



DARK SUN™

CAMPAIN SETTING



Scale, Tail, and Claw

Scale, Tail, and Claw

The Reptilian Peoples of Athas

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Prologue

Found journals transcribed 4th day of Fortuary, Year of Priest's Defiance, 170th King's Age

First Journal, Entry 1

"Third day of investigation in the Kano Swamp: every inch of my body swells painfully from the humidity, but it was worth it. Today I saw them— not just one, but three distinctly different species.

"The first sighting was of a long reptile's head with snout and crests that appeared just above the water line. When it moved, I saw a scaled body with musculature much like a human's. As it swam through the mangroves, it seemed to breathe the fetid water as easily as it breathed air. It carried spears well-made, but primitive, seemingly designed to be carried through water.

"Not long after seeing the first, I spotted the second. A small upright reptilian being with a longer and thinner snout and pronounced teeth. It had long, flipper-like feet on the ends of its powerful legs. It seemed to be on the trail of the first swimming reptile, running swiftly along the surface of the shallow water after the swimmer disappeared from sight.

"Just as I was about to change position, I sensed a movement behind me. I froze, hoping my efforts at concealment held. I felt the weight of this one as it stood upon me. Judging by its weight it was not much bigger than the second being, but its feet were much smaller. As it moved on, I got a clearer view— it was a delicate humanoid with shockingly red scaled skin and spiked ridges in many places. It seemed to use its spear to help it find safe footing as it moved forward, evidently interested in where the other two creatures were going.

"It was at this moment I realized that our entire premise for this expedition in the Kano swamp was wrong-headed. We had called them all the dra-tok, the "people of the egg" (the reptile people), but they are not single reptile people at all, there are many different reptile peoples! And judging from all I've seen of the records on the subject, there is precious little information on any of these peoples. Indeed, we don't even know exactly how many different types of reptile people exist.

"I have now taken my findings back to the Kiltetet, along with my recommendation that my next hunt should be to document as many different groups of reptile peoples as can be found in the known world.

"They reminded me that this journey will likely take me places where others have ventured and not returned. But I know the difficulty of the experience is the price I must pay for the knowledge I hunt. If my foray is successful, we will understand these groups in ways none have ever before."

-Journals of Kil'mma'aktho (translated)

Introduction

"One of the things early on we said was 'we don't want to do a standard fantasy world. We want to make it something really different.' So we're not going to have any elves, and we're not going to have any halflings... we're not going to have any of that stuff, it's going to be all new races. And the marketing department somehow got wind of that and said 'no no you can't do that.'"

– Troy Denning, co-creator of the Dark Sun world (Bone, Stone, and Obsidian Podcast, Episode 9, Interview with Troy Denning).

From the beginning, Dark Sun was intended to host more than just reimaginings of the standard races from other settings. It was always intended for there to be strange new races. Indeed, one could argue that the world is better suited for insects and reptiles than mammals - after all, a world with a searing hot sun that blazes across endless miles of parched earth, sandy dunes, and salt flats is hardly a hospitable environment for thirsty and constantly-perspiring mammals like humans.

Who could thrive in such an environment? Rather than skin that burns and drips with sweat, it would be better to have scales that help retain a body's moisture, aren't

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damaged by the searing sun, and provide protection against the brutal desert. By themselves two legs are slow and clumsy; it would be better to have a tail for balance when making one's way over crumbling barrens, through sandstorms, or when fleeing the monstrosities of the wastes. Instead of doughy hands that provide a slippery grip when scrambling across rocky badlands and fumble when foraging for food, it would be better to have sharp claws that can cling carefully to stones, prevent prey from escaping (when you're the predator), and allow you to fight back (when you're the prey).

It would be better to have scales, a tail, and claws.

Desert environments are crawling with reptiles for good reason. They are the creatures ideally suited to survive in such a savage ecological niche. Over the years, Dark Sun books have introduced a variety of

reptilian species, yet despite being incredibly well-suited to the world, they have gotten the proverbial "short end of the straw", with minimal information about their anatomy, personalities, societies, histories, settlements and important personages - until now.

Scale, Tail and Claw - the Reptilian Peoples of Athas seeks to pay homage to the original idea of Dark Sun's designers, who envisioned a world that belonged to unusual species, by focusing on many of the frequently mentioned but underdeveloped sentient reptilian races of Athas. In this book, players will find all they need to make interesting and well-developed player characters out of each of the nine reptilian races discussed, and DMs will find historical, cultural, and geographical information, as well as adventure hooks, to support adventures involving these races.

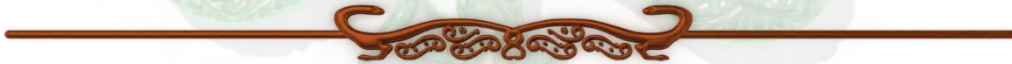
The Organization of this Book

This book is written in three parts. Each part presents the nine reptilian races of Athas in order as listed in the Reptilian Anthropomorphic Spectrum detailed on the next page.

Part 1 - Player's Guide introduces the reptilian peoples of Athas to player characters. It is intended to be suitable to distribute to players at the very beginning of a Dark Sun campaign, during character creation or a Session Zero. It is written to avoid any major spoilers about the world of Athas.

Part 2 - DM's Guide provides information about the secrets of the different species – their history, their (sometimes secret) settlements, their leaders, and their myths, as well as usable NPCs and adventure hooks.

The **Stats Appendix** contains the relevant game stats for various editions of D&D. It is designed to be fully separate from the rest of the book, but follows the same basic organization.



