphatians not sympathetic with the ways of the Alasiyan tribes left when the colonies were liberated by Al-Kalim in the 800's. Almost all Ylari Alphatians are now followers of Al-Kalim.

Notable exceptions include the network of Alphatian spies in the coastal cities and Barimoor, the Alphatian exile, questing on the Path of the Paragon in the Great Alasiyan Basin.

Persons of Alphatian descent reflect the mixed ancestral roots of imperial Alphatia. Alphatians come in almost every physical type, and cannot be recognized by appearance. Most Alphatians in the Emirates are similar in appearance to Alasiyans, Thyatians, Nithians, or other foreigners from various countries.

Staging: Most Alphatians are cast as villains in this context, particularly the Alphatian spies, Barimoor, and his minions. Whenever the PCs encounter a magic user of unusually high level, he may be an Alphatian exile, or a descendant of an Alphatian wizard.

The Alasiyans

The Alasiyan culture is the dominant culture of the Emirates, and is treated in detail in *Society in the Emirates*. Alasiyans are generally tall and slightly built, with dark complexion and sharp facial features. The black hair is cut shoulder length and commonly worn pulled back and covered with the long, white traditional headwrap, a *keffiah*. The beard is usually neatly trimmed and close-shorn. Choice of garments depends on wealth and social status. Nomads, rural peasants, and urban poor wear plain cotton or wool trousers and shirt with a long robe that hangs to bare or sandal-shod feet. The wealthy wear garments of fine cloths (silk, cotton, linen, and wool), dyed and embroidered—beautiful robes belted with wide sashes, long fur-lined overcoats—with sandals or elegant boots of leather or colorful cloth.

Economics of the Emirates

A partial transcription from a young sheik's notes of an introductory lecture in Political Administration at the Eternal University.

"...Most people lead simple lives of modest subsistence which is a considerable improvement over conditions two centuries ago, when weather variations or warfare (common occurrences) disrupted agriculture and plunged the lower classes into famine and destitution.

"Now, thanks to those enlightened leaders dedicated to Al-Kalim's Dream of desert garden, water is more plentiful and reliable, better managed, and either free or inexpensive. Also, with the current politically stable regime, tribal feuds are less frequent, and seldom flare into armed conflict.

"Though inhabitants of the remote desert and highland wildernesses still suffer at the mercy of weather and warfare, in this modern period of peace and plenty, most nomads, farmers, and laborers can afford a comfortable diet, adequate shelter and clothing, and even small luxuries (fine weapons, superior horses, decorative crafts, religious objects and hand-copied manuscripts of the Nahmeh).

"Approximately 70% of the Emirates' treasury derives from agricultural taxes, and most of this wealth comes from the modest farmer and nomad whose produce is collected by chiefs, sheiks, and tax collectors, and then either sold at market or stored in public warehouses for government use.

"The remaining 30% of the treasury primarily consists of taxes on middle and upper class merchants, importers, and craftsmen. The nobility fulfills its obligation to the government in many ways, sometimes in taxes, sometimes in maintaining the security of the realm, sometimes in the construction and support of public works, such as monumental architecture, colleges, irrigation projects, and places of worship. Also, foreign unbelievers pay a poll tax which is a substantial resource in this our capital of Ylaruam, full as it is of foreign scholars, merchants, and travelers.

"The reign of law, justice, and competent government administration generally protects the rights of property in the Emirates, but I would not be candid with you if I did not admit that corruption and abuse of authority may sometimes result in unrightful confiscation of property, or forced contributions to chiefs or states. Particularly when the victim is a foreign unbeliever, such injustices are apparently all too common..."

The Currency

The *dinar* is the Emirates' equivalent of a gold piece. One dinar is equal to 10 *dirhams*, the Emirates' equivalent of a silver piece. One dirham is equal to 10 *fals*, the Emirates' equivalent of a copper piece. Platinum and electrum coins are not minted by the Emirates, since these metals are not currently produced in quantity here. In cosmopolitan regions like the Nicostenian coast, along caravan routes, and in larger cities and towns, merchants and taverners usually accept foreign coin, or can direct you to moneychangers who will cheat you only within the bounds of dignity and good taste.

Income and Resources of the Emirates

The following are brief economic summaries for the six emirates. The population figures include only permanent residents of towns and cities; the transient populations (nomads, pilgrims, scholars, caravaners, merchants, and other travelers) vary from 10% of the permanent population in large cities to 200% of the population of small towns during pilgrimages or during the summer encampments of the tribal nomads.

The Emirate of Alasiya

Area: 27,720 square miles
Total Population: 78,000
Cities
- Ylaruam (city): 13,000
- Ylaruam (suburbs): 7,000

Tribal Seats
- Kuznetz: 1,050
- Deraan: 1,100
- Sulba: 1,000
- Tel al Kebir: 1,900
- Hedjazi: 1,200

Almost one-quarter of Alasiya's population is concentrated in the city of Ylaruam, its suburbs, and neighboring agricultural settlements. The rest of the population is widely distributed among small villages, tribal seats and the wandering tent communities of the Alasiyan nomad tribes.

The Alasiyani of the desert wilderness are primarily subsistence nomads. Their herds include horses, cattle, camels, goats, and sheep. The nomads trade these animals and their products (hides, meat) with the settled townspeople of the borderlands for the luxuries and necessities the nomad desires—grain, cloth, carpets, coffee and other culinary delicacies. The finest horses are purchased for considerable sums by shrewd horsetraders, who in turn sell these thoroughbreds in towns and cities for a fabulous profit. Salt, glass sands, tar, naphtha, and petroleum are also collected in remote regions by adventurous natives and sold by small entrepeneurs.

Various grains, particularly wheat and alfalfa, and dates are the main products of the settled Alasiyani of the borderlands and waterholes. They also produce a variety of vegetables and fruit, including nuts, cucumbers, olives and oil, peppers, apples, quinces, peaches, limes, oranges, citrons, lemons, melons, myrtle berries, pomegranates, and raisins. Meats, particularly fowl, cheese, and dairy products are also common, and cotton and wool are produced for domestic textile industries. Some fruits, nuts, and olive oil is exported to other regions, but most produce is consumed locally.

The suburbs of Ylaruam produce agricultural goods similar to those of the borderlands. In addition, there are many fine craftsmen and small industries in Ylaruam proper. Their products are soap, candles, lamp oil, perfume, incense, and musk, brasswork and ironwork, pottery, tanning and leatherwork, mundane and decorative glass, and textiles, to list a few of the more common products. Dwarven jewelers and smiths and native carpetweavers create world-renowned export goods, and specialists in arms, the blacksmiths, swordmakers, armorers, bowyers, fletchers, saddlemakers, find plenty of remunerative labor in Ylaruam. Fine Ylari steel weapons, products of the dwarven weapon masters, crafted from the superior iron ore of the Nithian and Dythestenian highlands, are also justly famous throughout the world. Finally, tourism and hostelry is big business in Ylaruam, with all the visiting natives and foreigners on religious and scholarly pilgrimages, and the traders, merchants, and caravaners who carry goods across the deserts to and from Ylaruam.

The Emirate of Abbashan

Area: 4,536 square miles
Total Population: 30,000
Cities and Larger Towns
- Abbashan: 4,300
- Jaboor: 2,000
- Fabia: 2,500

Most of Abbashan's population is concentrated in the oasis at Abbashan and along the coastal plain. The desert wilderness is home only to the Alasiyani nomads and their herds.

The desert wilderness, borderlands, and oases of Abbashan produce animal and vegetable resources like similar regions of the Alasiyan Emirate. Their produce is nomadic livestock, grains, fruits, and some vegetables.

All of this agricultural produce is consumed locally.

Because of Abbashan's hostility toward foreigners, there are fewer successful merchants in Abbashan, and all of their traffic is with other Alasiyan tribes in neighboring emirates, primarily trade in local fruits, olives, dates, nuts, livestock, camels, and fine horses for superior arms and armor to outfit the growing Abbashani military.

However, seven years ago (993 AC), through treaties with various tribal chiefs, sheiks, and lords, the coastal ports of Jaboor and Fabia and associated coastal plain were added to the Abbashan Emirate. The inclusion of this region confronts the Abbashan Emirate with some difficult policy questions.

Jaboor and Fabia are trading ports like Cubis and Tameronikas, though more modest, since no substantial roads or tracks lead from the central coast inland toward Ylaruam, Ctesiphon, or other major caravan routes. Thus, most of Jaboor and Fabia's trade has been confined to communities in the neighboring coastal plains which is perfectly in keeping with the previously anti-foreigner policies of the emir and his advisors.

However, if Abbashan is to compete economically and politically with Alasiya and its capital Ylaruam, as Abbashan's emir has vowed, the province must encourage foreign merchants to use the ports of Taboor and Fabia and to ship goods in caravans through Abbashan toward other cities and established caravan routes. The government has chosen to commission the pioneering of new caravan routes inland from the coast toward Abbashan, and ultimately to Ylaruam, Ctesiphon, or Cinsa-Men-Noo—a good job for adventuresome player characters. The conflict between established patterns of hostility toward foreigners and this new policy promoting foreign trade may cause serious problems for those pioneering the caravan routes and for the merchants who venture along these new routes.

Further, the citizens of Abbashan and its larger settlements are more ascetic, more scornful of luxuries, scholarship, and "culture," than the peoples of Ylaruam. The Abbashani pride themselves in preserving the traditional values of the desert nomad, believing that there is an inherent toughness and nobility in those who have learned to master the hardships of the desert. This makes the Abbashani a disappointing market for many of the luxury items valuable enough to justify their shipping across the desert by caravan.

Abbashan, the capital itself, is not a notable trade city; its craftsmen and artisans aim their work at less demanding local markets, and the culture lacks the wealthy conspicuous consumers that patronize the master craftmen of luxury items. Abbashan is, however, rumored as a good place to buy inexpensive and serviceable weapons, armor, and tack for military purposes. Much of the stock is purchased by the emirate, but there is ready availability of used and second-class equipment at bargain prices.

The Emirate of Nithia

Area: 7,560 square miles
Total Population: 17,600
Cities and Large Towns
  Surra-Man-Raa: 2,000
  Cinsa-Men-Noo: 1,100

The population of Nithia is concentrated along the coastal plain. Apart from the settlements along the caravan route in the region of Cinsa-Men-Noo, the rest of Nithia is an inhospitable and almost-unpopulated wasteland.

Even the relatively populous coastal plain is in poor shape compared to other regions of the Emirates. Though the plain receives plenty of rain, centuries of cultivation and some short-sighted agricultural policies of the Alphatian colonial administration have left the land exhausted and unproductive. The Way of the Eternal Truth has not taken hold here since relatively few are True Believers, and the emir and administration appointed by the sultan in Ylaruam has little support or cooperation from the squabbling chiefs of the local tribes who cling to ancient superstitions and dark worships. The peasantry is wretched, scrabbling desperately to produce enough food to survive, while the chiefs demand an excessive portion of the already meager harvest as taxes to support their own luxury and an armed rabble to keep the peasants in line and to settle their differences with other greedy tribal chiefs.

Therefore it is ironic to speak of the products and resources of Nithia, unless you are in the market for starving peasants or petty chieftains supported by murderous brigands. An illicit slave trade is still practiced here, in fact, in spite of the emir's efforts to wipe it out, and bands of cut-throats for hire may be had by anyone brave or foolish enough to solicit their service.

The coastal plains produce barely enough barley, millet, vegetables, and fish to support the population. Wealthy chiefs and townfolk may be able to afford cattle, goats, sheep, and their products, if they are able to find tribal nomads tending their herds and bringing them to market rather than raiding agricultural settlements or one another.

There is also an illicit trade in archaeological artifacts from ancient Nithian sites. The Emirate strictly forbids access to these sites, but enforcement is quite difficult in such underpopulated areas. Qualified scholarly expeditions may receive research permits from the emir or Vouchery of the Provinces, and adventurers and mining experts (dwarves, for the most part) can often find employment in these groups.

Cinsa-Men-Noo and nearby settlements are not so unfortunate as Nithians of the coastal plains. Most people are followers of Al-Kalim, the local administration has had full cooperation from tribes and tribal leaders, the trade routes and mineral wealth of the region provides a steady source of cash, and the local nomads, eager to trade livestock for cash and luxury items, provide enough meat and cheese to provision caravans as well as supplement the otherwise poor agriculture of the area.

Marble, gold, silver, iron, nickel, and copper are mined in this region and in the wastelands to the east. The deposits are rich and only now beginning to be extensively exploited. The savage and perilous nature of the highland wastes are the primary constraint on the development of these mineral resources, and the Vouchery of the Provinces frequently hires adventurers to survey the wilderness, to protect prospecting expeditions, and to guard mining operations.

The emirs of Nithia also are eager to grant dominions in the wilderness regions near Cinsa-Men-Noo; in return for dedicating oneself to assuring the security of a dominion, a chief or lord receives the right to propect for and exploit the minerals in his dominion. Such grants are considered quite risky, but potentially very lucrative, and finding potential financial backers is not very difficult.

The Emirate of Makistan

Area: 6,552 square miles
Total Population: 31,500
Cities
  Parsa (capital): 2,000
  Warqa: 1,500
  Uruk: 1,500
  Anram: 1,500

Eighty percent of Makistan's population is located in the Ust-Urt Valley, in agricultural settlements along the minor rivers and in the urban settlements of Parsa, Warqa, Uruk, and Anram. These urban settlements are really just real big villages; unlike the other urban settlements in the Emirates, there are no fortifications associated with these towns, no

enclosing city wall, and little monumental architecture. Dwellings of two stories or more are exceptional; mud or sod huts accompanied by a variety of auxilliary tents are common, even for relatively wealthy merchants or tribal leaders. The largest, most substantial buildings are often the sprawling wooden tribal stables, where each tribal community shelters and cares for its more valuable herd animals and ponies.

Wheat, millet, and rice are the primary agricultural products of the Ust-Urt Valley. The rich soil produces large yields, permitting Makistani farmers to sell a good portion of their harvest to nomads, or to be made into bread to provision caravan travelers. The nomad herds of cattle, sheep, and goats provide ample meat, dairy products, hides, hair, and wool to fill local needs, with surplus sold as caravan provisions.

Some local Makistani crafts are in demand in other regions of the Emirates, particularly the fine blankets, rugs, and tents made from the hair of their herd animals, and the powerful laminated bows and lamellar armor the Makistani warrior prefers, but most of these products are consumed locally. The Makistani as a people seem to be commercially unambitious. Even established Makistani merchants are casual and uncompetitive traders; haggling is tiresome work for a Makistani, in contrast to typical Alasiyani merchants, who haggle for the fun and sport of it. Try striking a hard bargain with a Makistani—he's likely to give you a fishy scowl of distaste and go off looking for someone more pleasant to deal with.

The Emirate of Nicostenia

Area: 3,780 square miles
Total Population: 65,000
Cities
Tameronikas (capital): 4,000
Cubis: 1,000

The Nicostenian populations are fairly evenly distributed in the major ports and large villages along the coastal plain, with substantial settlements and semi-nomadic herders on the upland plateau.

Farmers produce grains, vegetables, cotton, cattle, sheep, and fowl for local consumption. Coffee, tea, spices, fish, sugar, grapes, raisins, and wine are produced for trade with other regions of the Emirates. The coffee, tea, spices, and sugar are considered necessary luxuries by the Alasiyani peasants and nobles alike, and wine is quite popular for the middle-class and wealthy. These products are relatively lightweight, compact, and durable in transport, so trade in these items is quite profitable, and heavily taxed.

The Nicostenian uplands are the only substantial source of timber, charcoal, and firewood in the Emirates. Even here, it is quite expensive, and practical in value only for the small shipbuilding industry or as a building and decorative material for the well-to-do.

The ports of Nicostenia are cosmopolitan trading communities with vital mercantile traditions. Silk, velvet, satin, linen, brocade, fine cloth, porcelain, precious woods, lamps, paper, and other items are imported and shipped by caravan all over the Emirates. In return, various Emirates products (carpets, weapons, fine jewelry, perfumes, horses, and precious metals) are exported to nations throughout the D&D® world.

The markets and shops of Tameronikas and Cubis offer serviceable if unexceptional goods and services of all kinds for local consumption.

The Emirate of Dythestenia

Area: 4,032 square miles
Total Population: 7,600
Cities
Ctesiphon (capital): 1,000

Ctesiphon owes its relative large population to its position at the junction of several important caravan routes and to several year-round springs which provide for barley, millet, vegetables, and fruit adequate to local needs.

The rest of Dythestenia is an unpopulated wilderness of barren rocky slopes and badlands. A few settlements are found along the east-west caravan route, and a few mining communities are nestled on the lower slopes of the Altan Tepe range. The settlements produce grain and vegetables for their own needs; the mining communities, however, yield nickel, gold, silver, copper, and carbon-rich iron prized in the fine weapons made by Ylari swordsmiths.

The remaining population consists of desert nomads who visit the uplands after the brief and violent rainstorms of winter turn the wadis into adequate pastures, then spend the summer near Ctesiphon and the settlements along the caravan route. The nomad herds of horses, cattle, camels, goats, and sheep produce only enough for the tribe's needs, with a small surplus to trade with settlements for coffee, tea, sugar, and other luxuries.

To add to the burden of hostile climate and poor soil, this emirate has of late been plagued with raids from monster tribes and bands of giants based in the Altan Tepe Range, an unfortunate result of recent Thyatian punitive expeditions into the southern slopes of the mountain range. To protect the populace and the valuable minerals mined in the region, the emir has been forced to hire mercenaries skilled in this sort of warfare. Standard Emirates military units are most effective when mounted on open ground against other disciplined human military units; in badlands against ambush and barbarian tactics they are almost useless.

Society in the Emirates

Al-Kalim and the Eternal Truth

Faith in the Eternal Truth as preached by Al-Kalim is the most important element in the society of the Emirates. The Confederated Tribes of the Emirates of Ylaruam was founded through the leadership of Al-Kalim. It remains together because of the unifying dreams shared by the Emirates' peoples—a dream of justice and honor, a dream of a garden in the desert, and a dream of trust among men and Immortals—the dreams exemplified in the heroic example of Al-Kalim's life and in his teachings as recorded in the Nahmeh, the holy book of the True Believers.

The Life of Al-Kalim

Every Emirates youth knows the story of Al-Kalim's birth, childhood, and young adulthood as a tribal nomad of the deep desert. Fearless and wise before his years, he was the perfect embodiment of the ideals of the desert nomad. Tales are told of his unerring sense of water beneath the sands as an infant, his courtesy and justice with his playmates, his obedience as a child, his fierce nature and reckless horsemanship as a an adolescent, his lonely and miraculous solitary journeys through desert wilderness and sandstorms as a young man, and his authority, justice, and wit as a young chief. Throughout his young life he is spoken of as a teacher, always quick with a tale, a verse, or a saying appropriate to the occasion.

His youth was the embodiment of the ideals of the desert nomad, and therefore an embodiment of the ideals of all Alasiyan peoples, for no matter how cultured or civilized an Alasiyan may be, he always measures himself by the rugged standards of his frontier forebears, the heroic images of tough, independent, honorable beings.

Al-Kalim's early military successes came through the force of his personality; he welded a group of previously-feuding tribes into a warband of unprecedented size and discipline, and other tribes were simply overwhelmed by force of numbers. When he captured Ylaruam in 825, his warband of 10,000 desert warriors was the largest army ever seen in the Alasiyan desert.

The near-disastrous blunder in attacking Parsa the following year was a great lesson to Al-Kalim. An unusual out-of-season storm turned the battleground into a quagmire and made the Makistani's bowstrings useless; the stroke of luck eliminated the Makistani's edge with mounted bowmen and turned the battle into a chaotic free-for-all. The desert warriors prevailed, but losses were heavy, and Al-Kalim realized that he had a lot to learn about generalship. Fortunately, his charm and skill enabled him to obtain the Makistani as allies, giving him the mounted bowmen that played an important part in campaigns against the colonial powers in the next four years.

Al-Kalim studied the writings of classical military philosophers. He devised the tactics of mobile warfare that even now, two centuries later, make the Emirates a military power of international reputation. He also studied the Alphatian innovations in the use of mounted magic users as skirmishers. Al-Kalim succeeded, possibly because he understood that the key to effectiveness in such units was military training and high morale as well as textbook magical scholarship.

The enthusiastic response of the Makistani to his personality may have encouraged Al-Kalim to add a mystical, spiritual element to his campaigns. In 826 he first revealed his visions of the Dream of Justice and Honor, a belief in a world where a man could count on his fellow man and on the Immortal powers for justice and honor, so long as he lived his public and private life in accordance with these principles. This dream appealed to the chiefs, sheiks, and clan leaders, and gave them an excuse to give over their private feuds in the name of a romantic ideal.

Al-Kalim's campaigns against the colonial overlords were thankfully decisive and anticlimactic. The colonial overlords relied on native auxilliaries for their cavalry, of which they were swiftly deprived by Al-Kalim's diplomacy and idealistic charisma. The Alphatian colonial forces were of extremely poor quality, depending on the fearsome firepower of their magical support units. Al-Kalim's mounted archers and warriors made short work of the magical brigades, shattering their morale with showers of arrows, then maneuvering around the disorganized infantry and charging through the magic users ranks with devastating effect. The demoralized Alphatians fled immediately, and the towns opened their gates in welcome to Al-Kalim and his liberating army.

The Thyatians were a more difficult matter. Their colonial military forces were second-rate, but disciplined, and after several decisive battlefield defeats, the Thyatians withdrew in good order to the fortified towns, where Al-Kalim's fierce cavalry and archers were of no use.

Fortunately Al-Kalim had anticipated this, and had engaged dwarven advisors to school him in the art of seige. Also using well-poisoning and treasonous intrigue, Al-Kalim forced the surrender of Cubis and Tameronikas in less than six months each.

With all of the territory of the modern Emirates under the control of his troops and allies, Al-Kalim convened the first Convocation of Tribes in Ylaruam in 831. Al-Kalim had realized years before that his coalition of tribes was bound to dissolve into traditional inter-tribal conflicts once the external enemy was removed. In his famous opening address to the convocation he introduced his Dream of the Garden in the Desert—a new principle to inspire the cooperation and fraternity of the region's peoples. This dream was not to replace the Dream of Honor and Justice, but to supplement it—a dream to enrich the land and increase the prosperity of succeeding generations.

Despite resistance from more conservative elements in the convocation, Al-Kalim's proposal that all magical, scholarly, and technological resources be focused on the problem of bringing water to the desert carried the day. Al-Kalim diplomatically maneuvered the convocation into asking him to become their sultan, their chief of chiefs. He accepted under protest, and set about engineering the structure of the current Emirates. By the end of the convocation he had, with the help of many chiefs, wise men, and scholars, produced the document establishing the Confederated Tribes of the Emirates of Ylaruam, and had obtained the signatures and vows of the majority of the chiefs and sheiks present.

This act brings to a close the public part of Al-Kalim's life. Thereafter the Preceptors, the council of wise men established by Al-Kalim to advise the sultan, handled the affairs of the young nation.

Al-Kalim set out on a pilgrimage to the Undersea Kingdom to seek out an Immortal of the Sphere of Time, the Old Man of the Sea. After many fabulous adventures Al-Kalim reached the peak of a seamount, and there conferred with the Old Man of the Sea, who undertook the sponsorship of Al-Kalim's quest for immortality along the Path of the Dynast. (A brief review of the Path of the Dynast on page 15 of the *D&D® Companion DM's Book* shows that Al-Kalim was already on the way to success on this path.)

Upon his return to Ylaruam (after many other adventures on his return from the Undersea Kingdom), Al-Kalim entered a period of contemplation and study, researching the legends of artifacts that enable time travel. It is during this period that the Nahmeh was composed. How much of it was written by Al-Kalim and how much by his companion Farid is a matter of endless and inconclusive conjecture by two centuries of scholars.

Regardless of the issue of authorship, it is clearly the most influential book in Emirates history, and arguably among the most important books ever written.

The official legend is that Al-Kalim spent the rest of his life in solitude and contemplation, dying quietly with family and friends in 900 AC. In fact, seven years after Al-Kalim returned from the Undersea Kingdom, he slipped out of Ylaruam, accompanied only by his faithful companion Farid, on a search for an artifact that controls the flow of artifact was located and won by Al-Kalim, who is now on a series of voyages into the future to aid his descendants in maintaining the dynasty uniting the Emirates of Ylaruam.

The Legend of Al-Kalim

Though the details of Al-Kalim's tales may not be literally true, each tale tells us something about the values and dreams of the peoples of the Emirates who tell the stories, and thus are true records of the character of the people, even if they are not true reports of the events. Further, most of the tales and legends have a significant core of truth, no matter how bizarre they may sound.

For example, his magical intuition of the presence of water is the result of a special spell cast permanently upon him by a Makistani sorcerer as a reward for a favor. This occurred when Al-Kalim was eighteen; fanciful legends and exaggerated anecdotes of childhood friends have extended this power back to his infancy. This legend is a symbolic expression of Al-Kalim's desert nomad background and his later dedication to the dream of plentiful water for all the Emirates' peoples.

Alasiyans have a fine sensibility about the legends of Al-Kalim. They say, "It is said of Al-Kalim that he did such and so..." rather than "Al-Kalim did such and so." They understand that the art of storytelling involves embellishment, and they clearly distinguish between storytelling and factual reporting. Nonetheless, the Alasiyan takes great satisfaction in the spiritual truths of myth and legends, and hold the fabulous tales of Al-Kalim's pilgrimage and adventuring to be no less true than a merchant's sworn tax statement or a battle scout's report of enemy position—though the standard of truth differs according to the purpose of the speaker and listener.

The following facts are the foundations for many of the more fabulous legends of Al-Kalim.

Al-Kalim was born with superior abilities in strength, intelligence, wisdom, constitution, dexterity, and charisma. He became an excellent fighter and horseman as an adolescent (reaching level four). In his solitary years in the desert he was trained by a hermit mystic in the ways of clerical ritual and magic, receiving the sort of spells appropriate to a desert druid. (These spells form the core of the True Believers' special NPC clerical spell list.) During these years he began receiving his prophetic visions. He concealed these visions until later life, when he made reference to them in his orations and in the Nahmeh.

By the time Al-Kalim had returned to his tribe and inherited its leadership after the death of his father, Al-Kalim had been visited by an Immortal and had adopted a more standard clerical path, worshipping privately in the manner introduced by Thyatian travelers. As a chief, then chief of chiefs, Al-Kalim's charisma gave him natural ability as a diplomat, but the restrained and infrequent use of a *ring of human control* obtained on an adventure accounts for his uncanny ability to obtain cooperation from his most bitter enemies at critical moments during the years of campaigning and warfare leading up to the establishment of the Emirates.

It is said that Al-Kalim was a frequent consort and compeer of the djinn, the efreet, and other denizens of the elemental planes. In his youthful adventuring he did travel to other planes, often with clandestine aid from a shadowy Immortal patron, and in the years after the founding of the Emirates, he frequently visited the elemental planes and challenged the powers there, winning their aid in his quests. Djinn and efreet know Al-Kalim by name, and many are still bound to him by oath. Other more treacherous efreet may occasionally be found in bottles marked with Al-Kalim's seal ring.

Al-Kalim's quest to obtain Immortal sponsorship is detailed, if a bit fancifully, in the Nahmeh. The more outrageous events are most often literally rendered; the more prosaic events that Farid, Al-Kalim's scribe and companion, rendered were embellished to enhance their entertainment and didactic value. Farid's own exploits are somewhat exaggerated, reflecting Farid's idea of what he *would* have done, had circumstances been different. Adventurers often encounter bits of business left unfinished by Al-Kalim during this pilgrimage, and ambitious True Believers (high level PCs and NPCs) may test themselves by reenacting parts of Al-Kalim's marvelous journeys.

And there is the legend of the Shah-i-Zindah, "the Living King," the holy man who still lives and who will one day return to his people in their hour of greatest need. This legend speaks of an Immortal father of a nation who promises to look out for its welfare, even beyond the limits of a normal man's lifetime. Using his artifact of time travel, Al-Kalim will literally return to future eras of the Emirates' history to insure the continuity of his dynasty and nation. Whether he conceals his presence, or publicly pronounces his return, depends on the circumstances (and the needs of the DM).

The Dynasties of Al-Kalim

Two factions claim line of descent from Al-Kalim, the Preceptors and the Kin. (See *History of the Emirates of Ylaruam*.)

The Preceptors favor more modern, cosmopolitan values; foreigners and unbelievers are tolerated, scholars welcome ideas from the outside world, and urban and mercantile cultures are not considered inferior to the nomadic and warlike Alasiyan culture.

The Kin are more conservative; they favor the traditional values of the desert nomads. Foreigners, particularly foreign unbelievers, are treated with hostility. Those who have not been tested by the harsh conditions of desert living, such as farmers and city-dwellers, are soft and contemptible.

Al-Kalim actually anticipated and encouraged this split among his followers, reasoning that two dynastic lines with contrasting values would be more likely to survive than one dynastic line, and that the cosmopolitan values of the Preceptors might be appropriate for certain periods of cultural enrichment and expansion, while the conservative values of the Kin might be appropriate when the Emirates was threatened by external military or cultural threats.

For example, in the future Emirates of 1200 AC, in the time of the coming of the Desert Master (See X10, *Red Arrow, Black Shield*, page 18), the Kin faction is in power, and Sultan Ali Ben Faisal "believes that those who live in the hot desert are tougher and more noble than those who live in the soft, effete civilized lands." In this period the Emirates is hostile to foreigners, and the policies of the state are self-interested and opportunistic.

Staging: If the DM wants Ylaruam to be sympathetic and open to foreign adventurers, the Preceptor faction should be in control. This is appropriate if the player characters in the campaign are visitors from other countries of the D&D® world.

If the DM wants Ylaruam to be hostile to foreigners, the Kin faction should be in control. This is more appropriate if native player characters are used, or if foreign PCs are on raiding or spy missions. Though both Preceptor and Kin factions are strongly Lawful regimes, the arrogant intolerance and narrow

perspective of the Kin faction makes it more suitable as an unsympathetic antagonist than as a setting for travel and adventure. Also, such an ascetic, anti-intellectual, anti-cultural regime is a less colorful, less provocative backdrop for a fantasy campaign.

Adventure Idea: The player characters are contacted by a time-traveling Al-Kalim or his agents and enlisted to aid one faction in a struggle for power.

For example, the Kin faction has remained neutral during the war of the Desert Master. The Desert Master has been defeated, and the D&D® world is once again in a period of relative peace and prosperity. The conservative and self-interested policies of the Kin faction are less fruitful in such an era, so Al-Kalim sends a vision to a PC cleric, admonishing him to reestablish the Council of Preceptors as an advisory body in Ylaruam.

The Eternal Truth and Articles of Faith

The Eternal Truth of Al-Kalim, as elaborated in the Nahmeh and as accepted by all True Believers, is that a man must have Faith and Trust in the Immortal Guardians, the honor of his fellow man, and in the wisdom that is obtained through reason and contemplation. The Nahmeh directs men on the proper ways to show respect and honor to the Immortal Guardians and to other men, and praises those who seek to understand the world around them through scholarship and study.

Reverencing the Immortal Guardians: The Nahmeh lists two rituals that must be made in observance of man's faith and trust in the Immortal Guardians.

First, all True Believers must devote themselves to prayer and meditation at sunrise and sunset. Violation of the sanctity of these observances is in very bad form in a city like Ylaruam; in the camp of a desert nomad it may be a capital offense.

Second, all True Believers must fast for 24 hours from sunset to sunset on the day of the full moon. At the end of the fast True Believers are required to feast, dedicating a part of their food to the Immortal Guardians, either as a symbolic gesture, or in the case of the more devout, by sharing the feast with the poor.

Reverencing One's Fellow Man: The Nahmeh lists three rituals that must be made in observance of man's faith and trust in his fellow man.

First, whenever a True Believer meets with another True Believer, the Water Ritual should be observed which is a symbolic or literal sharing of a drink of one another's water. Observance of this ritual varies from a perfunctory offering of wetted fingers to polite and elaborate ceremonies where coffe or tea is shared in special ornamental cups to the accompaniment of recited and improvised verses.

The second is the ritual of Truthtelling. To speak an untruth to another True Believer is a grave sin. This ritual may be observed informally with the oath, "By Al-Kalim and the Eternal Truth, I swear...," or more formally by swearing before a cleric, paladin, or other holy man. A man who breaks his word after such a vow is cursed by the Immortal Guardians, and scorned by his fellows.

The third ritual is Attendance to the Security of Your Fellow Man. This ritual takes many forms. In its least manifestation, it is the obligation to give alms to the poor and wretched. It also includes answering a chief's summons to war against Unbelievers. (The True Believer is not supposed to attack another True Believer. This inconvenient injunction is often bypassed by declaiming a foe as a sinner or unrighteous man, by obtaining a magistrate or chief's judgment against a foe, or by goading a foe into making the first attack, thereby justifying hostilities as self-defense. This is a popular and well-established topic in the religious and government courts of law.)

Reverencing Wisdom and Scholarship: The Nahmeh lists two rituals that must be made in observance of man's faith and trust in scholarship and reason.

The first is the ritual of Judgment. When a True Believer is called upon to judge an issue, whether it be a matter of natural science, military practice, or ritual law, he is enjoined to follow three steps. One, to contemplate and observe. Two, to weigh the evidence. Three, to base judgment on knowledge, not tradition or superstition. Giving judgment is a patient, methodical, and solemn practice among True Believers. A chief whose judgments are wise is widely respected, and men who act and judge impulsively in arrogance or anger are thought childish and irresponsible.

The second ritual is the reading, reciting, and study of the Nahmeh. The fiercest desert warrior and the most wretched urban beggar is likely to be able to recite from the Nahmeh at length, and most peasant and nomad families have a copy of the sacred text as their most treasured possession.

Pilgrimage: Though not a requirement, pilgrimage is encouraged for all those in good health and of sufficient means. A pilgrimage is a symbolic reenactment of a portion of Al-Kalim's pilgrimage to the Undersea Kingdom to solicit the sponsorship of an Immortal for himself and his people. Only the most powerful might contemplate retracing some portion of Al-Kalim's actual route; more common is the practice of visiting Ylaruam (or some other large center of learning) and listening to the lectures and didactic tales of the learned holy scholars in sanctuaries dedicated to the Eternal Truth. Besides being a sort of religious obligation, pilgrimage is usually a pleasant vacation, and big business for the hostelry and guides that cater to the pilgrimage trade.

The Dream of Justice and Honor: This article of faith severely enjoins True Believers against taking up arms against one another, and condemns the traditional practices of feud and herb raiding popular among the desert nomads. Most desert nomads interpret these passages of the Nahmeh to discourage inter-tribal disunity in the face of foreign or Unbeliever aggressors, while judging camel raids and feuds as sacred rituals assuring the security of their fellow man (for fellow man read "blood relative, tribe member, or ally by oath and treaty").

The Dream of the Garden in the Desert: This article of faith exhorts the chiefs, scholars, and holy men to study how sufficient water may be brought to all peoples of the Emirates, exhorts the merchants and wealthy to generously support this project, and exhorts the peasants to cooperate with their chiefs in managing their water resources as efficiently as possible. The success of many water projects may be attributed to the universal acceptance of this dream as in the common interests of True Believers of all levels of society.

Staging: Here are examples of ways to dramatize features of the Eternal Truth in Ylaruam campaign:

* Clerics who omit the Articles of Faith don't get their prayers answered.
* Other True Believing characters who don't follow the articles are subject to heavy penalties on reaction checks.
* NPC villains may observe the letter but not the spirit of the articles, providing a clue to their evil character, and sanctioning righteous chastisement from PCs.
* PCs who observe the articles receive XP bonuses for alignment play and role playing.
* Crusading and undertaking holy quests earn generous XP awards.

The Way of Al-Kalim

The True Believers, the followers of the Eternal Truth and Al-Kalim, are divided into three different groups, according to the Way of Reverence taken by the follower. These three paths of devotions are called the Way of the Follower, the Way of the Warrior, and the Way of the Scholar.

The Way of the Follower

These are the lay members of the faith, from the humble peasant to the mightiest emir. Followers acknowledge the Eternal Truth and observe the Articles of Faith, but are otherwise free to follow any occupation they choose. To become a Follower of the Eternal Truth, one need only swear in the ritual of Truthtelling that one accepts the Eternal Truth, as Al-Kalim and the Nahmeh have revealed it, and faithfully observe the Articles of Faith in reverencing the Immortal Guardians, one's fellow man, and wisdom and scholarship.

Most natives become Followers through this oath while they are adolescents. Foreigners who become Followers through this oath, or natives who accept the Eternal Truth later in life, are seldom immediately accepted as sincere. Since the ritual of Truthtelling promises that an insincere oath will be punished by a curse, True Believers often withhold judgment for a time to see if the character has been cursed. Since the nature of a curse is often ambiguous and difficult to recognize, the True Believers feel that weighing this judgment against a test of time and observation is only proper.

The Way of the Warrior: The Military Orders

These True Believers are members of the Military Orders of the Eternal Way. Warriors are sworn to service in their youth, and may come from any social status, though they come most often from wealthy or noble families as younger sons and daughters who do not stand to inherit rulership or wealth. Youths with peasant and artisan backgrounds may also be accepted, but they can seldom afford to provide their own equipment (as is required by tradition). Further, children of middle- and upper-class families often begin their military training as soon as they can ride and draw a bow, putting poorer applicants at a great disadvantage.

Examination Tournaments: The Military Orders hold regular Examination Tournaments where applicants may qualify for one or more of the Military Orders. To apply, one need only be a True Believer and supply one's own horse, chain armor, shield, lance, spear, throwing hammer, and bow. (A warhorse is not required. Jousting is one of the examination tests, but an applicant may decline this test; however, an applicant must demonstrate his riding skill in the other mounted competitions.)

Obviously, such outfitting is expensive, and out of the reach of most peasant, laborer, or artisan families. However, a tribe, village, or individual benefactor may sponsor an applicant, out of tribal or civic pride, or for various personal reasons. *First, second, and third level characters with insufficient funds may go adventuring to earn a reputation, and so come to the attention of such potential sponsors. Considering total experience points as a measure of reputation, a low-level PC might find himself in competition with two or three other local NPCs for the patronage of the tribal chief, the village council, or a wealthy merchant advertising a sponsorship tournament as a promotion.*

The five Military Orders are the Order of the Pike, the Order of the Arrow, the Order of the Spell, the Order of the Mace, and the Order of the Desert Rose.

The Order of the Pike is for heavy infantry. Successful applicants for this order generally come from urban settlements and are of great strength and constitution. Once trained, these soldiers are assigned to duty as palace guards or elite standard, scout, and command units in the Emirates' military divisions.

The Order of the Arrow is for mounted archers. Successful applicants for this order are often of Makistani descent and are of remarkable dexterity and constitution. Once trained, these mounted archers are assigned to duty in the Sultan's Peacekeeping Guard (an elite unit for peacekeeping in remote areas) or in elite mounted archer or scout units of the Emirates' military divisions.

The Order of the Spell are mounted skirmishing magic users. Applicants for this order need not provide the standard armor and weapons, but must be excellent horsemen. Successful applicants have tough constitutions as well as magical skill. The most important test of applicants for this order is the ability to cast spells under fire while mounted, a considerable feat (requiring substantial hit points, a tough constitution, high dexterity to remain seated, and high intelligence to maintain concentration). After training, these magic users are either assigned to instruction duty at universities or to the elite magic user skirmisher or scout units of the Emirates' military divisions.

The Order of the Mace is for clerics who provide leadership, spiritual support, and healing magic. Successful applicants for this order are prayer leaders and itinerents of superior constitution and wisdom. Once trained, these clerics are assigned to duty as officers and healers in palace guards or elite standard, scout, and command units in the Emirates' military divisions.

The Order of the Lance is an honorary order of the finest soldiers, magic users, and clerics drawn from the other orders. Members are selected by the Council of the Desert Rose, a group of eminent members, on the basis of reputation, service, and dedication to the principles of Al-Kalim and the Nahmeh. Knights of the Rose (as they are known) usually are assigned to duty as captains of royal guard units or elite military units, or may receive royal commissions as faris (the Ylari equivalent of a paladin), with instructions to wander the land, seek out evil, and administer justice wherever necessary.

Staging: The Military Orders of this campaign are loosely based on the mameluks of the ancient Arab cultures and the Military Orders of the Crusades.

The mameluks were military slaves with a reputation for great fighting ability and high morale; part of the reason for this was their early military education, all the more rigorous because the mameluks were slaves. In this context, the Military Orders receive early military training to prepare them for the examinations, and their training can be so rigorous because they submit completely to the authority of their trainers and officers through oath to their religion. Essentially they are religious slaves.

The religious orders of the Crusades, the Knights Templar and Hospitallers of St. John, for example, were knights who took monastic vows of poverty and obedience to God and their superiors, and who devoted their lives to defending the Holy Land.

A review of one or two of the references on Arab cultures or the Crusades listed in "Suggested Reading" may inspire a DM with further details on these elite military groups.

The Way of the Scholar

Those who follow the Way of the Scholar are roughly equivalent to the priesthood of the Eternal Truth. However, there is no ecclesiastical hierarchy, no body of ritual (other than that required of lay Followers), no specific requirements to join, and no specific responsibilities to perform. Scholars may also be of any character class, including magic users, fighters, and thieves, though most

Scholars are clerics.

There are three varieties of Scholar: Prayer Leaders, Itinerents, and Dervishes.

Prayer Leaders are learned and devout men who lead the daily prayers in the Sanctuaries of the Eternal Truth, who deliver sermons and instruct the people in proper observances of the Articles of Faith, and who judge questions of religious law.