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The Reptilian Anthropomorphic Spectrum

First Journal, Entry 2

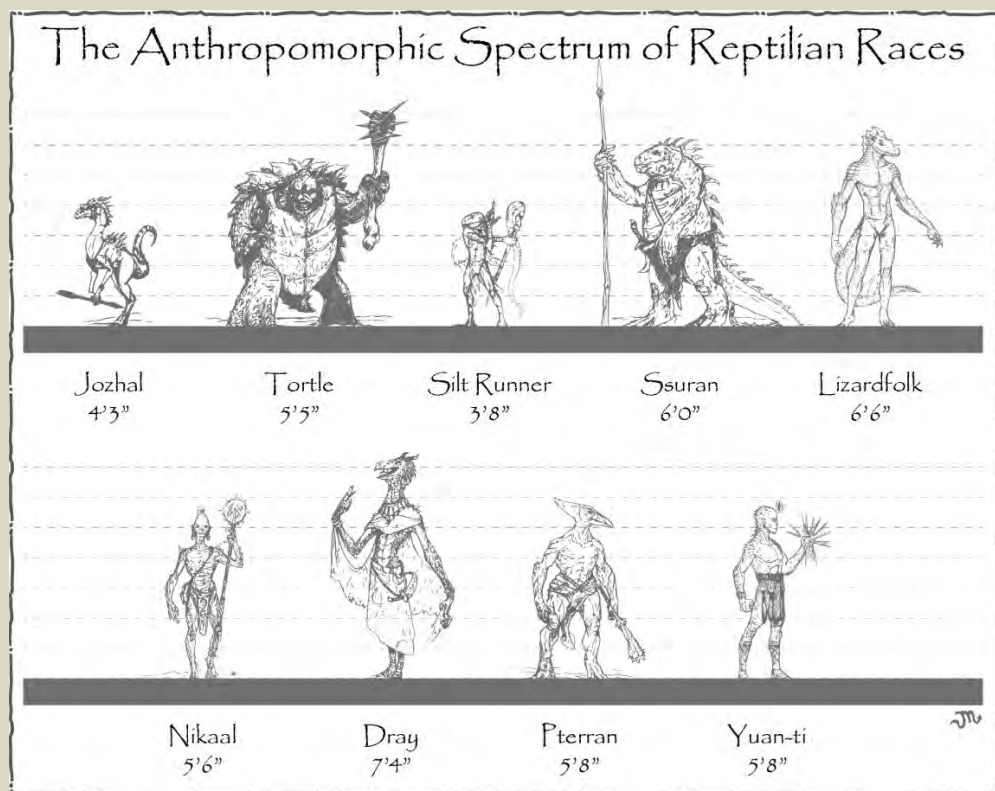
"All good hunters must prepare.

"In preparation for my expedition, I have spent seven weeks in the libraries of J'eztere, and called in my last favors with the other knowledge hunters I know in L'rax and even Haazi'sa itself.

"Based on our most extensive searches, we can file the different descriptions of reptilian races into nine distinct types, ranging in shape and behavior from fully lizard or drake-like to only superficially different from humans. We call them all dra-tok - people of the egg - but despite their reptilian appearance, some do not even lay eggs.

"During my efforts at this classification, I made an interesting discovery- the more the creatures resemble the other humanoids, the more easily and closely that species would associate with the humans and their ilk of the Tablelands. This in turn seemed to have profound effects on their culture and behavior.

"To help with my classification, I have devised a spectrum of ranking for these races to cover this range between reptilian and humanoid. My findings will be organized along this spectrum."



The Reptilian Spectrum, in order from most reptilian to most humanoid: Jozhal, Turtle, Silt Runner, Ssuran, Lizardfolk, Nikaal, Dray, Pterran, Yuan-Ti.

"For the sake of rigor, I have also investigated reports of several other peoples which could be described as reptilian. I have eliminated them from this list for one of several reasons: either their classification or origin was unclear (such as the gith), their sentience was in question, or reports of them were too difficult to substantiate. I will leave these to other hunters for future studies.

"I believe I am now ready."

-Journals of Kil'mma'aktho (translated)



Part 1 - Player's Guide

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Jozhal

Few intelligent reptiles are as inhuman in appearance as the jozhal. Their extreme physiological differences from other species, combined with generations of bad experiences with defilers and templars, have led to them simply avoiding most humanoid races entirely.

At most, their interactions seem to often involve petty thievery (for which they have developed a talent) - stealing magic and other items and then using their natural camouflage to escape undetected.

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Second Journal, Entry 2

“On the edge of the settlement of Lost Scale, I had my first encounter with small creatures known as the jozhal.

“At first I thought they were scavengers, picking over the carcasses of a failed party of human raiders. But then I saw that they were removing gear and gemstones from the bodies, examining them in the evening light as if appraising them. Despite my best efforts, they detected me and fled before I could get close.”

Second Journal, Entry 4

“I encountered the jozhal again on the edge of the forest four days south of Lost Scale. I was traveling with a nikaal caravan, and had opted to join the night watch when we stopped for the night. I smelled the jozhals before I saw them, such was their camouflage.

“They must have assumed my total stillness was dormancy, as they ignored me as they moved through the camp. None of the others on watch had detected them yet, but as I surreptitiously alerted my hosts, I informed them that I wished to observe their behavior before we took any actions.

“Once again, they came to steal, but the jozhals’ choice of what to take was unusual – they seemed more interested in stealing waste or broken tools than they were in valuables or food. They worked until they heard a noise in the night, then once again departed quickly.”

Second Journal, Entry 5

“I convinced the nikaal to help - they will lure out the jozhals and help me broker a dialogue with the jozhal pack we have discovered. If successful, I will document my full findings here.”

-Journals of Kil'mma'aktho (translated)

Physical

Standing at approximately four feet tall and weighing about 70 lbs, jozhals seem at first glance like nothing more than small bipedal dinosaurs. They have elongated snouts filled with needle-sharp teeth that are perfect for catching the small reptiles, snakes, and insects, and gnawing the tubers from the ground that make up the jozhal diet. Male jozhal tend to be slightly larger than females, and have more pronounced crests on the back of their head and neck.

Jozhals’ bodies are highly adapted to thrive in the sandy wastes they naturally inhabit, with a body structure optimized for agility and speed. Their legs are positioned underneath their bodies, enabling them to run quickly on two legs that are long and strong, with three-toed feet that are adapted for both running and climbing. Their arms are short but powerful, and end in small, three-fingered hands that are capable of

grasping and manipulating objects, including branches when climbing trees. Their tails are also a key part of their anatomy, serving as a tool for balance and control while running and as an extra limb for climbing.

A jozhal’s skin is rough and made of tiny scales, with color changing pigment that allows them to blend into or stand out from their surroundings, making it easier for them to hide from predators or to ambush their prey. Changing the color of their skin can also help jozhals regulate their body temperature, changing to a darker color to absorb more heat from the sun or to a lighter color to reflect heat and cool down. Jozhals also use color changes as part of how they communicate with other jozhals. A jozhal might change to a bright and kaleidoscopic pattern when trying to attract a mate or change to a darker orange color when feeling

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threatened (this usage of their color changing ability is discussed further in the Language section).

There are two distinct subraces of jozhal that can be encountered in the Tyr region.

Sand Jozhal

Many jozhal clans make their homes in sandy wastes where they subsist almost entirely on the flesh of other creatures. Due to the shifting nature of the desert sands, these jozhals have developed webbed toes to better keep them atop the dunes. When not specifically using their skin to communicate, sandy wastes jozhals tend to keep their skin the color of the surrounding sand.

Tree Jozhal

Found within scrub plains or verdant belts, these jozhal clans often defend their patch of greenery relentlessly. They purposely encourage the growth of trees into dense copses, when possible, to make their homes in the branches, providing them with excellent lines of sight across their territory and some protection from land-based predators. Tree jozhals use their tails for more than just balance, employing them when climbing and grasping large objects, and as a result, have more precise control with their tails than sand jozhals. Jozhal from the scrub plains and verdant belt

families often have a brown and sage green mottled look to their skin, and are generally slightly smaller than their sandy waste cousins.



Combat

Jozhal are generally peaceful creatures, preferring to avoid combat whenever possible and using their innate ability to change the hue of their skin to blend in with their surroundings and evade predators. Despite their peaceful nature, however, jozhals are not to be underestimated. When provoked, they can be fierce and formidable opponents, using magic and their natural weapons to defend themselves and their territory.

When unarmed, a jozhal can attack with the sharp talons on its front limbs, as well as deliver a sharp bite. They are aware that many predators outclass them in terms of raw power or strength, so jozhals prefer to coordinate their attacks and fight in groups for their mutual protection. Indeed, one of the first indications to aggressors that jozhals are far more than mere lizards is the way they organize and coordinate their attacks.

Personality

Jozhal are an intelligent, cunning, and curious people, known for their keen interest in magic and fierce protection of the natural world. They are both resourceful and independent, making use of every scrap they find to survive, and even thrive, while living

much closer to nature than other intelligent species. Jozhals are creative problem-solvers, often finding unexpected solutions to challenges with the natural resources around them and the odd bits of things they carry around with them. Sometimes this cunning can

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lead to a sense of pride and a desire to show-off or prove their wit and resourcefulness, which can lead them into trouble, as can their natural curiosity, but jozhals also have a talent for finding their way out of difficult situations.

Despite their small size and very lizard-like appearance, jozhals are largely respected by other races for their magical knowledge and abilities. While jozhal are interested in all kinds of magic, they usually practice elemental magic, although jozhal preservers are not unknown. There are some who seek their counsel on matters relating to strategy, deception, or arcane lore - it is said that House Wavir particularly values their counsel, having good relations with more than one jozhal family. This connection is said to date back to the early days of the merchant house, which is why Wavir chose to place them on their banner.

Due to their generally non-confrontational natures and light presence, jozhal are rarely seen as a threat by anyone except those who wander into jozhal territory carrying interesting magic items with which they don't wish to part. Jozhals are, however, known to play

pranks from time to time simply to see how people will respond. Their natural stealth and intelligence, along with their camouflage abilities and magics, often result in the targets of jozhal pranks never realizing the source of their confusion, frustration, or embarrassment. Jozhals can be decidedly mean spirited when it comes to those who would harm the land, particularly defilers. Conversely, they may look kindly on those of good intention and spirit, lending them unseen aid.

While most jozhal are very selective about who sees them and when they are seen, preferring to avoid the attention of taller races, there are some jozhals who revel in attention, highlighting their wits and daring as well as their natural abilities for both stealth and spectacle. These jozhal can sometimes be seen dashing brightly-colored through crowded spaces with procured items before disappearing under camouflage, telling riddles and bargaining with bits of lore, or showing off their mysterious crafting talents to awed onlookers.

Society

Jozhal society has three delineations - subspecies, clan, and family. There are two subspecies – sand and tree jozhal, which are found quite widely across the Tablelands and beyond. Within each subspecies, there are a number of clans that live primarily in one geographic region (for example, west of the Ringing Mountains, if one were to encounter a jozhal, it would nearly always be a tree jozhal and it would identify itself as part of the Hinterlands clan of jozhal). Though jozhal recognize their membership in both a subspecies and a clan, their society is primarily defined by their small, autonomous family groups. When a threat or situation affects multiple families, they may work together, but otherwise each family group manages itself. Within these groups, the jozhal have a loose sense of structure and agency, with each member playing a role based on what is needed at the time or the individual jozhal's perception of what the group needs and what they themselves need.

Generations of storytelling and oral tradition have led to a rich cultural heritage and set of values passed down by jozhals through the ages. Education is highly valued within jozhal society, with a strong emphasis on the study of magic and the natural world through apprentice-teacher relationships wherein they are

taught to value the land and its resources, and protect and preserve their environment. Jozhals celebrate work that restores defiled land, preserves water sources, and protects plants that are especially important for nutritional or medicinal purposes within their territory. Wealth, however, is not a major focus within jozhal society, it is seen as transitory in nature - though the jozhals remain practical people who engage in trade as needed.

The jozhal do not have a formal government, and in most circumstances do not even form communities that coordinate decisions across family groups. That said, jozhals are often aware of other families that live in their area - from time-to-time, families will gather to discuss a matter of shared importance (for example, families who all use the same oasis might meet to share concerns if the oasis is running low). When such a meeting of families occurs, discussions are led by the wisdom and guidance of the eldest members of a community but ultimately any political decisions are made through discussion and consensus. Although tree and sand jozhal have no animosity toward each other, families of the two subraces rarely interact simply because they tend to prefer different habitats.