To become a Prayer Leader one simply goes to a Sanctuary and begins to study and discourse with the other Prayer Leaders. In time, one either learns that he is not ready for this vocation, and is asked to leave the Sanctuary, or he is encouraged by the Sanctuary's established Prayer Leaders.

From this point a Prayer Leader may become a standard cleric, receiving spells through his worship, or he may choose to become a religious scholar, studying magic, natural science, history, storytelling, or whatever he chooses. Any such role he chooses for himself is proper, so long as it displays reverence for wisdom and scholarship.

Itinerents are standard cleric-adventurers. They become clerics by vowing to devote themselves to the study of the Nahmeh and to the spreading of the faith through righteous action and devout teaching. An indeterminate period of time passes, presumably while the Immortal Guardians are considering the sincerity of the Itinerent's vow; then, if he is worthy, he is granted the ability to pray for spells.

Dervishes are holy hermits who dedicate themselves to observing the natural world around them and to contemplating the Eternal Truth. Fleeing the distractions of society, they withdraw into the wilderness where they live simple, solitary lives of worship and reflection. Though they avoid contact with people, they do not forget their duty to reverence their fellow man and guard their security; these hermits may be called upon to aid in rescuing travelers or to provide guidance to pilgrims and True Believers on righteous quests.

Special Clerical Spells

These spells are given only to clerics of the Eternal Truth. Clerics of other backgrounds may receive these new spells when they become True Believers, but they must also lose the ability to receive the spells replaced by these special spells. For example, a second-level cleric from Karameikos might become a True Believer. He would gain the ability to receive the *detect water* spell, but he would lose the ability to receive the *resist cold* spell.

First Level Spells

New Spell: *detect water*
Range: 0
Duration: 2 turns
Effect: All water within 300'

This spell enables the cleric to sense the presence of any water within the range of the spell. It will also give an impression of the quantity of the water (approximate number of quarts if limited; "a lot" if a great quantity). The spell is not blocked by intervening substances. (DMs with a sense of humor may consider all meat and plant life as sources of water, but the cleric quickly learns to distinguish the distinct sensation of drinking water.)

Spell Lost: resist cold

Second Level Spells

New Spell: *poetic inspiration*

Actually, this is only a modest variant of the *bless* spell. Range, duration, and effect remain the same. The cleric exhorts himself and his companions, reciting or improvising verse to inspire martial ardor in allies or terror in enemies. The spell may also be used to influence diplomatic relations, conferring a +1 bonus to monster and retainer reaction rolls, assuming the cleric can speak the affected beings' language. If you're impressed with the eloquence of the player's exhortation, don't be stingy for further bonuses.

Third Level Spells

New Spell: *truthtelling*
Range: 0
Duration: instantaneous
Effect: one living creature

Any creature swearing an oath to perform an action or vouching for the truth of a statement will be *cursed* as the third level clerical spell if they do not perform the action as promised or if the statement they have vouched for is false. The DM is the sole arbiter of whether an action has been performed acceptably or whether a statement is true.

The DM determines the nature and timing of the curse. If appropriate, use the wording of the oath as a guide. For example, if a character says, "May Al-Kalim strike me dead if I fail to do such-and-so," a cursed character may be struck by a lightning bolt during a future storm, or may be struck down by a Warrior of Al-Kalim during a battle during a subsequent adventure, or Al-Kalim or his avatar may appear suddenly and strike the character with a *cause critical wounds*. Make the curse fit the seriousness of the crime, and time the effect of the curse so that observers may recognize it as a judgment of the character's faithfulness to his oath.

For True Believers there is no saving throw against the *curse* effect of this spell. Unbelievers receive a saving throw vs. Spells at a -4 penalty to avoid the curse.

Spell Lost: confuse alignment (reverse of know alignment)

New Spell: *know destiny*
Range: 0 (cleric only)
Duration: instantaneous
Effect: one hint

This **commune** spell variant allows the cleric to ask the greater powers (the Immortal Guardians) for guidance, information, or advice. The cleric may either ask concerning a specific situation, or make the request generally, trusting the judgment of the Immortal guardians to provide what is necessary.

Sometimes the Immortals are not interested in the cleric's problems. "You're on your own. Now don't bother me again."

Sometimes the Immortals are disappointed in the alignment play of the cleric. "You have been too interested in grabbing treasure and too careless about honoring your fellow man. Look out, or your prayers for spells may not be answered."

Sometimes the Immortals are disappointed in the cleric's initiative and self-reliance. "You've got a brain. Use it. Or something terrible is going to happen to you."

Sometimes the Immortals are glad you called, because they had something they wanted to tell you. "Killing that man is a bad idea. He's a dervish who's been ensorcelled. Save him, and we'll be real happy."

Sometimes the Immortal DM has an important message or prophecy that he wants to slip into the adventure. "Seven brothers will come riding, and the seventh brother bears the seventh ring of Habib the Waster, who will bake you like a loaf of bread if you don't step lively."

Sometimes the Immortal has some verse he wants to share with you.

"And the serpents shall skate on thin ice,
In a cavern 'neath the sea
And opportunity shall knock twice
Before he renders up the key."

Punish indiscriminate use of this spell with irrelevant and misleading responses. "It's probably going to be snowing somewhere

tonight..." (in Norwold). "Your mother wonders why you haven't written."

Staging: See *Clues* in the Basic D&D® DM Rulebook. Delivering a clue in character as a cleric's Immortal patron or guardian rather than as DM is a fancy flourish.

Beginning characters need this sort of help, but can't get the spell until sixth level, and may not have the sense to avoid abusing it. To provide low-level characters with access to the spell while restaining its use, give it to a friendly NPC, or provide one-use magic items like clerical scrolls or limited-charge special items. This spell lets the DM speak directly to players as an Immortal, developing Immortal personalities. Immortals were characters once upon a time, just like the petitioning cleric.

Be light-hearted or serious in your responses according to the tone of the adventure. If the quest is serious, a flippant answer from the Immortals is out-of-character.

Reward good in-character play and shrewd tactical thinking. If the request for guidance is made eloquently and humbly ("Oh, Immortal Guardians, we beseech you to guide us where our meager wit has failed"), be generous. If the player has cleverly asked a very appropriate question, or asked for guidance only when it would be foolish to continue without better knowledge, be generous.

Admonish over-cautious, unheroic play. ("It is a good day to die" or "Do you want to live forever?")

NPCs using this spell provide the prophets, seers, and visionary hermits that player characters commonly encounter in the wilderness and in the streets of Emirates towns and villages.

Spell Lost: growth of animal

Social Structure

Like D&D® game characters, people in the Emirates want to "go up a level," and they have to gain "experience points" to do it. To a character in the Emirates, gaining wealth and completing dangerous tasks is like gaining experience points; it helps one rise to a higher status in society where one has more power and glory, and where the competition is more challenging.

However, in the Emirates people also earn "experience points" by honoring their social and personal obligations. In the D&D® game this is like good alignment play. It's staying in character and honoring the principles you've chosen to support.

This section tells you how social status and social and personal obligations affect characters in the Emirates. You need to know this for two reasons.

First, to create and present a consistent, well-motivated NPC from the Emirates, you have to know what is important to that NPC. How will he respond in a specific situation? Unless you know what makes him tick, you can't know. This is important if you use Emirates NPCs in an Emirates-based campaign or if you use NPCs from the Emirates in other D&D® adventures and campaigns.

Second, social status and social and personal obligations are important measures of character in the Emirates. Therefore, you should reward player characters with Emirates backgrounds when they improve their social status or honor their obligations. This section offers suggestions for DMs who want to award experience points to player characters who improve their social status without ignoring their social and personal obligations.

Social Status in the Emirates

An Emirates citizen's social status is determined by four things: birth and family background, wealth, reverence, and ambition and achievement.

Birth and Achievement: The most important distinction is whether one is a native or a foreigner. Each cultural group considers itself superior to the other cultural groups—a Makistani considers himself better than an Alasiyan or Thyatin, for example—but all cultural groups agree that a native of the Emirates is better than any foreigner. *Emirates NPCs are generally prejudiced against foreigners and persons from other cultural groups. Exceptions to this behavior are indications of a special friendship or reputation with the foreigner or member of another cultural group.*

Whenever a PC foreigner earns the respect of Emirates natives, an XP award may be appropriate.

Further, the Alasiyan desert nomad has a particular contempt for village, town, or city dwellers, believing the hard desert life makes them tough and noble. On the other hand, hazar (permanent house dwellers) regard the nomads as uncivilized brigands and savages. *Persons who can live in both the nomad and hazar world are exceptional. NPCs will be prejudiced against a character of a different background until the character proves himself.*

A PC nomad who is accepted among hazar, or vice versa, may deserve an XP award when he is honored as an equal.

Wealth: All Emirates natives respect wealth. They may despise the dishonorable or unjust methods by which the wealth was obtained, or they may scorn unwise or decadent displays of wealth, but having money and fine possessions is a good thing, and a common goal of all citizens from peasants to emirs. *Emirates NPCs are usually interested in making a dinar. Wealthy merchants and sheiks will always lend an ear to any proposition or project that might make money. The rare exceptions to this rule. Prayer leaders and dervishes, for example, believe that wealth is a distraction from more important values, like scholarship and contemplation.*

PCs normally receive experience points for wealth and treasure, whether it comes from dungeon-delving, trading ventures, or dominion income; no additional award is necessary.

Characters from poor backgrounds, or who are dressed as though they are from poor backgrounds, may have trouble getting an interview with persons from the upper and middle classes, and they may be treated badly when they encounter wealthy persons on caravans, in city streets, or on adventures. To get along in the Emirates, it helps to have money, or at least to dress and act like you do.

Reverence: First, followers of any faith other than the Eternal Truth have less status than True Believers. Unbelievers are regarded both as foolish, for failing to perceive the obvious wisdom of the Eternal Truth, and dishonorable, for not being bounded by the Eternal Truth's Articles of Faith, particularly the ritual of Truthtelling. Unbelievers are generally believed to be dishonest and careless in keeping their word.

Second, the more devout the True Believer, the more he is honored by his fellow man. No matter how cruel, shiftless, lazy, or unpleasant a man is, if he observes the Articles of Faith with reverence, people will generally regard him as a good man.

This may seem unfair to the players initially, that one is judged on one's faith more than on one's actions, but this is a foreign land, and it has strange ways. Also, if an Unbeliever PC is consistently good and honorable, he will eventually achieve recognition for it.

On one hand, whenever a mixed party of True Believers and Unbelievers perform a service for an Emirates citizen, it might be appropriate to give the True Believer characters a larger share of the XP. On the other hand, any player dedicated and obstinate enough to insist on playing an Unbeliever character, in spite of the disadvantages, may deserve an XP bonus for in-character play.

Ambition and Achievement: Despite the typical prejudices against foreigners, contrast-

ing cultures, poor people, and persons who do not follow Al-Kalim, people of the Emirates are quick to recognize accomplishment and dedication without envy or bitterness. A convert to the True Faith may face initial skepticism and hostility, but if the convert proves to be devout and reliable, he will receive honor for it. An accomplished craftsman, tradesman, or scholar needn't fear the scorn of any man, no matter how rich or powerful.

Soldiers and adventurers in particular are respected for their courage and professional skills. They are also honored for the special services they perform when they defend citizens from invaders and monsters, and when they open up wilderness areas for exploration and exploitation.

Most significant NPCs encountered will have earned their status this way. NPCs who owe their status completely to birth or inherited wealth are either villains, minor obstacles, or annoying chance encounters.

Experience points may be awarded in standard fashion for goal accomplishment, or may be awarded when a character wins honor for his actions or behaviors. For example, if a character gives a sultan particularly good advice about a problem, the sultan is likely to praise the character in public and present him a gift. An XP award in addition to the monetary value of the gift is appropriate to reflect the increase in status resulting from public praise by the sultan.

Certain achievements, like acceptance into a Military Order, or being made an adviser to a sheik, or leading a successful campaign against invaders or unruly monsters, or discovery of historical evidence of Al-Kalim's pilgrimage to the Immortals, or introduction of a new method of producing water for agriculture, should receive XP awards appropriate to the esteem earned for the character by the deed.

Staging: Characters deeply involved in Emirates society who accept commissions in the army, manage dominions, perform services for sheiks and sultans, frequently visit cities, or must regularly cooperate ith Emirates citizens should gain a larger proportion of their experience points according to increases in social status. Characters who spend most of their time in wildernesses or dungeons, who confront monsters and magical beings more often than Emirates citizens, or who quest frequently on other planes are less concerned about their social status.

Social and Personal Obligations

Emirates citizens are most concerned about four kinds of social obligations: religion, family, tribe, and culture, oath and contract, and personal honor and virtue.

Consider these obligations when creating well-motivated NPCs. These are also effective tools in motivating PC adventures. Finally, players who consistently honor their character's social and personal obligations may deserve XP awards for good role playing.

Religion: A person of the Emirates has a duty, first and foremost, to honor the Eternal Truth, the Immortal Guardians, Al-Kalim, and the Nahmeh, and to observe the Articles of the Faith. All other duties ought to be subservient to one's religious obligations. *NPC True Believers should be doggedly faithful in performing their observances. An NPC who pointedly goes about his business, boldly ignoring sunrise or sunset prayer, should immediately be seen as an outcast or foreigner, and a foolish one. Foreigners, PCs or NPCs, who are careless about offending True Believers by lack of respect for religious obligations like telling the truth or respecting scholarship are looking for trouble.*

If a mission can be construed as a religious obligation, you have a powerful means to encourage a player to accept even the most dangerous and inconvenient assignments. For example, if the sultan declares a holy war against the infidel elves, no character could honorably refuse, even though it takes him far from his home into the dark, mysterious, and alien forest. And if a villager begs a group of adventurers to protect his village against brigands, and specifically invokes Al-Kalim's name as an Attendance to the Security of Your Fellow Man, the adventurers could only honorably refuse if they had a mission of greater religious priority.

Family, Tribe, and Culture: After religion, duty to family is the most important obligation. In the Emirates, "family" means not only the immediate family (mom, pop, and siblings), but also aunts, uncles, cousins, nephews, grandmothers and grandfathers, and the relatives of those relatives, too. Further, the obligation is not simply to protect the security of those relatives; it is also to protect the reputation and honor of those relatives.

This is how feuds get started. One fellow will offend another fellow, and pretty soon everybody and his cousin is involved, often enthusiastically and violently.

To make things even more complicated, it is a common practice to informally adopt a close friend as a "brother." This connection is ironically stronger than a simple blood relationship, because it is entered willingly and is often sealed by a Truthtelling ritual.

Since tribal intermarriage is fairly common, and because adopted brethren from other tribes is even more common, sometimes figuring out conflicting obligations is difficult.

Finally, a person is also obligated to defend his tribe or culture against other tribes or cultures, something on the principle of the ultimate extended family. Tribal conflicts are common among the desert nomads, where raiding another tribe is a sort of deadly serious, macho sport. Racial prejudice is usually confined to good-humored contempt and chauvinism, though the Alasiyani are sometimes more than a little vicious in their treatment of the Makistani, whom the Alasiyani consider short, dirty, and uncouth, while the Makistani consider the Alasiyani a humorless, cruel, and mercenary people.

Player characters will encounter feuds and prejudices at the grass roots level when they are low-level characters, and may have to deal with them when they receive their own dominion. Sometimes diplomacy is called for; sometimes only bloodshed will satisfy tarnished honor. In either case, PCs should receive XP awards for acceptance of the obligation and earnest attempts to discharge it honorably.

Family obligation is an effective motivation for adventures initiated by concerned parents and relatives. Emirs are always hunting for wayward sons, or for wives for their wayward sons, or for magical elixirs to cure their wayward sons. Rich merchants engage PCs to convoy their pride-and-joy to visit a dying uncle, and of course the dying uncle lives in some exceedingly perilous wilderness teeming with djinn, efreet, and monsters. Or a sobbing mother entreats the PCs, "Oh, my dear son has gone down into this trapdoor and hasn't been seen for many days, and all this smoke and lightning, oh-dear-oh-dear..."

Oaths and Contracts: Students and apprentices make contracts with their masters, craftsmen with their guilds, merchants with other merchants, servants and guards with their chiefs, soldiers with their captains, governors and maliks with their sultans, friends with friends, and so on. The contract is of special significance where honesty and oath-giving are taken so seriously, and where the Truthtelling spell is an effective and terrifying deterrent to deceivers and oathbreakers.

Sometimes problems arise when oaths are in conflict with other obligations. For example, a governor may swear to uphold the laws and policies of his emir; when he learns that the laws and policies cause great suffering among the citizens, thereby offending against the Attendance to the Security of Your Fellow Man, does the oath take precedence, or the interpretation of religious law?

Once a PC has taken an Truthtelling oath to do something, he'd better do it; otherwise his next quest might be to find someone to remove a curse. NPCs will go to considerable trouble to punish an oathbreaking character; such offended NPCs have long memories and will make certain that the reputation of the faithless character is ruined.

Before a character is permitted to ride with desert nomads or to accompany a caravan, he often must swear to abide by the decisions and judgments of the tribal chief or the caravan master. Such oaths can put PCs in difficult circumstances, forcing them to join an illegal raiding party, or to stay with a caravan, defending it at the master's command, when the PCs would have a better chance abandoning the caravan to its own fate.

On the other hand, an NPC who takes an oath to support a player character can probably be relied upon, as long as the character carefully considers the wording of the oath.

Personal Honor and Virtue: Since the Ylari are very conscious of their social obligations, many of their personal virtues are based on those obligations. A virtuous Ylari is devout. He honors family, tribal, and cultural ties, and he is honest and faithful to his word.

In addition to honoring these social obligations, a man must display personal virtues to be respected by his fellow men.

First, he must immediately respond to any charge that he (or his family, or his tribe, or his nation) has been dishonorable.

If the challenged party agrees that the charge is just and accurate, he is personally responsible for making restitution or for removing the blot on his honor in some way. This may involve a payment or service as suggested by the offended party, or may be to offer the offended party satisfaction through a duel of honor. The offended party may either accept the restitution or offer of a duel, or he may forgive the offense. Once the offense is settled, it is in poor taste to refer to the offense again in public.

If the challenged party disagrees with the charge, the typical response is to challenge the opposite party to a duel of honor. Insults are generally handled this way.

Ironically, right after honor the Ylari value courage. This means that any challenge, whether it is just or not, ought to be answered by a duel. Though it is honorable to make settlement for an admitted offense, it is thought unmanly.

In all things a man should be courageous — in battle, in diplomacy, in facing the unknown. Courage is best exemplified in the martial arts. All citizens own weapons and are expected to be able to use them, in self defense or in defense of personal honor.

Hospitality is another important virtue. A subordinate, friend, or relative is entitled to guest himself with you at your expense for up to three days; after that he may be turned out with honor. Guests are supposed to be well-treated, entertained, and well-fed. With unwelcome and uninvited guests, the hospitality is generally cool and formal; it is dishonorable, though socially tolerable, to press yourself on an unwilling host. Guests are under the host's protection, and must not be harmed. (Offering another food technically makes him your guest.)

The virtuous man is generous with friends, relatives, retainers, and masters. If someone has done you a service, it is polite to give a gift as a token of gratitude. The richer the gift, the greater the honor of the giver.

It is poor manners to refuse a gift. In certain cases it is also undesirable to be in the debt of one who offers a gift. Conflicting personal or family obligations, religious strictures, or protestations of humility may sometimes be accepted as reasons for refusing a gift.

Storytelling is an important popular art form and entertainment, and its practitioners are always welcome guests. A storyteller who can fit a tale to circumstances, and who can draw a moral lesson to instruct his listeners while entertaining them, can win great honor among commoners, nobility, and rulers alike. (See the Storytelling Rules under *Procedures*.)

Eloquence and fair speech is the sign of true nobility. None respect fair words without fair deeds, and a warrior is forgiven if he is less gifted in speech than in courage and martial prowess, but a warrior who is also courteous and well-spoken is universally admired. The Ylari revere princes, advisers, diplomats, storytellers, and adventurers who can quote the Nahmeh and the verses of poets, philosophers, and moralists, and who are skilled both at flowery poetic speech and the formal, polite language of diplomacy.

As has been stated, honesty and honoring oaths and vows are both important religious and personal virtues. However, Ylari also appreciate shrewdness—the art of telling the literal truth while twisting it to your own purposes. One who can twist the truth may not be trusted, but he may be admired for his wit. Farid, the pattern of shrewd speech for all viziers, was renowned for his ability to be perfectly truthful and honest, yet to conceal his intent and purpose by indirection.

Other virtues are also valued by the Ylari. Ingenuity is praised, particularly in science, engineering, sorcery, and the military arts, and in devising clever tricks and plans when straightforward methods are dishonorable or impractical. Respect for tradition is important, particularly in religion and among the tribal nomads, though the Nahmeh specifically admonishes all to base judgment on knowledge, not tradition or superstition. Scholarship, particularly in the study of the Nahmeh, the life of Al-Kalim, and the Eternal Truth, is greatly respected. Initiative is prized in subordinates; retainers are expected to us their own judgment rather than check with their masters at every turn. Boldness of speech is appreciated when it is preceded by deliberation, supported with sound reason, and delivered with courtesy and respect for authority.

Government and Politics —

Rulers and Authority

Traditionally chiefs, leaders, and rulers of the Emirates' peoples had no more authority than they could command by their own power, wisdom, and personality. The concept of divine right never developed among the Emirates' peoples, and when it was imported by colonial powers, it was immensely unpopular. Traditionally clerics and shamans of tribes had little power; the leaders were generally strong fighters with some leadership ability. Clerics often played the role of diplomat and advisor to the war chief; clerics were more noted for fine speech than heroic deeds, and among the desert nomads there is a tolerant contempt for even the most devout and fine-spoken scholar unless he can ride and fight as well.

Today's Emirates is a highly organized and structured bureaucracy under the authority of the sultan in Ylaruam. The Grand Vizier, the viziers of the various voucheries (government departments), and all the sultans and government ministers are chosen by the sultan with advice from the Council of Preceptors, and the emirs and sultan choose the governors, kings, and other minor rulers in the emirates.

The Grand Vizier is essentially a prime minister. He attends to the practical aspects of running the nation, and he advises the sultan and Council of Precepts on important policy matters. As the authority of the sultan is based in the personality and legend of Al-Kalim, so the Grand Vizier is based in the personality of Farid, Al-Kalim's shrewd and sometimes unscrupulous companion.

This pattern of public-and-exemplary-leader and private-and-pragmatic-adviser is typical in Emirates government from the top to the bottom. Each provincial emir has his own grand vizier, each vizier of a government branch has a head voucher, each governor has his personal secretary, and every tribal chief has his trusted adviser. (Those who fill this role in government are henceforth referred to as a "vizier," though they may have many other official titles.)

There is a constant contrast between public appearance and practical reality in the dealings of government. On the surface, there is a great display of generosity, wisdom, and virtue on the part of the public figures. Rulers make a show of going among their people, giving government a personal touch, performing as a symbol of the government's princely dignity and judgment.

Weekly audiences are held in specially-designed throne rooms, vast and luxurious, with great arched ceilings, long colonnades, and rich carpets where citizens of all classes gather and wait. Here any man, rich or poor, may come forth and present his petition or grievance before his ruler. (Similar audiences on a smaller scale are expected of tribal chiefs and lesser rulers.)

However, actually getting to see the ruler here is a matter of getting the attention of the vizier or his secretaries, and little more than public posturing takes lace during the audience. Getting something done means dealing with the vizier, and he is generally a difficult man to deal with. The vizier does not *have* the power so much as to control and direct it.

These viziers, patterned as they are on the legendary figure of Farid, are inevitably corrupted by the power they wield. When the ruler is a strong and honorable leader who takes an active interest in government affairs, a vizier is usually as close to evil as he can be while staying within the law. In the case of weak, ignorant, or unprincipled rulers, the vizier is often thoroughly evil, though there are cases when a wise and principled vizier has restrained the excesses of the ruler.

Staging: *Whenever PCs deal with rulers, nice things usually happen. The ruler is supposed to be a nice guy. If the PCs are clumsy, offensive, or criminal in their behavior, the ruler may righteously blast them, but most of the time player characters are presumably lawful folk on the side of the government and rulers. Rulers summon PCs when they desire aid or advice, they ask for it graciously, confident of the PCs' accepting their public duty, and rulers are generous when the PCs please them by thought and deed.*

Whenever PCs deal with viziers, not-so-nice things happen. Viziers are not nice guys. They are supposed to get things done. Viziers send soldiers to roust the PCs in the middle of the night. Viziers have PCs politely invited to a private audience, where they are threatened with death or imprisonment if they don't surrender a valuable magic item, or betray a sworn friend, or risk their lives for no reward, "As a service to the sultan and the people." Viziers are masters of diplomatic language; they can tell more lies when speaking the literal truth than most compulsive liars can tell when they are working at it.

It is bad enough dealing with a vizier. Wait until a player character is appointed as a vizier. Typically, when a ruler is especially pleased with something someone has done, he makes him a "trusted vizier." This is a great honor, and involves generous gifts from the ruler, but the work the PC is required to do may make him wish he hadn't been so honored. If the ruler has a dirty job, particularly a dirty job of doubtful morality, he summons his vizier and says, "Take care of this, and don't tell me how you do it." Here you confront the layer with conflicting obligations, moral and social obligations vs. obligation to your lord and ruler. Any vizier who can satisfy his ruler and still maintain his morality deserves a hefty experience point bonus.

The Nobility

A durable tradition of hereditary nobility persists; most minor chiefs and sheiks are succeeded by their eldest sons, and confirmed by the emirs or sultan. Seldom do the emirs or sultan interfere with this process; only when a leader clearly abuses his authority or offends against religious law will a leader be deposed and a new leader set in place from above.

New dominions are constantly being created as new lands are opened to cultivation by revolutionary irrigation methods, and rulers encourage expansion into the frontiers with large land grants and generous financial support. Thus a steady sequence of new and centrally-approved chiefs are produced, challenging and stimulating the leaders of the hereditary nobility.

Staging: *Presumably the player characters will be among these new nobles. Conflicts of authority and precedence between newly-appointed nobles and the older hereditary nobility make good role playing and diplomatic challenges, and can provide the central hook for an adventure scenario.*

For example, the Sheik of Deraan has traditionally hunted the trolls of the mountains west of Castellan for sport. Your 12th level fighter has been given a dominion bordering these mountains. The Council of Preceptors has recently ordered that citizens of the Emirates are not to engage in armed expeditions across the border to avoid giving offense to Rockhome. The Sheik of Deraan leads his party across your lands, stops by for a visit at your stronghold, and casually mentions that he is off on his annual troll hunt in the mountains across the border.

The sheik is a long-established figure of power and influence in these parts. He is an 8th level fighter, and has more men on his hunting expedition than you have in your garrison. You are charged to uphold the laws of the land. The sheik is scornful of the dwarves, the trolls, the Council of Preceptors, and nouveau-nobles like you.

The following chart lists the common titles of nobility in the Emirates. Many alternate but equivalent titles are current in various emirates (e.g., in Makistan, chiefs, sheiks,

Noble Title	Emirates Equivalent	How PC May Receive Title
paladin	faris	Oath of fealty to emir or sultan
baron	tribal chief (also "quaid" or "qadi")	Hereditary by adoption, or by election by tribal elders
viscount	sheik (chief of chiefs)	Hereditary, by adoption or by appointment by tribal elders
count	beg, bey	Appointment by emir
duke	atabeg (governor)	Appointment by emir
archduke	malik (king)	Hereditary, by adoption, or by appointment by emir
king	emir (also "pasha")	Appointment by sultan
emperor	sultan (also "caliph")	Descent from Al-Kalim or selection by Preceptors

Note: "Prince" is a generic term, referring to any ruler of noble descent.

and lords are often called "khans," while the emir is the "Great Khan"), but the titles below are recognized throughout the Emirates.

The faris (the Ylari equivalent of a paladin) has no rulership duties; however, he is empowered by the emir or sultan to judge civil justice when no magistrate or Court of Scholars is available. This rank has developed in response to the need for law and order in the sparsely populated wilderness and borderland areas where there is no authority, or where a nomad chief may visit only seasonally.

Staging: *If the PCs perform noteworthy deeds, the sultan or emir summons them and bestows upon them the honor of appointment as a faris. This honor is sealed by generous gifts and oaths of service and loyalty to the ruler. The ruler may hereafter cheerfully exploit the oath and obligation on the PCs by sending his loyal faris off on perilous missions in the government interest. This is another ready-made excuse for DMs to send PCs off willy-nilly on adventures.*

The Bureaucracy

The government of the Emirates as established by Al-Kalim and the Tribal Convocation is a centralized and relatively efficient bureaucracy. Under the sultan and grand vizier are a number of administrative departments called "voucheries." The government voucheries of primary importance include the Voucheries of the State, the Faithful, Water Resources, Agriculture, Mining, Merchant Affairs, Trades and Crafts, Sorcery, the Military, Civil Law, the Provinces, and most important, the Vouchery of Taxation. The duty of each vouchery is to supervise and administer the laws and edicts of the land while maintaining detailed records of all government and financial transactions.

The term "voucher" comes from the obligation of each official to "vouch" for his integrity in administering the law and for the completeness and accuracy of his records. With the Truthtelling oath as a safeguard, the Emirates' bureaucrats are a model of reliability and efficiency in government.

Each vouchery is headed by a vizier, who is in charge of a vast army of vouchers, minor vouchers, clerks, scribes, and examiners. Fifty per cent of all vouchery officials reside in Ylaruam and work in the enormous government complex there. The other officials are assigned to supervise and administer the government in emirates, dominions, cities, villages, and administrative provinces of the Emirates.

Staging: *PCs can get aid from these voucheries if their requests are in the interests pf public welfare. However, the may have to persuade a host of minor officials before they can gain an audience with someone in authority. Connections with a ruler or vizier, a reputation, or dignified bribes may accelerate the process. (Accepting money for special service is not considered dishonest in the Emirates, as long as there is no implication that the official would not otherwise do his duty.)*

The more powerful the vouchery, the slower it moves and the more conservative it is granting requests. Taxation and the Military are typically slow-moving and uncooperative, while the Vouchery of the Provinces is often actually eager to meet with adventurers and lavish with the few resources it has.

Grants for material, military force, or government authority are most difficult to obtain. Requests for information are less difficult. Clerks are usually cooperative and cordial. Records concerning civilized areas for the last century are detailed and complete. Records concerning wilderness regions and more remote historical periods are spotty. Occasionally an official with a passionate personal interest in his subject can be a valuable informant.

Vouchery of Water Resources

This department develops and administrates regulations and policies concerning water use in the Emirates.

Early in the modern period (since Al-Kalim), water resources were energetically and carelessly exploited. Underground reservoirs were depleted by numerous wells, large lakes were formed by drawing underground water to the surface (thereby losing most of the moisture to evaporation), and wells dug in close proximity to one another dropped the water table so precipitously that all the wells ran dry. Wealthy people also dug many wells for their own pleasure, to feed fountains, large reflecting pools, and lush private gardens. Wasting water became the most ostentatious form of conspicuous consumption.

The Vouchery of Water Resources has curbed these excesses through its license and permit system. Now no well may be dug without a well permit. No well may be operated without a license that regulates how much water may be drawn from the well in a year.

Well permit applications are reviewed by Agriculture and Water Resources. Applications must include a plan for agricultural or vegetative use of water. Unless a plan for binding the water in plant life (generally agriculture) is approved by Agriculture, the well will not be approved. Wells can be dug to supply residential settlements, but only after the plant life plan is approved, and only if the residential water is provided for those directly or indirectly involved in agriculture.

Water engineers can be hired to survey and develop a well-and-vegetation plan. Engineers (often dwarves) and agricultural experts visit the spot, then develop the plan. *Sometimes these surveys are made in dangerous conditions (wilderness, brigands in Nithia, goblins raids in southeastern highlands, angry or feuding nomads in desert) and require adventurers as escorts. Sometimes powerful men want to drill illegal wells, and hire unscrupulous engineers to design them; PCs may be approached, or may be sent as private detectives to reveal the sins of a chief's rival.*

When a well application is submitted, Inspectors (accompanied by a staff cleric) survey the area with the *detect water* spell. The underground reservoir is mapped by spot detects over a large area. If there is sufficient water, technicians from Agriculture examine the land and review the vegetation plan submitted with the application. Magic may be required (such as *plant growth*) to ensure an immediate vegetative water trap. *Adventurers are often hired to accompany water resource*

technicians of survey missions into hostile borderlands.

Water Resource Inspectors check well levels and usage; a license may be cancelled, and those responsible for excess water use may receive heavy fines and imprisonment. No one may sell water. Inspectors, itinerants, and faris aid magistrates and local officials in enforcing these regulations.

Nonetheless, water is like gold in the desert, and water crimes such as excess use, black market water, water extortion, water theft, and well-poisoning are all too common. The more powerful the criminal, the more carefully concealed are his crimes, and the more dangerous to investigate him.

Accompanying a well inspector to the palace of a hostile wilderness chief may be a difficult adventure for mid-level character. Adventure elements include problem solving and detective work while searching for evidence of hidden wells and other abuses (clever use of magic may be very useful here), role playing in interviewing the chief, family members, servants, and other NPCs, avoiding foul play when you've found out too much, and arresting the chief who is protected by his family guards.

Vouchery of the Provinces

Any region of the Emirates which is not controlled by a permanent resident ruler is organized as an "administrative province" for government purposes. These are the sparsely populated desert and highland wildernesses for which no ruler wants to accept responsibility.

Officials assigned to administrate these provinces seldom visit the regions they govern, and are often ignorant of events there. In fairness, since they have inadequate budgets and little military authority there, it wouldn't make much difference if they were experts. Their only hope is to interest local rulers, military, knights and paladins, or freelance adventurers in the problems of these regions.

Staging: *The Vouchery of the Provinces often advertises for volunteer or poorly-paid missions into the wilderness, encouraging adventurers to risk life and limb for the satisfaction of having served their faith, their fellow man, and their ruler. The missions promise few material rewards, but they are seldom dull—there's plenty of XP to be won for monsters and beasts and otherworldly menaces and wicked sorcerers, and now and then some significant wealth is found. Voucher officials are full of fascinating (and unreliable) tales of fabulous treasures and loathsome evils overcome by doughty warriors and crusading Defenders of the Faith; occasionally they hire storytellers to hang around in taverns and spin these yarns to attract volunteers to their wilderness missions.*

Expeditions: The Vouchery encourages qualified, well-equipped and responsibly-led expeditions into the upland and desert wildernesses. Typically such missions are either commercial or scientific in nature. Commercial expeditions include surveying lands to be distributed as dominions and prospecting for mineral wealth. Scientific expeditions include the study and collection of unusual species and the investigation of ancient ruins and tombs.

All wilderness expeditions are supposed to get wilderness research permits. This regulation is intended to protect the careless, inexperienced, or under-equipped adventurer, and it incidentally helps the government keep tabs on new potential sources of revenue.

In practice, anyone who wants to go into a wilderness area can just mount up and ride in. No one is likely to be hanging around to check his papers. Nomads and hermits travel through these areas regardless of government regulations. However, anyone hoping to profit from a wilderness adventure had better have a permit; otherwise there can be legal problems when the adventure returns to society with his wealth and encounters officials from the Vouchery of Taxation.

According to a long-standing edict of Sultan Suleiman Al-Kalim, no one may enter or visit an ancient ruin or tomb without a research permit from the Vouchery of the Provinces. Al-Kalim was quite concerned about awakening ancient evils, releasing ancient plagues, or stirring up ancient curses, and this regulation is energetically enforced, particularly by wandering faris, True Believers of the Order of the Rose, and itinerant clerics of the Faith.

To receive a research permit you must first convince a vouchery official that you are a qualified scientific expedition. Then you must show that you have sorcerers or holy men adequate to the task of suppressing any evil you stir up. Finally, you have to prove that you have adequate equipment and technical expertise to explore subterranean sites. Because of the frequent earthquakes in the area, exploring ruins and tombs is often more like mining than exploring. Many passages are collapsed or unstable, and expeditioners are as threatened by cave-ins and other natural disasters as by Unthinkable Ancient Horrors.

Secretaries of the Provinces: Player character residents (and rulers of dominions) in the remote wildernesses should become familiar with local minor officials of the Vouchery of the Provinces. These Secretaries (as they are titled) spend much of their time riding from ruler to ruler, trying to convince them to ride off into a neighboring wilderness and persecute the wicked and defend the helpless.

Such Secretaries are often entertaining company, good storytellers and charming personalities, and generally welcomed with warm hospitality in remote strongholds or tent camps where diversions are rare and precious. These colorful figures are often competent adventurers with noble or wealthy backgrounds, skilled at diplomacy, and competent in leading any expedition they can con a rule into mounting.

Usually the secretary is an honored guest for three days while the ruler and his people enjoy the novelty of his visit. Then the Secretary politely explains that he has problems of his own, that he can't be bothered with matters in the wilderness, and the Secretary continues on his journeys.

Occasionally, however, a ruler decides he needs a little exercise, or he has a few younger relatives he thinks need some seasoning. The ruler then graciously offers to lend the Secretary some aid (while obtaining assurances that this generosity will be appreciated in Ylaruam), and extracts a promise that the Secretary will not carelessly waste the loaned personnel and supplies. Then the Secretary and his volunteer party are off in search of adventure.

Staging: *This is a wonderful frame for wilderness adventure. The player characters could be the persons volunteered by the ruler (or the ruler himself, if the expedition sounded interesting), or they could be the Secretary and his staff, looking for warm bodies and some financial support for a perilous adventure. Role playing the charming Secretary, the "generous" and "civic-minded" ruler, and the eager (or thoroughly unwilling) "volunteers" could be lots of fun. This is a reliable and repeatable narrative hook for initiating adventures. Also, the political connections of the Secretary might be useful to the ruler or the adventurers if the mission is successful, particularly if the Secretary's noble background can gain a low-status character access to the upper classes, or bring the character to the notice of a sultan or emir.*

Important Internal Policies

The voucheries, emirs, sultan, and other rulers are encouraged to support these policies. Compliance with these policies varies (for instance, the emir, nobility, and peoples of Abbashan are openly hostile to foreigners).

Tolerate Foreigners: Encourage commerce in new ideas and products. Make allowances for foreigners ignorant of the Emirates' law and custom, but politely instruct them where possible.

Maintain the Emirates' Current Military Preeminence: Spend lavishly on the military. Keep troops sharp and battle-hardened by engaging Emirates divisions as mercenaries for other powers and by mounting expeditions against non-human raiders from the southeastern Altan Tepes. Maintain tension along Thyatian border (see *Foreign Policies*).

Develop Water and Agricultural Resources: Slowly and deliberately increase availability of water for agriculture and settlement of borderland areas (see *Vouchery of Water Resources*).

Keep Inter-Tribal Conflict in Check: Use diplomatic (and, where necessary, military) pressure to suppress inter-tribal aiding, feuds, or brigandry. Avoid interference with traditional values; as generations of chiefs change, so will nomad culture change, gradually, with a minimum of strife.

Explore and Exploit Resources of Desert and Upland Wildernesses: Provide maximum personal support of rulers and officials, but minimum financial support. Rely on adventurers and entrepeneurs to fund these ventures.

Important Foreign Policies

The Emirates is not officially hostile to foreigners during this period (around 1000 AC). Nonetheless, the Emirates' historical reputation of hostility to foreigners persists, and is supported by vociferous victims of the significant political minorities (particularly the Kin and Abbashan factions), who are still vehemently opposed to foreign ideas and visitors.

The Emirates should enjoy another century of comparative peace and prosperity under the guidance of the principles of Al-Kalim. However, by 1200 AC, the time of the War of the Desert Master (see module X10), the teachings and political legacy of Al-Kalim are in the hands of reactionaries from the Kin faction, and alliance with an evil villain like the Desert Master is not impossible.

Regardless of changes in political policies, the Emirates will continue to be a major military power for several centuries. The military traditions and tactics established by Al-Kalim and supported by religious and social values will continue to produce superior soldiers with superior fighting ability. Ultimately, rule of a military dynasty is not implausible if Al-Kalim's dynasty fails.

As the Emirates establishes control of the northern uplands, conflicts with the Soderfjord Jarldoms over mineral rights in the mountains are likely.

If the Thyatian Empire is weakened in its conflict with Alphatia, the Emirates may try to reclaim the Altan Tepe Mountains and the coastal plain as far as Tel Akbar, lands accounted by some to belong to ancestral Alasiyani peoples. Alliance with the hated Alphatians is unlikely; opportunistic exploitation of the Alphatian-Thyatian War is more plausible.

There is little danger of invasion of the Emirates by a foreign empire. The value of the land compared to the cost of taking it is unappealing, and in 1000 AC, no army exists that could defeat the Emirates military on its own ground. In 1200 AC, the armies of the Desert Master are another story altogether. The military is shaped by a similar culture and charismatic leader, but supplemented by innovative magical and technological resources.

Relations with Specific Nations

Vestland, Soderfjord, and Ostland: Current relations are cautious and reserved. In recent centuries northmen raids have been an offensive provocation, but the raids have stopped, and northmen merchants and traders are common sights in eastern coastal towns, and northmen compete with Emirates sea raiders. Individual reactions to northmen range from tolerant to hostile.

Thyatis: The former colonials overlords themselves are viewed with suspicion and hatred. Thyatian diplomats are considered dishonest and treacherous. It is a reputation well-deserved, since the Thyatian have been caught in the act many times.

Fanatics and expansionists would like to reclaim Tel Akbar and the fertile coastal plain from Thyatis, based on sketchy archaeological evidence that people of Nithian descent once ruled this region. Alphatian agents, spies, and subversives support these fanatics, hoping to discomfort their Thyatian enemies through an unsophisticated puppet nation.