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In addition to informal elder councils that are established to settle matters of shared importance, a key institution within jozhal society are soothsayers – druidic, magical, or psionic hermits who, for whatever reason, do not live with a family of their own, but rather travel from family to family and hold positions of great respect and authority in their clans. Magic plays a central role in jozhal society, with many members practicing druidic or elemental magic, and seeking to learn more about its mysteries. Some jozhal also possess powerful psionic abilities, which they often use to stand out from and aid others in their community.

Family Life

To produce offspring, jozhal lay their eggs in one of several hidden family caches, which they check on semi-regularly, looking in when they're in the area every few days. When defending an egg, a family will become far more territorial than usual. Both sand and tree jozhal families tend to be small because females typically lay only one egg at a time. Since jozhal eggs are particularly large, they are highly prized by predators, and thus jozhal families take pains to ensure they have a stable source of food and are well-positioned to defend against predators before they even begin to consider laying eggs. It's not unusual for several years to elapse between a family's egg layings. Raising their young leaves a jozhal family vulnerable, and the mortality rate of their young and sometimes even the family members guarding them can be significant.

Jozhal families tend to live independently of each other. However, it is not unusual for an unpartnered adult male or female to live with a sibling and that sibling's partner and children, meaning that a jozhal family group will sometimes consist of more than two adults who collaborate in protecting an egg and raising any hatchlings. Thus, families of 2-4 adults (which can include adult children) and 3-5 young children, with the children spaced apart in age, are common.

Jozhal reach maturity around age 17, although jozhal young will typically live with their families into their 3rd decade of life before seeking out a mate of their own. Once they find a mate, jozhals typically relocate their new families some distance away from their former family groups to avoid straining local resources. It is uncommon, for example, for a jozhal with a family of their own to use the same small oasis as their parents.

Jozhals can live over 100 years and often continue to mate until very late in life, so it is not unusual for a jozhal couple to continue laying an egg every 3-5 years for a period of decades, with new young being hatched as older young set off on their own. A pair of jozhals in their 30's or in their 90's will thus often have a very similar family structure.

Jozhal are sentimental, but not impractical, and they harvest the bones and bodies of their fallen family members, as well as taking the family member's goods. The bones and various body parts are turned into new tools and weapons as a way to honor the fallen family member, and the items (both new and old) will be distributed to any remaining relatives. The remaining flesh is ritualistically consumed by remaining family members, both as a means of connecting the jozhals with their past - reminding them where and from whom they come from - and as a nod to the practicalities of survival. When a matriarch or patriarch dies, jozhals make an effort to distribute a tool or other practical item from their remains to every living descendant. Over time, many jozhal end up with a great collection of tools and weapons fashioned from



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their relatives which – along with any magic items – will often be the only possessions that matter to them. The smaller of these items are often attached to a

ceremonial “ancestral ” that many jozhal carry, with the items being detached for use as necessary.

Language

While the sand and tree jozhal have been separated by chosen habitat for king’s ages, their dialects are still similar enough that the two species can still largely understand each other. Regardless of dialect, the Jozhal language is exceedingly difficult for other races to understand, let alone learn, as it is both audible and visual in nature: when jozhal are speaking amongst themselves, ideas are not only expressed as spoken words, but are also conveyed through shifts in the color, pattern, saturation, and hue of their scales. Jozhal’s spoken words consist largely of hisses, chirps, and clicking sounds which are unusual enough that people who have never heard a jozhal speak its native tongue might not even realize they are hearing a language at all.

Jozhals have a wide variety of signals and messages that will be recognizable to other jozhal, and can be sent by shifting their coloration. Many of these signals are concepts related to coordinating movement, avoiding danger, and identifying threats. A jozhal might, for example, shift the scales of their arm into a series of dark orange rings to indicate danger in a particular direction, while a series of faint bluish rings

on a limb would indicate that it is safe to travel in that direction; concentric dark orange circles on the stomach indicate general danger, with the direction unknown, whereas concentric circles on the stomach of a blue color would indicate a place was safe. Nearly any sort of simple tactical idea can be communicated in this way. It should be noted, however, that jozhal cannot communicate in this way and retain the benefits of skin coloration-based camouflaged at the same time, but communicating in this way can be done in total silence.

Changes in coloration are an integral part of how jozhals communicate their emotions, and thus in any sort of personal conversation, jozhals will exhibit a bewildering array of colors and patterns. Complex intellectual topics, on the other hand, largely rely on the spoken aspect of the Jozhal language. Nearly any concept can ultimately be communicated with spoken language with enough effort, but it’s a very unnatural way for jozhal to communicate. When jozhals communicate among themselves, they will use a mix of spoken and visual techniques. Other races that learn the Jozhal language are able to communicate most concepts verbally, despite the difficulty replicating some of the language’s sounds, but will likely lack any way of using color signaling for tactical purposes or to fully communicate their emotions.

Sand and tree jozhals have somewhat different vocabularies, but they are able to understand each other with only a bit of patience via verbal communication. While they do not use precisely the same camouflage signals, they can quickly pick them up as many of the gestures, shapes, and colors are nearly universal.

Common Jozhal Names

Male:

- Alos
- Dacius
- Elicos
- Mhai
- Nymos

Female

- Hrit
- Lris
- Juba
- Mrcea
- Tiega

Sand and tree jozhal do not typically encounter each other very often, but when they do meet, the encounters are usually friendly.

As a general rule, jozhal tend to keep their distance from other races, whether reptilian or humanoid, when

possible. Their decidedly non-human appearance, difficult to understand language, and generally furtive behavior causes them to be viewed with distrust in the city states and most other settlements. Jozhals do, however, occasionally interact with other races. It is

Relations

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rather common for jozhals to encounter ssurrans and nikaal, as their territories and travel ranges often overlap. Wily ssurran and nikaal traders both recognize that jozhal will go to great lengths to trade for minor magical items or trinkets – even spent items – and so they know the dangling of such goods is sufficient to get jozhals to undertake a wide range of tasks, or retrieve items of great value. Though it's rare to obtain magical items, there are few trading partners who will go to greater lengths than a jozhal for such items. Despite general cordiality, ssurran and nikaal tribes often misunderstand the familial nature of jozhal, wrongly assuming that winning the favor of one jozhal family will ingratiate all the jozhals in a region.

Jozhals generally look more favorably upon the desert tribes of Athas than any of the peoples associated with the city-states. This is both a matter of affinity and practicality. The jozhals feel a commonly shared bond with the ex-slave tribes and desert nomads as desert-dwelling peoples who are often marginalized and threatened by the more powerful societies of the city-states. While jozhals will frequently pilfer from traveling caravans and especially from traveling armies, they will generally leave desert tribes alone unless truly desperate. Of course, this affinity only goes so far and if these tribes compete with the jozhals for scarce resources, go after jozhal eggs, or desecrate jozhal territory, this friendliness will disappear and the jozhal will make themselves a thorough nuisance.

Jozhals' well-known love of magical items often proves to be greater than their fear of humanoid races, leading them to trade with (or steal from) those they believe to not be a threat. The exception to this tends to be elves. Jozhals tend to have an awkward relationship with elven tribes. Jozhals are likely to be a nuisance to any tribe traveling through their territory, and though it may prove to either be an amusing or irritating one, there is a real threat of losing some of the tribes' valuable magical items. Many elves see jozhals as

competitors and trouble makers with no tribal loyalty. Elven tribes with defilers, however, often find themselves directly at odds with local jozhals - who will not tolerate them on their lands any longer than absolutely necessary, although the jozhals are mindful of the fact that elves are often just passing through and that coming into conflict with the elves may actually result in more harm than good. In addition, most elves seem more than a little horrified by the jozhal practice of ritualistically cannibalizing and salvaging their own dead.

Defilers are viewed as enemies by jozhal, as the jozhal value the balance of nature and view the actions of defilers as dangerous and destructive. Preservers, however, are generally seen as potential allies by jozhal, as jozhal appreciate the preservers' respect for the balance of nature and of course find arcane magic fascinating.

Thri-kreen who come into a jozhal clan's territory while hunting large prey are usually left alone. Jozhal consider thri-kreen close to nature and will not interfere in their affairs unless necessary for their own safety or food supply. However, if a thri-kreen pack thinks to stay in the jozhals' territory for long, they quickly learn that a jozhal clan lives there and they are unwelcome as long-term guests.

House Wavir, with their positive view of magic as a tool for enhancing their trade and business ventures, is generally on good terms with jozhal clans. In fact, the jozhals' natural wit, ingenuity, and respect for nature is what inspired House Wavir to feature a jozhal on their banner, causing many jozhal to view House Wavir caravans as safe to approach. Any house that is known to use defilers, by contrast, quickly becomes enemies of most jozhal clans, with House M'ke, House Shom, and House Tsalaxa foremost among them. House Vordon is viewed with suspicion or distrust, especially because they have a history of exploiting or manipulating desert-dwelling races.

The prime time for jozhals to undertake a period of adventure is as young adults, after leaving their families but before settling into a new family of their own. Though many jozhal will not stray far from their families during this period, others will venture far away from their home territories to explore and observe (or steal from) the outside world. Those particularly obsessed with magical items may quickly realize that such items are most easily obtained through a life of adventuring. Jozhal may also take up an independent life if their families are wiped out by raiders or natural disaster. Though naturally reserved creatures around larger species, these motivations are often sufficient to overcome a jozhals' innate shyness.

Many jozhal are on the hunt for magical items, and thus favor a life that advances this path, with thieves and traders being particularly common vocations. A jozhal who heads to the cities in search of magical

items may fall in with the Veiled Alliance, where their quiet and secretive natures make them extremely useful members. The jozhal obsession with magic is not widely known in the city-states, so most people would be surprised to discover a jozhal preserver. Though they are most interested in arcane magic, jozhals will often have an easier time finding an introduction into the worship of the elementals, and such priests are fairly common in jozhal families. Jozhals' comfort with the wastes makes them skilled rangers, and a lone jozhal might be a druid on their time of wandering, ultimately in search of their guarded lands.

A jozhal PC must overcome their chaotic, independent natures to mesh well with a group of adventurers. Much like an elf, they may also have to overcome negative stereotypes of their people. Ultimately, many will recognize there is safety in companionship.