On the other hand, loyal citizens of Thyatian descent are generally accepted as natives in Nicostenia and Dythestenia.

Karameikos: Relations are distant but formally cordial. Karameikos is an important market for Emirates sea traders, and Karameikan merchants frequently visit Emirates cities on business. Resentment grows in Dythestenia as Karameikan campaigns drive non-human raiders out of the Altan Tepes and into the Emirates. Proposals for joint operations are under discussion at diplomatic levels.

Alfheim: Relations are reserved and xenophobic. Elves are extremely rare visitors to the Emirates, and suspected of practicing black magic and gruesome rituals. The close-mouthed and haughty manners of their ambassadors are considered rude and offensive by Emirates nobility.

Glantri: Glantrians are thought to be evil incarnate. Their antipathy toward all clerics and religions disqualifies them as intelligent beings. Glantrians who visit the Emirates must do it covertly.

Rockhome: Traditionally good friends of the Makistani, the dwarves are generally respected and trusted throughout the Emirates. Al-Kalim sought them out for their skill in seige technology during the wars of colonial liberation, and for their engineering and mining technologies when exploiting the Emirates' water and mineral resources. The dwarves also make internationally-prized fine weapons from the high-carbon steels of the Emirates.

Dwarves are considered tough and honorable, and since they are very private in their religious practices, they seldom offend the Faithful. Most large towns have a dwarven quarter, and dwarves are the most widely tolerated foreigners in the Emirates.

Ethengar Khanate: Ethengars are intolerant of the Emirates religion; Followers of the True Faith return the favor, with interest. Nonetheless, close cultural ties with the Makistani peoples provide an excuse for some friendly relations. Relations between the nations alternate between alliance and hostility; at present, relations are distant and reserved.

Darokin: The only mutual interests of Darokin and the Emirates are the security of travel along caravan routes and roads. Currently relations between the nations are strained by an escalating war of tariffs on goods crossing the border between Selenica and Parsa.

Alphatia: Though Alphatians are hated on principle as former colonial overlords, officials at the diplomatic level are guardedly cordial with Alphatian ambassadors in order to make the Thyatians nervous, a completely successful tactic. Alphatian agents work clandestinely to intensify frictions between the Emirates and Thyatis. Both culture share interest and commerce in magical and scientific technology. Alphatians have avoided the reputation for diplomatic treachery earned by the Thyatians, thanks to the skill and conservative policies of

Alphatian subversive agents.

The Five Shires: Cordial trade relations are maintained with the Shires. Halfling foreigners are treated like cute, precocious children. Few take their martial abilities seriously, but they have excellent reputations as storytellers.

Minrothrad Guilds, Ierendi, Norwold, Heldan Freeholds, Thanegioth Archipelago: Little or no contact occurs at diplomatic levels, though Emirates sea merchants market their goods in these nations, and cordial trade relations are maintained.

Law and Custom

The institution of law in the Emirates is less dependent on formal written law and more dependent on circumstances and the personal judgment of the ruler, civil or religious magistrate, or other persons with power to minister justice when rulers or magistrates are not available (e.g., faris, Knights of the Rose, and itinerents).

The body of formally written law includes the original constitution (composed by Al-Kalim and approved by the Convocation of Tribes), the edicts of emirs and sultans, and regulations published by the voucheries. Records, interpretation, and commentary concerning traditional tribal law, historical precedents, and legal opinions of scholarly bodies like the Council of Preceptors are also primary legal references. Written law and legal records taken as a whole are voluminous, incoherent, ambiguous, and often self-contradictory. Only those who devote their lives to the study of law have any chance of comprehending it, and their services are quite expensive.

But justice in the Emirates is based on the principle that one needn't be a legal scholar to make fair judgments. Any True Believer who adheres to the ritual of Judgment, that is, who first contemplates and observes, then weighs the evidence, and finally bases his judgment on knowledge, rather than tradition and superstition, can arrive at a fair judgment, whether he is familiar with the law and the records or not.

In this system lawyers (called "scholar advocates") are no more than expert advisers. Those who are empowered to judge (rulers, religious and civic magistrates, vouchery officials, faris, Knights of the Rose, and itinerents) need not have legal training; they need only be devout and honorable men.

Under these circumstances, the law is very personal and circumstantial. Great attention is given to the motives of the parties involved, their intentions, and circumstances which might have influenced the parties. The legal process is swift and decisive in clear-cut cases of crime, but slow and deliberate in complex cases of conflicting values and interpretations.

Staging: *The practical effect of this legal system for DMs and PCs is that no law or regulation is absolute. A judge may always determine that a party's reasons for his actions were just, even if the actions were unlawful. This means that the PCs can try to talk their way out of anything, with plenty of room for in-character pleading and role playing when they are judged by magistrates or rulers. If their actions were consistent with the values of society (see Social Structure and Personal Values), the Articles of Faith, and the teachings of Al-Kalim and the Nahmeh, they will receive favorable judgments.*

It also means that they must have solid cases against anyone they accuse of law-breaking, and that rich villains with sharp lawyers can often evade prosecution, putting them back into the environment as continuing PC nemeses and campaign motivators.

Civil and Religious Courts

Civil judges (in towns and cities, the magistrates; in rural and nomadic tribes, the or ruler) handle offenses against the constitution of Confederated Tribes, edicts of emirs and sultans, regulations of the voucheries, and most traditional and tribal law.

The Court of Scholars is a body of religious magistrates drawn from the prayer leaders and other religious scholars of a sanctuary's community. This body handles religious offenses in cities and towns; in rural areas and nomadic tribes the local chief, a resident holy man, or itinerent cleric may be the acknowledged leader of the Faith.

Religious offenses include failure to observe the Articles of Faith, oathbreaking, abuse of holy men and scholars, abuse of public welfare, injury to a neighbor's security, and mistreatment of the destitute.

In theory a religious court or judge has no power to punish wrong-doers other than through public censure, curses, and expulsion from the Faith; however, since in rural and nomadic tribes the religious judge is also the civil judge, religious offenses may often be treated as offenses against society. This is typical in rural and remote regions where hostility to foreigners and unbelievers is common, and pressure to conform is greatest.

Further, since religion is so important in the Emirates, social pressure on religious offenders is very powerful. A wealthy and powerful merchant condemned for a religious offense may find his business partners and customers deserting him. Nobles and rulers under religious curse may find their servants and subjects in rebellion.

Staging: *Religious magistrates and judges are traditionally viewed as checks on the excessive power of the wealthy upper classes and nobility. When PCs are aligned against corrupt villains of wealth and political influence, they may find allies among the prayer leaders, itinerents, faris, and holy men of the Faith, not inconsiderable resources, given their access to magical holy relics and their array of magical spells.*

Judgments and Sentences

Judgments and sentences vary greatly, depending on the nature of the crime, the circumstances, and the personality of the judge. Emirates peoples are partial to punishments that fit the crime, and appreciate imaginative and dramatically- appropriate sentences.

The punishment may be brutally severe or mockingly humorous according to the circumstances: a cruel and violent crime should receive a harsh enough penalty to deter other would-be criminals, while a careless, stupid, but basically harmless offense is treated as an occasion for entertaining and amusing the populace.

In addition to punishment and instruction, the other primary function of a sentence is compensation to a victim. If the injury is monetary, a stiff fine or forced labor is appropriate. If the injury is non-monetary, such as loss of reputation and honor, or crippling injury, a more imaginative compensation is necessary.

For example, a foreigner accidentally pollutes a water source, mistaking it for a bathing basin. In the desert, where water is dear and the injury to the people is great, the foreigner may be flogged and fined the value of the water or the cost of having a cleric purify it. In an city where there is plentiful water and more tolerance for foreigners, he may simply be forced to drink the water (risking unpleasant diseases), then required to spend two hours a day in the busiest market in town, ringing a bell and wearing a sign describing his crime, and to instruct other foreigners on the value of water in the Emirates.

Staging: *Here is a great device to direct PCs on an adventure. A ruler or magistrate sentences them to perform a task as judgment for a criminal act. Given the complexities of Emirates law, it is easy to find some pretext to arrest and try the characters.*

If the PCs are just incredibly righteous, then a local vizier with an undesirable task frames the PCs with a trumped-up charge.

The beauty of this set-up is that you have motivated two adventures in one stroke; first, the adventure the PCs are sentenced to, and second, the adventure to get revenge on the wicked vizier.

It would be nice if justice were served equally for rich and poor, but the fact is that the poor often receive harsh judgments while the wealthy, well-dressed, well-spoken, and well-advised, generally receive light sentences or avoid prosecution altogether. Hopefully this shall serve as an inspiration to crusading PCs.

Law Enforcement

In the cities and large towns the local military garrison serves as a police force, and the mufti (police chief) is appointed by the local ruler. Soldiers are assigned to patrol certain areas on a regular schedule, and larger contingents turn out for major disturbances. In settled and rural areas outside the towns and cities, local law enforcement is handled by the local chief or sheik and his personal guards and retainers.

However, whenever possible, most criminals are cheerfully handled by the armed-and-righteous citizenry. Vigilante justice is a popular sport in the Emirates, a bit of excitement and a chance to exercise the manly virtues of honor, courage, and martial prowess. Even elderly women and small children join in the fun. A crowd of shouting peasants enthusiastically pursuing an evil-doer down a crowded alley is a common sight in Emirates cities.

Minor vouchery officials often serve as criminal investigators on affairs within their jurisdiction. One such prominent official is the Inspector of Markets from the Vouchery of Merchant Affairs. He inspects shops, traders, and market sellers, who are forbidden to cheat customers, sell bad products, or to make an excessive profit.

Staging: *These officials are very powerful and self-important. Because of their power, they are often corrupt, persecuting poorer merchants to aid the monopolies of the wealthier merchants. As NPCs they can be annoying and offensive nuisance encounters when PCs organize caravans, sell merchandise or treasure in the market, or defend the rights of the weaker merchants.*

Another is the Tax Inspector. He normally is no more than a clerk who investigates records and obtains oaths testifying to each citizen's wealth. Some Tax Inspectors, however, have skills similar to those of the thief class, and are used to investigate persons suspected of evading taxes.

Staging: *Here is honorable employment for a thief's skills—detective work for a vouchery. A party of thieves and magic users might be employed to investigate the manor of a rich merchant, searching for signs of undeclared income or unscrupulous trading practices (watering wine, using slave labor, avoiding guild regulations, etc.).*

Foreigners, Unbelievers, and Emirates Law

For all their cultural and religious chauvinism, Emirates peoples are in some ways remarkably tolerant of foreigners and unbelievers. A Ylari readily admits that it is possible for an outsider to be respectable and virtuous, but the burden of proof is on the outsider.

Foreigners and unbelievers must pay a poll tax (10 dinar/month) in addition to their regular individual tax (10 dinar/month, and a duty tax on any items they sell—10% of market value). In return foreigners and unbelievers are not required to perform military or other public services (like street cleaning and other community services), and are permitted to observe their own religious and cultural practices in the privacy of their homes.

Certain sections of most cities are also set aside for foreigners and unbelievers; in these areas, foreigners may do as they please and be governed by their own rules. For example, the Makistani, the Thyatian, and the dwarven peoples have their own quarters in Ylaruam, and the port city of Tameronikas has a mixed quarter where travelers and traders from all over the globe may be found. Each quarter chooses its own ruler or ruling council and establishes, administrates, and enforces its own laws (as long as they do not injure their True Believing neighbors).

However, whenever a complaint is between a foreigner or unbeliever and a citizen of the True Faith, the matter is under the jurisdiction of Emirates law, and anywhere outside of the foreign quarter, foreigners and unbelievers are expected to observe local law and custom. In Ylaruam and other cosmopolitan cities guards and officials often exercise tolerance and mercy in their handling of foreigners and unbelievers; in smaller towns and rural districts they are less forgiving.

Staging: *PCs visiting from other countries will probably dwell initially in these foreign quarters. Here they can avoid getting executed for cultural ignorance while they gradually learn the ways of the Emirates' peoples. The foreign quarters are also colorful places, filled with visitors from other lands and fugitives from Emirates' justice.*

Important Legal and Moral Concepts

Ownership

Among the nomads, ownership of land is an alien concept. Right of passage, water use and pasturage is established by usage, and by power. When resources are plentiful, all are welcome to use the land. When resources are scarce, might makes right.

Among rural and settled tribes, most land is communally owned under the administration and judgment of the chief. Some land may be privately owned at the sufferance of the sultan, emir, and chief. Land owners either buy the land from the chief or provide a valuable community service, and are given land in return.

In towns and cities, the legacy of colonial law is apparent. Most land is owned by the city under charter from the emir or sultan. Land may be leased, but not sold, and leases may be cancelled for legal or contract offenses. Much land is leased by guilds, merchants, and nobles, insuring a handsome monthly income for the city. In turn, the city provides military and police protection and some civil services.

Dominions and Taxes: Chiefs, sheiks, and emirs do not own their dominions, but they are permitted to tax them. From dominion taxes the chiefs pay taxes to the central government which support the army, religion, government, charity, universities, markets, public works projects, and other public services.

Dominions with traditional noble rulership are inherited, though the successors are subject to review by sultan and the emirs, and may be replaced for incompetence or moral offenses. Modern dominions (since Al-Kalim) are not automatically inherited; successors must meet with ruler's approval or the lands return to the government.

Guilds: Craftsmen and artisans may organize and obtain guild charters which empower them to regulate the affairs of their trade or craft, subject to review by the Voucheries of Trades and Crafts and Merchant Affairs. They may set standards for apprentice, journeyman, and master statuses, rates of pay, and quality of worksmanship. Guilds also take an active part in city government and public life, vocally and financially supporting certain policies and providing public entertainment (plays, festivals, craft fairs, etc.) and charity for the destitute. Guilds charge their members dues, and are taxed in turn by the government.

Sorcery and Divine Magics: Magic users are called "sorcerers" in the Emirates. Sorcery is a craft like any other, and taxed and regulated

as such. In the interests of public safety, sorcerers are required to wear distinctive garments which announce their profession to observers.

Divine magic (clerical magic) is viewed as the work of the Immortal Guardians, and as such is not a craft. Private fees may not be charged for the performance of clerical spells; all remuneration must go directly to support sanctuaries, religious scholars, holy men, and their works.

The public use of deadly or destructive magic itself is no more criminal than violence or destruction caused by a skilled warrior or escaped wild animal. The civic and personal damage is the crime, not the use of magic. Anyone who trifles with a prominently identified mage is foolish, and deserves what he gets, just as if he had trifled with a paladin or wild beast.

Slavery: Slavery is illegal in the Emirates other than as a punishment for the crime of unlawful debt. Before Al-Kalim it was a common practice to buy and sell foreigners, prisoners of war, and criminals, particularly debtors.

Now debtors may only be sold as compensation for unpaid debts, and are only indentured for periods of one to five years. Slaves are rarities among nomads and rural settlements, but less rare in cities, where 2% of a population may be slaves. Slaves have all the civil rights of servants except choice of employer and employment, and inspectors from the Vouchery of Civil Law make sure they are not mistreated.

Slaves have an ambiguous reputation. Some slaves work hard, learn valuable skills, and when their indentures are over, may remain with their former owners at good salaries. Some slaves are evil and treacherous, and bring their masters great grief.

Violence: In a culture that sentimentalizes personal honor and courage, and accepts violence as a traditional defense of justice and honor, either or both parties in an assault often are partially justified in the eyes of the judge.

The court or tribal justice procedure deters unjust violence by exposing the dishonorable character of a wicked attacker to public censure. Violence itself is not considered wrong, except when it injures the persons or property of innocent or uninvolved citizens.

Therefore, a fight in a tavern is wrong because it damages the tavern and spoils the other patrons' meals. An honorable private fight or duel that involves only the concerned parties may be irresponsible or show poor judgment, but it is not morally wrong.

Theft: Theft from unfriendly tribes is praiseworthy among nomads, and stealing stock from a competitor's herd was once the established way for young men of meager means to start their own herds. A bold and shrewd theft from enemies is a sign of courage and initiative (though theft from a friend or tribe member is despicable, requiring the death or expulsion of the thief). The government frowns on inter-tribal raiding, but the nomads don't seem to be disconcerted by this disapproval.

Even urbanized and scholarly Emirates citizens have a sentimental sympathy for the traditional nomadic values. A PC thief who can play on this sentimental notion of a brave and clever thief who steals only from is enemies (i.e., the rich, the powerful, the evil, the unrighteous, the unjust) will be a hero rather than a criminal among nomads, and may get away with token punishments from rural and urban magistrates.

Laws, Regulations, and Customs

The following annotated list describes common crimes, important circumstances that may influence a judge, and sample fines and sentences.

Lewd Behavior: Revealing too much skin, or behaving in a seductive manner in a public place; does not include traditional dancing, considered a fine art in the Emirates. Sentence: public censure, expulsion from community.

Water Theft (diverting water from a licensed well), Creating a Well Without a Permit, Wasting Water, and other water crimes: Rarely justifiable. Sentence: fines, compensation, confiscation, or imprisonment.

Well Poisoning: A heinous crime. Only justified in extreme military situations or against foreigners and unbelievers. Sentence: confiscation, flogging, and death.

Practicing Black Magic: Practicing fire-based and necromantic magics; prohibited by edict of Al-Kalim. Exceptions may be made for research and scholarly purposes, but should be obtained from Vouchery of Sorcery first. Sentence: expulsion from Faith, exile, or imprisonment.

Concealed Sorcerous Ability: Sorcerers must identify themselves by distinctive dress —colorful robes prominently marked with the inscription "Practicing Sorcerer." Sentence: exile or imprisonment.

Theft: Theft for profit is treated harshly. Sentence: flogging, maiming, or death. Cases of theft for sustinence, protection of family, or for some other acknowledged social obligation depend on the plight and established character of the thief and the character of the judge. Character witnesses are helpful, the more devout or prominent, the better. Sentences emphasize compensation over punishment, and relatives or other community figures may even be chided for the sorry state of a destitute and desperate thief.

Assault: Includes public verbal abuse and physical abuse of person or possessions that does not cause serious injury. Depends on the circumstances, including provocation, initiation, restraint, or cruelty shown by the parties, social obligations of parties (family honor, oaths, etc.), reputation and charm of parties, and a host of other dramatic, practical, and emotional issues. Sentence: If assault is perceived by the judge to be in some way justified, sentence is often token fine, compensation, and/or public service. If assault is seen as unjustified, heavy fines, punitive compensation, flogging, expulsion, or imprisonment are appropriate. Imaginative and unusual sentences appropriate to the crime are quite popular.

Murder: See *Assault*. Murder or assault by stealth or upon defenseless persons is a contemptible act, and seldom justified. Sentence: fine, compensation, and death or expulsion of murderer.

Treason: Cooperation with foreigners against the political or financial interest of the Emirates. Indefensible. Sentence: death. *Missions against traitors assure successful player characters of popular fame and rich reward, particularly when traitors are wealthy merchants, nobles, or wicked viziers. On the other hand, before the treason is proven, the characters are up against ruthless and powerful opposition; one slip, and they're either dead, locked in a deep dungeon, or competently framed as vile and cowardly criminals.*

Tax Evasion: When oath-breaking is involved (false reports of income or transactions), religious law takes precedence. After the religious judgment, the civil court takes action. This is a particularly contemptible crime in the Emirates, associated with fat, soft, wealthy merchants without courage or honor. It is indefensible, since it injures everyone. (Of course, making a dinar is greatly respected in the Emirates; getting caught making a dinar dishonestly is contemptible.) Sentence: Fines, confiscation, flogging, and imprisonment.

Destruction of Personal Property: Sentence: If justified (see *Assault*), restitution is adequate. If motives are immoral or irresponsible, punitive fines, compensation, flogging and/or imprisonment.

Debt: Sentence: First offenders or victims

(Continued on page 37)

What Everyone Knows About the Emirates

Tavern Rumors From Neighboring Lands

The People: "The people of Ylaruam hate outsiders. None of them speak any civilized tongues, and if they do, they pretend they don't. They're hot-tempered and always fighting among themselves. They dress funny, all wrapped up in these long robes and headdresses, which they wear even in the hot sun. They live in the desert in tents, though some live in crude brick houses in the cities.

"They all ride camels and horses, and great horses they are, mind you, and they're pretty sharp traders. They aren't very civilized since they live outside all the time, and they haven't got any princes, lords, or nobles like we have, just tribal chiefs."

The Land: "It's one big desert. There is nothing but sand, sandstorms, and rocks. I can't imagine how anyone could live there."

Ylaruam: "That's the city in the desert where the Sultan or Emir or something lives. There are some tall, pointed spires covered with gold, they say, and there's a university full of scientists and lawyers."

Other Towns: "Tameronikas is a nice port and has lots of foreigners. Abbashan is a big oasis full of exceptionally nasty people."

How to Get Rich and Famous: "Ride camels on long caravans. Look for lamps with djinni in them. Find magic carpets in the desert, and rings and efreeti in chests in ruins. Get sorcerers to find hidden treasure, then trick them out of their share."

Hot Tips: "The government is hiring mercenaries and irregulars to suppress goblins and giants from Altan Tepes."

"There's plenty of caravan and expedition escort work around. Check around in taverns for merchants."

From Conversations With a Veteran Adventurer

The People: "Most are honest and honorable. When they give their word, they mean to keep it. They are extremely religious, always praying and quoting Al-Kalim, their hero and prophet. Debating fine points of law and ethics is a pleasant pastime for them. They have little trust or respect for Unbelievers and foreigners, and from what I've seen of the world, with some justice."

"As a people they're most touchy about honor, and quick with a sword when you offend it. Most citizens are armed and quite with weapons, and are happy to use them. The soldiery is first-rate. They are disciplined, well-trained, and fiercely loyal."

The Land: "It's warm and pleasant along the eastern coast, and hot and dry in the central desert and highlands. Learn native ways, and there's little danger from the weather, except during violent storms. The nation is safe if you stick to caravan routes and towns, but its wilderness regions are among the most dangerous in the world. There are few humans, but plenty of monsters and otherworldly horrors. Stay away from Nithia unless you like trouble."

Ylaruam: "It's comfortable for foreigners. Plenty of merchants and government officials are hiring experienced adventurers. Information and scholarship are plentiful if you know where and how to look."

Other Towns: "In Parsa local Makistani tribesmen live in hut-and-tent towns; they're like Ethengars, only cheerful and pleasant. They are more hospitable and easy-going with strangers than desert people. Tameronikas is pretty much like coastal towns around the world. At Ctesiphon and Cinsa-Men-Noo the locals cater to travelers and adventurers. There's plenty of wilderness escort and expedition work, and outfitters and guides are available for all types of expeditions."

How to Get Rich and Famous: "The conservative route is to start off in caravan or expedition escort work. Build a reputation, get connected to nobles or rich merchants, earn the respect and gratitude of a ruler, and win a dominion.

"The dangerous way is to hunt treasure and exotic creatures in the wilderness, but it's hard to judge the risks, and you're a long way from help if you get in trouble.

"If you don't care about money, but do want to tame the wilderness and punish evil, there's plenty to do in the wilderness, and you'll quickly earn the respect of the locals."

Hot Tips: "Do not lie or break an oath. Even if the locals don't kill you for it, they'll never deal with you again.

"Once you've got a reputation as a tough adventurer, there's plenty of work. The best native fighters, magic-users, and clerics are in the military so locals routinely hire reliable foreigners as mercenaries, guards, for missions into the wilderness, or for rough stuff. Sit around the taverns and keep your ears open, or make contacts in the Vouchery of the Provinces who'll send tips your way.

"If you're going to freelance, stay conservative or carefully research your objective. Seek out reliable informants and pay them well.

"The natives are superstitious. They do have some pretty odd stories about the uninhabited regions. They are not sissies. If they are nervous about something, it's worth being careful."

What Everyone Knows About the Emirates

As Told by a Young Desert Nomad

The People: "Desert folks are obviously tougher, more honorable and fearless, than house-dwellers. City folk are liars and cowards, they can't ride or fight, and would die in a minute in the desert. Foreigners are just as as bad, though it's said that some are better than others. Friendly tribesmen are always welcome in our tents. Bandits, thieves, and murderers deserve to bleed to death in the desert."

The Land: "Respect the desert, and the desert is your friend. The desert only kills fools, but it is easy to be a fool during the sand storms.

"Our familiar pasturage and traditional tent grounds are usually quite safe. We are not cowards, but there are places in the desert and the hills where only fools go, full of monsters, evil sorcerers, and powerful spirits.

"The villages are interesting places, especially during summer camp at market time, though the local people and merchants are sneaky and greedy."

Ylaruam: "They say it is beautiful. It's full of liars and merchants, but the Sultan's palace and university are hundreds of feet tall and decorated with gold and jewels. The Sultan's gaming fields are said to be carpets of living grass, and the tournaments of the Military Orders are said to be quite fine. I would love to ride with the Sultan's guard, and someday my chief will give me armor and weapons so I can go to Ylaruam and become a Knight of the Lance."

Other Towns: "Kirkuk is quite big with many stone buildings and several tall towers, and very busy, with a market day twice a week. Our tribe camps there during the summer with other friendly tribes and we have games and feasts and trade our spare horses and camels so we can buy the weapons and coffee we need for the winter.

"Abbashan is a city like Ylaruam, but Father says men are not soft and corrupt in Abbashan like they are in Ylaruam. In Abbashan they are quite strict with the heathens and greedy merchants."

How to Get Rich and Famous: "I want to ride with a raiding party so I can prove that I am a warrior. Then my chief will give me armor and weapons and I will go to Ylaruam and become a soldier.

"Or perhaps my chief might let me go with the Secretary on a ride into the Empty Places. That way I'll become famous for my deeds

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Hammond Mason (Order #3789028)

and the Secretary will introduce me to the Sultan, who'll make me a faris so I can ride around the land and punish the wicked and unfaithful."

Hot Tips: "They say one may be paid for riding with scholars and miners into the hills. Some men from my tribe went to cities and villages to find such work, and they returned with fine weapons and expensive horses and great tales to tell.

"There are stories of young boys who open trapdoors in the desert and who find beautiful princesses and magical rings and fierce demons. I'm not sure about these tales, but they must be true; else, how would men imagine them?

"Sometimes in difficult times men from our tribe ride into the desert to hunt fearsome beasts. Then those who live go to towns and sell the beasts to sorcerers and scholars."

What Everyone Knows About the Emirates

As Told by the Younger Partner of a Merchant Caravan Outfitter in Ylaruam

The People: "The people of the coastal plain live comfortable and peaceful lives, and fine cloths and spices sell well there, though the peasants and poor folk of Nithia suffer under their squabbling and cruel chiefs.

"The desert nomads are usually polite and formal, but you must take care not to offend them. They are good markets for coffee and weapons, but they only buy while encamped for the summer.

"The cities and towns of the Emirates are all good markets for fine crafts and imported luxuries (except Abbashan, where they frown on luxury and frivolity). The poor folk are devout and orderly, and the nobles and craftsmen are sturdy Defenders of the Faith and free with their purses.

"The pony-folk of the northwest may seem fierce and war-like, but they are really playful and light-hearted as children. Their needs are modest, and their lands plentiful. They are nowhere near as touchy as the desert people, but they are rather uncouth and uninterested in conversation and bargaining, though great fans of fantastic stories of wizards and heroes.

"It is fashionable to say that men of other lands are without honor or virtue, but I have seen for myself. The Unbeliever hardly values his word, and though I have seen the splendid temples of his numerous powerful and fearsome gods, I have seen few at worship therein. Nowhere have I seen the common piety and daily reverence of the least of the True Believers."

The Land: "It is dry, but the people live well. The coastal region grows fruit and vegetables in abundance, and the plains of the Ust-Urt Valley yield excellent crops of grain. The wadis and oases provide pasture for the nomad herds and vegetables to supplement the abundant meats and cheeses of the nomad herders.

"I've been north and south along the coast, and over the mountains to Darokin, Specularum, Thyatis, and Dengar, and nowhere have I seen a happier, better-fed nation."

Ylaruam: "Certainly smaller than Thyatis and Specularum, but not less grand, and more civilized in many ways. The markets of Ylaruam are twice the size of those of Specularum and Thyatis, and the skill of Ylaruam's craftsmen is second to none.

"There are poor folk in Ylaruam, but they are far less desperate than the wretched poor in the slums of the other cities of the world. The Eternal University is one of the finest in the world, and scholars may be seen lecturing or discoursing in plazas and gardens throughout the city. And the Sultan's palace and the Vouchery District is splendid with its colorful mosaics, fountains, gardens, and the magnificent Great Throne Room with the great arched ceiling."

Other Towns: "Parsa is a comfortable caravan stop, but not a very profitable market; the Makistani prefer their ponies over our magnificent stallions, and their pony-hair blankets and tents over our fine silk and wool fabrics. Ctesiphon is a nasty spot, but has lots of money from the local mining projects. Cinsa-Men-Noo is the nicest town in Nithia, not that it is much of a distinction, and a good market in summer when the nomads are encamped. Surra-Man-Raa is a disgrace. The Sultan should take a couple of divisions and clear that place up once and for all. I certainly won't trade there. Tameronikas is a lovely climate, lots of quality imported goods, and keen traders to deal with. It is always a challenge, but always profitable. Abbashan is a clean enough town, but an unprofitable market for anything but coffee, weapons, and fine horses."

How to Get Rich and Famous: "Buy coffee, spices, textiles, and expensive household crafts in Darokin, Karameikos, or Thyatis. Sell high in Tameronikas, or better yet, ship across the caravan routes and sell at twice the price in Ylaruam, or three times the price in a rural market. Buy the best horses from the nomads, the best rugs and pottery from rural craftsmen and weapons, glass, and jewelry from urban craftsmen, and export them. Then invest your money in mining or an import/export firm.

"Get to know the right people, get a well permit, get a charter from an emir for a new dominion, and build yourself a comfortable country estate. Support wilderness expeditions because sooner or later one may uncover some treasure or ancient artifact, and your fortune is made."

Hot Tips: "To earn your stake, dig around at the Vouchery of the Provinces. Those fellows know all about the hidden treasures of the wilderness, and are eager to con you into chasing after them. Provinces will put you in touch with other rough-and-ready entrepreneurs, and may have suggestions for backers to touch for investment capital.

"Mining metals and precious stones is the wealth of the future. As the northern and southern highlands are cleared of savages and monsters, they will become among the richest mineral deposits in the world."

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Creating Ylari Characters

Use the following charts to design characters with distinctive Ylari flavor. The chart listings are meant to be suggestive, not restrictive; improvise freely in the spirit of the given listings, drawing on your knowledge of fantasy literature and Near East cultures.

1. Select a name and residential tag.

The most important detail about a character is his name. Whatever a character knows, he always at least knows his name, and expects others to remember it and to address him politely by it. His name also contains the name of his father, Suleiman Al-Kalim, or Urabi-ibn-Selim ("ibn" or "al" means "offspring of"). In a land where family obligations are cherished, the name of your father is an important detail.

Right after the name, the most important thing about a Ylari is his place and his cultural background. If a Ylari is a nomad, he moves around, and is not strongly identified with any place, therefore his tribe is his most important identification. If a Ylari is settled, his region, village, or town name is most important. When a Ylari introduces himself, he often adds his residential tag after his name. For example, Tahir al-Anouar of the Qahtan, or Jaffar-ibn-Mehmet of Hedjazi. If you meet someone where he lives, he omits the residential tag in his introduction. It's assumed he's a native if he doesn't state otherwise.

2. Select a cultural background and spiritual alignment.

The most common cultural backgrounds are Alasiyan and Makistani, with some Thyatin, Alphatian, Nithian, and other cultures of the D&D® world. All but a few Ylari are Followers of Al-Kalim and the Eternal Truth and of lawful alignment.

The only sizable minority religions are foreign alignments in the cities and the outlawed chaotic Magian Nithian religion. Another sizable minority has no spiritual commitment, though, for social reasons, most at least pretend to be True Believers. These uncommitted may be of any alignment.

If you need a chaotic character, insanity is a good excuse. A neutral is probably either an indifferent Believer or an unbeliever pretending to be a Believer.

When a character introduces himself, he seldom mentions that he is a True Believer. In the Emirate that's a given. If among foreigners and heathens, he may proudly announce that he is among the Faithful.

3. Select a physical hook and nickname.

A good way to make an NPC distinctive is to give him a special physical feature or action. A nickname also helps to make an NPC unique and memorable. The Physical Tag and Nickname charts are obviously incomplete; use them as examples, and devise your own physical tags and nicknames.

YLARI NAME CHART

(* indicates female names)

Abdallah, Abdullah, Abdul, Abu, Ahmed, Ahmad, Aicha*, Aladdin, Ali, Alia*, Aman, Amar, Amin, Amineh*, Anouar, Azeezeh*, Aziz, Baba, Babrak, Bechir, Besma*, Buzurg, Chukri, Daood, Djamal, Dunya*, Farah*, Farid, Farouk, Fatima*, Faysal, Fuad, Habib, Hafez, Haroon, Hassan, Hosni, Hossein, Hussain, Ibrahim, Idris, Ismail, Jaffar, Jamila*, Jullana*, Karim, Khader, Khalid, Leilah*, Mahmud, Mansour, Maroof, Mehmet, Mizra*, Mohammed, Muhammed, Muammar, Mujibur, Muktar, Mussa, Mustafa, Myriam*, Nadir, Najib, Naomi*, Nasir, Nasser, Nazar, Nizar, Nizam, Nuri, Omar, Omer, Rachid, Radija*, Ramman, Ravi, Rezah, Ruhollah, Saddam, Said, Selim, Sheherazad, Sharif, Sherif, Sinbad, Suleiman, Tahir, Tarik, Urabi, Walid, Yasir, Yasser, Yasimina*, Jusif, Zia, Zumurrud*.

RESIDENTIAL TAG CHARTS

Ylari Tribe Chart

Awaliq, Awamir, Abidah, Amalisah, Asir, Awamir, Awazim, Anazah, Amarat, Bal-Ubayd, Batahirah, Bayt Kathir, Bayt Yamani, Bani Yas, Buqum, Bani Kab, Bani Hajir, Bani Atiyah, Bani Sakhr, Dayyin, Dahm, Duru, Dawasir, Dhafir, Ghamid, Gani Khalid, Harb, Hutaym, Huwaytat, Humum, Harasis, Hudhayl, Ifar, Janabah, Juhaynah, Mahrah, Manahil, Manasir, Murrah, Muntafiq, Nu'aym, Qahtan, Qara, Ruwalah, Rashayidah, Rashid, Shararat, Sulabah, Shammar, Subay, Shihuh, Suhul, Shahran, Sayar, Ujman, Utaybah, Yam, Yafi, Wahibah, Wayilah, Zahran.

YLARI REGION CHART

(* means an administrative province under Vouchery of Provinces)

Ust-Urt Valley, The Dead Places (desolate areas of Nithia), Northern Highlands*, North Coast (Nithian coastal plain), Middle Coast (Abbashani coastal plain), Abbashan Oasis, Great Salt Basin (vast desolate salt lake)*, Great Alasiyan Basin (The Empty Quarter— Rub Al-Khali)*, Ylaruam Oasis, Valley of Death (salt basin west of Ylaruam)*, Southwestern Highlands*, Southeastern Highlands*, Piedmont (Nicostenian Uplands), Southern Coast (Nicostenian coastal plain).

For other geographical reference tags, characters may also refer to the nearest town or village, or to nearby roads and caravan routes.

YLARI TOWN AND VILLAGE CHART

(capitals indicate capital of the emirate)

Emirate of Alasiya: YLARUAM, Kuznetz, Deraan, Sulba, Tel al Kebir, Hedjazi.
Emirate of Makistan: PARSA, Warqa, Anram, Uruk.
Emirate of Nithia: SURRA-MAN-RAA, Cinsa-Men-Noo.
Emirate of Abbashan: ABBASHAN, Fabia, Jaboor.
Emirate of Nicostenia: TAMERONIKAS, Cubis.
Emirate of Dythestenia: CTESIPHON.

The following town/village names may be scattered around on detailed topographical maps: Jauf, Taymor, Tayma, Wahj, Muscat, Dubai, Abu Dubai, Doha, Salwaw, Jubayl, Qaysumah, Nuayriyah, Urayirah, Mubbaraz, Hofuf, Udayliyyah, Haradh, Mishab, Ras al Khafqi, Ras Tannurah, Abu Hadryah, Zilfi, Ghat, Ruywaydah, Shaqra, Diriyah, Dilam, Hillah, Layla, Hariq, Salamiyyah, Artawiyyah, Turayt, Hadithah, Ha'il, Unayzah, Dawadimi, Kasamin, Bishah, Baljurshi, Kahmis Mushayt, Abha, Dirs, Kiyat, Uzan, Lith, Afif, Ulah, Umm Lajj, Duba, Ras al Qasbah, Haql.

CULTURAL BACKGROUND

Alasiyani, Makistani, Nithian, Thyatian, Alphatian, other D&D® nationalities and races.

SPIRITUAL ALIGNMENT

Eternal Truth (lawful), Magian Fire-Worshipper (chaotic, outlawed, and evil), no spiritual alignment, foreign religion.

PHYSICAL HOOK (APPEARANCE OR ACTION)

Distinctive Feature

hunchback, leather skin, deep tan, lily skin, pony tail (Makistani), lizard boots, blue eyes (rare among Alasiyani), scowl, dark complexion (Nithian), face-like-the-moon (great beauty, round and clear-faced), acne-scarred, scraggly forelock, many rings on fingers, embroidered headband (affectation), skinny, double-chin, fat lips, hawk nose, wide nose, buck teeth, big ears, balding, full-beard (nomads—town folk shave); facial scar, noble brow (level, dark eyebrows), stiff knuckle (sword scar), voice (loud, soft, foreign accent, high or low pitched), body (fat, thin, muscular, long armed, tall, short)

Distinctive Gesture, Phrase, or Interest

coughs (nomad sandstorm lungs), whistles tunelessly, always rubbing nose, fidgets with beard, chews lip, never looks straight in eye, haughty address, rude (rare among Ylari, sign of power or malevolence), drinks too much coffee, chatters all the time, obsessed with horse racing, rug expert (family trade)

NICKNAME

(Best if based on distinctive feature, gesture, phrase, or interest. Could also refer to famous incident or other reason for renown or infamy.)

The Butcher (admiring martial ruthlessness, or condemning for cruelty), Black Hand (cruel), the Poet (ironic—lousy and prolific poet), Desert Quail (sweet singer), Half-Heart (coward in battle), the Devout, Tale-Teller, the Traveler (scholar), the Strange One (quiet sorcerer), the Northerner (dark Nithian), Winter Rat (tough), Water Bag (always thirsty), the Generous, the Sworder of Vengeance, the Just, the Cheerless (always pessimistic)

To devise other nicknames, think about the Ylari social and personal virtues. One obsessed with a particular virtue might be known for it—"the Trustworthy," for example. Or consider the character's occupation—"the Caravaner" or "the Swordsman" or "the Spell-Monger."

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Procedures

Riding Checks

Roll the character's *riding rating* or less on 3d6 to succeed in an action. A character's riding rating is his dexterity modified by the following bonuses or penalties:

Bonuses and Penalties (Cumulative)
Dwarf: −4
Halfling: −2
Level 1-4: −1
Level 10+: +1
Military Cavalry Training: +1
According to character biography or DM discretion. Most D&D® game nations have sizable cavalry units. Assume that any fighter or elf has a 50% chance of having had cavalry experience, that any clerics have a 5% chance, and that a magic-user or thief has a 1% chance.
Born in Saddle: +2
Makistani, Alasiyani, Ethengar, or other nomadic cultural background at DM discretion

Staging: A riding check is appropriate whenever characters perform actions on horseback when poor horsemanship might interfere with success. For example:

* when meleeing
* when firing a missile
* when casting a spell
* when the mount is traveling at full speed (penalties for poor terrain and terrified mount are appropriate)
* when executing a difficult maneuver (striking a ball with a polo mallet, grabbing an object while riding past it at full speed, handing off a baton)

If the character fails the riding check, he fails in his action. In combat, this usually means a blow or a missile missed its mark, or a spell is ruined. In addition, if the horse is moving, the character may have fallen off; roll 3d6 equal to or less than dexterity (no bonuses or penalties) to stay on the mount.

In riding contests or games, characters may make opposed riding rating rolls to determine which character succeeds in a contested action. The character with the highest 3d6 roll (plus or minus penalties) who still passes the riding check is the winner.

For example, Nadir the Nomad, a 5th level fighter of the Ifar tribe with a dexterity of 14 is playing polo with Muktar Khan, chief of the Amarat tribe and a 12th level fighter with a dexterity of 17 and with cavalry training. Each charges and swings at the ball.

Nadir is "born-in-the-saddle" for a +2 bonus and a riding rating of 16. Muktar is also "born-in-the-saddle," and has additional bonuses of +1 for military training and a +1 for over 10th level, for a riding rating of 21.

Nadir rolls a 12. He needs a 16 or less to succeed his riding check, so he succeeds. Muktar rolls a 7. He needs a 21 or less to succeed in his riding check, so he succeeds.

Both have successful riding checks so both stay on their horses. But Nadir hits the ball because his roll is higher than Muktar's.

If only one had succeeded, he would have hit the ball; the other would have had to check to see if he fell off his mount. If both were successful, and rolled the same number, the rider with the higher rating should succeed. If both ratings and rolls are identical, something dramatic should happen; maybe the ball shoots straight up in the air, or both mallets shatter, or the riders get tangled in each other while the ball is trampled by the mounts' hooves.