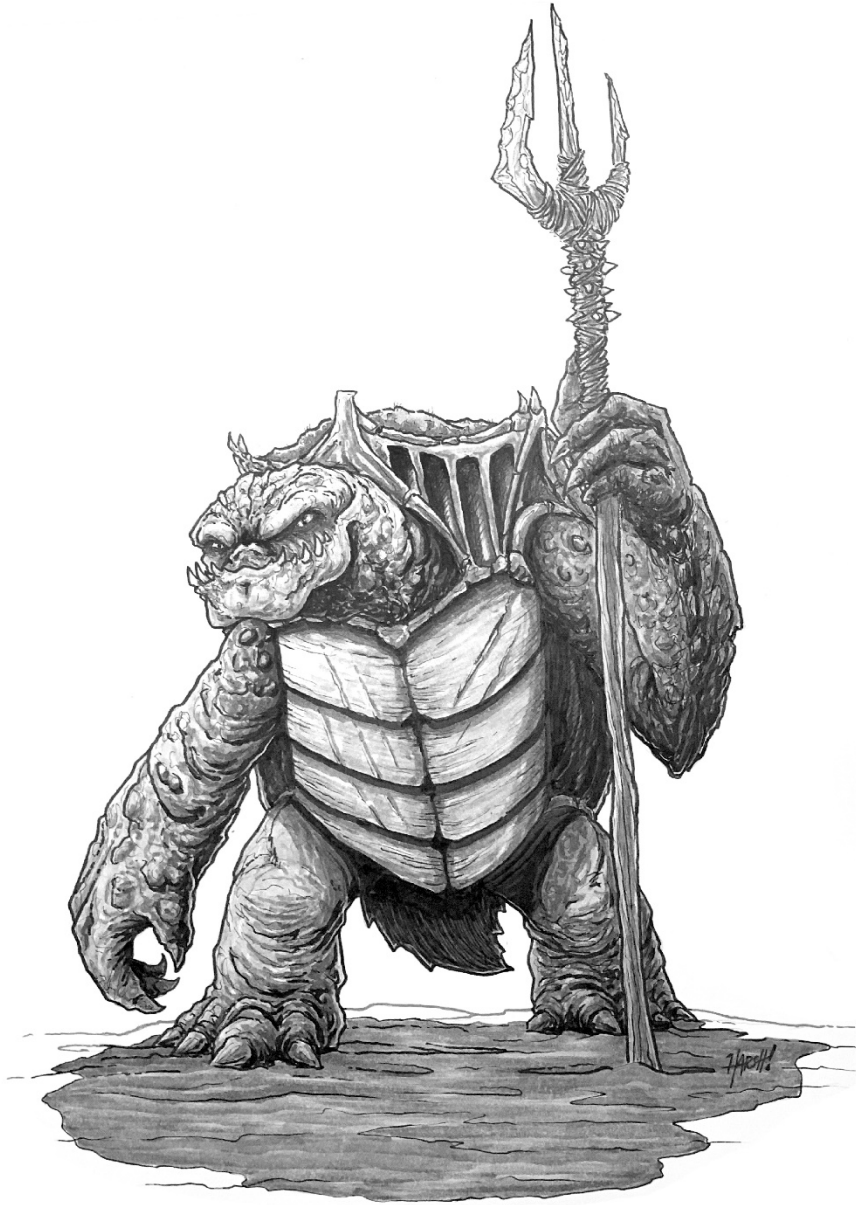


Character Archetypes

Potential roleplaying and character-building ideas for jozhal PCs include:

- A fiercely independent and self-reliant character who values their freedom and autonomy and has a burning passion for learning about all the world has to offer.
- A jozhal rogue or ranger who learns quickly and is able to adapt to new situations, and is skilled at survival in difficult circumstances.
- A practical and realistic jozhal mage, cleric, or psionicist who can think on their feet and come up with creative solutions to problems using their spells or powers.
- A protective and aggressive druid who doesn't tolerate abuse of the land, and will engage in guerilla tactics against any would-be perpetrator.

Scale, Tail, and Claw



Tortles

There are many who say the tortles are not a race natural to Athas, and they may be right. Legend has it that the tortles were originally an early failed experiment by the templars of Hamanu where they

attempted to modify driks. Regardless of their origin, the tortles have inhabited certain remote reaches of the Silt Sea for several king's ages now, driving away or devouring all other competition for their lands.

Scale, Tail, and Claw

Fourth Journal, Entry 1

"It seems most humans never think about the world outside their city-states, but reptilian peoples have awareness of entirely different geographies. Thanks to their flying pterax mounts, the pterrans know about the lands across the silt. They informed me that they knew of two other groups of their kind across the Silt Sea. I was also aware of multiple sightings of other species of reptilian people near the edges of the Silt Sea, so I decided to risk a journey across the deep silt. Though I did not know exactly where these groups were located, I believe there is much to learn across the Sea of Silt.

"Among the crew I joined, I encountered an entirely new type of reptile folk whose existence had only been hinted at in two recent accounts among travelers. Shorter than a ssurran but far heavier, she was clearly built for combat - large, jagged teeth, long razor-sharp claws, and a thick dense body protected by armor plates: it looked as if a drik had stood upon its hind legs and began to talk. I soon learned her people called themselves 'tortles'.

"She was gruff and not very communicative, but with some effort and offerings of food, I managed to earn her trust. From her short answers, I was able to glean that her entire people had moved from the Tablelands within the last few centuries, supposedly leaving behind their creators and former slave masters to forge their own identity. They have lived on the silt ever since.

"And she certainly did live on the silt! I have never seen a land-based race last longer submerged in silt than this turtle. It seems these turtles were made not just for war, but for amphibious assault. I wonder how well a zik-trin would do against one in a coastal battle..."

Fourth Journal, Entry 5

"After making our landfall, the three surviving crew of the skimmer (the turtle, the yuan-ti, and myself) made our way south towards the nearest turtle settlement, following the shoreline at some distance from the silt so as to remain out of range of any silt runner weapons. Then suddenly, the turtle stopped us in our tracks - holding still as a statue, with her massive overlong arms blocking our way. All she said, in a whisper, was "young".

"After a few moments, I saw a stirring in the sand in front of us. I realized with some excitement I was watching the hatching of a new turtle! Then one turned into five, which turned into twenty, then more; my joy turned to horror as these newly hatched young scrambled towards any and all living things, attacking and killing everything in sight (kes'trekels, a silt runner encircled by hatchlings, even each other!)

"We remained at what the turtle thought was a safe distance, until a few of them noticed us and began racing in our direction - that's when she shouted 'Run!'

"Once we had managed to get sufficiently far uphill to avoid them, I had many questions. Fortunately, the turtle successfully guided us to a small turtle village, where after some introductions, the village elders were willing to answer my questions."

-Journals of Kil'mma'aktho (translated)

Physical

The tortles are bulky creatures that appear to be half tortoise and half man. Though typically only 5 to 6 feet in height, they may weigh between 400 and 500 lbs, with females tending to be slightly larger than males.

Tortles possess a large, blunt head and a heavy jaw lined with protruding fangs. Their necks are longer than they seem, but are usually tucked away within folds of thick skin that give the impression that they have nearly no neck at all. Tortles take full advantage of this impression to surprise enemies by snapping

Scale, Tail, and Claw

their long necks forward like snakes to bite at unprepared foes.

Strong arms that are flattened enough to serve as flippers and a psionic power that allows them to be buoyant in silt have made turtles into natural swimmers in the grayish powder. This, coupled with their ability to hold their breath for long periods of time, as well as a rudimentary blindsense that enables them to find their way in the slit when submerged, have turned them into an unlikely success story in the harsh habitat of the Silt Sea.