Since horsemanship is an important part of Emirate culture, each PC should compute and record his riding rating on his character sheet, and the DM should often list the riding rating among an NPC's important statistics.

Travel Rates

Use standard movement rates with adjustments for terrain in normal encounters.

However, standard movement rates are not appropriate for desert or caravan mounted travel, since they do not consider problems of feeding mounts (foraging delays or encumbrance of carried fodder) or of pacing creatures in hot weather.

Use the following guidelines for travel along roads or caravan tracks:

1. With superior riding horses, a small group lightly encumbered can travel 32 miles a day.

2. With riding horses, a moderately encumbered cavalry unit can travel 16 miles a day.

3. With any mount other than riding horses (draft or war horses, mules, camels, ox-carts) or on foot, a typical caravan, infantry unit, or party of adventurers loaded down with gear may travel 12 miles a day.

Forced marches may apply at DM discretion. Foraging and hunting along caravans routes or roads is impossible.

When not on a road or caravan track, reduce these rates by 1/4. When off roads or tracks in wilderness desert and uplands terrain, reduce these rates by 1/2, except with camels reduce the rate only 1/4.

Heat Exhaustion and Lack of Water

This topic is much too complicated for a realistic treatment that is easy to use in a game; however, the following procedures are adequate.

For every hour a character travels in the heat of the day without adequate water or while wearing metal armor, the character temporarily loses a point of constitution. If the character is both armored and short on water, two points are lost.

After the points are subtracted, the player rolls 3d6. If the result is greater than the current constitution, the character collapses and cannot be revived until he awakens in 1d4 turns.

Thereafter he may resume travel, but continues to lose constitution and the player must roll 3d6 against his character's current constitution each hour. When the character's current constitution reaches zero, the character does not awaken and will die within 1d4 hours.

When a character experiences reduced constitution, such as when performing any activity (for example, if in combat, casting a spell, or using a thieving skill) the player must roll 3d6 against his character's constitution or the action fails. This reflects the distraction and debilitation of heat exhaustion and thirst.

Optional Combat-in-Hot-Sun Rule: A character fights normally for a number of combat rounds equal to his armor class (i.e., in leather armor for seven rounds; in plate and shield for two rounds). Thereafter he temporarily loses a point of constitution per round, and makes constitution checks to use abilities and to avoid collapsing as outlined in the procedure above. *This adds a dramatic touch to desert fighting, but is a bit involved for regular use, and makes heavy armor a real liability. Save it for small combats or duels when the sun just "happens" to be real hot. Remember, you control the weather and the timing of most combat encounters. The weather is cool, or the enemy attacks in the early morning or evening, as you desire.*

Staging: Unless the characters are normally foolish or completely ignorant, assume they have the common sense to carry plenty of water in the desert, and when they insist on wearing armor as they travel, demonstrate the constitution loss procedure as an instructional experience.

It would not be nice of you to arrange an attack of a brigands to coincide with the characters' first experience with heat exhaustion. Demonstrate this procedure in an otherwise

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unthreatening situation, and if is hoped they will learn their lesson.

Then you can save this procedure for an emergency situation where they've gotten lost or or the bad guys have dumped them in the desert without food or water.

Experience Point Awards for Role Playing Points of Honor

In the chapter concerning Social Structure it was recommended that you awarded experience points to PCs who honor their social and personal obligations. Here are two suggestions for judging these awards:

Honor Challenges: When you plan an adventure, add encounters and problems that specifically challenge the honor of the player characters. Think of this "honor challenge" as though it were a monster with which you were going to confront the characters.

When you plan the honor challenge, jot down a description of the situation and the personal or social dilemma it presents. Then consider how the PC may respond and how many XP the PC should receive if he resolves or mishandles the problem.

For example, a PC sees a ragged hunchback perched on his doorstep. The hunchback is begging for money. If the PC gives him money, the PC gets 1 XP per gp. If the PC brings him in, shares food and lodging, and listens to his story the PC gets 50 XP and a hot tip about a magical treasure in story form.

If the PC delivers an impromptu speech to a crowd about the evils of vagrancy as the PC beats the hunchback, roll 2d6, add the charisma bonus, and consider the speech for other bonuses. If the result is 9 or more, the crowd cheers and the story becomes local gossip, and the PC gets 100 XP. If the result is 8 or less, the crowd is sympathetic with the hunchback and attacks the PC, who loses 200 XP.

The last response doesn't deal with charity. Players will often see things differently than you do; don't be surprised if they see a different moral dilemma than you do.

When assigning an XP value for responses, consider that each honor challenge XP award should be no more than 1/100 of the difference between the XP for the PC's current character level and the XP needed for the next level is as listed on the character class experience tables. Also consider that honor challenge XP awards should not exceed the XP awards normally given for defeating monsters appropriate to the character's level.

For other examples of honor challenges, see *NPCs, Encounters, Adventures*, and the *Village of Kirkuk*.

Honor Points: A simpler method of awarding honor XP points is to wait until the end of an adventure. If a character has been particularly honorable, award a 5% bonus to experience points. If the character has been particularly dishonorable, subtract 5% of the experience points. Stage this as a reflection of the ruler or patron's praise or condemnation of a PC's performance, or as the state of his reputation when the story of his adventure is known.

Storytelling

The art of storytelling is popular in the Emirates. Stories are told to entertain and to edify, and dramatic and eloquent storytellers are often honored by their hosts with gifts and praise. Sultans have been known to make a storyteller a vizier on the spot after hearing a story that particularly pleased them.

The following procedures help the DM judge storytelling in role-playing adventures.

Storytelling Rating: A character's storytelling rating is computed using the following formula:

Int + Wis + Cha + Character Level = Storytelling Rating

Telling the Tale: To tell a tale, a character rolls 3d6, adds it to his storyteller rating, and compares it with the *Storytelling Chart*.

STORYTELLING CHART

Score	*Story Quality*	*Audience Response*
100	masterpiece	unforgettable experience; teller reckoned a saint (+4 reaction); treated as kin and excessive gift
90	remarkable	audience deeply moved; teller reckoned a wise man (+3 reaction); friendship offered and great gift
80	pleasurable	audience enthusiastic; earns great respect (+2 reaction); generous hospitality and large gift
70	interesting	audience attentive and cordial; earns respect (+1 on reactions) and a small gift
60	tedious	audience bored but polite; social duties met; hospitality extended
50 or less	shameful	audience offended; hospitality withdrawn; lose 1% of current XP

Bonuses and Penalties:

+5	if based on true character experience
+5	if illustrates a moral lesson clearly applicable to current circumstances
+1 to +10	if enhanced with magical effects (i.e., charm, poetic incantation, visual and auditory effects, etc.)
-1 to −10	if audience is initially hostile (if storyteller is foreigner, or audience is captor, enemy, evil efreeti, etc.)

Story Extension: If story was interesting or better, the storyteller may choose to Extend His Story.

Roll 3d6. If the result is greater than the intelligence of the audience (average intelligence if a group of listeners), the story automatically becomes "boring," and the storyteller loses whatever benefits he earned with his first roll. If result is less than or equal to the intelligence of the audience, the storyteller may re-roll the 3d6 for his original storytelling roll.

This is obviously useful when the first roll was low, or when the importance of the occasion and audience justifies a little risk-taking.

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Dervishes (Desert Druids)

The term "dervish" is often misused by foreigners, as indicated by the misleading entry for "dervishes" listed under "Men," page 53, Expert Rule Book. The "dervishes" listed there are probably no more than a typical Alasiyan nomadic tribe.

The dervishes are holy hermits, True Believers following the Way of the Scholar as they live solitary lives of contemplation and physical devotion in the desert wildernesses of the Emirates. Also known as desert druids, these holy men live in caves, crude shelters, or tents in remote regions. Dervishes are revered by desert nomads, who aid in providing the holy hermits with food and shelter needs.

In contemplation they strive to achieve a mystical oneness with nature by studying and participating in the tranquility and majesty of the desert wilderness. They patiently observe and commune with the animals and plants of the desert, and at higher levels of the discipline, they may even communicate with the elemental forces of the desert such as the wind, the sand, the stone, the sun, and the miraculous inspiration of water.

Their physical devotions, a discipline of strenuous ritual exercises, are their prayers to the Eternal Truth. Acrobatic and athletic, these devotions produce men of remarkable durability and stamina. They dash barefoot through the desert, across the dunes, and over rocky mountains. They juggle rocks, lift great stones, and twirl like tops in the heat of the noonday sun or in the chill of evening.

Dervishes have withdrawn to the desert wilderness to escape the distractions of commerce with other men, and they avoid becoming involved in the affairs of men. Visitors to the wilderness are considered uninvited guests; if they are polite, not disruptive or demanding, and gone quickly, they are not offensive.

However, as followers of the Eternal Truth, the dervishes are still bound by the principle of concern for the welfare of their fellow man. Dervishes are generally extremely restrained and judgmental in their expression of this concern. The foolish and arrogant may be left to their own devices when stranded in the desert; the wise and respectful should not need aid.

Dervishes are pacifistic in philosophy; they carry no weapons, wear no armor, and learn no combat skills. They seldom interfere in violent conflicts, though their superb physical conditioning gives them advantages when forced to fight. Their spells are primarily intended to facilitate their study and observation of nature, though some are useful for self-defense.

Staging: *Desert Druids are special NPC clerics for the Ylaruam campaign setting. They differ from standard clerics in several ways. Their constitution scores are 13-18 (1d6 + 12). Their saving throws are as dwarves. They generally refuse to use weapons or armor, though there is no reason why they could not use them if they so chose. Dervishes fight as thieves of similar level. Their spells, a mixture of clerical, druidical, and special spells, are specially adapted to their life in the desert.*

Spells

The following spells may be learned and cast as with normal cleric spells. The total number of spells usable in one day does not change. Dervishes have no restrictions against the use of reversible spells.

The Dervish has the same abilities as the cleric. For example, they can **turn undead** as a cleric of the same level. The DM may allow the use **cure light wound** spells on special occasions.

FIRST LEVEL DERVISH SPELLS

1. Detect Magic (cleric, BP 26)
2. Detect Water (special, GAZ2)
3. Faerie Fire (druid, CMP 14)
4. Locate (druid, CMP 14)
5. Predict Weather (druid, CMP 15)

SECOND LEVEL DERVISH SPELLS

1. Hold Person (cleric, EXR 5)
2. Obscure (druid, CMP 15; instead of a misty vapor, a dust devil is formed; all other effects identical)
3. Snake Charm (cleric, EXR 6)
4. Speak with Animals (cleric, EXR 6)
5. Truthtelling (special, GAZ2)

THIRD LEVEL DERVISH SPELLS

1. Call Lightning (druid, CMP 15)
2. Growth of Animal (cleric, EXR 6)
3. Hold Animal (druid, CMP 15)
4. Know Destiny (special, GAZ2)
5. Shift Sand (special)
   Range: 30'
   Duration: 6 rounds + 1 round per level of the caster
   Effect: Moves 25 cubic feet of sand per round

This spell causes sand to flow like water, but at the bidding of the caster. It can be used to excavate a ruin, open a passage, uncover an object, or tunnel an emergency shelter. If the flowing sand is directed at a human or monster, it causes no more inconvenience than would a similar flow of water (i.e., the equivalent of standing in a small stream).

Once the spell duration has ended, the sand behaves normally, flowing naturally with gravity. If the sand is thoroughly wetted first (*create water* spell or equivalent), the shifted sand may retain its shape until the sand dries which is one day, or at the DM's discretion.

FOURTH LEVEL DERVISH SPELLS

1. Charm Animal (as magic spell *charm monster*, EXR 13; however, only normal or giant forms of animal, including mammals, birds, reptiles, insects, may be affected; intelligent animals and fantastic creatures are not affected)
2. Create Water (cleric, EXR 7)
3. Neutralize Poison (cleric, EXR 8)
4. Speak with Plants (cleric, EXR 8)
5. Summon Animals (druid, MP 5)

FIFTH LEVEL DERVISH SPELLS

1. Commune (cleric, EXR 8)
2. Conjure Elemental (magic user, EXR 14)
3. Control Winds (druid, CMP 16; in a sand desert, this spell creates the equivalent of a small sandstorm in the area of effect; all normal creatures are blinded)
4. Pass-Wall (magic user EXR 15)
5. Quest (cleric, EXR 9)

SIXTH LEVEL DERVISH SPELLS

1. Anti-Animal Shell (druid, CMP 16)
2. Find the Path (cleric, EXP 9)
3. Speak with Monsters (cleric, EXP 9)
4. Summon Weather (druid, CMP 16)
5. Word of Recall (cleric, EXP 9)

SEVENTH LEVEL DERVISH SPELLS

1. Creeping Doom (druid, CMP 16)
2. Earthquake (cleric, CMP 13)
3. Holy Word (cleric, CMP 13)
4. Survival (cleric, MP 3)
5. Weather Control (magic user, CMP 21)

Example: Saddam the Aged, of the Dead Places. Former soldier, one eye destroyed by scimitar slash. Keen senses and communion with nature, speaks with birds and beasts, lives near a cursed ruin proscribed by Al-Kalim and the Ylari government. Always pauses for five or ten seconds to consider before replying to a question. Visited once by a messenger of the Immortals who warned of a great evil in the ruin, and prophesying that someone shall come one day to lay the evil to rest. His magical Staff of the Desert is charged with an variety of dervish clerical spells.

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Courtesy Tips for Foreigners in The Emirates

A Nicostenian merchant briefing his newly-arrived Thyatin cousin on the eve of his first cross-Emirates caravan:

"When we meet with our customers, they first offer us coffee. Good coffee, generally. No business spoken yet—the coffee sharing is a formal version of a religious water-sharing ritual. Praise the coffee and drink three cups. Less suggests the coffee is inferior; more suggests lack of restraint.

"Eat with the fingers of your right hand, never your left hand. Do not offer your left hand to another. Emphatically wash your right hand before and after a meal. At meals, people of all social statuses mingle together, a token of equality and brotherhood; do not be surprised if the host is as cordial to his servants and porters as he is to you.

"In meetings, do not be hasty in pressing forth your business; hosts struggle to avoid abruptness and excessive briskness in both social and business life. Those in authority wish to appear accessible and cordial to all, so don't be surprised if other persons are present during important exchanges. Conversations may overlap in a very confusing fashion at times.

"Traditional dress is preferred—none of those flashy things you brought with you from Thyatis. Keep your head covered indoors. Not to be well-dressed is unacceptable. It reflects lack of respect for your host and careless personal habits.

"If you can't speak the truth, don't speak at all. Don't chatter unless you know what you are talking about; you are held responsible for your judgment on even trivial matters like the weather and the proper conduct of children.

"You can't learn their language right away, but you can show respect by learning the common greetings and responses."

COMMON SALUTATIONS

Greeting	*Response*
Peace be upon you.	And upon you peace.
Good morning.	Morning of light.
Good evening.	Evening of light.
How are you?	Well, praise be to the Immortal Ones.
Farewell, in the Immortals.	In the care of the care of the True Ones.

Staging the Nahmeh

Peoples of the Emirates like to quote from the Nahmeh when supporting moral arguments or philosophical observations, or when making polite conversations. Offering apt quotations is a sin of piety, scholarship, wisdom, and judgment.

Since the Nahmeh doesn't really exist, it is hard for players and DM to quote from it as player and non-player characters. Instead, here is a strategy for presenting quotes as though they were from the Nahmeh.

Make a list of your own favorite quotations. Check reference books like Bartlett's Quotations and use familiar sayings from your own reading and speech. Consider topics like nature, justice, honor, faith, trust, service to your fellow man, warfare, and family. Review the "Society in the Emirates" section as a guide to the moral and religious topics Al-Kalim might have discussed.

Now review your list of quotes and adapt them to the Ylari culture. For example, instead of "Observe the lilies of the field, they neither spin or weave...," choose a hardy desert plant such as the acacia, and adapt the quote to "Observe the flowering acacia...."

Keep this list handy. Select a few favorite quotes for each player character and non-player character to become familiar dialog tags for each personality.

Here are some examples of quotes from the Nahmeh created in this fashion:

"We must be the candles that burn so that others might have light." (From Al-Kalim commentary on soldiers defending the Faith on the battlefield.)

"If friendship is a diamond, then troubles are a diamond mine." (An admonishment to consider misfortune a confirming test of friendship.)

"The enemies of our enemies are not necessarily our friends." (A diplomatic saying.)

"If such may befall the mighty efreeti, then our own misfortunes are light." (From the Parable of the Cuckolded Efreet.)

"There is no power but in the Immortals."

"Before the Dark Minister of the Graveyard, all joy seems fleeting, and the day is a tedious prelude to a dark and restless night."

"Do not rail against the condition of man. Would you rather be a dog or a donkey? Accept what is given, and cease your grumbling."

"Al-Kalim has said, 'The stranger must be succored in times of need."

"Wealth does not avail before the Terminator of Earthly Delights."

"If it were engraved upon the corner of the eye with a needle, it would serve as a lesson to those who would be wise."

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Glossary

ABBASHANI: citizens of the Emirate of Abbashan or the city of Abbashan (see fold-out map)

AC: after crowning (of first Emperor of Thyatis)

ALASIYANI: citizens of the Emirate of Alasiya; original desert nomadic peoples of the Emirates (see fold-out map)

ALPHATIANS: citizens of Empire of Alphatia; Ylari citizens descended from Alphatian colonists

ARROW, ORDER OF THE: military religious order of mounted archers of the True Faith **ATABEG:** Ylari noble equivalent of a duke (often governors of provinces and large cities)

BC: before crowning (of first Emperor of Thyatis)

BEY, BEG: Ylari noble equivalent of a count

CALIPH: political head of the Emirates; sultan (a religious term, literally "defender of the faith")

CHECHIA: cylindrical headgear made of cloth

CHIEF: tribal leader; equivalent to a baron (also QADI)

D&D® GAME WORLD: place where all the gazetteers are set

DESERT ROSE, ORDER OF THE: high-status honorary military religious order of soldiers, clerics, and magic users of the True Faith

DREAM OF JUSTICE AND HONOR: principle proposed by Al-Kalim whereby each man undertakes to do justice and honor to his fellow man and the Immortals, and expects the same in return; unifying theme in Ylari politics

DREAM OF THE DESERT GARDEN: Al-Kalim's vision; cultivation of Emirates' deserts made possible by magical and technological development of water resources

DYTHESTENIANS: citizens of the Emirate of Dythestenia (see fold-out map)

EMIR: king; political head of an emirate

EMIRATES (of Ylaruam): the nation, as natives refer to it

FAHTMAH: woman

FARID: Al-Kalim's companion and adviser

FARIS: itinerant noble knight of the True Faith (equivalent of a paladin)

FELLAH: peasant

HAZAR: settled Ylari tribal peoples descended from desert nomads (literally "house-dwellers")

KIN FACTION: religious and political faction dominant in the Emirate of Abbashan; supports tracing descent from Al-Kalim through Al-Kalim's personal ancestors

KOUGLAR: curved dagger

MACE, ORDER OF THE: military religious order of clerics of the True Faith

MAKISTANI: citizens of the Emirate of Makistan; nomadic peoples descended from Ethengar settlers in northwestern Emirates (see fold-out map)

MALIK: a minor king; equivalent to a duke

MUFTI: sheriff, chief of police

MUHTASIB: inspector of markets and trade; minor government official

NAHMEH: the sacred book of the Eternal Truth (literally "the word") composed by Al-Kalim and his companion Farid; revered and studied by True Believers

NICOSTENIANS: citizens of the Emirate of Nicostenia (see fold-out map)

PASHA: king (also EMIR)

PIKE, ORDER OF THE: military religious order of select foot soldiers of the True Faith

PRECEPTORS, COUNCIL OF: governing and advisory body to the sultan

PRINCE: general term referring to any noble ruler

QADI: tribal leader (also CHIEF, QAID, KADI)

QAHWA: dark strong coffee

RELIGIOUS ORDERS: military religious orders of select warriors of the True Faith

SHEIK: chief of chiefs; equivalent to a viscount

SPELL, ORDER OF THE: military religious order of magic users of the True Faith

SULEIMAN AL-KALIM: founder of the religion of the Eternal Truth; father of the Emirates; archetypal hero and leader of the Ylari

SULTAN: religious and political head of the Emirates; descendant of Al-Kalim through election of the Council of Preceptors

SUQ: market, bazaar

THE ETERNAL TRUTH: the dominant religion of the Emirates, founded on the teachings of Al-Kalim (also THE FAITH, THE WAY)

THE WAY: see the ETERNAL TRUTH

THYATIANS: citizens of Empire of Thyatis; Ylari citizens descended from Alphatian colonists

TRUE BELIEVERS: followers of the Eternal Truth, the Ylari religion founded in the teachings of Al-Kalim as presented in the Nahmeh (also TRUE BELIEVERS, FOLLOWERS OF THE WAY, DEFENDERS OF THE FAITH)

SEA OF DAWN: sea to the east of the Emirates

VOUCHERY: government bureau

YATAGHAN: large double-edged scimitar

YLARI: adjective form of Ylaruam; citizens of the Emirates

YLARUAM: the capital city of the Emirate of Alasiya; 'Ylaruam' when referring to the nation is common usage among foreigners; also YLARUAM OF THE GLITTERING SPIRES (see fold-out map)

THE HIJRAH MONTHS

Muharram
Safar
Rabi al Awwal
Rabi al Thani
Jumada'l Awwal
Jumada'l Thani
Rajab
Ramadan
Shawwal
Dhu'l-Qadah
Dhu'l-Hijjah

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of circumstance are treated mercifully, sentenced to work plan for paying debt. Careless, ignorant, irresponsible, or repeat offenders may be imprisoned or sold as slaves.

Drinking Wine or Strong Spirits: A religious offense harshly criticized by Al-Kalim. Politely ignored by some otherwise-devout middle- and upper-class Ylari. Generally permitted in foreign quarters of large cities. Sentence: public censure.

Gambling: Prohibited in the Nahmeh. Does not include contests for prizes or stakes wagered by principal parties. Sentence: public censure.

Ylari Customs

Robe of Honor: Treating a ruler or wealthy patron to wise counsel or delightful and instructive stories may earn you a robe of honor, handsomely tailored robes of silk embroidered with gold and silver thread and decked with gems. The value of these robes varies from 1,000 to 100,000 dinars, according to the wealth of the ruler and the value of the service. These robes are worn only on special occasions and are concrete displays of how your master values your service.

Games and Contests: Games and contests, popular among the Ylari, are socially constrained reflections of their fierce competitiveness and personal pride in their abilities. Good-natured challenges between rival but friendly nomad tribes are often in the form of riding contests and mock wars; such games are regular occasions at summer encampments and tribal convocations.

The settled Ylari are also fond of riding and martial competitions. Major festivals, like the Feast of Al-Kalim, will feature contests between local and regional champions, and the examination tournaments for the religious military orders are popular spectator events.

Games may also be used as a diplomatic tool to resolve personal or political conflicts between True Believers. Al-Kalim forbids Ylari to fight with one another. This prohibition is most often observed in the breach, but where honor and piety require, the challengers may agree on a contest to settle affairs of honor.

Essentially such contests are duels with rules and restraints to curb bloodshed. Individuals or whole tribes may participate in such contests. Individuals may fight to first blood or wrestle best-two-out-of-three-falls or according to some other conditions. Larger groups often engage in deadly mock wars to recover symbolic objects. For instance, to win a mock war you might have to snatch a banner from a chief's tent and ride to your own camp with it. Such mock wars may cover dozens of square miles and a period of several days before coming to a conclusion.

Hospitality: In business, diplomacy, or social gatherings, guests are to be treated to coffee, tea, and polite conversation in a formal and peaceful setting before getting down to business or pleasure.

The sharing of coffee or tea is an elaboration of the Water Ritual, an Article of Faith among True Believers, and a solemn affair that precedes all other speech or activity. The host tastes first to assure the guest that there is no poison which is a relic of times when relations among chiefs and hosts were less cordial.

Then the host and guest share the news. This is an important function in remote regions where communications are limited by distance and sparse population. News may be of a personal nature ("My sister has birthed a boy; she sends her greeting to your wife, and wishes to be remembered to her.") or of wider significance ("It is said that the rains in the southern hills have been early and weak, and there is concern about fall pasture this year."). Even in cities and along caravan routes where news and information are more abundant, polite speakers always open their discourse with a tidbit of news.

After the news comes polite conversation. Even in this social ceremony, the Ylari are fiercely competitive, each trying to outdo the other in generous compliments, polite protestations, elegant verses, and flowery speech:

"Your sons have grown even more tall and dignified than I might have imagined."

"But not so tall and dignified as your fine boys, splendid reflections of their honored parent. As the Prophet has said,

'As the moon reflects the sun,
So does the father shine
In the virtue of his progeny.'"

"But you are too kind. Here, have some more of this coffee. I admit, only a blend of Karameikan, Shires Cruth, and Ierendi spice, but respectable, for all that..."

Pilgrims: Traditionally, those on pilgrimage have special status as travelers and guests. They bring honor to themselves and their companions by their piety, and bring honor to their hosts by providing an opportunity for the host to display his hospitality and generosity.

In practice, this old custom has begun to sour through abuse. Many more people go on pilgrimage than in times past, and now pilgrims are noted more for their frivolity and irresponsibility than for their piety. However, services that cater to the pilgrims make good money, and private citizens eagerly offer food and board for the overflow. The poor are left to camp where they will, and provided with water from public wells.

Despite the deterioration of the traditions of pilgrimage, it is still an exciting time for Ylari in rural areas and along caravan routes, bringing lively visitors, conversation, and news to tavern and hearth.

The Welcome Feast: Friends, relatives, or retainers who have been away on a journey are customarily welcomed home with a lavish feast. After the meal, speeches are offered by the hosts in honor of the returned guest, and the guest is expected in turn to tell the tales of his travels. Afterwards, welcoming gifts may be exchanged, with the guest distributing tokens of his travels, while the hosts offer gifts to demonstrate their affection for the returned traveler. *This is an excellent setting for wrapping up an adventure, with NPC friends or patrons making speeches about how the PCs have been missed, and the PCs summarizing (and embellishing) the details of their adventure. If the feast is given by the PCs' patron, gifts may be offered in gratitude and acknowledgement of the PCs' service.*

The Village of Kirkuk

"The four notable things of Kirkuk are dust, heat, beggars, and graves. . . ."—a disgruntled traveler.

" . . . delightful grotto and gardens...the Bayt Saddam, with its exquisite carved teak panels, a palace in miniature...the ancient Watchtower of mystery and legend affords a splendid view of the rugged countryside." —a noble guest of Qadi Ramman al-Saddam.

"The biggest and best market for miles around"—the wife of a prominent nomad chief.

"A good place to find news, supplies and mounts, and men who know the desert as a friend. . .—a veteran adventurer.

The DM's map of Kirkuk with map key and list of important NPCs is printed on the inside cover. Refer to it frequently as you read the text. The players' map of Kirkuk is printed on the reverse of the large color map of Ylaruam.

For centuries Kirkuk has been an important water hole along a well-traveled caravan route. The sacred grotto, The Well of the Prophet, was a holy place long before Al-Kalim visited and blessed its waters after his siege and conquest of the Thyatian garrison here in the early ninth century. In the early tenth century the well is said to have fallen under a curse; now the water is not suitable for humans without the purifying rituals of the village prayer leaders.

The roads from the west and east are dusty and well-traveled in the dry season, muddy and nearly impassable during the brief winter and spring rains. An ancient Thyatian wall rings the village, and the ruins on an ancient Thyatian fort and towers lie along the north wall.

During summer encampment, several nomad tribes camp outside the walls of the village. Tribal encampment is a time for feasting, socializing, and contests among the nomads, and an opportunity to sell livestock and buy necessities for the long year ahead.

The market, graineries, and agricultural shed lie north of the main road to the east. During the day several farmers, laborers, and village housewives with their young children are working and gossiping at the shed. On market days the stalls are replete with colorful produce and wares, the air is sweet with fresh baked bread and roasting meat, and the listener's ears are filled with the chatter of vendors, purchasers, squealing children, and livestock.

The ruined fort and the caravansary are in the northwest corner of the wall. Children play in the rubble of the old fort. In the mornings and evening the caravansary bustles with departing and arriving caravans, loading and unloading goods, chatting merchants, and braying mules.

South of the main road lies the village proper. Two tracks lead south from the main road into town, one to the southwest and up to the residences on one end of the hill, the other up past the imposing Watchtower and the qadi's manor house on the highest point of the hill to the south gate, where the path leads out to the hills to the south.

Where the tracks fork at the foot of the hill lies the sacred grotto and garden and the ancient caves. The grotto and caves are at the foot of the small cliff that lies below the hill. Brilliant flowers bloom in the garden year round, and the clear water of the cisterns shimmers in the sun.

On the lower ground between the road and the hill lies other residences and three buildings, two inn-and-stables and the village sanctuary. The residences above and below the hill are of two types, the older dome-like stone and mud brick tructures and the newer angular stone dwellings. Both inns and the sanctuary dormitory are of the newer angular stone design, while the sanctuary is in the older style.

Most buildings have small outbuildings or shelters for livestock, and around most residences are small vegetable gardens and tethered goats. The rest of the village, except for the grotto gardens, is dirt, rubble, and dust.

During the morning and evening people are most active; with the hot midday sun most rest or work quietly in open shelters. In the evenings those with coin congregate at the local inns; those without coin gather in private homes or in the streets to share the news.

With scarcely 400 permanent residents, Kirkuk is a small village, but nonetheless a prosperous one. Several establishments provide accommodations and services for travelers and merchants, a lucrative business. The village bi-weekly market featuring a number of artisans, craftsmen, and food merchants is a busy and profitable affair, particularly during the summer encampments of tribal nomads. The surrounding region receives adequate rainfall and runoff from the mountains to support abundant agriculture, and the village chief provides milling and storage facilities for grain in return for a portion of the crop. And this is the first stop for expeditions in from the wilderness; successful adventurers are notably loose with their money.

Indeed, this prosperity partially accounts for Kirkuk's reputation for numerous beggars. Also counted among the beggars are those less fortunate adventurers; there are many sad and gruesome tales told by these crusty survivors, some of them even true.

Kirkuk is also famous for its graves. In the centuries before the Thyatian occupation (c. 500 AC to 828 AC) a tribe of monstrous creatures inhabited this region. Though study of artifacts shows they had advanced military technology, there are no signs of permanent dwellings; they are thought to have been nomadic or to have dwelled underground.

These creatures buried their dead in a series of caves in the cliffs near the grotto. By the time of the Thyatian occupation, the caves had been plundered by tomb robbers; now only rubble, bones, and odd artifacts remain to amuse the curious traveler. The grotto itself may have also been a burial cave submerged by the emergence of a spring, but this theory cannot be tested, since it is prohibited to profane the sacred well. (Bathing and swimming in sacred springs is a vile sacrilege.)

Using Kirkuk in Ylari Adventures and Campaigns

Read the following *Map Key* sections for an overview of the village. Then read *Staging Tips* for ideas on how to fit the village to your campaign needs and to bring the village alive for play.

Next, review *Scenario Ideas*. Pick one or more scenario ideas that appeal to your imagination, then follow the suggestions to develop the ideas into adventure outlines. Some scenario ideas need little additional material; others require considerable preparation and creative genius.

Map Key

1. The Village Shed is communal property owned by the qadi and shared by community farmers. Here a camel-powered revolving mortarstone grinds sesame and olives for oil and grinds grain for bread. The wood frame, thatch roof, and tent sides provide shelter from sun and wind, a convivial setting for community agricultural labors, and convenient storage for farm tools.

2. The Graineries are tall stone towers where wheat and other produce are stored.

3. The Sanctuary of the Abundant Dreams is a beautiful retreat for contemplation, prayer, and religious deliberations by those of the True Faith. Rows of elegant double columns support the domed ceilings covered with colorful mosaic designs. Carpets cover the floor where the devoted sit or kneel; there is no other furniture. There are always one or two villagers here in prayer or contemplation, and a prayer leader is either in attendance or available in the adjacent zawiya.

3a. The Zawiya is a dormitory and hostel for the sanctuary's prayer leaders and for itinerent clerics of the Faith. There are four private rooms for the sanctuary's prayer leaders, and six private rooms for visiting clerics on the upper floor, and a refectory, kitchen, common rooms, and storage on the ground floor. The central court has a fine desert garden where the Faithful may often be found in conversation or contemplation.

The zawiya is the private preserve of clerics of the Faith, but the qadi and his retainers, visiting scholars, pilgrims, nobles, and other notable or educated men, and friends of the clerics are often invited to share bread and conversation.

Prayer Leader Khamil-ibn-Ravi (C6) is an expert on the Nahmeh, the teachings of Al-Kalim, and local legal matters, and is renowned for his sage and just judgments. He knows little about the wilderness or the wider world, but he knows his villagers well, and has made the acquaintance of many itinerents and Faithful adventurers, and can refer you to expert advice on many topics.

His staff includes three junior prayer leaders (C1, C2, and C4), a cook, two clerks, and five domestics.

His current guests include:

Daood the Wide (C10), a corpulent, cheerful, and widely traveled itinerent and adventurer, a companion of kings and beggars, and a man with a mysterious background. Daood is known for his laziness, his love of fine food and luxury, his prudent and unheroic caution, his fondness for fables, and his improbable successes in adventure and warfare. His chosen mount is the mule. He may initially appear cowardly and unmanly, but he is fiercely honorable and a romantic sucker for a righteous quest. *Daood can rescue low-level PCs or support mid-level PCs on dangerous but noble expeditions.*

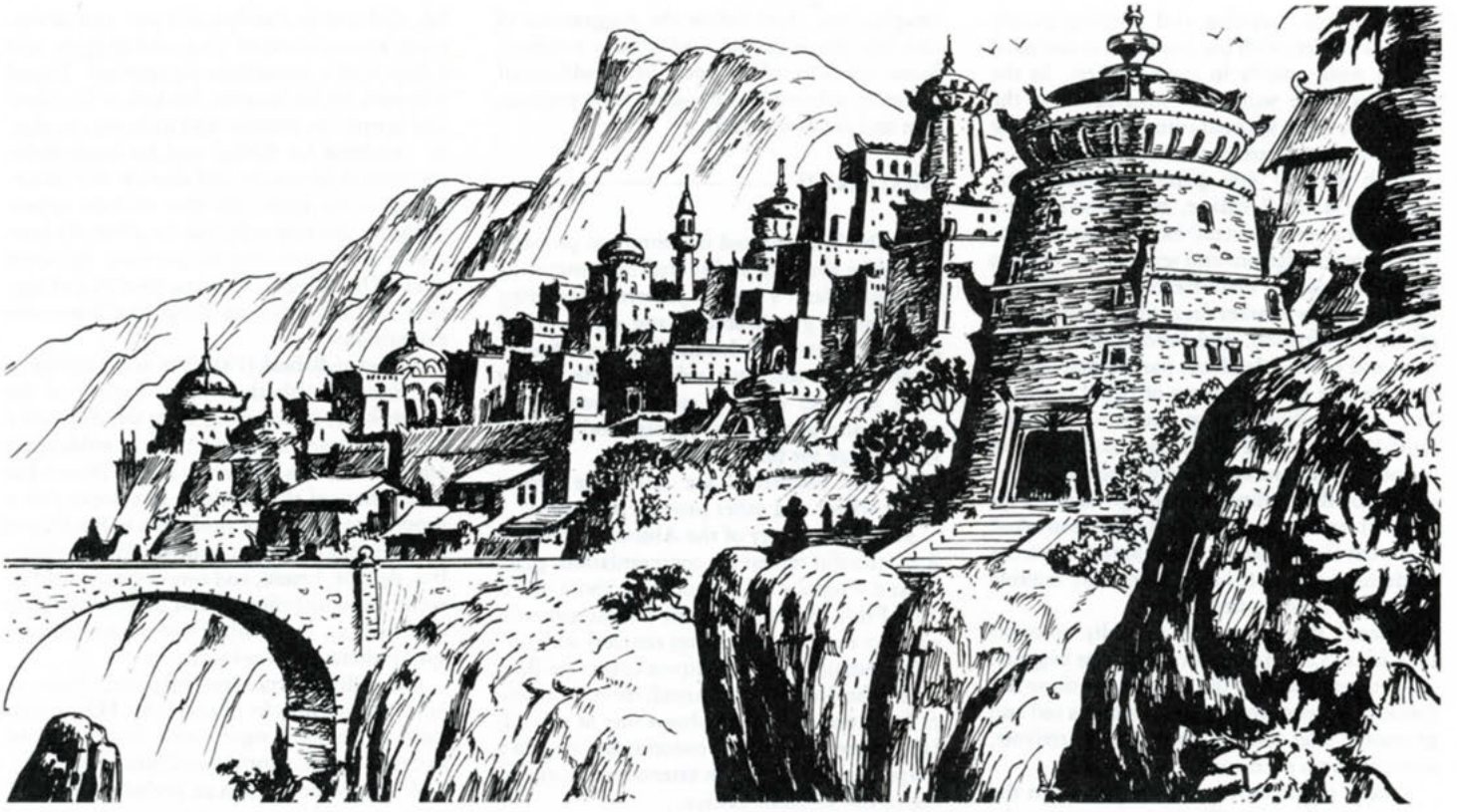
Nizam al-Babrak (F8), faris in the service of the Emir of Abbashan and a Knight of the Desert Rose, is recovering from the effects of a disease/curse incurred in a wilderness encounter with a sorcerer or efreet. Nizam has no memory of the incident, but hopes that a prophet or cleric may guide him to his destiny in facing his unknown nemesis. He is humorless, devout, heroic, and contemptuous of foreigners and unbelievers, but he will follow his destiny (i.e., the guidance of a *know destiny* spell) wherever it leads him.

Other devout travelers, pilgrims, clerics, or holy warriors may be placed here. PCs on missions of spiritual significance might also be directed here for shelter and information.

4. The Barber (M3) is an herbalist, surgeon, scholar, astrologer, sorcerer, storyteller, moral philosopher, barber, and insufferable bore. The old man is really a remarkable character (S5, I18, W18, D12, C14, Ch15, storytelling rating 54), but he drives everyone crazy with his incessant chatter, irrelevant digressions, and sententious advice. The Barber is a reliable source of information on many subjects, but the cost is high; one pays for a haircut, then must put up with his discursive style, hoping the Barber will eventually get around to saying something useful. Someday. PCs in a hurry are out of luck.

5. The Hospice of Habib-ibn-Ruhollah is a large two-story inn with stable, smithy, and armory. The staff is exceedingly competent, from cooks and domestics to skilled animal handler, smith, and armorer. They are well-paid, but not necessarily content, for Habib is a mercurial tyrant, one minute sweetness and light, the next a furious apoplectic. These may be improvised as "kids-who-want-to-join-the-circus" if a PC party is in need of NM or F1 retainers. The wealthy nobles and merchants stay here when in Kirkuk because of the superior, if exorbitant, services.

6. Traveler's Rest is a modest two-story inn with stable and smithy. Tahir al-Farouk, the innkeeper, and his staff are even-tempered, reliable, and unexceptional; the prices are modest. Tahir's is a budget traveler's best buy.



The common and middle-class of Kirkuk gather here in the evenings for the good coffee, sweet pastries, and gossip, and during summer encampment nomads with coin may come here to see how the settled folk live. This is a good place to look for local guides or laborers.

7. The Merchanter's Caravansary was built 50 years ago by the Merchanter's Guild and is one of the newest buildings in the village. The manager, Malud al-Aman, and his undistinguished staff are from larger, cosmopolitan towns, and they keep apart from the provincial villagers. The inn, warehouse, outfitter, stable, and smithy are over-priced and mediocre in quality, but they give travelers little to complain about.

Beggars consider this prime territory for soliciting charity from pilgrims and merchants. Malud uses curses and beatings to discourage them, but with little effect.

8. The Rubble is a ruined Thyatian fort, built c.500, and destroyed in 829 by Al-Kalim. The twin watchtowers still stand, but the upper levels of the fort have collapsed, only the outer shell remains. Villagers have scavenged stone from the fort and the ruined outer wall of the village to build their own dwellings. The outer wall is broken in several places and dilapidated in others.

The dungeons beneath the fort have not been entered since the structure collapsed in the sixth century. Who knows what wonders and horrors they may contain.

The Village Beggars: The Ruins provides shelter for the village beggars. Whenever caravans or travelers appear in town, the beggars deploy in full strength, first at the village gate, then at the caravansary and inns, politely pestering visitors for alms.

Beggars

Their standard cry, "Alms? Alms to the glory of the Immortals?" may be heard in all urban and village settlements. Encouraged by Al-Kalim's exhortation to charity, Ylari beggars do not suffer so much as the indigent of other countries. Beggars range from righteous and principled victims of fate— cripples, blind men, lepers, paupers, indigent children and old folk without family to support them—to shiftless malingerers, con men, and thieves.

Some beggars are pretty surly, biting each coin to see if it's real, or disdainfully returning a coin if it seems too meager a gift for one of high station. ("Oh, don't let me trouble your treasury, lofty prince...") Bystanders enjoy seeing the mighty mocked by the destitute, and will often protect a saucy beggar.

Sometimes the crowd likes to see someone deliver a lecture to shiftless vagrants, and beating an impenitent lout is approved behavior. On the other hand, if your lecture and beating is injust, the crowd is likely to turn on the lecturer.

Beggars are often scheming thieves and spies in disguise; if you see the same beggar in two different places, perhaps he is following you for some nefarious purpose. Beggars are also often prophets and storytellers.

Beggars may be helpful local informants in return for a small donation; if offered respect and hospitality, they may become loyal friends. Befriending a beggar may earn the scorn of nobles and middle-class types, but devout people of all classes approve of such generous behavior. On the other hand, befriending the wrong sort of beggar provides a flattering, useless dependent, a sneak thief, or a well-placed enemy spy.

Beggars are usually similar to T1-T2 with or without thieving abilities. Some have leather armor; most have daggers.

Bechir the Leper is the ranking beggar of Kirkuk. As such he looks out for the welfare of his comrades. Bechir knows the shady side of Kirkuk, and can aid the PCs if they are generous and respectful.

Bechir is an ugly cripple with withered legs, rotted toes and fingers, and a collapsed nose. Often found near the caravansary in his tattered rags, he lives in the Ruins with his companions. Formerly a soldier, he knows the surrounding region well, is alert, and knows everything that goes on in town. He has a keen eye for piercing the disguise of PCs or NPCs.

A proud man, Bechir only accepts enough charity to keep him alive. If PCs convince him that his information is valuable (which it is), he willingly accepts lots of money and gives excellent rumors of local wealth and banditry. He knows the real identities of Buzurg the Whiner and Abu the Horse Trader and about their connection to Yasir al-Achmed the brigand chief. Bechir will not casually betray them, out of fear for his own safety, and because they are quite generous to him. (The superstitious Yasir believes Bechir is a good luck charm.)

Blind Mussa is another well-known beggar frequently found around the caravansary. He has lost his wits and memory. A nomad found him wandering naked and badly burned in the desert and brought him to Khamil-ibn-Ravi to be healed, but Mussa proved beyond Khamil's aid. Mussa babbles incoherently and shambles about, but Bechir and the other beggars look out for him, soliciting alms on his behalf. Now and then Mussa falls into a trance and delivers prophecies or warnings from the Immortals (as the *know destiny* spell) in perfectly lucid Alasiyan.

The villagers and religious scholars consider him Blessed by the Immortals with second sight, and therefore a holy man. Malud and the staff of the caravansary consider him a nuisance and eyesore. In truth, Mussa is babbling in the tongue of the Plane of Elemental Fire. He was a 20th level cleric who offended a Pasha during a quest to the Plane of Fire; needless to say, his quest was not successful.

Blind Mussa says whatever the Immortals (you, DM) want him to say. His oracular pronouncements may be verse riddles, ambiguous directions, or clear warnings, according to the mood of the adventure.

Buzurg the Whiner is ostensibly a shabby beggar with a lung disease and a racking cough. He arrived in Kirkuk several years ago as a laborer in a caravan, and was cast off by his employer.

In fact he is a spy/thief/thug for local brigands/bandits/Magians/Alphatians (according to your campaign). When he isn't hanging around listening for gossip, he is sneaking along rooftops and alleys to listen at windows. So far no other beggar has penetrated his disguise; he is accepted as one of them.

9. Brick and Stone is the home and workshop of Khader al-Ghami the mason. Khader and his three sons are also competent engineers; their skills may be turned to excavation or mining when necessary. The family charges 100 dinar per week for their services; they are among the wealthiest citizens of Kirkuk, and can generally make their own terms for schedules and working conditions. Khader will not hurry, he will not do slipshod work, nor will he interrupt his schedule, even for a premium price.

10. Emirate Offices are where The Vouceries of Taxation, Water, and the Provinces maintain offices, each with a minor official and several clerks.

The Provincial Secretary Mustapha-ibn-Ibrahim (F15), a colorful and popular figure, is usually in the field and seldom available. However, when he's in town, he is soliciting adventurers for hire at the caravansary, inns, or nomad tribal encampments.

Mustapha is a middle-aged, handsome, well-connected Alasiyan noble. Mustapha's father sits on the Council of Preceptors in Ylaruam, his uncle is Grand Vizier of this emirate, and various other relatives are scattered throughout the bureaucracy of the Emirates.

In his youth Mustapha sailed with his grandfather, a sea trader, and visited many ports in the D&D® World. His knowledge of foreign languages and cultures earned him a post in the staff of a noted Ylari diplomat, serving at the Emperor's Court at Thyatis and at the Duke's Court at Specularum. Mustapha unwisely became involved with the wife of a baron of the Duke's Court. The duel resulted in the baron's death and Mustapha's return home in disgrace.

After his return to the Emirates, Mustapha was modestly successful in a number of vocations such as caravan guide, treasure hunter, and foreign affairs advisor to the Council of Precepts. Two years ago he was appointed Secretary for the administrative province which includes the wilderness area near Kirkuk.

Mustapha is quite a romantic figure, gone for months at a time into the wilderness, admired and respected by nomad and settled chieftains, a superb horseman, and quite the ladies' man. His major fault is doing the flamboyant and romantic thing when the practical and sensible thing would be wiser.

The Secretary is the logical NPC to organize and motivate expeditions for low-level NPCs into the wilderness. He also may provide information and support for mid- and high-level characters on business that concerns the government or public welfare.

Murad the Makistani (F8) is Mustapha's cheerful and profane Provincial Mufti (police chief). Occasionally Murad is in the outlands or accompanying Mustapha; otherwise he is at the office struggling with paperwork or visiting the caravansary and inns to check out the travelers, coffee, and gossip.

Murad served in the army for several years, eventually becoming captain of his unit. When he mustered out he joined a group of treasure hunters; he met Mustapha there, and they have been together ever since. Murad is 10 years younger than Mustapha, and considerably less experienced and sophisticated, but Mustapha is schooling Murad in foreign languages and cultures. Someday Murad hopes to travel and adventure with Mustapha in distant lands.

Murad has a broad and childish sense of humor, like many Makistani. With his social superiors he is comically stiff and formal, straining to project a sophisticated and polished appearance, and speaking in ludicrously elevated diction. With peers and the lower classes he is jovial, reckless, free-wheeling, and much too informal for most Alasiyan tastes.

The Taxation official, **Nizam al-Hosni**, carefully examines all products moving through Kirkuk and serves as muhtasib (inspector of markets and trade) for the district. He is persistent and humorless in enforcing trade standards and regulations, and if you get on his bad side, he can always find some excuse to harass you.

The Water official, **Idris al-Khamil**, is a well-intentioned, energetic source of misinformation. He is fascinated by the so-called "Curse of the Well," and will share many fantastic and implausible theories concerning its nature and origin. One of these theories just happens to be true, no thanks to Idris's research or critical faculties. *Idris can provide red herrings to distract and confuse PCs investigating the grotto. Without his permission, tampering with the well is a serious crime. Even with his permission, it will offend devout villagers and holy men.*

11. The Village Suq (market) is an array of 30 wooden stalls with wooden frames and tent shelters. The market is open once a week in the winter and spring and twice a week during the summer and fall. The following merchants, tradesmen, and craftsmen have regular stalls here:

5 agricultural vendors (fruits, vegetables, grain, etc.)

3 milk and cheese vendors

3 livestock vendors and butchers

4 food vendors (a baker, a fast food stand,

and two coffee and tea vendors)
2 coppersmiths
4 potters
1 weaver
2 leather workers
2 camel traders
2 horse traders
1 dwarven artificer and weaponsmith

One-quarter of these vendors and merchants live in the village; the others live in the region or travel from village to village selling at other markets. The last three, the horse traders and the dwarven artificer, live in the village.

Said the Horse Trader is an expert in horses and often has "superior" and "superb" Alasiyan steeds. Said also has an excellent relationship with the nomad tribal qadis, the source for his superior horses. He may be able to help PCs find the nomad tribes when they are not encamped at the village, or may offer to introduce them if he likes their looks, and if they are good customers.

Alasiyan Steeds

Fine Alasiyan steeds are among the swiftest horses in the world. They are also among the most inbred and delicate of their race, expensive, temperamental, and prone to disabling injuries.

Alasiyan steeds are as normal riding horses (Expert Rulebook, page 51) except for the following:

Class of Steed	Move in feet	Cost in Dinars	Chance of Serious Defect on 1d6
Nag	180′ (60′)	25-50	1-2
Poor	210′ (70′)	50-75	1
Normal	240′ (80′)	50-100	0
Superior	270′ (90′)	100-300	1
Superb	300′ (100′)	300-500	1-3

Unscrupulous horse traders might try to sell an inexperienced fool a normal horse for a superior or superb price. Determining the quality of a horse cannot be done by racing, or by any other simple test, because a horse cannot (or will not) do its best until it knows its master well. To accurately guess the quality of a horse, secretly roll 3d6.

3d6 Result	Character Judgment
equal to or less than the riding rating	class of horse is accurately judged
1 to 6 points greater than the riding rating	horse is believed to be one class better or worse than it is*
more than 6 points greater than the riding rating	horse is believed to be two classes better or worse than it is*

* If 3d6 result is odd, the horse is believed more valuable than it is. If 3d6 result is even, the horse is believed less valuable than it is.

Further, Alasiyan steeds have a chance of a serious defect that may not be detectable at the time of purchase. Characters have their riding roll as a percentage to discover such a serious defect before purchasing. If they roll d100 equal to or less than their riding rolls, roll 1d6 openly to determine whether the horse has a serious defect. If the d100 roll is greater than the riding rating, roll 1d6 secretly to determine whether there is a serious defect.

The serious defect may be weak bones (the horse breaks a leg and must be destroyed), a tendency to lameness (cannot be ridden when lame), or unreliable temperament (won't obey; likely to buck, run away, or refuse to move). The defect may be discovered out of play, or during a critical game event, at the DM's discretion.

Abu the Horse Trader (nickname, Horse Face) is a homely soul who buys and sells average to poor horses for low prices, but you get what you pay for. Abu also sells odds and ends to other merchants and vendors.

Abu gets his horses and odds and ends from bandits and brigands. Abu is the fence for several organized groups of raiders and thieves working in the region. He is not very crafty or successful, but it is the only work he knows.

He hasn't been caught as a fence because most lower class villagers suspect that the goods are stolen, but they pretend ignorance to spare their consciences and pocketbooks. More prosperous villagers disdain and mock Abu, and the mufti Murad is an adventurer and man of action, and a poor detective.

PCs tracing the village connections of the brigands will find Abu an easier mark than Buzurg, the beggar/spy. Following him or tracing his goods reveals his trafficking with bandits. Abu doesn't visit the bandit camps, but PCs could tail a bandit from a rendezvous with Abu back to the camp.

Hannarr the Dwarf (D14) has lived in the Emirates for 80 years, 60 of them in Kirkuk. Only a few (the prayer leaders at the sanctuary) know his story.

Hannarr was forced to leave his clan in Rockhome because of a feud with his clan leader, who stole his girl and publicly humiliated him. His pride and self-confidence shattered, Hannarr abandoned Rockhome and left to wander the world. After 20 years of adventuring throughout the world, Hannarr was killed by a poisonous giant serpent, and raised by an itinerant of the Eternal Truth. Hannarr, deeply shaken by the incident, became a True Believer.

For the last 60 years Hannarr has remained in this village, studying the words of Al-Kalim and searching for the Eternal Truth. He has not gone adventuring, contenting himself with his crafts (superb weapon and metalsmithing) and his studies. The villagers know him as taciturn and gruff. The prayer leaders of the sanctuary know him as a slow but diligent and questioning scholar; Hannarr is a frequent guest for feasts and learned discourse at the zawiya.

Hannarr is a potential resource in defense of the village against bandits or monsters. He is widely traveled and speaks Alasiyani, Thyatian, Makistani, and a smattering of the other languages of the D&D® world. Clerics at the sanctuary will refer foreigners to Hannarr for translation and culture shock problems. Hannarr might also be convinced to join a righteous party or quest; perhaps he is restless, or feels a call to crusade, or wonders what happened in Rockhome since he left.

Bayt Saddam is the modest palace and residence of the local chief, qadi Ramman al-Saddam of the Wahibah tribe. Many villagers and most farmers on the surrounding lands are of the Wahibah tribe, and the emir has certified Ramman and his father before him as the chief of this village and environs. Further, Ramman's family owns much of the land nearby and is quite wealthy, so his authority her is unquestioned.

The lower floors of Bayt Saddam are quarters for the domestics and retainers, kitchens, and storage areas. The upper floors contain the formal reception hall (where Ramman holds court), the guest reception chamber, with its hearth for the coffee ceremony, and guest rooms and living quarters for the al-Saddam family. All the upstairs rooms are richly decorated, but Bayt Saddam is locally famous for the carved teak decorative screens throughout, featuring inscriptions from the Nahmeh and fanciful geometric designs.

Noble and prominent travelers may expect an invitation to dine and share the hospitality of Bayt Saddam if Ramman is informed of

their presence. For such events other prominent citizens and visitors may be invited to share a feast—Khamil-ibn-Ravi, Kahder al-Ghami, Mustapha-ibn-Ibrahim, Hannarr the Dwarf, Murad the Makistani, Daood the Wide, Nizam al-Babrak, or any other important visitors.

Residents of Bayt Saddam
Ramman al-Saddam (F16)
Muammar al-Saddam (F13; brother of Ramman)
Muktar al-Saddam (F10; brother of Ramman)
Djamal al-Ramman (F4; son of Ramman)
Bodyguard (F12; 4 F8)
Retainers (2 F6; 10 F3)

A feast at Bayt Saddam is an opportunity to practice honor challenges and to pick up information and allies.

13. The Well of the Faithful Prophet is a flooded cave. Many centuries ago a spring burst into the cave and flooded the subterranean passage.

Humans who drink the water frequently (save vs. poison) contract a mysterious disease that causes weakness, paralysis, then death within a week. Animals are not affected. The source of the taint is unknown. Experts speculate that it is a natural metallic poisoning that effects the more sensitive human brain, or a powerful curse of some kind, or the result of some subterranean subsidence. To solve this problem, two great cisterns were built, and the local clerics *purify water* before it is used by humans.

This curse is the result of an adventurer's clandestine exploration of the cave over 100 years ago. The adventurer swam down into the well. His accomplices felt his line go taut, then suddenly slacken. They drew the rope up to find it had been severed by something very sharp. They fled, abandoning the victim to his fate, and telling no one about the event.

The adventurer awoke some Ancient Evil in the well. The well is actually a submerged lizardmen burial cave like the others, but this one has been undisturbed for centuries, and this one is where they put lizardmen rulers, mages, clerics, and noted warriors.

13A. The Caves are the ancient burial grounds of the race of lizardmen. The graves themselves are long since despoiled by grave robbers. All that remains are thousands of scattered bones (popular souvenirs), shattered bits of pottery, and enigmatic cave drawings and inscriptions. These inscriptions have defied interpretation.

A close inspection of the bones reveals human remains mixed among the peculiar lizardman bones. Further, the human bones often show signs of trauma, and many lizardman bones appear to have been shattered, perhaps in a frenzy of destruction by grave robbers. No hint remains of what was buried with the lizardmen in the pottery vessels, though local legend indicates variously that these vessels held the souls, the earthly treasure, or magical guardians of the dead lizardmen.

14. The Cisterns hold purified water from the grotto. Tampering with this water could endanger the whole village.

Desert Tribal Nomad
General Appearance: Weathered, sun-tanned skin, clean-shaven, wearing soft leather boots, white cloth trousers, long shirt, long robe, and *ghota* (Eastern-style headdress). Mount: Alasiyan steed of camel. Weapons clasped at dark leather belt. Armor, when worn, covered by robe. Embroidered trim and fine tailoring a sign of wealth. (Makistani: short stature, long black hair, wool trousers and tunic, no headdress, short bow.)
Young Warrior (F1-F2):
Abilities: S15, I12, W12, D15, C17, Ch11; AC 9 (8); F1; HP 7; MV 120' (40); #AT 1 sword (or 1 arrow, Makistani only); D 1d8+1 (or 1d6); save F1; ML 11; THACO 18 (or 18, R 50/100/150).
Gear: sword, (bow and arrows, Makistani only), food and water (on mount).

15. Camp of the Duru Tribe: The Duri tribe is a peaceful nomadic tribe of low status and little ambition. They prefer to tend their herds and live comfortably. They have no urge for glory or war. (As desert nomads, page 54 Expert DM book, but morale 7; 70 F1; 3 F2; 1 F3; 194 tribe members including women, children, and elderly men.)

16. Tent of Qadi Azeezeh ibn-Amar of the Duru: Qadi Azeezeh (normal man) is elderly and mild-tempered. He cares well for his people, and if he does tend to yield to pressure easily, it is in the interests of preserving his tribe's security. The young warriors of the tribe scorn Azeezeh's lack of courage and aggressiveness. They might be enticed by promises of adventure from PCs or the Secretary. The older warriors are cautious and have no stomach for battle, though they hold their own in games. *The Duru might be faithful and reliable allies, but not very aggressive, and inclined to withdraw without orders. They are best used as skirmishers or reserve guard.*

17. Camp of the Manahil tribe: This tribe is a more aggressive nomadic tribe of moderate status and ambition. Their herds are well-tended, but they romanticize the values of the desert warrior. (As desert nomads, page 54 Expert DM book, but morale 9; 86 F1; 21 F2; 8 F3; 4 F8; 2 F10; 315 tribe members including women, children, and old men.)

18. Tent of Qadi Mehmet al-Bechir of the Manahil: Mehmet (F15) and his warriors are fond of war games and gatherings in the chief's tent for tales of courage and valor. Mehmet fancies himself a tactical genius (a result of several successes in recent summer encampment war games), and in case of trouble would consider himself the logical war leader for all war bands. Mehmet and his warriors are troublemakers during summer encampment, always picking fights with other tribesmen and villagers and playing excessively rough and unscrupulously in contests and war games.

19. Camp of the Ujman tribe: This tribe is small and poor and of little distinction. Their herds are sparse and ill-fed, and their camp ill-kept and disorderly. They have fallen on hard times because of their unenterprising and self-indulgent leader. (As desert nomads, page 54 Expert DM book, but morale 5; 40 F1; 2 F2; 143 tribe members including women, children, and old men.)

20. Tent of Qadi Rezah al-Anouar: Rezah (F12) fancies himself a clever man, and blames the sorry state of his tribe on bad luck and gutless, stupid advisers and warriors. He openly shows his contempt for his people while bragging about his own shrewdness. All the capable young men have left the tribe. Only the unfit and family men remain, and the wisest of them stay as far from Rezah as possible.

As long a Rezah is qadi, the tribe's fortunes will continue to decline. Rezah is ripe for banditry if some bandit chieftain flatters him, and his tribe has no choice but to follow. If Rezah is out of the way, the tribe may be able to select a new leader and recover; however, Rezah is a skilled fighter, and would be hard to defeat.

If the PCs can get the emir to remove him, or can challenge and defeat Rezah in a public combat, they might be able to help the tribe.

Tent of Qadi Urabi al-Hussein: Urabi (F11) and his warriors are embodiments of the desert nomad virtues. They are noble, courageous, honorable, just, and devout. They are the logical antagonists of Mehmet and the Manahil tribe. The Manahil are impulsive and devious; the Humum are deliberate and

direct. In contests and war games the Humum play hard but fair, since honor is more important than winning, but the Manahil desire victory above all else. The Manahil are skilled at games, but the Humum have solid traditions of leadership and heroism in warfare, and are the superior warriors in real fights; many Humum warriors have +1 or +2 weapons, heirlooms of their father's fathers who fought with Al-Kalim.

The Humum and Manahil should be in constant conflict, with the PCs frequently getting caught in between. In contests they are evenly matched, since the Manahil cheat, but the PCs should want to be on the honorable side. In a real conflict, the Humum should prevail.

In honor challenges, the Humum present challenges of personal honor such as abiding by oaths, being fair in judgments and transactions, being courteous and respecting hospitality, telling stories, while the Manahil present challenges of courage and physical prowess such as physical games, combat, and tests of pride and will.

23. The Ruined Wall dates back from the Thyatian occupation, c. 500. With centuries of peace and prosperity, Kirkuk has allowed its defensive wall to deteriorate. However, in an emergency, makeshift repairs and ingenuity might make the village defensible against an army of brigands or monsters. Of the 4,000 feet of wall, about 200 feet require major repairs. A gang of dedicated villagers under the direction of Khader the Mason can repair those sections in two or three days, and with magical or engineering aid and extra labor, the time may be further reduced.

24. The Watchtower was built by the Thyatian occupation for a powerful sorcerer and his assistants. The tower fell into ruin, but was rebuilt and is currently maintained and manned by qadi Ramman. It offers a commanding view of the surrounding region, and would be an easily defended keep in case of invasion, with a well and plenty of room in the dungeons for food and refugees.

The Watchtower if a subject of many legends concerning the Thyatian sorcerer who built it. Some say he trafficked with evil spirits who still search the tower seeking their revenge on him. Some say his spirit still walks the tower. Some say that strange noises can be heard late at night in the deepest dungeons where few visit.

In fact, there are many odd things about this Watchtower. It has been studied by mages, scholars, and engineers, and has been found to have some interesting properties. First, it radiates strong magical dweomers, though some spell masks the identities of those dweomers. Second, several of the lower walls do not appear to be adequately supported. They should have collapsed, but have defied gravity. Third, some of the stones ring strangely when tapped, as though they were hollow, though magical scrutiny reveals no concealed space. Fourth, the lower dungeons are abnormally warm all year long, but especially in the winter.

Further, as yet not realized by the villagers, all babies delivered in the village on the night of the fifth full moon after the summer solstice have been born dead. On that night, agents of the sorcerer Barimoor steal the souls of those infants by means of devices, the soul daggers, given them by Barimoor's apprentices.

Barimoor struggles to accumulate sufficient magical power to enchant a device to present on support of his quest as a Paragon seeking Immortality. The harvesting of these infants' souls is essential to the ritual of enchantment.

Among the remarkable enchantments on the Watchtower:

The hollow-sounding stones are wormholes to other planes, activated by command words know only to Barimoor.

The stone-binding spells used in this tower which radiate the strong dweomer detected by magical researchers, are so powerful that dwarven engineers and Glantrian mages would caper with glee at the discovery of their properties. (This accounts for the apparently unsupported walls.)

The lower dungeons are honey-combed with tiny wormholes to the plane of Elemental Fire, the result of excessive traffic to that plane, and a sign of instability of the boundaries between planes. It could go any minute, causing unimaginable death and destruction.

Barimoor is one of the arch-villains of the Ylaruam campaign. More details about him are available later in this section.

Staging Tips for Presenting Kirkuk

Placing Kirkuk on your Campaign Map

Kirkuk is not listed on the fold-out map so you can place it according to your campaign needs. It is least appropriate in the coastal plain, the Ust-Urt Valley, or near Abbashan. Ideally it belongs on any caravan route or track in a wilderness or borderland region near the foothills of the Altan Tepes.

If your PCs are entering the Emirates from surrounding nations, place Kirkuk along their logical entry route (for example, if entering from Selenica, place Kirkuk on the road west of Parsa near the mountains). If your PCs are beginning as nomadic or rural tribal Emirates characters, Kirkuk is the nearby town where they can get their start as adventurers.

Getting the PCs Involved in Kirkuk

Give Them a List of Tasks: Whether your PCs are from the Emirates or from the outside, give them several reasons to visit Kirkuk. The ideal circumstance is one in which the PCs are hired by a patron or owe services to a lord, and their patron or lord gives them a long list of things he wants done in Kirkuk. The more motivations the PCs arrive with, the more quickly, thoroughly, and naturally the PCs will engage with the variety and interconnectedness of adventure elements in the village.

For example, instead of sending the PCs to meet one character or investigate one mystery, give the PCs a list of tasks to perform. For example, a patron might give them the following list of things to do:

* "Visit the dwarf Hannarr and see if my new mail vest is ready."

* "Visit Secretary Mustapha (or his assistant Murad). Report on the current status of the pacification programs in the outlands."

* "Visit my friend and colleague the Barber of Kirkuk, a wise and learned man. Engage him to visit the famed caves and bring me back a few choice relics for my museum."

* There is a horse trader, Said. Buy me a good stallion, and get Said to introduce you to one or two nomad chiefs. Get the news from them concerning conflicts among the tribes."

* "Take this letter of introduction to my kinsman Ramman al-Saddam, chief of the village. Send my regards and these gifts, and obtain his permission to visit the mysterious Watchtower. See if you can make any sense out of the magical reputation of that place."

* "There is a man they call Daood the Wide. My contacts say seek after him in Kirkuk, where he may be staying with his friend Khamil. He owes me a favor, and I would have him repay it. Give him this sealed message. If he agrees, follow his directions as though he were your lord." (The sealed message involves a jaunt to a mountain ruin in search of an ancient treasure).

With a list of tasks like this, the PCs will quickly become involved in the rich interweavings of character and plot available in the village. They may also choose those activities that interest them the most, and if they grow weary of the setting, you can always find some excuse to interrupt their manifest of orders with an urgent note by messenger from their patron.

Contest Challenges: Another way to get PCs involved is to have NPCs challenge them

to contests. PCs have a way of dressing like adventurers, and wherever they go, competitive and energetic nomads and villagers will challenge them to contests of skill (riding, wrestling, archery, footraces, etc.) or try to engage them for tournaments and mock wars. The challenges may be friendly and good-natured, cheerfully and fairly contested, and followed up with hospitality, boasting, and sharing the news. Or the challenges may be mean-spirited; the challengers may be prejudiced and have contempt for foreigners, or be looking to enhance their reputations by humiliating the PCs.

Requests of Local NPCs: PCs may be maneuvered into honoring the requests of local NPCs on grounds of religious or political obligation, honor, or sentimental sympathy, particularly if the PCs previously have accepted aid or hospitality from the NPCs. For example, the Faithful may be obligated to honor requests of the prayer leaders or Daood. Faris or other characters with religious or political obligations to keep the laws of the land may be obligated to aid the Secretary or the mufti in settling local disputes or crimes. And if the PCs accept invitations as the qadi's guests, they may be obligated to return the favor in some way convenient to the qadi's needs. Finally, any tribal or family obligation you can cook up may also be binding on the PCs.

Tossed Into the Middle of the Action: Sometimes the PCs are in the wrong place at the wrong time. Perhaps they witness the murder of a harmless beggar who later turns out to not have been so harmless. Perhaps they come upon a victim in need of aid—a merchant attacked by thieves, or a child whose father has been humiliated by the bully Manahil nomads. Perhaps they accept the hospitality of a man and discover they are caught in a crossfire between feuding families. Perhaps their host or ally is suddenly threatened by assassins or mysterious magical assailants. Perhaps hordes of brigands are seen riding toward the town. Or lizardman zombies come pouring out of the grotto. Or Barimoor's agents stalk the town in search of souls. Dump the PCs into a situation that demands immediate action, and they may find themselves dealing with the consequences of their responses for weeks.

Prophets and Seers: Another cheap trick is to have some NPCs deliver a PC's doom in a dramatic mystical trance. The *know destiny* spell is made to order for this sort of PC coercion, and devout characters are obligated to honor inspired prophecy or lose respect. Mussa the blind beggar is a good vehicle for oracular pronouncements. "Prepare to meet thy doom! At the twelfth hour of the new moon, thou must face the Darkness or be lost forever beyond the Fire." (Translation: Some terrible sending is coming to drag you off to the Plane of Elemental Fire; be ready for it, or you're a goner.) Mystic signs are also a lot of fun, such as colorful snakes curled up in your bag, strange dreams, blinding trances, mysterious figures beckoning, then disappearing, and so on.

Expeditions Hiring: Kirkuk is the last before the wilderness for many mining and scholarly expeditions; they may be hiring. A group of greenhorns may arrive by caravan and prepare to set out for the desert completely unprepared; kindly PCs may offer to accompany them for a sizable fee. The Secretary always has little missions to scout or scotch monsters or investigate mysterious rumors or rescue missing scholars, while the mufti is much concerned about local bandits and brigands. The vengeful soldier is often looking for men to support him in his feud with the man who slew his brother.

Deluge Them with Information: While the players are engaged in the current adventure, tantalize them with rumors and incidental mentions of other possible adventures. By the time they finish the current adventure, they're already doing research and pestering you for details on the next adventure.

For example, the PCs are busily engaged in Adventure A. All during Adventure A they hear various tidbits about Potential Adventures B-Z as irrelevant asides and incidental comments from local NPCs. While they're wrapping up Adventure A, they'll be puzzling over the riddle of Adventure G, or marveling at the magical potential of Adventure R, or worrying about whether they'll get maneuvered into accepting Adventure X as a holy quest and obligation of honor, or wondering if they can believe what the old man said about Adventure Z.

Staging Common Situations

Entering the Village: The arrival of a caravan or group of travelers is a big event for children, beggars, merchants, and hostelers, and of moderate interest for other villagers and nomads. The travelers first encounter the swarms of children, most eagerly soliciting a coin or small gift. Some older children are more businesslike; they are soliciting the travelers' patronage at one of the village inns:

"Come stay at Habib's! The finest of everything! The best food! Clean beds! Fine rooms!"

"Come stay at Tahir's! Good and cheap! Good company, good food, no fuss!"

"The caravansary is most convenient, good sirs, and staffed by the best men from the Merchanter's Guild. You are from the Merchanter's Guild, sir? A fine discount for Merchanters. . ."

For a coin these lads are effusive if unreliable informants.

The town's beggars also arrive to size up the prospects. The obviously well-to-do are immediately rushed. "Alms! Alms for the poor! Alms for the unfortunate Faithful!" Less prosperous travelers require a more subtle approach. The beggars wait until the evening, after they've eaten and rested, and are out or a walk in the cool air.

Spies for the local bandits and brigands also inspect the travelers, looking for profitable victims. Local thieves may risk a burglary or mugging if a subject wears jewels or carries valuable weapons, but normally bandits prefer the uninterrupted solitude of the desert for their work.

Seeking Lodgings: Caravans normally stop at the caravansary where there are storage facilities for goods, and where merchants generally stay for conversation and haggling. The caravansary is staffed by outsiders, and local villagers seldom visit. This arrangement may be preferred by less adventurous travelers.

Some caravan staff and most other travelers prefer the local inns. Here you may meet the local people and savor more of the flavor of the provinces. The Hospice is actually quite luxurious, and the food and service is excellent. The well-to-do and noble, accustomed to excellence and able to afford it, always prefer this inn. The Traveler's Rest is more informal and lively.

The local inns are likely places to encounter the important NPCs of the village. Murad, Mustapha, Daood, Abu, and other less proper locals frequent the Traveler's Rest. Hannarr is found here from time to time, sitting in a corner by himself, and tribal nomads visit here during the encampments. NPCs more concerned about their status and appearance such as the Barber, Nizam (the faris), Idris, Nizam (the tax official), and Said, are to be found at the Hospice.

Beggar Encounters: Beggars only occasionally will have a major part in an adventure, but they may regularly test the patience and charity of the NPCs in minor honor challenges that develop the PCs' characters. Every time the PCs make their way through the streets of the village they may be followed by a group of beggars. If the PCs give too much or too little, the beggars will despise and taunt them; there is little honor in chastising a beggar (though it may be proper enough if the beggar is too offensive), and the PCs may eventually get

quite desperate to rid themselves of these nuisances. On the other hand, the amount of the charity is not as important as the respect and kindness shown in the giving. PCs who pause to talk with the beggars and show interest and compassion for their fates need not give more than a coin or two, and as time passes, the beggars may become allies and friends, bringing the PCs useful rumors or offering to perform small services.

Kid Encounters: In a dungeon, children would be classed as "nuisance monsters" like green slime, ochre jelly, and giant rats. They don't hurt you much, but they are annoying and humiliating when they get the best of you. Most children have chores to do during the day, but the most obnoxious always seem to be running around pestering or tormenting player characters. They always want to play with the weapons, look in the bags, follow them on secret missions, go for rides on their horses, have the mage do tricks for them, have stories told, get tossed in the air, play "Hack the Dragon," or do something else playful and distracting.

Dealing with children is tricky. There is no honor in bashing an annoying child, and the villagers certainly take a dim view of it. The PCs have to be pleasant or clever enough to earn the children's respect and affection, but firm enough to keep them out from underfoot.

Like beggars, children can be useful if befriended. They know what goes on in the village, and can go where adults can't, and they have investigated some of the things that adults do not fool with.

Eating Out in Kirkuk: Most meals must be taken at the inns or caravansary. In fantasy literature and role-playing games the tavern is a traditional place to introduce the main characters to the informants, allies, and villains who figure in later episodes.

The first contact is likely to be with the innkeeper and his staff, who are paid to be helpful and cordial to guests. If the PCs need information, services, or a specific villager, the innkeeper, stable boy, servants, and other domestic help can tell PCs where to look, and if certain useful NPCs happen to be present for a meal, coffee, or socializing, the help may be willing to make introductions.

"Yes, the Caves," said Habib. "Quite mysterious places, and very popular with travelers. If you'd like to know more about them, you should speak with our barber, a most learned man, a scholar of alchemy, astrology, white magic, grammar, rhetoric, arithmetic, and the laws and traditions of the Eternal Truth."

NPCs may also take the initiative, either approaching the PC politely with an invitation to shared coffee and gossip . . .

"Pardon, but I can't help but notice you gentlemen are from...let me guess... hmm...yes! Karameikos, I'll warrant. Am I right? Excuse my effrontery, but would you be so kind as to join me for a cup of tea and tell me of that land? I take every opportunity to learn about the lives of folk from foreign lands."

. . . or in a challenging or aggressive manner:

"Look, Chukri! More foreign dogs dressed as gentlemen! How remarkable! My, I wonder if they can also speak like real men . . ."

Those who have business with the PCs make their initial contacts in the eating rooms, at least until a more private place is available.

Eating rooms are also good scenes for minor encounters which test PC judgment and honor. Often other important NPCs are present, and their future dealings will be affected by the impression the PCs make in the eating room.

For example, an Abbashani pilgrim insults a PC. The insult should not be overlooked, but public brawling is improper and inconsiderate of the innkeeper's property and the comfort of his patrons. If the insulting party is clearly dangerous, it is a test of courage to stand up to him, even against unfair odds; honorable patrons may take the side of a brave and honorable PC. Wit and trickery are also admired. If the PCs can turn the tables on the insulter and mock him with delicate and subtle style, the story will have spread throughout the village by the next morning.

On the other hand, if the PCs handle themselves poorly, they will have to overcome their first impression in later dealings with villagers.

Formal Invitations to Feast and Hospitality: PCs obtaining invitations to feast with the village or tribal chiefs, the prayer leaders, or with other prominent residents should be familiar with the important social rituals as described in *Law and Custom*. Here wit, proper deference, eloquence, and able storytelling may win the PCs respect and aid from NPCs. A clumsy performance may mark the PCs as boors and fools, and endanger their chances of getting important information or support, or at least make it much more expensive.

For example, here is a sample plan charting the honor challenges a PC party might face when summoned to Bayt Saddam for a feast:

Feast at Bayt Saddam

Subtract 10 XP each time business is discussed before step 9 (improper haste).

1. Host greets guests. Add 5 XP if PCs respond to traditional greeting properly in Alasiyan.

2. Host gives small gift to guests. Add 5 XP if PCs have an appropriate gift, no award if no gift, subtract 20 XP if PCs' gift is too excessive, belittling generosity of host.

3. Host takes guests to reception room and offers coffee. Subtract 50 XP if PCs show ignorance of religious custom. Add 10 XP if PCs silently sip coffee, savor it, praise it moderately, then thank their host, Al-Kalim, and the Immortals.

4. Sharing the news. The host opens with local gossip. Add 10 XP if PCs respond in kind. Add 50 XP if PCs have news of special interest to the host.

5. Polite Conversation. The host praises the guests' patrons, manners, and reputation. Add 10 XP if praise matches host's; no award if praise is clumsy or excessive. Add 25 XP if praise shows poetic wit and erudition. Add 5 XP for quote from Al-Kalim or flowery and appropriate verse.

6. The Feast. Add 5 XP for moderate praise of food.

7. Retreat to Music Room. Host bids musicians play and dancers dance. Add 5 XP for polite attention and proper praise.

8. Storytelling. Host tells story (check storytelling score). PCs may each tell a story. Add 25 XP if story is interesting or better. Add 25 XP if story subtly reflects PCs' business. Add 25 XP if the story is better than the chief's.

9. Retire to veranda. Business may be discussed.

Contests, Tournaments, and Mock Wars: The Ylari are a warlike and competitive people. Al-Kalim's injunction against attacking another of the Faith has forced the culture to channel its aggressive tendencies into contests, tournaments, and mock wars.

Anyone that claims the status associated with a title, ability, or achievement is obligated to defend that status when challenged by a peer to a contest. Anyone who claims to be a fighter or horseman must be ready to prove it. Anyone who claims to be a wizard must demonstrate his competence.

One is not obligated to respond to a challenge unless the challenger is worthy— one's equal or better. A novice mage is not entitled to question the ability of a veteran, but if the veteran is challenged by his equal or by a master mage, he is honor bound to respond. A challenge may be deferred to a later date if circumstances are inconvenient or unfair. For example, it may be deferred if the challenged one is injured, or on urgent business, or if the conditions of the challenge are inequitable,

malicious, or present a chance of serious injury. Refusing to meet a fair challenge results in a loss of status and a loss of XP equal to 1/100 or less of the differential between current level XP and next level XP.

An unreasonable chance of serious injury is relative to local standards. Among desert nomads, serious injury or death are not uncommon, even in friendly competitions. In rural and urban societies, it is considered foolhardy, not courageous, to engage in lethal contests. Also, in grudge or personal honor disputes, mortal violence is officially disapproved, but morally acceptable.

Most contests are amicable affairs among friends, acquaintances, and respected strangers. Some mean-spirited men use contests as a way to boost their own status at the expense of weaker or less-experienced victims. Society is ambivalent concerning these men, admiring their prowess but despising their personalities. Unfortunately, bullies and louts tend to group together and reinforce one another's unpleasant habits.

Typical informal, impromptu contests include horse riding stunts, horse races, foot races, swordsmanship (to first blood, or with blunted weapons), archery, wrestling, jousting, wall climbing, magical showmanship, spell duels, storytelling, lifting weights, and juggling.

Tournaments involve the same sort of contests, but the events are organized by the sponsor of the tournament. Tournaments also include team competitions, like relay races and polo. Some tournaments are standard holiday events sponsored by the Military Orders, the guilds, or other public group. Some tournaments are organized by rulers and nobles to celebrate a great occasion, such as a marriage, land grant, or sudden and fortunate wealth. Other tournaments are held for practical purposes, such as the Examination Tournaments for the Military Religious Orders or the Magician's Guild. The Tournament Rules, Companion DM book, pages 6-7, can be adapted for these tournaments.

Mock wars may be part of an official tournament or, more often, a traditional feature of holiday celebrations at nomad tribal encampments. The mock war originated among the nomads, and is based on the ancient but currently-proscribed practice of herd-raiding. Now groups of warriors and mages fight with blunted weapons, dummy arrows, and nonlethal spells for a variety of objectives. Some mock wars involve stealing livestock from a guarded herd, some try to capture the opposite tribe's token while defending their own. One popular variant has two or more tribes on horse- or camelback lined up at opposite ends of a large territory. In the center is a single, man-sized dummy. The object is to dash out, locate the dummy, grab it, and return to the starting line before the members of other tribe find it, and you, and try to take it away and ride for their starting line. Such contests can go on for hours, until the participants are exhausted or too battered to continue.

In private contests, the parties often place small cash or items as wagers on themselves, leaving the victorious contestant with a prize. For tournaments and mock wars, the sponsors offer more generous awards of coins and treasure.

Important NPCs

Allies:

These characters are routinely sympathetic to the PC. They can provide support and information, and when the PCs get in trouble, these are the likely rescuers.

Murad: As mufti, cheerful Murad has plenty of excuses to pry into PC business. Also, as a Makistani, he is sensitive and sympathetic to the prejudices shown against foreigners, and he helps ignorant visitors avoid the most damaging social gaffes.

Mustapha: As Secretary of the Province, Mustapha is constantly seeking dedicated adventurers at low pay for one mission or another. He is eager to do the PCs a favor, though he expects the favor returned when the Secretary has some tough assignments to handle.

Daood: Fat and complacent Daood is scorned by those countrymen who revere martial prowess, physical fitness, and reckless courage. As a result, he often finds his companions among foreigners (like most PCs). Daood is a tough campaigner unappreciated by his peers; the greater respect and companionship the PCs offer, the more dedicated a friend he becomes.

The Barber: The Barber is everybody's ally. He'd be friends with Orcus, as long as Orcus let him chatter about astrology and alchemy, and put up with the Barber's long homilies on proper deference to elders. Advice is free and abundant from the Barber; if the PCs can get a word in edgewise, and present a compelling case, the Barber may even offer his magical services.

Neutrals:

These characters should initially be reserved and wary, presenting the PCs with challenges and observing their responses. If the PCs prove themselves worthy, these characters may become allies or at least well-disposed neutrals. If the PCs are clumsy, mean-spirited, or dishonorable, these NPCs may withhold their aid and information, or actually work against the PCs.

Hannarr: A tough, experienced dwarven fighter is always an asset, and as a foreigner long-adapted to Ylari life and customs, he can help foreign PCs. Hannarr is very private, however, and unlikely to initiate a contact unless the party contains a dwarf, or they have an introduction from a cleric from the Sanctuary.

Qadi Ramman: The qadi's social rank and responsibilities prevent him from joining the PCs in adventures, but he might offer aid, support, or loyal retainers for a good cause or at the request of the emir or other high-status NPCs.

Qadi Azeezeh and the Duru: Cautious and reserved in all things, Azeezeh only aids the PCs when his tribe is threatened or when the demands of honor are inescapable.

Qadi Urabi and the Humum: Urabi and his tribe are the models of Ylari virtue and honor. However, they will not meddle in affairs that do not concern the tribe, unless Unholy enemies are involved, or unless a very strong case for Attending to the Welfare of One's Fellow Man is made by honorable and eloquent PCs.