Turtles' scaly hides come in a range of colors, ranging from sandy white and yellow to light or dark brown, and even occasionally blood red and black. Turtles have boney shells which provide them with a great deal of protection and into which turtles can withdraw for added defense. As with driks, the shell is formed by the secretion of resins over time which harden into a shell. These resins can be partially melted by fire and reshaped, which turtles sometimes do for purposes of personal ornamentation, but this process must be undertaken carefully so as not to inadvertently burn the turtle's flesh.

The turtles' irritability is both a personality and physical trait. Perhaps as a result of the supposed experimentation that led to their creation, turtles are prone to surges of adrenaline that can make it difficult for them to remain still. This sometimes results in

surprisingly fast reactions or unexpected bursts of speed; these surges are also one of the major causes of turtles' irritability and while they are especially common when a turtle is threatened, such surges can course through a turtles' veins with little warning at almost any moment.



Combat

Turtles are built for combat. Between their hard, protective shells, their sharp claws and teeth, and their surprising heartiness, a turtle is a dangerous opponent. Opponents encountering turtles for the first time might expect them to be ponderously slow, but this can be a dangerous miscalculation. In fact, turtles often purposefully pretend to be more slow and docile than they really are. This is a well-tested tactic and all turtles have learned to gradually close with unknown opponents, hoping to be underestimated, and then startle their opponent with a ferocious snap of their maw.

Once engaged in open combat, turtles are vicious fighters, whether armed or unarmed. When fighting with weapons, turtles can still snap their necks forward to deliver unexpected bites and their armored shells

make them quite difficult to injure. Withdrawing into their shell can be a tricky calculation for a turtle: against weak or relatively unintelligent opponents, they may be close to untouchable when within their shell, but more cunning foes can often figure out ways to take advantage of a turtle being prone, even when within their shell. Oftentimes, withdrawing into the shell is a tactic only engaged in briefly, as it usually takes at least a moment or two for most opponents to figure out how to harm a turtle that has withdrawn into its shell.

Turtles' high tolerance for silt has made them an asset to siltship crews since they first emerged, having no trouble serving as shock troops or rescue divers for their less slit-adapted crews.

Personality

On first impression, turtles can seem slow and placid. They take their time before saying anything and are generally slow to speak. Only with time (or having seen them in combat) does one realize their intractability and potential for speed, ferocity, and savagery.

Turtles can be very short tempered, if not outright rancorous. They tend to be easily annoyed by others, sometimes for no apparent reason, and are known to violently lash out. Oftentimes these outbursts are due to the turtle being unaccustomed to being in the company of others, or finding themselves in unfamiliar environments and situations; their snappish and irritable behavior usually abates somewhat once they get used to their new conditions. Much of turtles' volatile temperament is said to stem from their supposed origin as a race created to serve as living weapons, and many turtles actively struggle to master

their tempers and go against their natures. They believe that by doing so, they are liberating themselves spiritually from slavery, just as their ancestors are said to have liberated themselves physically when they escaped the slave pens so long ago.

From a young age, turtles are very voracious and food driven. A quick way to get on their good side is to offer them food and drink, preferably in large quantities. So long as they have something to nibble on, a turtle's testy personality can be kept in check by their companions.

Turtles also have a deep appreciation for crafts and music. Their large claws make it difficult for them to manipulate fine instruments, and many turtles hold great respect for the ability of artisans and bards to master the tools to produce fine works. Turtles can spend hours intently watching such adept individuals, almost as if enthralled by some spell.

Society

Turtles are organized into small groups called septs, which are led by an adult female. Members of a given sept are not necessarily blood relations; instead, sept leaders adopt any hatchlings they happen across. Much like driks, sept leaders do not tolerate the presence of other adult females in their septs, and those females that reach adulthood must leave and find septless male turtles or roving young to adopt, forming septs of their own.

Some turtle septs form loose confederations with other nearby septs, and sometimes such a collection of septs will work closely enough to call itself a clan. Typically, such confederations consist of little more than agreements not to attack each other and to not compete too directly for food, but clans will sometimes build or occupy structures in close proximity to each other; other races often perceive this to be a village. The turtles for their part tend not to see it that way, knowing that at any moment the clan could fall apart with the septs striking off on their own, and viewing most structures as only temporary shelters. Any broader organization than this is generally rare, although turtles are intelligent creatures and quite capable of banding together when truly necessary. Some turtles have aspirations of establishing larger

settlements like those of other races, but turtles' inherently belligerent natures make this a difficult proposition.