Villagers and Tribal Warriors: They will not cooperate with the PCs without approval of their qadis. At the DM's discretion, a few villagers or warriors may be willing to leave their tribes (or get permission to leave from their chiefs) and join the PCs on a wilderness expedition as guides, laborers, or guards.

Beggars: If treated with respect and paid appropriately, they may provide information or aid in scouting or other shady capers within the village.

Khamil the Prayer Leader: Khamil reserves his and his staff's spell resources for the welfare of the villagers. However, if the village is threatened, his aid is available, *truthtelling*, *know destiny*, and various *cure* spells may be available to devout followers.

Nizam (the faris): Nizam can easily become a villain. As a member of the Abbashan faction, he hates foreign PCs, and may show them nothing but contempt. However, if the PCs' cause is just, honorable and heroic Nizam can eventually be persuaded to help, even if he personally despises the PCs.

Said (the horse trader): Said can provide the PCs with introductions to the nomad chiefs. Without an introduction, the chiefs are unlikely to welcome the PCs.

Villains:

These characters are generally enemies. Most of them are simply bad humans, not full-scale repulsively evil monsters, and at

their worst are likely to be the unwitting tools of more powerful and evil beings. The only truly evil personalities in the village are those corrupted by Barimoor, the Magian Fire Worshippers, or any other Ultimate Evils you have selected for your campaign (see *Ultimate Evils* in the Adventure section).

Qadi Mehmet and the Manahil: Unless personally of high status or achievement or agents of a high-status Ylari, the PCs will get little respect or attention from Mehmet. Generally the Manahil are nasty or mean-spirited villains, not deeply evil, but contemptible.

If the PCs are prominent and undauntable warriors, they may maneuver Mehmet into committing his and his tribe's resources by challenging their courage, prowess, and might in arms. If the PCs are of low or moderate status, the PCs are likely to be the butts of Mehmet's and his warrior's harsh pranks and haughty challenges, and in mock and real wars, the PCs face the Manahil's rough and dishonorable style of warfare.

Qadi Rezah: Whenever the PCs encounter Rezah, he swaggers and treats them with ill-disguised contempt, provoking them, but never giving them an excuse to act openly. He is a solitary villain, apparently easy to deal with, but in fact his tribesmen are honor-bound to support him, even if they detest him. The challenge will be getting rid of Rezah without having to punish his innocent and wretched tribesmen.

Nizam al-Hosni (tax official): Here the PCs are menaced by the terrible monster Bureaucracy. Nizam wants a look at the PCs' possessions. Knowing PCs, that is going to cause some conflict.

Then Nizam decides that maybe some of the PCs' possessions are imported from out of the Emirates, and that duties must be paid on them. Unless the PCs have receipts for duties paid (highly unlikely, since border guards don't generally bother searching adventurers gear), the PCs are going to have to cough up 5% of the value of their treasures.

This is not the time to fight. Nizam is the law here. Nobody likes him, but no one will tolerate arrogance toward the law. If the PCs get tough with Nizam, even friendly NPCs will hunt them down and turn them over to Ramman al-Saddam, the local magistrate.

If the PCs don't have the cash, they can probably borrow it from Daood or Hannarr, who are sympathetic to the plight of foreigners. Or they may be able to get the Secretary, the Mufti, or some other prominent PC to intercede with Nizam. Or they may be able to bluff Nizam with their political connections.

Buzurg the Whiner: By day Buzurg unobtrusively keeps track of the the PCs; by night, Buzurg is a thief and spy, sneaking into PCs' rooms and rifling possessions, looking for important documents or treasures, or any indication that the party is worth knocking over for his brigand and bandit buddies. Solitary low-level characters may be attacked. Buzburg has a few villager friends who might cooperate in some skullduggery if the price is right, and if the PCs forfeit public sentiment by being foreigners, unbelievers, proud and wealthy, or dishonorable characters.

Yasir al-Achmed of the Northern Highlands: The short, fleshy, swaggering, and fearless Yasir is chief of a band of over 130 brigands that raids the fringes of civilization in this region. The brigand's headquarters is in the rugged hills about 15 miles from Kirkuk. Yasir is from Nithia, and he has several fellow countrymen in his band such as a Magian fire-priest and his acolytes disguised as adviser and servants. Yasir's band is unique in having the support of several skilled mages. He takes great pains to keep this secret from all but his most trusted lieutenants.

Yasir is a godless and lawless man, honorable and generous with his lieutenants and band, a superb horseman, and a charismatic leader. Yasir admires fearless men, scorns devout Believers, and has a weakness for heroic tales. In his raids he is shrewd and ruthless, caring little for the lives or welfare of his victims, and is cautious (and well-advised by his Magian) where sorcery is involved.

As an enemy he is extremely dangerous. As an ally, he is reliable if he respects you, if he has given his word, if he and his men are treated generously and with respect, and if the money is good.

Yasir's Brigands: 120 F1; leather armor, shield, short bow, sword.

Yasir's Lieutenants: 6 F2, 4 F3; chain, shield, sword, lance.

Magian Sorcerers: 2 M1; 2 M3; 1 M5; 1 M9; dagger.

Yasir's Bodyguard: 3 F5; *chain +1*, shield, *sword +1*; lance.

Yasir: F 24; *chain +2, shield +1, sword +2, lance +1.*

All brigands are mounted on normal riding horses, except leaders and sorcerers, who are mounted on superior steeds, and Yasir, who is mounted on a superb steed. Yasir's brigands are otherwise as in the Expert Rulebook, page 53.

Brigands

These are outlaws with the background and skills of desert nomads, but without herds to care for. They survive by raiding other nomad tribes and village settlements. They honor the martial values and traditions of the nomads, and are excellent desert warriors, but by ignoring Al-Kalim's injunction against attacking others of the True Faith, they condemn themselves. To rationalize their banditry their chiefs declare their victims infidels on flimsy or non-existence pretexts; thus, the brigands consider themselves True Believers. Nithian brigands have generally abandoned the pretense of rectitude, and operate openly as bandits. On the other hand, brigands aligned with the Abbashani faction may be indeed very lawful, operating under covert approval of Abbashan's emir.

PCs may be attacked by brigands as natives of or visitors to nomad tribes and villages, or as travelers in caravans. The government mounts military campaigns against brigands, particularly in the Nithian emirate. In times of war, the government may solicit the aid of brigand groups as auxilliaries, raiders, or mercenaries. PCs may be sent to solicit their aid, and may have to prove their bravery and wit to win it.

Abu (Horse Face): Abu would never start trouble with the PCs, but he is an important link to the more intimidating bandits and brigands.

Barimoor's Agents: Barimoor's agents are perfectly normal villagers completely unaware that they are Barimoor's thralls. Each carries a normal looking dagger which is a standard item of dress for Ylari, but that is really an intelligent enchanted weapon. Each agent is obsessively concerned with having his dagger near him at all times, especially as he sleeps, but that is not so remarkable for a Ylari.

When Barimoor has a task for an agent, the dagger is activated by telepathic command. Each dagger contains the soul of a mage bested by Barimoor in his quest for Immortality and bound to Barimoor's will by sorcery. The soul-daggers take possession of the minds of the agents and follow Barimoor's orders. When under the enchantment of the soul-daggers, the agents are effectively possessed by the dagger's personalities, which use the magical powers of the daggers to defend the bearer and enable him to achieve his task.

The agent recalls nothing about his actions while under the soul dagger's control; for this reason, the agents are generally only activated during hours of sleep. If an agent were acti-

vated while awake, he would believe that he had passed out.

Soul Daggers: Int 15, Ego 12, Will 30
Primary Powers: Detect Magic, Detect Good, See Invisible
Extraordinary Powers: Illusion, X-Ray Vision, Teleportation
The daggers normally use these powers to permit the agents to achieve their tasks. However, the teleportation power is reserved; if the agent is in danger of being captured, the dagger teleports itself to the bottom of the Watchtower, where Barimoor sends an apprentice to retrieve it as soon as possible.

Barimoor

Barimoor is an expatriate Alphatian wizard who got tired of being just one of the hundreds of 36th level magicians in the Alphatian Empire. About eight centuries ago Barimoor secretly traveled to the Nithian colony with an entourage of sorcerers, alchemists, sages, monstrosities, horrors, and otherworldly creatures. From Surra-Man-Raa, Barimoor and his minions made their way to the Great Alasiyan Basin, where they summoned magical beings from the elemental planes to build them a great underground complex beneath the desolate salt flats of the Alasiyan Basin.

This underground complex is concealed by powerful magical artifacts, supplied through wormholes into obscure planes, and inaccessible from this plane without magical spells and resources scarcely imaginable outside the Alphatian Empire.

Barimoor is questing on the path of the Paragon, seeking to become an Immortal in the Sphere of Energy. (See the requirements for this path on page 15 of the Masters DM Book.) Here is how he stands to date:

Quest: Barimoor has two possibilities in mind. The first is that he knows the Celestial Planisphere is in the possession of a Makistani sorcerer. Unfortunately, he doesn't know the sorcerer's true identity, or the location of the Celestial Planisphere. The other is the Bead of Oblivion that Barimoor has located, buried deep beneath the city of Surra-Man-Raa. However, the Bead was placed there by a team of Immortals, and he is being very conservative in researching its defenses; another two or three centuries should do it.

Trial: Barimmor has created thousands of magical devices, all more or less unique, among them the soul daggers described above. He is still searching, however, for the device that would be unquestionably original.

Testimony: Barimoor has over 120 apprentices, several dozen of which have risen over 12 levels in his service, so this requirement is completed. The transformation of the land for 100 miles around his home is continuing underground at a steady pace. The region within 20 miles of the original underground complex is honeycombed with tunnels populated with a vast variety of inhabitants, and constantly restocked with new arrivals from other planes. At this pace, the work may be completed within one or two centuries.

Task: Barimoor believes he is already the most accomplished of magic users in a 1,000-mile radius, but always conservative, Barimoor won't make his move until all the other requirements are completed. Barimoor is still afraid of interference from ancient competitors in the Alphatian Empire, and he intends to stockpile magical resources, research, and allies for the next several centuries as he prepares to make his final challenge.

Staging: Staging a 36th level magician, his army of apprentices, his legions of minions, and his subterranean empire is a pretty mind-boggling task.

First, imagine an urban complex the size of a modern city that is underground, and populated by several hundred thousand monsters of all shapes and sizes.

Second, imagine all the villain wizards, evil lords, and monstrous intelligences in all the TSR® modules, all in one place, working for Barimoor.

Third, imagine a wizard as villainous as Barimoor, but completely sensible, practical, and cautious, leaving nothing to chance.

Fourth, imagine a wizard as powerful as Barimoor, having accumulated magical artifacts, resources, allies, and apprentices for eight centuries, carefully hoarding them against the day when Barimoor expects to stand against all the great magic-users of the D&D® World, and perhaps of the Alphatian Empire also.

As mind-boggling as this all is, remember that it is nothing compared to the 1,000 36th level wizards of Alphatia's Council of Mages.

Keep Barimoor a secret from the players and their characters. Barimoor's primary objective is to conceal his presence until he is ready to challenge all magic users within 1,000 miles, and he directs his considerable total resources to that task.

Think of Barimoor's underground empire as an invisible and unknown Atlantis. Barimoor's apprentices and agents may be responsible for a large proportion of the dark, sorcerous mischief in this part of the D&D® world for the last several centuries, but he has covered his tracks well. His minions are seldom detected, always working through intermediaries. When they are detected they are never taken alive, and appear to have been working on their own. Occasionally the PCs may come across some enigmatic reference to a shadowy sorcerous figure, or receive vague prophecies of a Ylaruam's doom in the future, or use *speak with dead* on a deceased minion to discover hints implying a conspiracy of immense proportions, but they never get close enough to find out what is really happening.

Barimoor's preparations for achieving the Path of the Paragon are likely to be completed in about two centuries— just as the Desert Master is rising to power in the lands to the west of the Darokin Empire. Sensible and conservative fellow that Barimoor is, he is certain to wait until that conflict has sapped the strength and resources of nearby nations before he makes his challenge. So, on the heels of the Desert Master another grand villain may rise to threaten the D&D® World.

Lizardmen Undead: Not strictly speaking NPCs, but these monsters are bad news if they start shambling out of the grotto and terrorizing villagers. The zombies are a nuisance, but the sanctuary's staff should be able to handle them. Undead lizard clerics and wizards are another matter; unless mid- or high-level magical support is available, the smartest move might be to evacuate the village, use delaying and containment tactics, and wait for reinforcements.

The lizardman race itself is ancient beyond imagining, their tombs having been buried by ice sheets 4,000 years ago while the Blackmoor World was in its infancy. Their descendants still survive in parts of the D&D® World, though they have descended into savagery.

When awakened from the sleep of death the lizardmen are bewildered by what they find. Their swampy homeland has disappeared and been replaced by a desert populated with horrible mammals in a mockery of lizardman form. They find they are not really alive, but only sustained by ancient magics, reawakened only to preserve the sanctuary of their tomb.

The lizardmen might respond in a number of ways to their reawakening:

* Perhaps they are more than content to return to the slumber of the grave, once the sanctity of their tomb is reestablished.

* Perhaps they struggle instinctively to destroy the alien world they discover.

* Perhaps the undead lizardman clerics and sorcerers imagine they can reestablish a race of lizardmen with their Lizardskin bed.

Other NPCs

A Caravan: One or more caravans are always stopping overnight in Kirkuk to water their animals, wash off the dust, and savor a decent meal and fresh gossip. The PCs may arrive as part of such a caravan. Merchants, handlers, laborers, and guards are generally competent fighters with some armor, and may be called upon to defend the village in case of monster or brigand attack. The category of pilgrims and travelers gives the DM a free hand to introduce whatever extra NPCs he wants for a scenario. Further, many travelers and pilgrims are in disguise in the tradition of Ylari action-adventure tales; that rug merchant may actually be bearing samples of magic carpets for the sultan's incipient air force, or that blathering tourist-pilgrim may actually be an evil sorcerer intent on fathoming the mysteries of the grotto or the Watchtower.

Disguise

Traveling incognito is a common practice among adventurers, spies, outlaws, fugitives, and monarchs. A large number of NPCs encountered by the players will not be what they seem.

This is a useful adventure design element. PCs may have an opportunity to unmask and bring to justice a vile criminal, an Alphatian spy, or a Magian Fire Worshipper. They may also meet distinguished and talented persons who travel incognito to avoid unwanted attention, such as sultans and viziers studying the health and happiness of their subjects, Makistani sorcerers who value their privacy, foreign scholars and adventurers on the trail of some legendary ruined city, or merchant princes accompanying the delivery of some rare treasure to a palace. Not all fugitives are evil. Some are victims of evil viziers or powerful merchants; some are desperate suitors rejected by cruel parents; some are faithful relatives sworn to avenge a family member's murder; some are princesses being smuggled away from the lustful eye of corrupt rulers. Important messages often travel with disguised couriers to prevent their interception by unfriendly agents.

Popular cover identities are tradesman, wandering mystic, pilgrim, scholar, caravan laborer, old man or woman, servant or slave, merchant—roles that account for an unusual amount of travel, but which do not attract too much attention.

Normally these disguised characters should be planned as part of the adventure preparation, but disguised characters are such a common feature of the Ylari adventure landscape that you can improvise one on the spot as an informant, ally, or nemesis without straining credulity.

The Abbashani Caravan: Nuri-ibn-Djamal of the Awamir tribe of the Empty Quarter is the caravan leader. Always wearing a sour scowl, Nuri grunts disdainfully before every speech. His nickname, Notchblade, comes from the over-enthusiastic and indiscriminant application of his sword to various victims. Accompanied by a chosen guard of his countrymen, Nuri is guiding a caravan from Abbashan on its way to Selenica with a shipment of coffee and spices. Fanatic Followers and supporters of "The Kin" faction, Nuri and his men are very hostile to foreigners and unbelievers, insulting and challenging them at every opportunity. Nasty, humorless, and rigidly traditional, these Abbashani are otherwise perfectly honorable and devout Ylari.

The Alchemist's Expedition: Urabi Al-Chukri, alchemist of Ylaruam, a Makistani with long, white scraggly chin whiskers, earned the nickname "Chalkfinger" from constantly scribbling orders, formulas, and inventory on the slates he always carries with him. Urabi is a wealthy alchemical supplier, contracting for the Vouchery of Sorcery and Sorcerer's Guild, and with plenty of influential connections in both groups.

Urabi's caravan includes two large wagons, 20 mercenaries, a large staff of apprentices, and several adventurers who travel with Urabi and organize short side expeditions into more dangerous territory.

Urabi travels with a small alchemical lab, library, sorcerers' supplies, and a variety of magical potions. He is a useful informant on legends and rumors of magical artifacts and treasures, and may provide alchemical services for standard fees. He may buy rare spell components for fair prices, or hire adventurers to obtain them.

The Vengeful Soldier: This fighter shows up in Kirkuk swearing revenge on someone who has sullied his sister's honor. The someone might be a common villager or a member of Qadi Ramman's guard. The soldier might be obviously too weak to obtain vengeance on his own, soliciting aid from the PCs for gold or as a matter of righteous honor. Or the soldier might be obviously too strong for a fair fight with his intended victim—perhaps an NPC the PCs have befriended—and the PCs may feel they have to stand against the soldier to even up the odds. Vengeance and stained honor are potent motivators in the Ylari setting.

The Prince in Disguise: A standard Arabian Nights trick is to have the heir of a distant kingdom hiding in an out-of-the-way place, waiting for an opportunity to return to his kingdom and wrest rulership from the evil vizier who snatched power in some vile and contemptible fashion. If the prince takes a fancy to the PCs, or if they fall into his plans for regaining power, a meeting with the disguised prince could set in motion a quest which might eventually establish the PCs as close associates and trusted vassals of a powerful ruler.

The Kid Who Wants to Join the Circus: A charming minor NPC retainer is the little orphan boy who attaches himself to the party, complains that his foster parents are cruel to him, and begging that they let him join their romantic band of heroes. If you can saddle your PCs with this charming little fellow, you can look forward to many hours of sappy, sentimental, heroic PC gestures as you throw the lad into the clutches of vile kidnappers, ferocious beasts, or seductive mischief. Such lads are always crawling into holes too small for the adult adventurers, or being snatched up by rocs and requiring rescue, or searching for their real parents in the middle of world-shaking quests. Nobody can bear little kids being threatened by the Ultimate Evil.

Normal Men, Women, and Children: These villagers are usually just around to be terrorized or victimized by the villains, but an inspired DM can improvise a noble hero by arming a mother or father with household utensils and confronting them with some menace keen on gobbling a child or other treasured family possession. Unfortunately it is usually necessary for these common folk to die nobly to stir the PCs' to feats of heroism, but it is always nice to turn the tables and save the PCs with a crowd of pitchfork-and-torch bearing peasants.

Potential Expedition Guides and Laborers: Other than the Secretary, the Mufti, Daood, Hannarr, and other obviously skilled NPC adventurers, there are tribal warriors and villagers who can serve as guides and laborers familiar with the local terrain and climate. Such may be competent warriors (F1-3) or normal humans. Some may have weapons, armor, and mounts, others may need such provided.

Scenario Ideas

The following ideas may be developed into adventures using Kirkuk as a setting.

Raiding Brigands: Bechir the Leper notices

particularly rich caravans or heavily-laden PCs entering Kirkuk and scurries off to contact a brigand leader. The brigand and his men plan a surprise night raid upon victims who suppose themselves secure in the village. The plan might depend on stealth and thieving skills, or on swift mounts and clever diversions, or on superior numbers and aggressiveness.

These raids are on a small scale (10-40 brigands), but such a group supported by several low-level magic users can be a formidable enemy. PCs are likely to be caught in bed on unfamiliar ground, with other villagers reacting in panic.

If Kirkuk is set in Nithia, large brigand bands (100-300 men with substantial magical support) roam in defiance of the weak government; such a group might assault Kirkuk in broad daylight. In other emirates large frontal brigand raids appear only in times of famine or political disruption. Brigands are particularly desperate when attacking to obtain food. PCs may be assigned a defensive position to protect, or may be called upon to help organize the village's defenses against a protracted siege.

Raiding Monsters: The northern slopes of the Altan Tepes have been troubled by goblin tribes supported by hill giants. The PCs receive orders from a patron to organize the defenses of Kirkuk and to investigate causes and possible remedies for these goblin incursions.

This scenario might have the following sequence of episodes:

1. Arrive in Kirkuk, meet important NPCs.
2. Scout into the surrounding hills and encounter an advance party of the goblin army. (Take captives and discover that goblins are starving.) Retreat to Kirkuk and ready defenses.
3. The goblins arrive and camp. Allied giants breach the walls, but withdraw under concentrated attack.
4. Obviously outnumbered, the PCs must either stall or be clever. They can either create dissension among goblins by offering food, or contact giants and explain that goblins are using them as shock troops while the goblins sit and watch. Giants attack goblins. Other options might be to send a mounted day raid into goblin camp to destroy the leaders so the goblin morale crumbles, or contact the giants and offer them a better deal. Giants join PCs in defense of village. PCs ride piggyback on giants and shatter goblin morale. After glorious victory, giants give village kids piggyback rides and become True Believers.

Parts of this scenario are perfect for BATTLESYSTEM™ large-scale combats.

The Roc's Egg: A shepherd dashes into the village, "I've found a giant egg in the hills." Cheerful villagers with dreams of instant wealth take a wagon and go get the egg.

Mrs. Roc comes back and gets very mad. She looks around and finds the egg in the village shed. After wrecking a few dwellings and massacring a few town folk, the roc settles in to hatch the egg. Mr. Roc joins her.

The PCs are hired to get rid of the roc so people can live in Kirkuk again. Incidentally, the sultan would give a fortune for an intact roc egg.

For this scenario, powerful NPCs like Daood, Mustapha, Murad, and Hannarr should be away on business. The roc (Expert DM, page 55) may be large or giant according to party abilities. For a more challenging problem, substitute a baby dragon for the egg and a pair of huge dragons for the doting avian parents.

In either case, the idea of a giant flying creature blundering around in Kirkuk is a pretty awesome concept. Anything but a perfect landing could take out a couple of buildings. And a little dust bath in the village suq could flatten outbuildings throughout the town. And the natural sympathy for parents and child makes the PCs task a little more than a monster roast.

The Missing Son: Your patron (sheik or employer) has had a report that a ring belonging to his long-lost son has been traced to the village of Kirkuk. The PCs are sent to see if they can find the missing scion.

What the patron doesn't say is that the missing son fled because his father demanded that he marry a nasty-looking daughter of an important noble rather than the beautiful maiden he loves. The wretched boy is living in Kirkuk as an animal handler at the caravansary, hoping that some day his father may relent, but fearful to return to his native land.

Finding the boy depends on detective work among the villagers. The backgrounds of most villagers are common knowledge, since most have lived here from birth and are of the same tribe. Only strangers to the village could be a disguised prince, and most of the strangers are those imported by the Merchanter's Guild to manage and operate the caravansary.

The physical description given the PCs is too vague to be useful. ESP spells, searching private possessions, dropping leading statements in casual conversation, or a variety of tactics may be appropriate.

Finally, however, the boy will resist discovery and return to his father unless assured that he may marry as he likes. This is not proper behavior for a son, and the PCs are within their rights to compel him to return, but players with romantic notions are likely to be sympathetic with the son, and faced with a difficult honor dilemma.

The Tribal Feud: A respected warrior and personal guard of a tribal qadi kills the son of another qadi in dubious circumstances. The qadis declare feuds with one another, and the peace of the village is disrupted. As agents of the emir/village chief/Provincial Secretary, the PCs are sent to investigate the incident and quell the rising furor.

The personal guard denies having assaulted the victim, though his alibi is unsupported. As the PCs investigate, incidents between the two tribes escalate to the point of war.

Episodes can alternate between investigative encounters (searching the scene, questioning witnesses, etc.), diplomatic encounters (urging restraint on the qadis while avoiding offending their honor), and action encounters in which members of the two tribes face off against each other.

The fact is that a Thyatian agent and a mage conspired to impersonate the qadi's personal guard and frame him with the murder, hoping to stir up conflicts that might destablize the local political situation. If the PCs can piece together the circumstances of the attack and discover the impersonation, they can bring their case before the magistrate or the Provincial Secretary. Of course, the accused will disrupt the court scene with a desperate attack and escape attempt if the PCs seem to have built a solid case.

The Poisoned Well: The Well of the Prophet has been poisoned! This doesn't threaten the humans, since their water is routinely purified, but the village livestock is seriously threatened. The emir issued a call for itinerants to handle immediate needs, but the source of poisoning must be located and removed.

An agent of Barimoor has been sent into the well to retrieve the fabled Lizardskin Bed. Of course, that agent disturbed That Which Ought Not Be Disturbed; only the teleportation power of the soul dagger preserved the poor agent's life. Now the taint of Things Which Should Be Dead has defiled the waters of the well, and it's just a matter of time before zombie lizardmen and their scaly liche-like masters begin emerging from the well and wandering around stiff-legged, bent on restoring the Ancient Dominion of the Reptile Races.

The Ruined Fort: Thyatian records say the treasury of the Kirkuk garrison was never recovered. In that treasury a certain object may have been placed for safe-keeping, the Carnelian Idol, an artifact discovered on the nearby site of an ancient wizard's tower, and

claimed by the contemporary qadi as a local treasure. Legend says that the object is cursed, but is the key to the recovery of a treasure vast enough to purchase an empire.

Of course if the idol is found in the fort, it remains the property of the village. It is pretty difficult to undertake a major excavation without attracting attention, but clever and greedy PCs may find a way. Or the operation may be handled in an above-board manner, obtaining permission from the Vouchery of Provinces and local qadi to dig, and soliciting villager aid in the excavation.

Of course, who knows what kind of horror is going to march out of a centuries-buried dungeon. And the traps and guardians of the treasury are likely to be intimidating. And the idol itself is no slouch in the bad news department either.

All Aboard for Plane of Elemental Fire: Remember Blind Mussa, the beggar that walks around babbling in the tongue of the Plane of Elemental Fire? Well, he finally remembers what it was that he wanted to say, and it opens a wormhole to the Plane of Fire. Guess where the PCs happen to be when this happens?

Unless you foreshadow these events with a few vague prophecies, the players are going to think this is pretty arbitrary. (Of course it is. Nobody wants to go to Plane of Fire on purpose. This is just a particularly sneaky way to send your high-level PCs on an interesting adventure.)

The Enchanted Cucurbits of Al-Kalim: In Al-Kalim's adventures he encountered many ill-mannered efreet which he admonished by confining in small bottles (cucurbits) with stoppers sealed by sorcery, there to contemplate the error of their ways. One passage of the Nahmeh refers to Al-Kalim's hurling several such bottles down a deep well.

Could the Well of the Faithful Prophet be that well? A bottle containing an efreet would be of great value to one who wished to visit the Plane of Elemental Fire, or who was brave (or foolish) enough to bargain with an efreet.

The bottles are down there all right, but so are a lot of undead lizardmen. See *The Poisoned Well* for further details.

The Spirit of the Watchtower: The Magician's Guild/Qadi Ramman/an undercover Glantrian scholar hire the PCs to aid in investigating the magical mysteries of the Watchtower. A sequence of episodes might be as follows:

1. Arrive and discover the marvelous magical anomalies of the Watchtower first hand. Something spooky but non-lethal occurs.

2. Enquire among NPCs about legends of the Watchtower, get lots of nonsense and some useful notions.

3. PCs find an agent of Barimoor in their chambers rifling their possessions in the wee hours. A combat ensues. The agent escapes with a terrifying illusion and a *teleport*, leaving bewildered PCs.

4. PCs continue investigation of Watchtower. Barimoor sacrifices an agent, sending him to attack the PCs in the deep dungeons, leaving evidence that the agent was an insane magic user who stole things from the villagers and promoted the spooky rumors about the Watchtower to conceal the hiding place of his stash. PCs kill agent, dagger *teleports* away, PCs are left with a red herring.

5. If PCs continue investigation, Barimoor sends an apprentice and a squad of fire elementals to ambush the party in the deep dungeons. Low-level survivors should get help. High level characters who survive in good order get the Royal Treatment.

6. Barimoor himself arrives with a horde of loathesome servitors and able apprentices. Maybe they destroy the Watchtower, the village, and the PCs. Maybe they are impressed by the PCs, and decide to abandon the Kirkuk operation. In any case, Barimoor survives and continues as the campaign's Ultimate Villain.

. . . And a Few Short Ideas

It's Only a Game . . .: PCs accepting the hospitality of Qadi Ramman find themselves invited (or challenged) to join Ramman's forces in the mock war during next week's celebration of the Prophet's Pilgrimage. Despite everyone's assurances that it is only a game, the PCs discover that Mehmet and the Manahil play very rough, and have a flexible sense of honor.

The Missing Relic: The Eternal Rose, a relic of Al-Kalim's visit to Kirkuk, is stolen from the Sanctuary in the night. Legends ascribe to it the power to raise the dead, though Kirkuk's clerics know better than to tamper with such a legendary object Who has taken the object? And why?

A Righteous Monster Hunt: Monsters (giant creatures, insects, or reptiles, goblins, purple worms, trolls, giants, or something original and exotic) attack a caravan near Kirkuk. Survivors stagger into the village with a tragic tale. The Secretary, the Mufti, and/or the Qadi musters up a party of brave heroes to hunt down the creatures menacing the important trade route.

Bandit Busters: The Merchanter's Guild decides that the local bandits must have contacts among the villages. The PCs are hired to enter the village in disguise and uncover the bandits' inside man.

The Hostile Chief: Mehmet of the Manahil is said to know the location of an ancient ruin. Someone wants this information and is willing to pay the PCs to get it. In order to get the information from Mehmet they have to get an invitation to meet him, deal with his abuse, impress him with their prowess, then bargain or trick him into revealing his secrets.

Setting up a Ylaruam Campaign

Here are suggestions and guidelines for establishing your own Ylaruam campaign.

How Much Should Your Players Know?

This campaign pack was designed for the Dungeonmaster. However, if the player characters in your campaign are natives of Ylaruam, some portions of the information in the pack should be common knowledge for those characters.

Before you begin the campaign, review the *Ylaruam Gazetteer* and decide which sections your players may read, and which they may not read.

Depending on the background and education of the character, Ylari natives should be familiar with different portions of the subjects covered in the Gazetteer. For example, an Alasiyan nomad would rarely know much about government and politics.

Foreign characters know of Ylaruam only by rumor, a typically unreliable source. For examples of the information a foreign player character might have about Ylaruam, see *What Everyone Knows about the Emirates.*

Certain passages in the book (marked in italics) are specifically addressed to the DM, and should never be read by players. Further, no player may read the *Village of Kirkuk* or *Campaigning in Ylaruam* sections.

Gazetteers for the D&D® game nations present DMs with problems they didn't encounter with module adventures. With a module, the player was simply prohibited from reading any of the module. With a gazetteer, the player may need to know some information to present his character properly. It is up to you to decide and communicate what background information the player can read.

Choosing a Time Period for the Campaign

This gazetteer presents Ylaruam during the Eleventh Century AC. However, the Ylari culture is so stable that society changes very little, even over several centuries. The earlier and later periods offer special campaign opportunities.

Pre-Al-Kalim (earlier than 800 AC): Much of Ylaruam is sparsely populated by constantly feuding tribal nomads. Monsters and sorcerers inhabit the wilderness. Only in the Alphatian and Thyatian colonies are there any significant settlements. There is no central government, and caravan trade is an extremely perilous adventure. There is no Eternal Truth or Eternal Dream to bind the Ylari together. The Ylari warrior is fierce, but not yet organized as are the armies which will later intimidate the world. This is a wide-open campaign setting, suited best for wilderness monster and treasure hunts, and for small-scale tribal conflicts.

Contemporary with Al-Kalim: An epic campaign might be developed, following the rise of Al-Kalim, his uniting of the Ylari peoples, the defeat of the foreign colonial masters, and the quest to the Immortals on behalf of the nation. Such a campaign has plenty of human vs. human warfare and diplomacy, with occasional quests for magical aid. In the later stages of Al-Kalim's life, companions or disciples of Al-Kalim might be required to quest at all levels of experience, throughout the D&D® game world and the various planes, seeking information, allies, and artifacts to aid him in his quest on the Path of the Dynast.

The Thirteenth Century AC: This is the period covered in the epic War of the Desert Master, a campaign that sprawls across most of the known D&D® game world, and is abundantly developed in three fine TSR® adventure packs, *Master of the Desert Nomads (X4), Temple of Death (X5),* and *Red Arrow, Black Shield*

(X10). Few other D&D® campaigns are so well developed and detailed. *Red Arrow, Black Shield* even contains a 32" x 21" map of the D&D® world, counters, and order of battles for the troops of the D&D® world, letting you use the War Machine to fight a global war as the background for the campaign.

Ylaruam during this period is divided between two ruling factions. One is the Kin faction, which has come to power and rules in Ylaruam, and the other is the Preceptor faction, which survives as outlaws among faithful nomad tribesmen. The Kin faction is inclined to ally with the Desert Master (the Ultimate Evil of that campaign). The Preceptor faction would remain neutral until convinced of the Desert Master's evil, then it would join the other D&D® nations in resisting the Desert Master.

A Ylari campaign set in this period should have PCs of Preceptor background trying to overthrow the usurping Kin faction and to reestablish their faction as the rulers of Ylaruam. Eventually these PCs should join the global war against the domination of the Desert Master.

Introducing Player Characters to the Campaign

Where Are They From? If your characters are Ylari natives, presumably they start at Experience Level 1. If the PCs are visiting Ylaruam from other D&D® nations, they may start at Experience Level 1 or they may, at your option, introduce established characters to the Ylari setting.

Why Are They Here? The DM should know the basic motivation of the player characters so he can tailor the campaign's adventures to the players' tastes. Each of the three common character motivations require different kinds of adventures.

* To Gain Loot and Power: Players are most interested in gaining treasure and slaying evil monsters so they can become more advanced and powerful characters. Wilderness adventures and magical artifacts are most popular with such players.

* To Save the World (and themselves) from Evil and Death: These players prefer heroic characters who do the right and just thing. Loot and power are useful, but only to aid in the campaign against evil. In these campaigns, the selection of a compelling Ultimate Evil(s) is very important, and that Ultimate Evil should always play a significant part in their adventures.

* To Have Adventures and Develop Characters Through Experience: Such players are equally interested in role playing their characters in combat, diplomacy, and moral challenges. They enjoy a variety of adventures, as long as they can develop their characters consistent with their personalities and cultures. Emphasize peculiar details of the Ylaruam culture and setting (storytelling, riding, honor challenges, Al-Kalim, etc.) in the scenarios.

How to Guide Characters Toward Adventures: Here are several standard motivational schemes that obligate a player character to accept and persist in challenging and dangerous adventures:

* Mercenary Employment: Once a character has signed on with an employer, it is dishonorable to refuse an assignment. Such a refusal might make it difficult to get mercenary employment elsewhere.

* Obligation to Friend, Family, or Tribe: It is dishonorable to refuse a mission framed as an obligation of friendship, blood, or tribe.

* Religious and Moral Obligation: Religious and moral obligations are extremely important to the Ylari. One who denies such obligations will be shunned and scorned by all righteous men.

Further, it is a great honor to be invited on a pilgrimage with a respected hero and holy man. Turning down such an offer may be viewed as an insult—an insult, in particular, to someone it would be unwise to insult.

* Prophecy: It is foolish to try to avoid fate. Once a prophet has been given a vision of your fate, you must meet it sooner or later; to delay is simply cowardice.

* Slavery: A cute trick is to require each player character to begin as a slave (a convicted debtor) for an adventure. Try not to use this more than once.

* War: When a Ylari's land, property, and neighbors are threatened by monsters or enemy warriors, only a coward runs away.

* Binding Oaths: Once a character has sworn a *truthtelling* oath, he breaks his word at the risk of incurring a curse.

* Honoring Authority: When ordered to do something by your tribal qadi, a government official, or the sultan, or other rightful authority, the Ylari is obligated to perform to the best of his ability. The Ylari fears not only the dishonor, but the practical consequences, for disobedience to a leader is unlawful, and punished severely.

* Vengeance and Pride: An Ylari wronged or humiliated is shamed and belittled until he has gotten even with the one who abused him.

* The Moral Tale: An NPC may tell a brief tale, the moral of which indicates the proper action the character should take. This is not a strong obligation, but a more subtle way for the DM to hint and nudge a character along the appointed path.

Campaign Structure

When beginning a campaign with Ylaruam-based characters, player characters should begin either as foreigners or young tribal nomads with little knowledge of Ylaruam outside of their own tribe and region.

Then steer the characters to Kirkuk. Place Kirkuk conveniently on the map of Ylaruam to facilitate this. Foreigners may be sent specifically to meet some Kirkuk personage, or may have to go through Kirkuk to enter the country. Young nomads may belong to one of the four tribes encamped around Kirkuk.

Next, hook the PCs up with a knowledgeable informant/ally. Secretary Mustapha, Mufti Murad, or Hannarr the Dwarf are good examples. The DM can channel information about Ylari history, geography, customs, and adventure possibilities through these characters in a gradual, natural fashion while the PCs engage in a few Kirkuk scenarios. The knowledgeable informants/allies may accompany the PCs on initial scenarios, or may simply be the contacts through which the PCs learn of adventure opportunities.

Once the PCs know a little about Ylari customs through their experiences with Kirkuk and their knowledgeable informant/ally, they are ready to venture out into Ylaruam on their own in search of adventure. Or they may be content to keep Kirkuk as a base of operations, and divide their time between wilderness and village scenarios.

Experience Point Awards: About 1/5 of adventure experience points may come from monster kills or captures. Since "monsters" as a term includes humans and other intelligent races, don't hesitate to award substantial experience point awards for capturing or effectively eliminating enemies by non-lethal means. For example, if the threat of raiding goblins is decisively ended by diplomacy, treaties, or reliable oaths, the PCs deserve as many experience as if they had decimated the goblins and forced their retreat. Don't encourage massacring intelligent creatures as a means of character advancement. Resolving conflicts through honorable and just actions and shrewd diplomacy should be well rewarded.

Between 1/5 and 2/5 of experience points should come from goal achievement, honor challenges, and good role playing.

Goal achievement may be in terms of mission objectives (fulfilling obligations to a master or leader, protecting the village of Kirkuk) or in terms of personal objectives (avenging the family name, proving personal courage).

Honor challenges are situations when a character's social standing depends on proper actions. Characters with social aspirations are

most concerned with these challenges; characters who spend all their time in the wilderness facing monsters, evil sorcerers, and efreet are little concerned with their social status.

Good role playing means learning the ways of the Ylari and maintaining a consistent and well-motivated character. Since this contributes greatly to everyone's enjoyment of the game, reward it with experience point bonuses.

The remaining 1/5 to 2/5 experience points may come from treasure.

Be stingy with powerful treasures, but lavish with treasure experience points. In a campaign where powerful magical treasure is rare and often limited by complicated conditions and boobytraps, each item is relatively more valuable in terms of the character's status. For example, in a conservative campaign, a character with a *wand of fireballs* may be an equal opponent for a character of twice his level.

The "handicaps" and "penalties" associated with artifacts (see *Masters DM Book*, pp. 45-64) are excellent concepts to extend to all magical treasures. Placing limitations, conditions, handicaps, and penalties on the use of magical items retains the marvelous aura of sorcery without allowing it to counterbalance a campaign, turning it into a magical high-tech shootout.

Also, think of information as treasure. Knowledge is often more powerful than wealth or power in achieving a goal. For example, if a character has the sense and good taste not to plunder a tomb, yet he brings back detailed descriptions of wall inscriptions to study, he has perhaps brought back a more valuable treasure than if he returned laden with gold.

Selecting an Ultimate Evil for the Campaign

An Ultimate Evil or two are useful in linking various scenarios and adventures into a coherent campaign. Here are a few candidates:

Magian Fire Worshippers: These descendants (and perhaps a few long-lived sorcerers and liches) of the ancient Nithian elemental worshipping culture have lovely wilderness filled with ruined temples to pop out of, competence in deadly necromantic and fire elemental magics, and a desire to reestablish their moribund kingdom —perfect credentials for a typical Ultimate Evil.

Barimoor and his Sorcerous Minions: An exiled Alphatian questing on the path of the Paragon has little concern for the fates of mere mortals. Such an arch-villain might work exclusively through agents and powerful retainers in the initial stages of the campaign, only revealing himself if the PCs reach character levels where they might personally oppose him.

The Abbashani/Kin Faction: As xenophobic and intolerant religious fanatics, they are good antagonists, yet their culture is based on the religion of Al-Kalim, and so is unlikely to be completely evil. On the other hand, they may be the unwitting tools of another Ultimate Evil like the Magians or Barimoor, or pawns in some Immortal game.

Thyatin and Alphatian Agents: Ylaruam could easily become a pawn in the great struggle between these two empires, with the Alphatian agents instigating hostilities against Thyatis through ruse and diplomacy, and Thyatin agents seeking an opportunity to gain influence within the Ylari government, hoping to redirect Ylaruam's military might against the Alphatians, or to at least assure its borders against an Ylari invasion.

The Lizard Men: As inhuman monsters from a dead civilization, carriers of a deadly plague, intent on reestablishing their dominion regardless of the fate of the current human civilization, the lizardmen make a good Ultimate Evil for a Basic or Expert campaign. To qualify as a challenge for Companion or Master level characters, they would need powerful magical allies like Barimoor or the Magians.

Monsters, Men, and Marvelous Beings

The following is an annotated list of monsters, men, and otherworldly beings (hence referred to as "monsters") encountered in the Emirates or in Emirates-related adventures.

B, X, X1, CM, M: In parentheses after each entry is an abbreviation of the D&D® rulebook or supplement in which the monster is described.

Location: This indicates where the monster is likely to be encountered.

Staging: This suggests ways to feature the monster in adventures.

Aerial Servants (CM): ***Location:*** Elemental Plane of Air, or on Prime Plane as summoned by evil clerics or enemies of the djinn. ***Staging*** Aerial servants, or "haoou," are enemies of the djinn. Since many djinn are allies of Al-Kalim, and some are even True Believers, PCs on extra-planar quests may find themselves allied with the djinn against the haoou, or earning favors from the djinn by adventuring against the haoou.

Adaptor (M): ***Location:*** Anywhere. ***Staging*** This ancient race of shapeshifters is responsible for many strange tales of half-human creatures in Ylari lore. They may be allied with powerful beings from any plane, or may simply be itinerant travelers and adventures.

Allosaurus (X1): See Reptile, Giant.

Ankylosaurus (X1): See Reptile, Giant.

Animal Herd (X): Antelope (wild) and goats and sheep (domestic): HD 1-2; D 1-4. Other domestic herds include Horse, Camel, and Mule. ***Location:*** Throughout settled and borderland regions. ***Staging:*** As contests in nomad camps (goat wrestling). Send 1st level nomads (or city slickers) to round up the herd during inter-tribal raids or as shepherds seeking lost flock.

Ant, Giant (B): see Insects, Giant.

Bandits (B): Thieves gangs in rural or urban settlements. Won't last long unless secretive or protected by local chief. Must have some support from established citizens or they can't survive. Inferior fighters; may be competent at typical thieving skills. (Contrast with Brigands—superior, well-organized bands of desert warriors that raid other nomad tribes or rural settlements.) ***Location:*** Nithia and towns and villages of coastal plain. ***Staging:*** If bandits are operating openly, easy pickings for low level PCs. More challenging detective and diplomatic job (finding bandit contacts in citizenry) if bandits are a secret gang.

Barimoor: ***Location:*** Barimoor's vast underground complex is hidden beneath the Great Alasiyan Basin. His agents and apprentices may be encountered anywhere. Barimoor himself is likely to personally appear only when challenged by characters of Master or higher experience levels. ***Staging:*** Barimoor and his apprentices, agents, and minions are important antagonists for Ylaruam campaigns.

Beetle, Giant (B): see Insects, Giant.

Bug Bear (B): ***Location:*** Foothills of Altan Tepes. ***Staging:*** Raiders of settlements in Emirate of Dythestenia.

Camel (X): ***Location:*** Domestic herds throughout the Emirate. ***Staging:*** Killing camels is as stupid as killing horses —they're very valuable.

Carrion Crawler (B): ***Location:*** Wilderness. ***Staging:*** Typical monster encounters.

Dinosaur (X, X1): See Reptiles, Giant.

Lions (B): ***Location:*** Coastal Plain, Nithian and Dythestenian highlands. ***Staging:*** The Ylari regard the lion as a noble beast of great intelligence. They are prized pets of nobility, and often figure in marvelous tales of speaking animals.

Dimetrodon (X1): See Reptile, Giant.

Djinni, Lesser and Greater (X, CM): The djinn frequently visit the Emirates, though

rarely reveal themselves to men. Some live in great sky cities on this plane, but most live on the Plane of Elemental Air and travel here by magical means.

Centuries of sorcerers have trafficked with the djinn; many have been forced to serve these sorcerers unwillingly, so the djinn are distrustful of men. Djinn trapped by enchantments may bargain their magical abilities and service for freedom.

Al-Kalim and his heroic followers often quest on the Plane of Elemental Air, seeking the aid of the djinn. Al-Kalim and his followers are respected and honored among the djinn; some djinn even reckon themselves as True Believers, and friends and allies of the human Faithful.

The djinn are admirers of human beauty and storytelling; they travel by night and day through the land hoping to gaze upon a perfect form or listen to a well-told tale. They may occasionally reveal themselves to the exceptionally beautiful or exceptionally wise.

Location: May be encountered anywhere in their fleeting travels, but their invisibility hides them from the eyes of men. Commonly encountered through magical enchantments binding djinn to tasks or objects. Such bound djinn are most common around ancient ruins and dwellings of sorcerers. ***Staging:*** Low level characters encounter the djinn primarily through magical treasures and friendly sorcery. Higher level characters may seek service or allies among the djinn on this or other planes. Unlike the efreet, the djinn are benevolent in nature, and relatively safe to deal with. The more violent and malevolent efreet are more appropriate if your objectives are violent and malevolent, but the efreet are cruel and treacherous, and unreliable allies.

Dragons, Blue and Gold (B, CM): ***Location:*** Remote wilderness and highlands. ***Staging:*** Rarely seen except as companions of Makistani sorcerers. Dragon blood and other materials are prized by alchemists and mages.

Dwarf (B): ***Location:*** Commonly encountered as artisans in large settlements or as itinerant engineers or adventurers, especially in Makistan and highland wildernesses. ***Staging:*** Potential PC companions, allies, or retainers.

Eagle, Great: (Creature Catalog): ***Location:*** Peaks of Altan Tepes. ***Staging:*** Servants and mounts of Makistani sorcerers.

Efreeti, Lesser and Greater (X, CM): ***Location:*** Common visitors in wilderness areas and ruins, or sealed in containers by Al-Kalim. (See "Magic Lamps" and "Seal Ring of Al-Kalim" in *Treasures.*) ***Staging:*** The powerful efreeti are often sought as magical servants by higher-level mages. More treacherous and malevolent than the djinni, they are most useful for violent and destructive mischief.

In his lifetime Al-Kalim captured and imprisoned many troublesome efreeti in lamps, bottles, and cucurbits. Other efreeti wander the earth in various forms, or are bound to locations by sorcery or circumstance. Efreeti generally promise service if released from bondage, but are often too dangerous for low-level characters to deal with unless magical aid is available.

Elementals (X, CM): ***Location:*** Rare on Prime Planes, except where summoned by sorcery. ***Staging:*** Commonly servants, especially fire elementals, of the Magian Fire-Worshippers. (See *Tales.*)

Elemental Rulers (M): ***Location:*** Respective Elemental Planes. ***Staging:*** High level characters questing on other planes may seek aid from elemental rulers. True Believers are well-received on the Plane of Air, generally regarded as enemies of the Plane of Fire, and frequently questing on the Plane of Water according to the dreams and prophecies of Al-Kalim's Garden in the Desert.

Faerie (M): ***Location:*** In sky cities and regions of the upper air. ***Staging:*** May be encountered as guests of the djinn, or in adventures concerning pegasi and hippogriffs.

Gargoyles (B): ***Location:*** In sorcerers' towers and ancient ruins. ***Staging:*** Common magical guardians of treasures.

Ghoul (B): See Undead.

Giants, Hill (X) and Stone (X): ***Location:*** Foothills of the Altan Tepes. ***Staging:*** Raiders of the Dythestenian highlands, often as allies of goblins, bugbears, orcs, and other tribes of monsters.

Giant, Cloud (X): ***Location:*** Regions of the upper air. ***Staging:*** Encountered in quests with the djinn or pegasi.

Gnome (B): ***Location:*** Foreign quarters, working with (or competing with) dwarven craftsmen. ***Staging:*** Potential companions, allies, or retainers for PCs.

Goblin (B): ***Location:*** Foothills of Altan Tepes. ***Staging:*** Raiders of the Dythestenian highlands.

Golem (X,CM): ***Location:*** Dwelling of sorcerers. ***Staging:*** Common guardians.

Griffon (X): ***Location:*** Foothills of the Altan Tepes. ***Staging:*** The bane of mounted expeditions against monsters raiding the Dythestenian highlands. May be allies or mounts of raiding monsters.

Hag, Sea (M): ***Location:*** Seas off coastal plain. ***Staging:*** Legendary nemesis of Al-Kalim in his pilgrimage to the Old Man of the Sea. May attack trade ships, or be the antagonist of True Believers questing in the footsteps of Al-Kalim.

Haunts (CM): See Undead.

Hawk, Giant (M): See Eagle, Giant.

Headsmen (M): See Thugs.

Helions (CM): ***Location:*** Elemental Plane of Fire. ***Staging:*** May be PC allies against salamanders, efreeti, and other denizens of Plane of Fire typically summoned as servants or allies of the Magian Fire Worshippers.

Hippogriff (X): ***Location:*** Regions of upper air. ***Staging:*** Prey on pegasi. PCs may earn friendship of pegasi by protecting them from hippogriffs.

Hobgoblin (B): ***Location:*** Foothills of Altan Tepes. ***Staging:*** Raiders of Dythestenian highlands.

Horde (CM): ***Location:*** Plane of Earth. ***Staging:*** Undines sought as allies by PCs as part of quests to Plane of Water may be required to adventure against the Hordes (enemies of undines) as the price of alliance.

Horses (X): See *Kirkuk* for details on Alasiyan steeds.

Hydrax (CM): ***Location:*** Plane of Water. ***Staging:*** Undines sought as allies by PCs as part of quests to Plane of Water may be required to adventure against the Hydrax (enemies of undines) as the price of alliance.

Insect Swarm (X): ***Location:*** Wilderness or treasure locations. ***Staging:*** Natural hazards or magically-summoned treasure guardians.

Invisible Stalker (X): ***Location:*** Dwelling of sorcerers. ***Staging:*** Common guardians.

Kobolds (B): ***Location:*** Foothills of Altan Tepes. ***Staging:*** Raiders of Dythestenian highlands.

Living Statues (B): ***Location:*** Dwelling of sorcerers or treasure locations. ***Staging:*** Common sorcerer and treasure guardians.

Lizards, Giant: see Reptiles, Giant.

Lizardmen (B): ***Location:*** Buried in hidden catacombs throughout Ylaruam. ***Staging:*** This extinct ancient race of reptile men may return as undead or magically revived individuals if their catacombs are disturbed.

Magian Fire Worshippers: See *Peoples* for more information about Magian Fire Worshippers. ***Location:*** Primarily found in remote regions of the Nithian highlands, but Magians operate in secret throughout the Emirates. ***Staging:*** The Magians, evil sorcerers and clerics of Nithians descent, are masters of the necromantic arts and elemental magics, especially fire magics. Their ultimate goal is to reestablish the Nithian Empire and the reign of the ancient line of Nithian kings. Al-Kalim has declared the Magians enemies of all that is Just and Honorable; the Magian's ritual practices are banned throughout Ylaruam on pain of death.

Wherever there is bad juju in Ylaruam, the Magians are likely to be mixed up in it. Not even the most evil sorcerers in this region regard necromancy as a legitimate sorcerous practice.

Manscorpion (CM): ***Location:*** Not native to Ylaruam, but may have been imported by evil sorcerers or lords. ***Staging:*** May be guardians or armies of evil NPCs.

Mek (M): ***Location and Staging:*** May be rarely encountered at random in the wilderness, or may be the servants of high-level sorcerers.

Men, Brigands (X): ***Location:*** Throughout wilderness and borderlands; common in Nithia. ***Staging:*** Outlaws preying on innocent settled and nomad tribesmen. Occasionally brigands may be honorable men turned to banditry by evil rulers or a desperate economic situation. In a national crisis, brigands may be sought as auxilliaries for military campaigns.

Men, Pirates (X): ***Location:*** Coastal plain, particularly in Nithia. ***Staging:*** Raids shipping. Powerful pirates may raid coastal settlements, especially along remote coastline of Nithia.

Men, Dervishes (X): Not to be confused with desert druids, as described in *The Way of Al-Kalim*. The Dervishes described in the *Expert Rulebook* should be considered variants of Brigands.

Men, Traders (X): ***Location:*** Throughout Ylaruam. ***Staging:*** In markets and caravans along trade routes. Often hire adventurers as guards, or maybe rescued from bandits and brigands by PCs.

Men, Nomads (X): ***Location:*** Throughout wildernesses and borderlands of Ylaruam. ***Staging:*** See *Kirkuk* for examples of native nomad tribes.

Metamorphs (M): Similar to Adaptors.

Mule [Donkey] (B): ***Location:*** Throughout Ylaruam. ***Staging:*** Common pack animal.

Mummy (X): See Undead.

Mystic (M): ***Location:*** In remote desert monasteries. ***Staging:*** These may be introduced to the campaign as variants of Dervishes (see *The Way of Al-Kalim*). These monastic True Believers study science, water, magic, the stars, and pacifist combat skills.

Ooze, Lava (M): ***Location:*** Strongholds of Magian Fire Worshippers. ***Staging:*** Guardians or servants of the Magians.

Orc (B): ***Location:*** Foothills of Altan Tepes. ***Staging:*** Raiders of Dythestenian highlands.

Pegasus (X): ***Location:*** Regions of the upper air. ***Staging:*** Sought as mounts by high-level heroes. (See *The Golden Bridle*).

Phantom (CM): See Undead.

Phoenix (M): ***Location:*** Plane of Fire. ***Staging:*** A phoenix is known to have accompanied Al-Kalim on several of his adventures. These ancient creatures are generally wise and reserved, but extremely inquisitive, and may be persuaded to join any extraordinary quest that promises a unique adventure.

Plasm (CM): ***Location and Staging:*** Found as guardians of sorcerers or treasures, or as servants of Magians Fire-Worshippers.

Pterodactyl (X1): See Reptile, Giant.

Purple Worm (X): ***Location and Staging:*** Typical wilderness encounters.

Reptile, Giant: ***Location and Staging:*** Typical wilderness encounters.

Roc (X): ***Location:*** Mountain regions bordering Ylaruam. ***Staging:*** Ancient Alasiyan heroes were said to have ridden rocs as mounts. A roc's egg is valuable beyond imagining. Mountain travelers may be attacked if they stray near a roc's nest. (See *Kirkuk* and *Tales*, "The Valley of Serpents.")

Salamanders, Flame (X, CM): ***Location and Staging:*** Found occasionally on the Prime Plane as servants and allies of the Magian Fire Worshippers.

Scorpion, Giant (X): ***Location and Staging:*** As wilderness encounters or guardians of sorcerers and treasures.

Skeleton (B): See also Undead.

Snake (B): ***Location and Staging:*** As wilderness encounters or guardians of sorcerers and treasures.

Snake, Giant: ***Location and Staging:*** Common guardians of sorcerers and treasures. See *Tales*, "The Valley of Serpents."

Spectre (X): See Undead.

Sphinx (M): ***Location and Staging:*** May occasionally be encountered in the wilderness, as companions or servants of sorcerers, or as guardians of treasure.

Spider, Giant (B): ***Location and Staging:*** As wilderness encounters or guardians of sorcerers and treasures.

Spirit (CM): See Undead.

Thugs (M): ***Location:*** Remote regions of the Emirate of Abbashan. ***Staging:*** This cult of fanatic True Believers is of the Kin faction. They specialize in assassination, kidnapping, and extortion, and are aiding Abbashani rulers in their ambition to overthrow the Preceptor faction and establish the Kin faction as rulers of Ylaruam.

Triceratops (X1): See Reptile, Giant.

Trolls (X): ***Location:*** Foothills of Altan Tepes. ***Staging:*** Raiders of Dythestenian highlands.

Tyrannosaurus (X1): See Reptile, Giant.

Undead (B, X, CM, M): ***Location:*** In tombs of long-dead Nithian aristocracy or as servants or allies of Magian Fire Worshippers. ***Staging:*** The ancient Nithian sorcerers were masters of the necromantic arts. In attempting to reestablish the Kingdom of Nithia, the Magians have summoned forth many undead beings from that vanished civilization.

Undine (CM): ***Location:*** Plane of Water. ***Staging:*** May be sought by PCs questing for aid in realizing Al-Kalim's Dream of the Garden in the Desert.

Wights (B): See Undead.

Wraith (X): See Undead.

Yellow Mold (B): ***Location and Staging:*** Found in ancient tombs and as guardians of ancient treasures.

Zombie (B): See Undead.

Treasure Hunting in the Emirates

This chapter contains three sections: *Legend Lore*, a system for determining how much information characters may know about a legendary magical treasure, *Staging Traps and Curses on Treasures*, physical and magical obstacles that must be overcome by treasure hunters, and *Fabled Treasures of Ylaruam*, descriptions of famous and obscure magical items, with suggestions for featuring these items in your Ylaruam campaign.

Legend Lore

Storytellers may know something about these treasures of Ylari legend. Roll percentiles, add the character's storytelling rating, subtract for any Obscurity Penalty, then refer to the Legend Lore chart.

Obscurity Penalty: Each treasure is coded according to how obscure its legend is. The four levels of obscurity correspond to the four major levels of D&D® game play: Basic, Expert, Companion, and Master.

Key To Obscurity Codes

Code	Penalty	Description
B	None	Commonly known (popular tales, Basic Levels)
X	−20	Limited currency (scholarly tales, Expert Levels)
CM	−40	Obscure (great mysteries, Companion)
M	−60	Unknown (artifact, Masters)

LEGEND LORE CHART

1-99: Never heard of item.
100-119: Has heard of the item, but doesn't

know the story.

120-139: Has heard of the item, has a *vague* idea of its magical powers or purpose.

140-159: Knows the outlines of the story (without names, places, and episodic details), and has a fair idea of its powers.

160-179: Knows the story of the item in detail, but not enough to connect it to the real events and locales on which the story is based.

180+: Knows the story in fine detail, and in INT - 1d20 weeks he can research the story enough to track down the real history of the item. *The character must have access to a large library like those possessed by nobles and rulers with literary interests or by large sanctuaries or monastic retreats. The DM makes the 1d20 roll secretly, so the player doesn't know how many weeks the research might take, or whether it will be successful. If the 1d20 roll = INT, the character already knows the real history of the item. If the 1d20 roll > INT, the character either cannot track down the real history, or tracks down an incorrect or misleading "real" history in 1d20 weeks.*

Staging: Treasure hunting is a popular way to get rich and famous in the Emirates. Humble adventurers and wealthy sultans are always interested in travelers and storytellers' tales of lost cities, ancient artifacts, magical rings and lamps, hidden trapdoors, robbers' caches, and other fabulous treasures.

Stories of these treasures can be used to initiate adventures in several ways.

1. A sultan or wealthy noble hears of a mysterious treasure and organizes an expedition under a trusted advisor to search for the fabled item.

2. PCs check with local storytellers for possibly profitable legends to explore (much as PCs often hang around taverns listening for rumors).

3. Hints of legends are introduced by NPCs during other adventures as asides or digressions. If the PCs are interested, when the current adventure ends, they may decide to look into these hints as potential adventures.

Legend lore can also be used by PCs to reckon the significance of items they have discovered or encountered in the course of an adventure. A successful legend lore check may enable a PC to recognize an obscure item for the magical treasure it is, and may give hints as to how it works—valuable information when the PC is in desperate straits and has no time to run to the local sage for an exhaustive study of the treasure.

The legend lore chart is also a guideline for judging how much help an NPC sage can be when PCs present an item for his examination.

Staging Traps and Curses on Treasures

Treasures are seldom obtained without confronting a series of physical or magical traps and guardians that protect them. Here are some ideas about the kinds of traps to be found on Ylari treasures.

Magical Curse: The most popular trap on individual items is the magical curse. Assume that all magical items of any value have some sort of magical curse upon them.

The curse should be triggered either whenever the item is touched or when the item is used for a purpose specifically prohibited by the magical curse. The nature of the curse may be as the clerical spell *curse* (the reverse of *remove curse*), or preferably may be a product of the DM's perverse and unfettered imagination. Common curse effects include:

* The victim feels pain like a wound rubbed in salt; lose 1d3 hit points per round held.
* The victim *polymorphs* into a beast —an ape, a mule, or a goat, for example.
* The item cries out the real or imagined sins of the character to any nearby audience.
* The item disappears if the proper command word is not spoken.
* An efreet or invisible stalker comes to punish the unauthorized user.
* The victim is struck with a disease.
* The victim is ensorcelled (mind-wiped, hypnotized, or possessed by a demon).

Physical Traps: Physical traps may be placed upon the treasure itself or may be a series of deadly devices blocking access to the treasure.

Physical traps on the treasure often involve poisoned spines or contact poisons, but an identifying mark or distinctive feature may also be a trap. For example, if the Sultan's seal is somewhere on an item, or if a bauble can be identified as belonging to the emir's wife, discovery of the item on the PC's person or among his possessions could be as deadly as any poison.

Deadly devices include the standard array of pit traps, sliding doors, set spears, triggers that release fierce beasts, collapsing ceilings, and so on. A less obvious "trap" is providing a false or minor treasure to decoy the treasure-hunter from real treasure.

Guardians: Normal and magical monsters are common treasure guardians. Normal or magical serpents, giant or in profusion, are common beastly guardians. Efreeti and living statues are typical magical guardians.

A nice touch is to make each magical guardian a minor treasure in itself. For example, before the door to the treasure room stands a golden statue of giant serpent with glittering adamantine teeth and coppery scales that reflect light like tiny mirrors. When the PCs enter, the serpent animates and attacks. When slain, the purple gore of the serpent is transformed to a healing elixir, the teeth are transformed to jewels, and the scales may be used to fabricate a magical scale armor with marvelous properties.

Fabled Treasures of Ylaruam

The following treasures are known through the tales and legends of Ylaruam. Each entry gives a brief background of the item; the DM should embellish upon this skeletal background according to the details of his campaign and in the time-honored tradition of exaggeration in storytelling.

Each entry also offers suggestions for adventures featuring the magical treasure. Many items tie in with other adventure elements described elsewhere in the Gazetteer so cross-references are provided.

The Carnelian Idol (X): This magical idol is a small griffin carved in a red gemstone. When it is touched, the victim's mind is filled with murmuring voices which compel it to march off into the wilderness in search of its master.

Its master is a long-dead wizard of a long-dead civilization. The idol will lead the victim to a ruined dwelling or city where other treasures may be found. But the victim cannot resist the impulse to go immediately. This treasure is often found in the hands of a corpse that marched immediately out into the desert without proper preparations, or glittering in the sands where it was dropped by its last victim, who is now bones scattered and covered by the dunes.

Staging: *The Carnelian Idol may be buried in the treasure vault of the ruins of an ancient Thyatian fort in the village of Kirkuk. (See Kirkuk Scenario Ideas, The Ruined Fort.)* The Idol's location may be traced through the last owner, the noted Thyatian mage Moracles who died in the destruction of the fort. Records of the mage's possessions are available through the Mage's Guild of Thyatis, and Moracles' death in the defense of Kirkuk is mentioned in several tales of Al-Kalim's campaign against the Thyatian overlords.

The Lizardskin Bed (M): A surface of sewn lizardskin stretched over an ancient wooden frame inscribed with curious runic engravings and glyphs. Crafted by a lizardman priest of an ancient lizardman race, this item is buried in the sacred tomb beneath the waters of the

Well of the Faithful Prophet in Kirkuk. (See *Lizardman Undead*, *The Poisoned Well*, and *The Enchanted Cucurbits of Al-Kalim*.) Through this device, the lizardman priesthood demonstrated their alliance against the assaults of Death, establishing their divine prerogatives while maintaining their control over the rulers of the lizardman empire.

Magnitude: Lesser Artifact		
Sphere: Entropy (Death)		
Powers: PP 125		
D1	*Cure Disease*	20
D1	*Cure Wounds, Serious*	25
D1	*Raise Dead*	60
A2	*Charm Person*	20

Activation: To activate, the blood of a reptile must be poured on the bed.

Use of Powers: Once activated, the bed will automatically cure a diseased being, heal an injured being, or raise a dead being. The being is also automatically charmed and subjected to the will of the owner of the bed.

Handicaps:

1. Those cured, healed, or raised by the bed will begin to become a lizardman in three months. Process is gradual, may be arrested by a *remove curse*, and removed by a *dispel magic* (versus a 20th level caster).

2. The owner of the bed similarly begins to become a lizardman when the bed is first used. He also begins to lose his memory of the present and begins to assume the identity of the lizardman wizard who originally created the artifact. This process may be arrested or removed as above, but the owner saves vs. the *remove curse* and *dispel magic* as a 20th level magic user. The owner does *not* want the transformation halted or removed, and resists any such attempts with all his abilities.

Penalties: The owner cannot recall human speech or use spell-casting or combat abilities during trances. Trances last 1d6 turns and are triggered by any hit point loss. To resist the trance, the owner may save vs. spells in the first month of transformation, with a −4 penalty in the second month, and a −8 penalty in the third month.

Staging: *This artifact is most likely of interest to evil magic users who are not aware of its undesirable effects. Foreign magic-users familiar with the primitive lizardmen ancestors still living in the D&D® world may have learned of this artifact's presence through ancient lizardman racial legends. If the lizardmen are awakened from their deathsleep, the lizardman undead wizard who originally created the object may try to raise himself and his followers from death using the Lizardskin Bed.*

The Magic Lamps (X): Rubbing the lamps summons an efreet. The DM secretly makes a saving roll vs. spells for the summoning character. If the save fails, the efreet is free to ignore or attack the summoner. If the save succeeds, the efreet is forced to perform one service for the summoner. If the save fails, the efreet pretends to serve, then betrays or attacks its unwary "master," and spirits the lamp away to prevent further unwanted summons. However, if the summoner's request suits the efreet's purposes or sense of humor, the efreet may serve regardless of the save result.

Staging: *Al-Kalim bound a number of efreeti in these lamps during his adventures. Hints to the locations of these lamps may be found in popular legends and in references in the Nahmeh.*

The Sparkling Spear (X): This device was crafted for Farid when he accompanied Al-Kalim on his quests to other planes. On the Prime Plane it is a *spear +4* vs. efreet and other denizens of the Plane of Fire (+6 if wielded on the Plane of Fire). It has the *see invisible* power (*Expert Rulebook*, page 60), and it sparkles with a dazzling light whenever a denizen of the Plane of Fire approaches within 300 feet. This is a well-known item on the Plane of Fire from the exploits of the mighty Al-Kalim, and most denizens of the Plane of Fire fear and respect its wielder.

Staging: *This famous historical device was stolen from the Archives of the University of Ylaruam several decades ago. The thieves, Magian Fire Worshippers, have removed it to a hidden sanctuary in the Nithian highlands, where they intend to use it in quests on the Plane of Elemental Fire. Reports of its location may come from travelers or denizens from the Plane of Fire (where the spear has been used recently by Magians), or from the prophecies of True Believing clerics.*

Dendan Oil (B): The dendan is a great fish that lives in the sea off the Emirates' coast. Legend says that this fish may be slain by a shout from a human. This legend is false. The oil of this fish is as a potion of *water breathing*, and is a treasure much-valued by those who would emulate Al-Kalim's pilgrimage to the Old Man of the Sea.

Staging: *The magical powers of dendan oil are common knowledge among storytellers and alchemists. Dendan (whales) are occasionally sighted by seamen, but only the northmen hunt these leviathans which crush ships with a flip of their tails. Arrows and lances mean little to these sea monsters, but a doughty crew and shrewd adventurers might be able to capture or kill a dendan by sorcerous means.*

The Golden Bridle (CM): This beautiful magical bridle, encrusted with gems and fine gold filigree, was crafted for Al-Kalim. A pegasus will faithfully serve whomever presents this bridle, so long as the owner is virtuous and honorable. If the owner performs an evil or dishonorable act, the pegasus will desert his former master, taking the bridle with him.

Staging: *Seek this bridle in the Temple of the Moon, a splendid palace in the cloudworlds where pegasi and other fabulous creatures of the air abound. Legends say that the worthy hero must sail by moonbeams to the temple, and that only the Old Man in the Sea knows how such a marvelous ascent might be made.*

The Magic Tunic (CM): This elegant embroidered tunic was created by a master craftsman and wizard for a sultan. Its power is to reveal the silhouette of one's perfect mate. The tunic was stolen from the craftsman by the sultan's jealous vizier, who subsequently disappeared.

Staging: *The lovesick sultan sends the PCs to seek the fugitive vizier and recover the tunic. The vizier could have gone anywhere—a remote province, to the court of a rival noble, or to a distant land. This is a sneaky excuse to send PCs on an exciting grand tour of Ylaruam and neighboring lands, and, if the PCs are successful, a good excuse to elevate the PCs to the nobility through the sultan's gratitude.*

The Brass Horsemen (CM): These brass golems were created by the ancient race of the City of Brass as guardians and guides. They serve those who know the command words; all others are attacked on sight. Only by learning the command words and finding a Brass Horseman can one visit the fabled City of Brass, for the Horseman can be commanded to guide its master to the City and protect him on his journey. (See *Adventures in Ylaruam* for further details on the City of Brass.)

Staging: *A number of adventurers and wandering nomads have encountered the Brass Horsemen in the Valley of Death; those who have fled survived and may be willing to sell their knowledge or accompany the party for a portion of the booty.*

Learning the command words is another matter. It is said that the command words are written on the golems themselves, but getting close enough to find out may be very dangerous. The djinni and efreeti are also said to know the language of the City of Brass, and are familiar with the marvels of the wilderness. Perhaps they have read the words on the Brass Horsemen, and may be convinced to reveal them.

The Magic Saddlebags (B): Recently a poor

fisherman of the Nithian coastal plain drew in a sealed lamp with his net. He opened the sealed lamp and freed a djinn, who rewarded him with these saddlebags, from which may be drawn a sumptuous feast three times daily. The quality of the food is said to have been fit for a sultan.

Staging: *The PCs are hired by a noble and given a substantial sum to purchase this item from the fisherman. The PCs discover the identity and residence of the fisherman (through the Vouchery of Taxation, storytellers, local gossips), and visit him, to be told that the youngest son of the fisherman has stolen the bags and disappeared. The fisherman and his wife plead with the PCs to find their boy, to tell him to return, and all will be forgiven.*

The boy, a nitwit, boasts and shows his treasure wherever he goes, thereby leaving a trail anyone could follow. A group of scruffy bandits not much smarter than gully dwarves overhear his boasts, and do manage to follow and kidnap the boy, who is now being held at the bandit's stronghold until he can be persuaded to reveal the command words for the saddlebags.

The PCs should scourge the evil and lackwitted bandits, rescue the wayward son and saddlebags, returning them to the fisherman, purchase the saddlebags from the fisherman for a princely sum, and present the saddlebags to their employer and receive generous praise and reward.

The Ionian Gems (X): The 3rd Century Thyatian mage Macrodorus gave to each of his six most trusted retainers an enchanted gem. These gems have the following powers: *healing* and *ESP* (as the extraordinary powers of magical swords, *Expert Rulebook*, page 60), and spell turning (as with the magical ring, *Expert Rulebook*, page 62). Those possessing the gems can also speak telepathically with other gem holders at will (range: 1000 miles).

Macrodorus owned the master gem with similar powers, and the further ability to *charm* the bearers of the other gems at will, thereby insuring their loyalty.

Three of Macrodorus' retainers perished in the defense of the Thyatian colonies eight centuries ago and their gems were lost. Macrodorus was executed for treason in the 4th Century; his effects were confiscated by the Emperor for the national treasury. The three surviving retainers disappeared to avoid being connected with Macrodorus' treason.

Recently Macrodorus' master gem was traced by Polybius, one of the Emperor's Ministers of Sorcery, and stolen from the Treasury. Polybius is experimenting with the master gem, and hoping to reassert the gem's power over the bearers of the other gems.

Staging: *Three Ylari currently possess the gems: an adventurer (perhaps a PC) who knows the basic powers of the gem and uses them, a sorcerer, lecturer at the University of Ylaruam and member of the Council of Preceptors, who knows the powers of the gem, but does not use them, and the son of an emir, who knows nothing of the power of the gem, which is set in his personal dagger.*

Suddenly these three men begin to behave strangely. One disappears. One behaves bizarrely, murmuring of hearing voices, is judged insane and incarcerated. One is accused of treason and imprisoned.

A stranger from Thyatis appears. He claims to understand the mystery of these gems, since he has owned one himself. He tells the story of Macrodorus, Polybius, and the master gem. The gems must be located and destroyed, or Polybius will obtain control of their bearers and bend them to his will.

Unfortunately, the missing gems have disappeared. The stranger is slain mysteriously. The PCs must either locate the gems and destroy them, or, better yet, find Polybius and destroy the master gem.

This can become a complex web of intrigue, with parties of various motivations and alignments competing to recover the Ionian gems and the master gem. Polybius and the master gem may be in Thyatis, or they may be in Ylaruam with three other gem-bearers.

The Gold Seal Ring of Al-Kalim (CM): This ring, crafted by the dwarves and enchanted by a Makistani sorcerer, was used by Al-Kalim to confine unruly efreet in containers. The efreet must enter the container at the ring bearer's command; if the container is immediately sealed, and the seal ring pressed into the seal, the efreet cannot leave the container until the seal is broken.

Efreeti know of this great seal ring, and greatly fear being confined in a bottle. To avoid confinement, they will often offer to serve the ring bearer. The terms of service offered depend on the shrewdness and insincerity of the efreet, who are treacherous and malevolent servants.

Staging: *The Seal Ring is in the possession of the Council of Preceptors. It may be loaned to righteous heroes in times of national or spiritual crisis, or for specially-sanctioned pilgrimages. Those who must quest on the Plane of Fire may be loaned this device to permit them to bargain with any efreeti they encounter.*

The Magian Fire Worshippers want this device, and might steal it, or ambush and kidnap its bearer. This desecration of a holy heirloom would justify a summons to arms for any True Believers.

The Yellow Kohl (B): Kohl is a greasy pigmented eye makeup. An evil alchemist has discovered a formula that turns metals into gold and he has concealed it by fashioning it and its container to resemble a woman's makeup case. The strategem backfired on him; an apprentice in his shop mistook the substance for real kohl, and sold it to a woman.

Staging: *An alchemist hires the PCs to recover a makeup case he says was stolen from him. The money is exceptionally good but the alchemist explains that the makeup was a secret formula that is his special stock in trade, and that it is quite valuable to him. A terrified and bruised apprentice stutteringly gives the PCs a detailed description of the woman, her clothing, her accent, and the makeup case.*

The woman can be traced by asking around town. When located, she insists she bought the case for another man, who hired her to buy a makeup case of a specific description from the alchemist. She claims she never saw the man before, or since, and that he paid her 200 dinars, when she only paid 2 dinars for the makeup.

A sorcerer has learned from one of the alchemist's apprentices (a paid informant) about the metals-to-gold research and the Yellow Kohl. He hired this woman to buy the makeup. Now the sorcerer is busily trying to recreate the alchemical formula from the study of the kohl.

The gold produced by this kohl is cursed, causing its possessor to become obsessed about gold, to obtain it and hoard it.

Several scenarios might develop from this background:

1. The PCs track down the sorcerer, recover the kohl, return it to the alchemist, and get paid. They never learn of its special properties.

2. They smell something fishy about the alchemist and investigate him. They discover his unspeakable alchemical research, and have him arrested for black magic. They may or may not pursue the yellow kohl and the sorcerer.

3. They track down the sorcerer, who tells them what the kohl really does, and offers to cut them in on the deal. They go for the deal, get paid in cursed gold, and are real sorry, or they recover the kohl in spite of the sorcerer, then return and righteously inquire why the alchemist lied to them. If they aren't satisfied by his answers, they may go back to Scenario 1.

(Alternate version of the magical kohl: smearing the substance on your eyes permits you to view adjacent elemental planes as an ethereal character views the Prime Plane.)

The Bead of Oblivion (M): Each of the facets of this bead has a power that suppresses, erases, or discourages recall of the Nithian Empire's dark sorceries, worships, and necromancy. Those who pass within 12 miles of this device make a save vs. spells at a -20 penalty or all knowledge of the Nithian Empire is forgotten.

A team of Immortals placed this major artifact deep beneath the earth in the ruins of the Nithian royal catacombs near Surra-Man-Raa. The device was created at great expense of power by The Old Man of the Sea, The Gnoll, and Zephyr, dedicated Immortals who wished to reestablish the balance disturbed by the direct interference of Thanatos (and his secret ally Corona) in the affairs of the Nithian Empire.

Staging: *Detail this device only when your player characters are ready to challenge the Immortals. This device is the objective of two major campaign villains: the Magians, who wish to reestablish the fire elemental worship and necromantic arts of the Nithian Empire, and Barimoor the Alphatian exile, who seeks the device as part of his quest for Immortality on the Path of the Paragon.*

The Immortals who placed this item may involve PCs in defending the device against agents of these two villains. The PCs usually will not be informed about the device they are protecting. The knowledge cannot be of use to them, and there's no need to risk the information falling into enemy hands.

The Celestial Planisphere (CM): This lesser artifact permits viewing and communication with the elemental planes and outer planes as a crystal ball permits viewing and communication on the Prime Plane. The viewer may speak with those viewed, but item is cursed. On a saving throw vs. spells at a -10 penalty, viewing or speaking with another plane causes a calamity in that plane such as an earthquake, flood, firestorm, or tornado that causes frightful damage both on the target plane and on the plane of the viewer.

Staging: *Every campaign should have at least one magical device that is nothing but trouble. This device is totally boobytrapped. PCs who fool with it find themselves in the kind of trouble that provides a DM with weeks of adventure hooks.*

The Celestial Planisphere resides in the remote wilderness tower among the magical treasures of Istakhr, a powerful but eccentric Makistani sorcerer. Only high-level characters can penetrate the bizarre magical defenses and confront the weird guardians summoned from distant planes.

Once inside, the PCs discover that Istakhr is away. They are free to roam around and meddle in the affairs of wizards. If a character touches the Planisphere, it activates, establishing contact with someone on another plane, and probably causing a terrible calamity on both planes.

The tower is a mess. Istakhr is terribly annoyed, but graciously allows the PCs to make good by doing him a little favor. If they survive the little favor, the offended parties on the other plane are equally annoyed, and have no trouble thinking up little favors they want done in compensation. This could keep the characters busy for quite a while.

And if they do manage to steal the Celestial Planisphere, Barimoor's agents find out, and come looking for it. (See the Barimoor essay in the Kirkuk *Important NPCs* section.)

Tales for Ylari Adventures

The following ideas may be developed into adventures in a Ylari campaign. The letter in parentheses following the title indicates a suggested character experience level, but many adventures may be adapted to higher or lower level characters.

Aladdin's Enchanted Cave (B)

A wicked Makistani sorcerer disguised as an elderly storyteller approaches the PCs with the tale of treasures hidden in a nearby cavern. "I can scarcely walk. I need young, strong people to carry the treasures through deep and difficult passages to the surface."

The PCs are taken to a concealed trapdoor in the wilderness. Something is scrawled in an unfamiliar language on the door, but the old man opens the door with ease after mumbling a few phrases—"...part of the legend, you know." The PCs descend into the caverns, and the old man closes the door behind them. The door is locked with sorcery and the PCs cannot escape! The old man promises to release them only if they bring him the following treasures. (Successive *knock* spells may open the door at your discretion.)

The caverns contain the following marvels:

* A room whose floor is paved with gold, diamonds glittering from the walls, and piles of gems everywhere. A beautiful woman beckons, her perfume filling your nostrils. If you enter the room, you pass out and awake outside the caverns. Two weeks have passed, and the old man is nowhere to be seen.
* A room with a pit of flame. In the center of the pit is a tree, it branches laden with gems. To harvest the gems you must devise a method to pass across the fire pit unharmed.
* An efreet bars a portal, behind which you see hundreds of men chained to the walls, and piles of gems on the floor. "You may only stay five minutes," the efreet says, "and you must each bring me a hundred gems, or I shall not let you leave." The imprisoned men cry piteously to be released.

If the PCs do as the efreet says, but do not free the prisoners, they each can escape with 1,000 dinars of gems, but they are cursed by the prisoners. If they relinquish the gems and free the prisoners, they become your loyal followers. With the help of their leader, a cleric, the PCs may escape past the efreet.

* The caverns are a complex maze. Unless the PCs mark their trail or map carefully, they become lost.
* A vast treasure room is enchanted. PCs who fail a save vs. spells become obsessed with greed, and refuse to leave unless they can bring every treasure with them. PCs must be overcome or tricked into leaving.
* A metal warrior with a red helmet stands before you. "None shall pass, but that he best me in a contest of arms." He may not be harmed by normal weapons, but water burns him as though it were fire. (The red helmet is a symbol of the Magian Fire Worshippers, and the guardian is a polymorphed minor fire elemental.)

Once the PCs have explored the caverns, they must escape. The sorcerer awaits at the only door, and refuses to open it unless they swear upon Al-Kalim to give him all the treasure they carry. Characters may employ guile, force, or magical items found within to overcome the sorcerer and escape.

The Valley of Diamonds (Any)

This valley is rumored to lie in the foothills of the Altan Tepes in the wilderness west of Ctesiphon. A legendary adventurer named Sinbad is said to have returned from that valley with a fortune in diamonds.

The valley itself is really a deep pit, surrounded by sheer cliffs. Below diamonds can be seen glittering in the sunlight, but a giant roc nests on a nearby peak, and is angered by the PCs' presence. The PCs must descend the cliffs while avoiding the attacks of the roc.

In the valley below, what appeared to be diamonds are apparently only glass-like stones. However, in the caves at the foot of the cliffs, a few real diamonds are found among the glass-like stones.

Deep within the caves lies a fortune in diamonds. Also within the caves lie numerous snakes of all kinds, and a race of giant serpents. The serpents are far too numerous and deadly to be overcome by a small party of low-

level characters.

However, also in one of the caves is an old man, driven insane from years of solitude. If the PCs are kind to him, he recovers, and reveals a hidden passage that permits the PCs to avoid most of the minor serpents. If they can overcome the great serpent in the central chamber, they can recover a fortune in diamonds. The PCs must then climb out of the valley, burdened by their treasure and by the feeble old man.

If they rescue him, the old man reveals that he is a deposed ruler of a nearby town, and offers to reward them with noble titles if they help him reinstate himself over his usurper.

A Bazaar Disturbance (B, X)

As the PCs make their way through the streets, they come across an elderly Makistani couple apparently arguing with an Alasiyan merchant. The Makistani are obviously bewildered, and speak only very poor Alasiyan. A crowd is gathering, and the merchant is raving, decrying the stupid foreigners who have "insulted him and wasted his time." In the confusion, the old Makistani man bumps into the merchant, who furiously hurls the old man to the ground. The crowd begins to kick the old man and beleaguer the woman.

Suddenly an Ethengar arian wizard stands protectively over the old man, his robes broadly proclaiming his sorcerous skills. The merchant is daunted, but his pride prohibits him from backing down. The Makistani are terrified, and crying out in their own tongue. The furious Ethengar arian apparently speaks no Alasiyan, but is obviously ready to unleash his deadliest spells at the slightest provocation.

Only the PCs intervention can prevent a deadly riot in which dozens might be slain. An injury to the Ethengar arian, a guest of an important noble, could precipitate a diplomatic crisis. The PCs may physically, magically, or verbally intervene. If they can prevent the Makistani from coming to further harm without touching off a riot, the PCs may obtain the friendship of the old couple and an important foreign sorcerer.

The Lake of Many Colors (X)

PCs traveling in the borderlands are overtaken by a mysterious storm. The wind howls, lights sparkle, the air is charged, and strange voices whisper in an unintelligible language. When the storm has passed, a shimmering lake, reflecting light in a rainbow of colors, has appeared before them. Across the lake is a tall tower.

The lake contains hundreds of fish of many colors, and they speak! They tell of their ruler, held captive by an evil sorceress in the tower. They beg the characters to free them and their ruler from the sorceress' enchantments.

The tower is filled with numerous minor guardians. In the dungeon a prince languishes, the lower half of his body turned to stone. He tells the characters about the sorceress living at the top of the tower (M8, specializing in the *polymorph* spell). If she can be slain or tricked into dispelling her enchantment on the half-stone prince, the lake turns into a small town, the fish into its inhabitants, and the prince generously rewards the PCs for their service.

The Tournament of Three Crowns (X, CM)

The Emir of Dythestenia, troubled by frequent reports of monster raids upon caravans and settlements in the southeastern highlands, orders his grand vizier to solve the problem, or lose his head. The grand vizier proposes establishing a series of strongholds along the caravan routes. To choose appropriate candidates to receive those strongholds and the glory and titles that go with them, the vizier proposes a great tournament. The three grand winners will each receive the grant of a stronghold.

An assortment of heroes and villains appear to compete in the tournaments. Only two other candidates, however, are the equals of the PCs. One is a young, but distinguished Knight of the Desert Rose, the other is a mysterious and apparently undefeatable stranger.

The tournament is staged so that at least one player character and the mysterious stranger win prizes of strongholds. The emir provides support and water magic for irrigation for the strongholds in return for which the new landholders pledge to protect the caravan routes, to build outposts and establish armed patrols against monster raids, and to provide military support in case of invasion by monsters or foreign nations. PCs can develop their strongholds according to the Expert tules, building fortresses and advertising for settlers and soldiers to defend their new realms.

In the meantime, the mysterious stranger is accused of treason and ordered to give up his stronghold. The stranger, a disguised Thyatian agent supported by a team of sorcerers, signs a treaty with the raiding monsters, claims sovereignty over his region in the name of the monster tribes, proclaims himself their protector, and brings east-west caravan traffic to a halt.

The emir orders the PCs to lay seige to the stranger's stronghold and execute the traitor. This may be staged as a combination military campaign (run with the War Machine or BATTLESYSTEM™ rules) and series of personal missions for player characters, such as an assault of the stronghold by stealth, an ambush of the monster generals, or an aerial attack on the team of sorcerers, for example.

The City of Brass (Any)

The Sultan summons the PCs and charges them with the mission of finding the fabled City of Brass. This city, once the most wealthy and powerful city in the world, was cursed by the Immortals because of the pride and vanity of its rulers and citizens.

First, a Brass Horseman must be located, and the command words discovered to engage his service. The Brass Horseman leads the PCs through a wasted wilderness, the land poisoned and barren, to a vast city, half-buried in the dust of the ages. The gates are shut and locked. Marble tablets are set in the walls next to the doors, admonishing men against the sin of pride. (These tablets, inscribed with the words of the legendary storyteller Suleiman-ibn-Nasir, are worth a fortune, and confer a +20 bonus for storytelling when the PCs return to the sultan.)

Spells cast upon the locked gate return against the caster as destructive spells of similar levels. A guardian spell at the top of the wall causes those who climb or fly over the wall to throw themselves to the ground outside the walls. Only the Brass Horseman can open the gates, and must be specifically so commanded.

Once inside the gates, a stone demon statue with closed eyes stands on a platform. Before the demon are scores of stone statues in various poses. The demon opens his eyes, and those who fail their saving throw turn to stone. If the stone demon is slain, the PC victims return to life, and the other statues turn to dust.

Throughout the great city no soul remains alive, but in the throne room of the palace, a beautiful enchantress waits. She gestures, and everything changes. The characters awake to a bustling city, full of people. They have traveled back in time. No one speaks their language or recognizes their unique garments. Only a sorcerer of the city can help them return to their time. As the sorcerer incants, he turns to dust and the throne room and the enchantress appear before them. She gestures and everything changes again.

The characters stand before the gates now. Statues to either side of the gates bear the faces of the characters. When the characters

touch the gates, they collapse. Inside is an impossible paradise of a lush green jungle and fierce beasts abiding peacefully with their normal prey. They are finally greeted by a talking lion, who takes them to the throne room where they see a beautiful enchantress. She gestures and everything changes again.

The characters awake before the gates they shattered at a touch. The jungle has withered, the ground is littered with skeletons, and gaunt men and women wander mindlessly to and fro, marked by the plague.

If the characters venture forth one more time into the city, they find in the throne room not a beautiful enchantress, but a giant serpent which is the true form of the being that guards the city. Around the serpent lies a fabulous treasure.

If the characters slay the serpent, they may loot the treasure and leave. When they return to civilization, however, the treasure turns to dust.

If they speak courteously with the serpent, it warns them of the sin of pride and presumption, and advises that the most valuable treasure is often hidden from proud eyes, and has the humblest appearance. This is a hint to search the throne room for a hidden treasure. A trapdoor beneath the serpent conceals a magical treasure. Unless the characters politely ask the serpent to move so they can search, they will miss the treasure.

The treasure is apparently a marvelous sword in a leather scabbard. The sword itself is only of modest value. The scabbard is actually the treasure. It is the scabbard of Al-Kalim's legendary Thunderbolt Sword. On command the scabbard causes the Thunderbolt Sword to appear and fight as a 20th level fighter.

The Dusky Land (CM)

The PCs investigate a disturbance in the desert. They come over a rise and see before them an incredible magical war. Wormholes flail about in the sky, spewing various denizens of the Elemental Plane of Fire across the landscape. Fell and noble beasts rend one another on the plain before the characters, as two armies of efreeti eye one another from opposite sides of the field, sending awesome magical bolts shrieking through the air to test one another's defenses. The ground dances and writhes as fields of force wash back and forth between the opposing forces.

Sensible characters are turning to flee when a small efreet arches over their heads, trailing smoke and squealing, and smashes into the ground on the slope behind them. The efreet gets up, brushes himself off, notices the characters, and gives them a crafty look. "You must be the heroes that Dahish was waiting for. Come on, it's a bad idea to keep His Worship waiting." If the PCs seem uncooperative, Khurt, their host, whistles up a squadron of efreet as an honor guard. The characters are taken directly across the battlefield. Khurt guards them from most of the special effects, but enough get through to make the characters thoughtful.

Khurt guides the characters to a vast pavilion behind the battle lines, waves, and leaves them with the efreeti guards. The guards mock and pester the characters, trying to get them to do something stupid. (If the PCs don't assert their rights and dignity, or at least get caught trying, they're in for rougher handling later.)

Finally a booming voice from within the pavilion bids them enter. The efreeti guards accompany them. If the characters endured their abuse passively, the guards push the characters around and scornfully announce, "Those heroes you were expecting, your Lordship. Yuk, yuk." If the characters challenged the efreeti guards for their discourtesy, the guards are almost respectful.

Dahish, the Duke of Fire, gets right to business. "There's a favor I'd like from you. I'd like you to humiliate my rival, Duke Gobro. I'm going to send you to his camp with a message. I want you to announce yourselves as Immortals in mortal form, that you're working for me, and that you're going to rip his head off if he doesn't immediately grovel before you and swear eternal allegiance to me, Duke Dahish."

The characters may protest. Dahish is very polite, but he insists on accepting the characters' generous offer to help him.

"Oh, and one more thing. To make his humiliation complete, after he has finished groveling, I want you to announce before all his vassals that you have been pulling his leg, that you are really just a measly bunch of mortals, but his oath of allegiance still stands, and his first order is to allow you clever humans is to walk out of his camp unharmed."

The characters may protest further. Dahish generously offers to repay them by doing them a favor someday, then he thanks them again for being so helpful, and suggests that they get moving before something unpleasant happens to them. "Dismissed!"

Khurt is right there, waiting to accompany them to the camp of Gobro. One false move and they're chin-deep in magical trouble.

This is actually a pretty simple job if the characters are brave enough. Gobro is scared to death of the Immortals, too dumb to realize that the Immortals would never be working for a measly elemental duke, and once he has sworn allegiance to Dahish, he knows he can't disobey his acknowledged master without risking the wrath of the Elemental Master of the Plane of Fire. However, Gobro will do his best to convince the characters that he's going to roast them, once he realizes how he has been had.

The Dead Place (Any)

The battle between Thanatos and the Immortal Guardians took place in a remote region of the Nithian highlands. In his desperate defense, Thanatos ripped open wormholes to dozens of planes and summoned his elemental allies. The place where the battle took place is now known only to the degenerate Nithian tribesmen. The Dead Place, as it is known in oral legends, is taboo. None may speak of or visit this place without risking the wrath of the Immortals. The Dead Place itself is in a rugged badlands swept by sand dunes. Occasionally the dunes shift to reveal the devastation wrought by the battle of Immortals. Fires, floods, earthquakes, and gales scoured the earth to bedrock, causing it to flow as water, burst into gas, shatter into fragments, then polish as smooth as glass by the wind-driven sands.

The center of the region is a great depression fused to glass by Immortal magics. Thanatos's opponents created this obsidian bowl to seal wormholes, cutting Thanatos off from his extraplanar allies. When the battle was finished, the vast glassy bowl served as a barrier against further extra-dimensional intruders. The depression has filled with sand and debris, but the rim is occasionally revealed by sand storms.

An expedition of Glantrian mages accompanied by native guides set out in secret to search for and study this fabled place. One survivor, a native bearer, made his way back to Surra-Man-Raa. "Call me Ismail. I alone am left to tell the tale." The Glantrian mages endeavored to pick at the scab that sealed the wound in the earth caused by the battle of Immortals. Things leaked out under an edge, and are still leaking.

The PCs are summoned to their destiny by a prophecy that sends them to Surra-Man-Raa in search of the storyteller Ismail. Ismail is a broken man, murmuring constantly of doom, the sin of pride, and folly of all human action, but he relates his tale, and may be persuaded to lead the PCs back to the Dead Place.

The journey may involve minor encounters with brigands, monsters, and Magians and their undead and elemental allies, but the main event is at the Dead Place, where ancient wormholes to various planes have begun to

leak under the edges of the glassy depression. Strange creatures and otherworldly beings have spilled out to roam the wilderness, and at the site powerful extra-planar menaces are preparing to rip the seal open completely, establishing a beachhead on the Prime Plane for an invasion of the D&D® game worlds.

That should keep your players busy for a couple of sessions.

The Pilgrimage of Al-Kalim (B, X, CM, M)

True Believers receive generous experience points awards for recreating elements of Al-Kalim's pilgrimage to seek a patron of the Sphere of Time in his quest for Immortality along the Path of Dynast. Here are several of the major episodes of his pilgrimage. Others may be improvised at will.

Founding of the Eternal University: To research the Paths of Immortality, Al-Kalim built the great Eternal University of Ylaruam, then traveled throughout the world and the planes of existence assembling a reference library, a staff of scholars, and myths and legends of the Immortals. Modern True Believers often adventure (or accompany other adventurers) to add to the university's knowledge and resources.

Research in the Magics and Artifacts of Water: Followers of Al-Kalim still search for new methods of bringing water to permit the cultivation of Ylaruam's desert wildernesses.

Seeking Gifts to Please Immortal Patrons: Al-Kalim presented magical artifacts, some of his own creation and some gathered in his adventures, to win the favor of his Immortal patron. His followers continue to search for and devise fabulous artifacts to assure the continued favor of the Old Man in the Sea.

Recreating Episodes in Al-Kalim's Actual Pilgrimage to the Old Man in the Sea: This is considered the ultimate devotion of the True Believers, and worth generous rewards of experience points and glory. Al-Kalim's adventures as described in the Nahmeh include the following:

* Al-Kalim sought the aid of the djinn in obtaining treasures from the Sky City of the Cloud Giants.

* To obtain directions to the retreat of his prospective patron, the Old Man in the Sea, Al-Kalim quested on the Plane of Water, aiding undines in a campaign against their enemies the Horde of the Plane of Earth.

* Al-Kalim voyaged with the northmen in search of the mighty dendan, whose oil confers the ability to breathe underwater. During the voyage, he faced sea serpents, pirates, and a deranged captain.

* Setting out in a small boat for the realm of his prospective patron, Al-Kalim faced tests presented by the Old Man in the Sea in the form of a hurricane and tidal wave, which left Al-Kalim shipwrecked on an uncharted isle until he contrived his rescue by a friendly djinn.

* Setting out to sea once again, Al-Kalim was attacked and captured by mermen, then borne away to the Undersea Kingdom, where he served as the slave of the King of Mermen. Al-Kalim earned the king's favor, and eventually his freedom, by commanding the king's mermen forces in the conquest of the Kingdom of Crabmen.

* With a party of mermen companions, Al-Kalim set out across the sea floor in search of the sea mount where the Old Man in the Sea was said to abide. After numerous adventures with monsters and denizens of the deep, Al-Kalim finally came to the foot of the Immortal's realm.

* After a series of encounters with guardians of the sea mount, Al-Kalim came at last into the presence of his prospective patron.

* The Old Man in the Sea proposed a series of tasks to test these aspects of Al-Kalim's character—honor and trustworthiness, dedication to the sphere of time and the element of water, resourcefulness in problem-solving, bravery, persistence in the face of adversity, mercy and charity of heart, and wisdom.

* After Al-Kalim completed all the tasks laid upon him, he returned to the sea mount, where his petition to seek Immortality on the Path of the Dynast was accepted with pleasure by his patron, the Old Man in the Sea.

Suggested Reading

Other D&D® Game System Supplements

Master of the Desert Nomads (X4) and *Temple of Death* (X5): The first two modules in the DESERT NOMADS series. Adventures are set in a culture similar to that of the Emirates, but at the opposite end of the continent.

Red Arrow, Black Shield (X10): This Expert campaign encompasses many of the nations of the D&D® game world using BATTLESYSTEM™/War Machine mechanics to handle the military campaign while PCs perform special diplomatic missions. War Machine statistics are given for many D&D® game nations. A giant color map of the D&D® Game World and wargaming counters are included.

The Lost City (B4): Lost civilization buried deep beneath the Valley of Death east of Parsa. (Does not include information on the Emirates.)

AD&D® Game System Supplements Easily Adapted to a Ylari Campaign

Pharaoh (I3), *Oasis of the White Palm* (I4), and *Lost Tomb of Martek* (I5): Modules 1, 2, and 3 in the DESERT OF DESOLATION series. These first-class adventures are easily adapted to a Nithian setting.

Day of Al'Akbar (I9): This adventure has a fine atmosphere and an especially nifty full-color fold-out map of an Emirates-like desert town.

Other Useful Game References

Holy Warriors, by Bill Hamblin. Great treatment of the cultures and history of the medieval Middle East of the Crusades. A good basic background reference.

Cities, by Stephen Abrams and Jon Everson. Tables for developing background details for villages, towns, and cities.

Tales of the Arabian Nights, by Eric Goldberg. A fantasy boardgame with storytelling elements based on the Tales of the Arabian Nights. A good source of fantasy role-playing adventure ideas.

Topics to Research at the Library

A great resource for role-playing game materials is the juvenile reference section of your public library. Books for kids are perfect for DMs and players because they are short, they have great pictures, illustrations, diagrams, maps, and other visual materials, and they deal with sensational subjects that we all find interesting, such as magic, warfare, the gods, and exotic and alien cultures.

Look in the card catalogues and browse in the stacks with these topics in mind:

Egyptians (for the Nithians)

Mongols (for the Makistani)

Arabs (for the Alasiyani)—also see Muslims and Persia

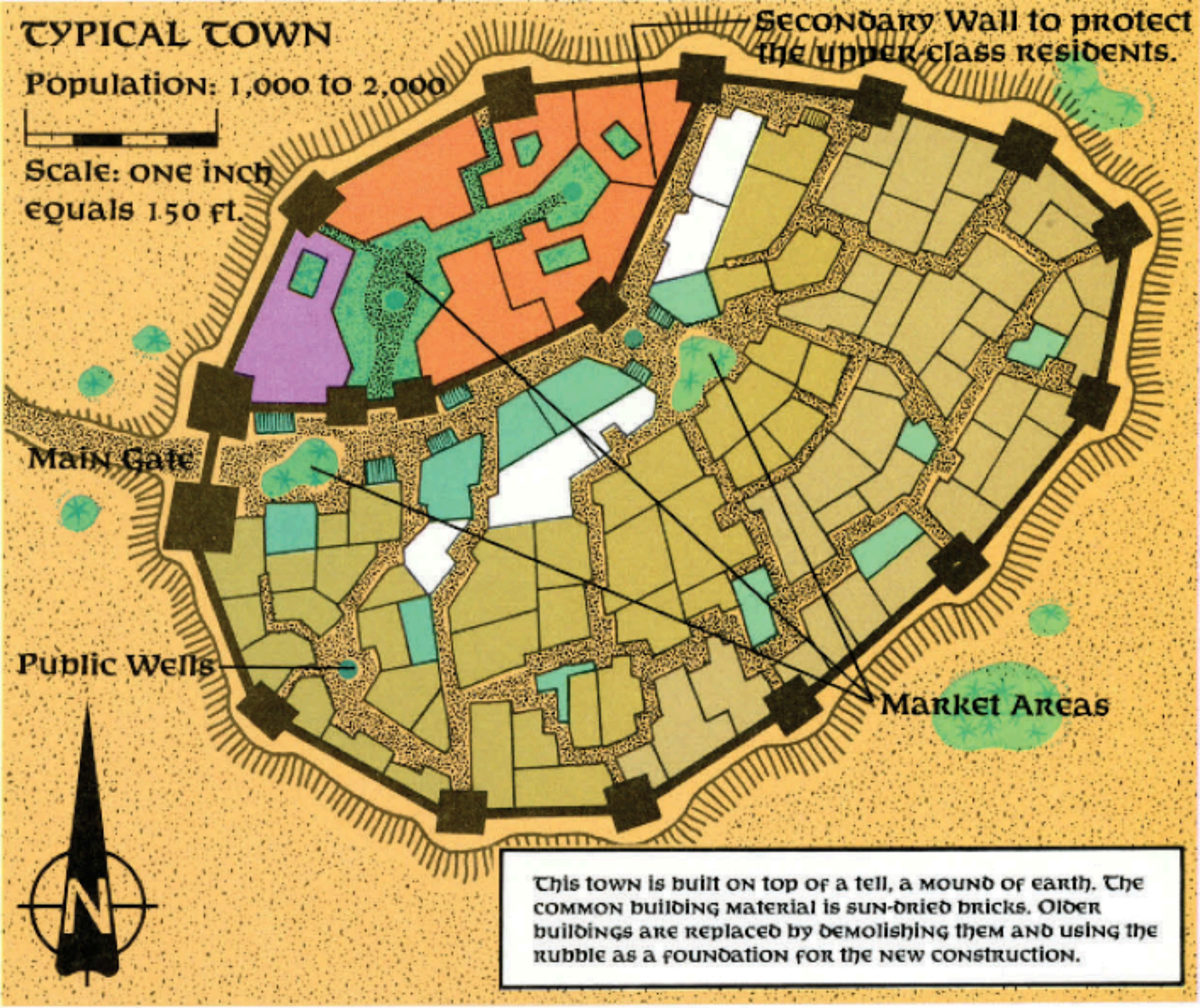
The Crusades (for knights and warfare in a setting like Ylaruam)

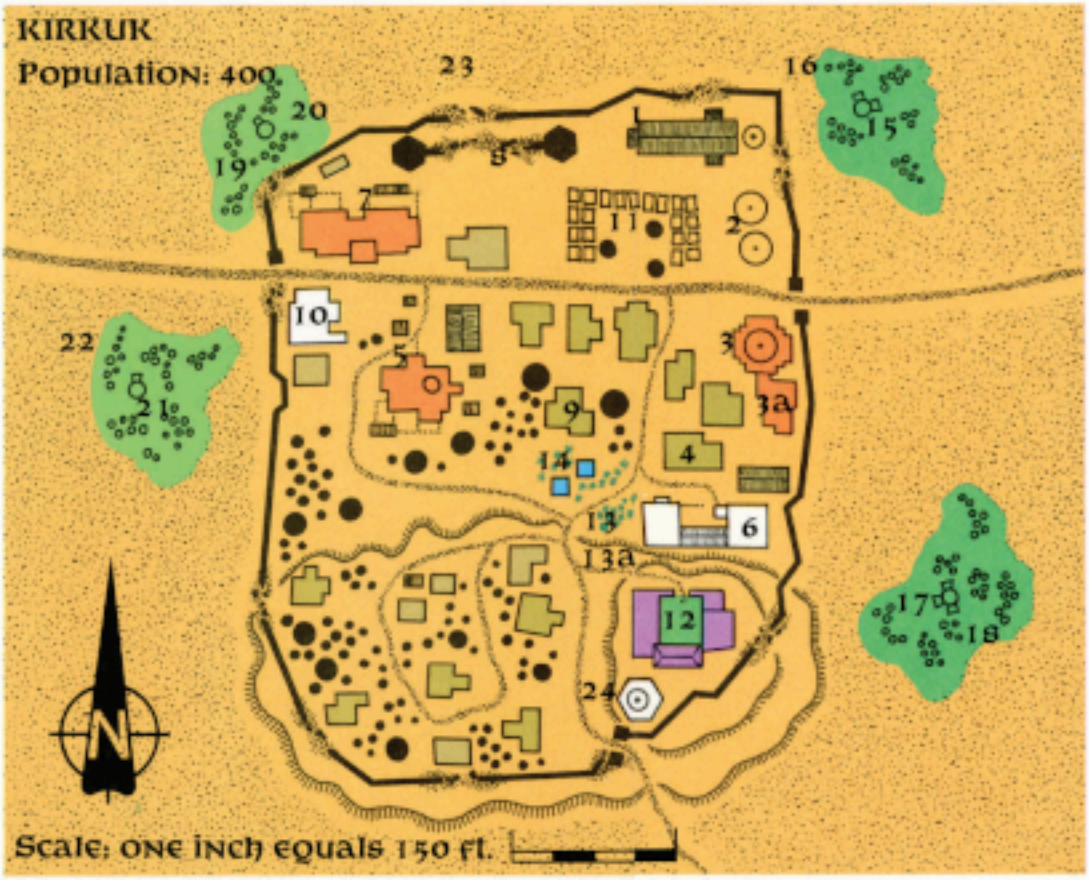
Deserts (for details of the desert environment)

One Last Suggestion

Frank Herbert's *Dune* series of science fiction novels have just the right flavor of desert warrior cultures, striking characters, and high-tech magical devices to adapt to fantasy role-playing adventures in Ylaruam.

THE CITY OF YLARUAM
Population: 20,000
Scale: one inch equals 400 ft.
Major north/south caravan route
Irrigation Canals
Stockades
Outer Wall
Artesian Lakes
Day Laborer Quarter
N
1. Palace and residence of the Caliph
2. Great Mosque of the Way of Eternal Truth
3. Dream of the Desert Garden University
4. Hospital and University Bimaristan
5. Shrine of Junayd
6. Palace of Zubaydah
7. Palace and Mosque of UmmJaFar
8. Palace of Umarah
9. Kazimayn Shrine
10. The Iron Gate
11. The Road of Bricks
12. Horse Market
13. Hay Market
14. Tanner Road
15. Mill Road
16. Coppersmith Road
17. Clothes Dyers Quarters
18. Butcher's Quarters
19. Cookmens Quarters
20. Clothes Merchants
21. Oil Merchants
22. Cotton House


TYPICAL TOWN
Population: 1,000 to 2,000
Scale: one inch equals 150 ft.
Secondary Wall to protect the upper-class residents.
Main Gate
Public Wells
Market Areas
N
This town is built on top of a tell, a mound of earth. The common building material is sun-dried bricks. Older buildings are replaced by demolishing them and using the rubble as a foundation for the new construction.



KIRKUK Scale: 1 inch = 200 feet

1. The Village Sheb: mill, storage and shelter for community agriculture; wood frame, thatch roof, tent sides.
2. The Granaries: tall stone towers where wheat is stored.
3. The Sanctuary of Abundant Dreams: contemplation, prayer, and religious deliberations.

3a. The Zawiya: hostel/dormitory of the Sanctuary

4. The Barber: herbalist, surgeon, scholar, storyteller, sorcerer, and barber.
5. Hospice of Habib-ibn-Ruhollah: large two-story inn with stable, smithy and armory.
6. Traveler's Rest (Tahir Al-Farouk): modest two-story inn with stable and smithy.
7. The Merchant's Caravansary: inn, warehouse, outfitter, stable, and smithy.
8. The Rubble: ruined Thyatin fort, built c.500, destroyed 829 by Al-Kalim. Twin towers remain. Stone scavenged for other village dwellings.
9. Brick and Stone (mason: Khaber al-Ghamil): home and shop.
10. Emirate Offices: Vouchers of Taxation, Water, and the Provinces.
11. Village Suq (market): twice weekly; wooden stalls with tent shelters.
12. Bayt Sabbam (the House of Sabbam, qabi of the Wahibah tribe): a modest palace, residence of Qabi Ramman al-Sabbam.
13. Well of the Faithful Prophet (grotto): sacred spring; flooded subterranean passage, apparently natural.

13a. The Caves: ancient catacombs.

14. Cisterns: purified water from grotto.
15. Camp of the Duru tribe.
16. Tent of Qabi Azeezeh ibn-Amar.
17. Camp of the Manahil tribe.
18. Tent of Qabi Mehmet al-Bechir.
19. Camp of the Ujman tribe.
20. Tent of Qabi Rezah al-Anouar.
21. Camp of the Humum tribe.
22. Tent of Qabi Urabi al-Hussein.
23. Ruined Wall: dates from Thyatin occupation, c. 500.
24. Watchtower: Thyatin; rebuilt and manned by the qabi.

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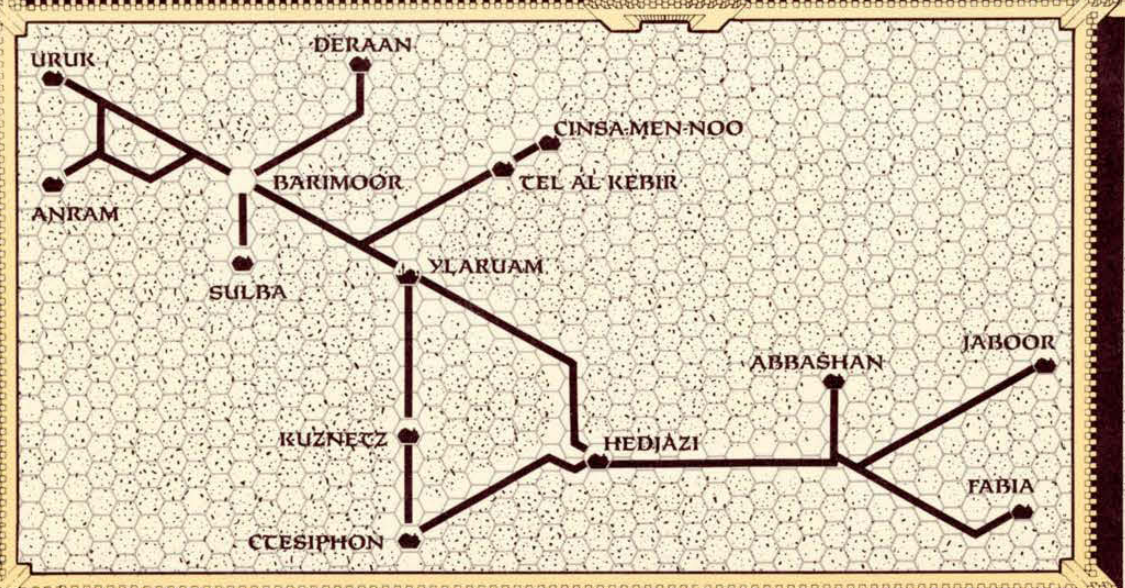
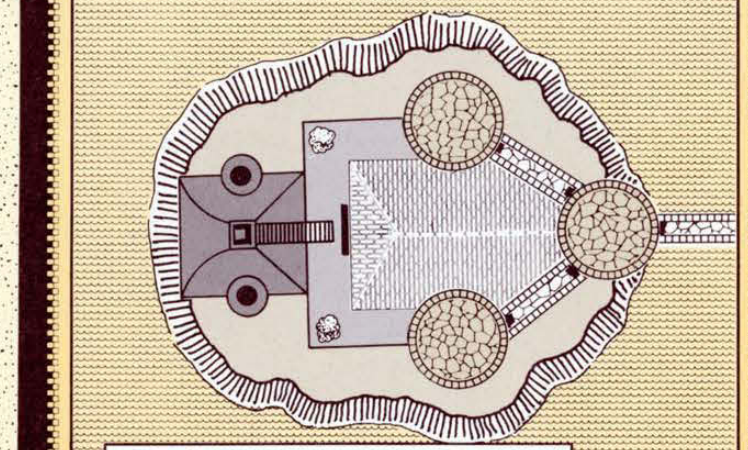
TAMERONIKAS
Population: 4,000
Scale: one inch equals 400 ft.
1. Palace of the Emir of Nicostenia
2. The Great Mosque
3. The Garden Gate
4. The Great Harbor
5. The Silver Gate
6. Palace of Kazimayn
7. Old Thyatian Fortifications in bad condition
8. Restored Fortification in good condition
9. Spice and Honey Market
10. Tanning and Dyeing Quarters
N

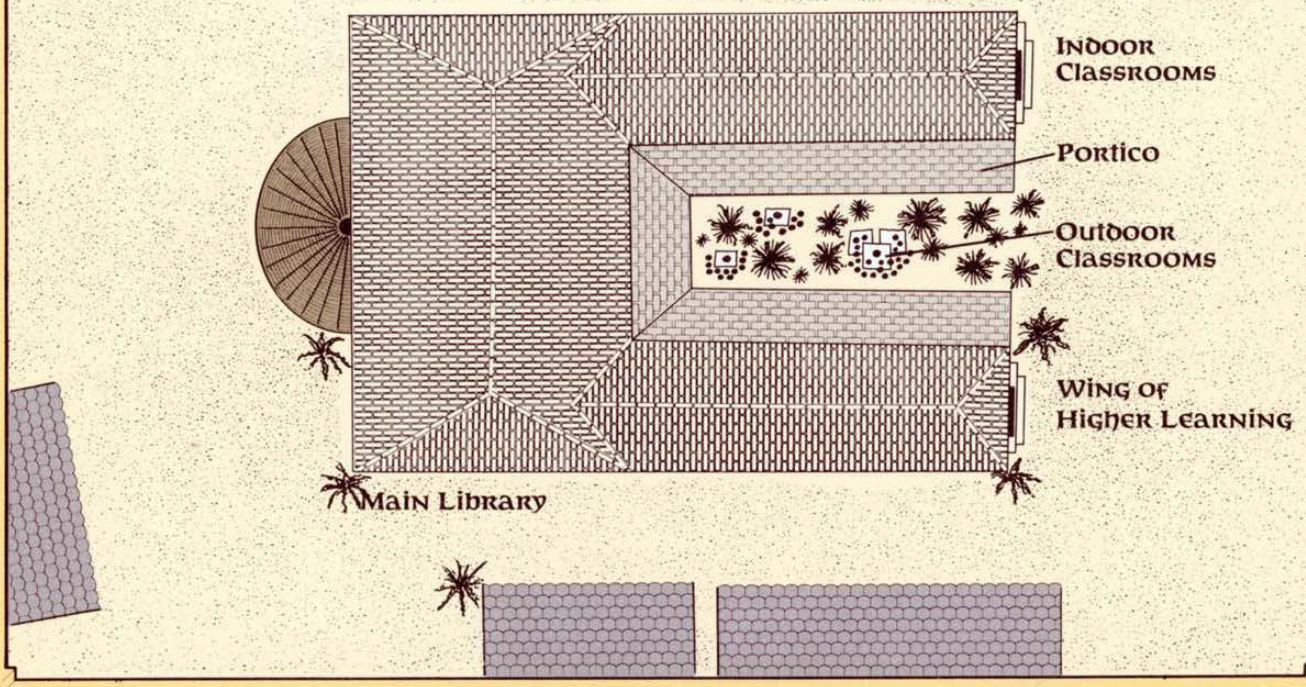


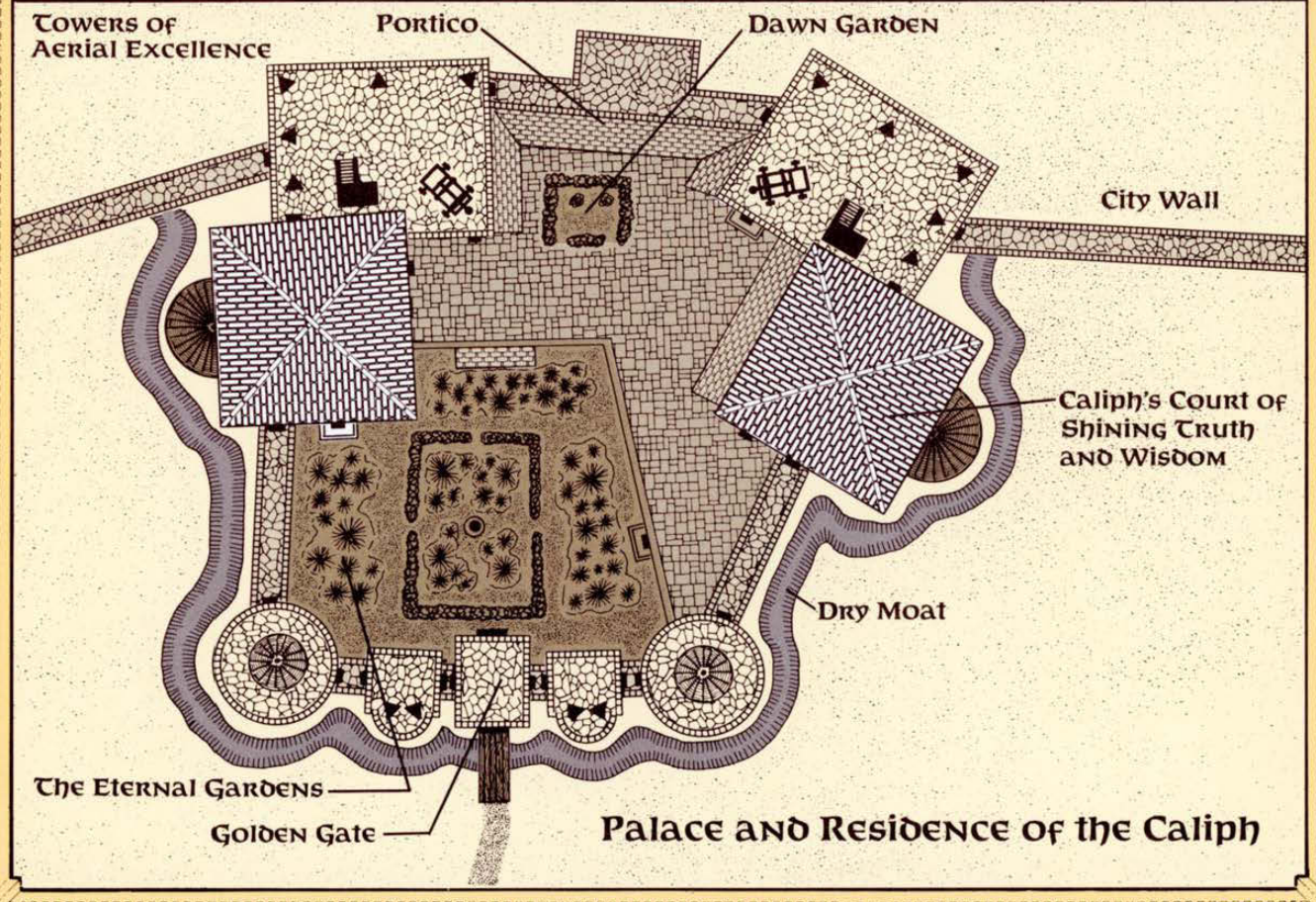
BARIMOOR'S UNDERGROUND COMPLEX



3. UNDERGROUND MINION DWELLINGS

Dream of the Desert Garden University





Palace and Residence of the Caliph

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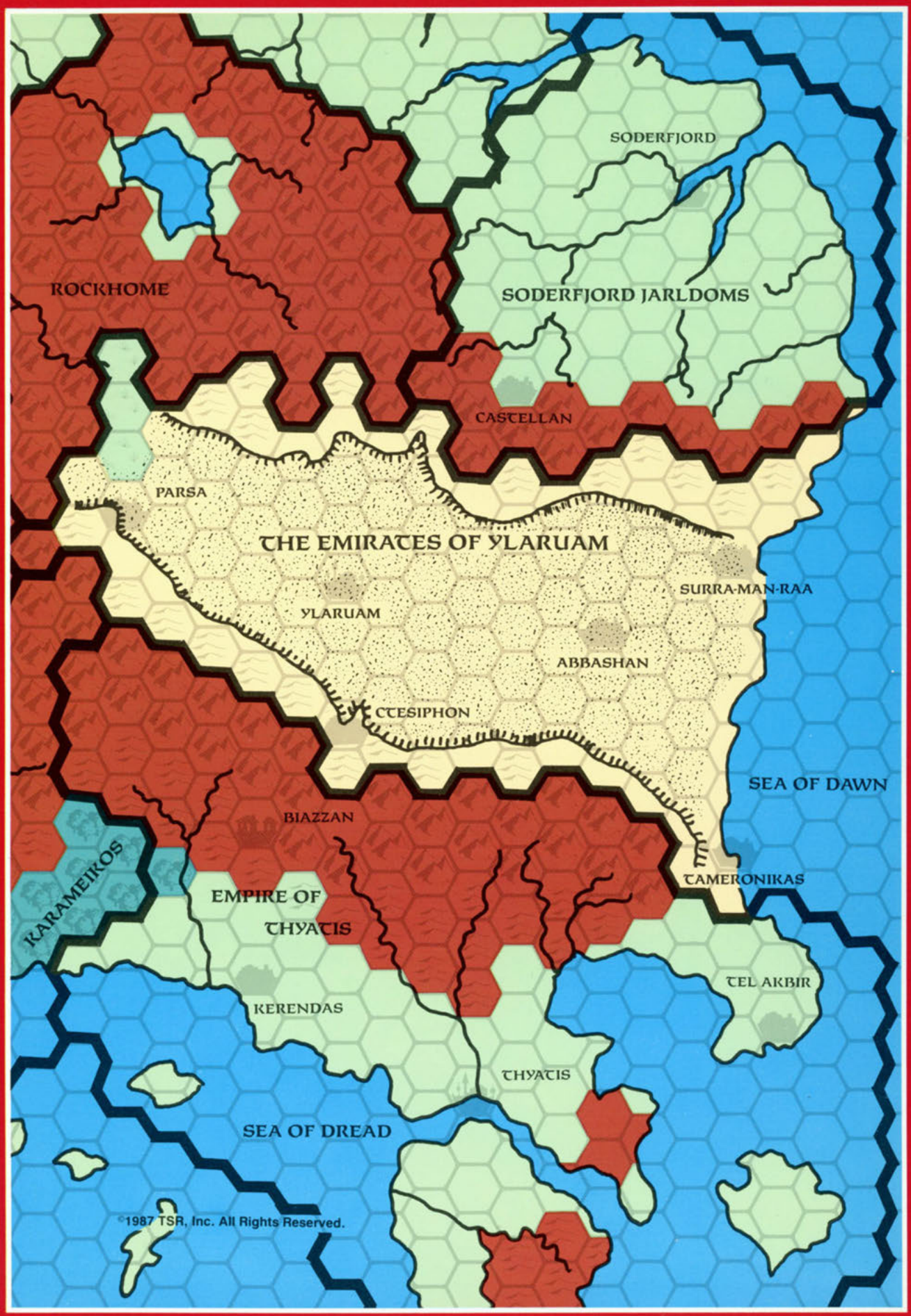
SODERFJORD
ROCKHOME
SODERFJORD JARLDOMS
CASTELLAN
PARSA
THE EMIRATES OF YLARUAM
SURRA-MAN-RAA
YLARUAM
ABBASHAN
CTESIPHON
SEA OF DAWN
BIAZZAN
TAMERONIKAS
KARAMEIKOS
EMPIRE OF
THYATIS
TEL AKBIR
KERENDAS
THYATIS
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