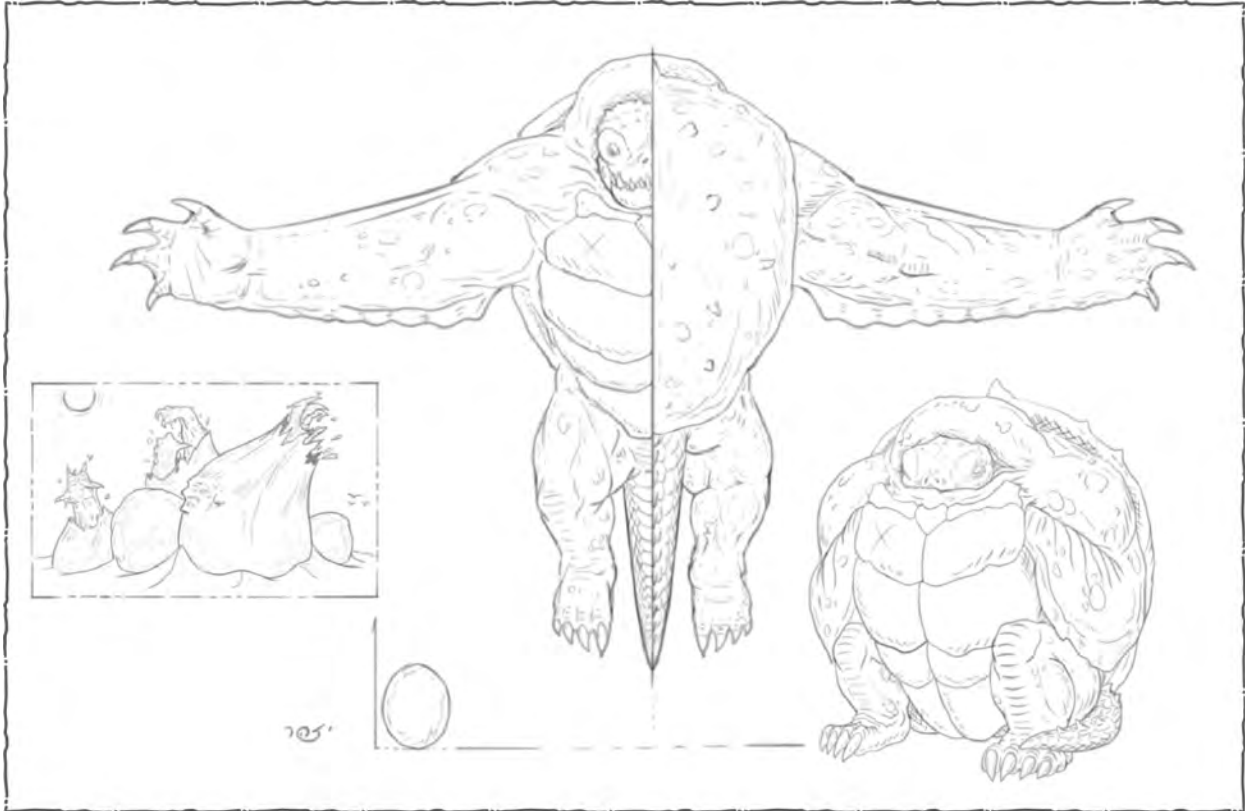
Turtles are mostly nocturnal, usually burrowing in the sand during the day to sleep, and emerging at night to hunt or explore. Turtles are not the top of the food chain – on Athas, no creature can fully let their guard down – but there are relatively few predators who attempt to eat a sleeping turtle, buried under the sand and retracted into its shell.

Turtles rarely wear any clothing or armor, favoring instead belts and harnesses to carry their belongings. Every piece of equipment they own is strapped to their person in a way that hinders swimming as little as possible.

Family Life

Turtles bury their eggs under the sands near a source of water, usually an oasis, and abandon them to their fate. A collection of such eggs is a clutch. Many unrelated mothers may all lay eggs in the same area. Hatchlings emerge ravenous and aggressive, attacking and eating anything and everything they can catch, even their own clutchmates. Turtles are very

Scale, Tail, and Claw



dangerous when young and don't begin to civilize until their 4th year of life. Only then can an adult female tame them; once tamed they will instinctively follow her, learning language and other important skills along the way. Clutchmates do not necessarily stick together; those that survive may end up in different septs. It is not uncommon for half or more of a clutch of young turtles to be eaten by siblings in lean times. This ensures that only the strongest survive. For this reason, adult turtles do not name or bond with hatchlings as individuals until they begin to civilize.

When an adult female begins to tame hatchlings, great care must be taken in their handling, as hatchlings will attempt to eat any caretaker and have been known to remove fingers from the unwary. Once a hatchling is adopted by an adult turtle, they are referred to as foundlings. Should a hatchling remain without the care and guidance of an adult, it eventually grows up into a feral creature, driven by the same base urges as hatchlings to kill and consume, but with far greater cunning and savagery. These creatures are known in the turtle tongue as a "zerlekh", a word that most closely translates to "thug" in the Common tongue, describing a turtle who is adrift, feral, a loner, violent,

and volatile. It is almost impossible to civilize such individuals, and zerlekhs are regarded as little better than hatchlings in turtle society and are viewed with great pity, but they pose such a threat that more often than not, civilized turtles are forced to slay them.

Despite becoming more sociable by their fourth year, turtles remain independent and bad tempered throughout their lives, and order within each sept is maintained by strength of arms, resulting in a pecking order with the sept leader at the top and the weakest hatchling at the bottom. The sept leader also makes sure to drive out any individual, especially females, who even begins to seem like it could challenge her rule, removing potential rivals well before they can become a threat.

Septs wander between the shore and the deep silt, where they hunt anything they can catch. Turtles have a special love for silt spawn, but will eat anything from an adult silt horror to kreen raiders.

Turtles grow quite quickly, usually reaching adulthood by their 10th year of life. They also age quickly, beginning to decline in health after about 40 years of age.

Language

The Turtle language sounds echoey and resonant, a characteristic that carries over when turtles speak in other languages. Turtles speak somewhat slowly, with long, drawn-out vowels. Turtles naturally speak with a sort of throat singing where they often sound as though they are creating two vowel sounds, at two different pitches, at the same time. When words are distinguished only by these different vowel sounds, it is difficult or in some cases impossible for non-turtles to get the sounds quite right. Accordingly, it is hard for non-turtles to speak the Turtle language, and some words simply can't be reproduced properly (aside from via magical or psionic means). Its slow and distinctive delivery, however, makes it a relatively easy language for others to understand once they have learned it. Similarly, Turtle music relies heavily on their ability to produce two vowel sounds at once and,

when a turtle sings, it creates the eerie impression of a single voice singing a duet.

Common Turtle Names

Turtle names have at least one long vowel sound, on which they linger when introducing themselves.

Male:

- Baaloor
- Chuluunha
- Gaanhyu
- Lmuunh
- Quunyul

Female

- Caamchi
- Chibao
- Depaang
- Odtsaang
- Naraanh

Relations

All turtles hold driks as sacred (in their own tongue, turtles name for themselves is *drikthar*, which means drik-blood or drik-kin), and will do everything in their power to protect driks and the few oases where they lay their eggs. Nothing is more abhorrent to a turtle than harming a drik or stealing its eggs, as they view driks as both their ancestors and their spirit guardians. A threat to these beasts is one of the few things that would make septa to cooperate with each other, and more than a few reavers have suffered the severe consequences of such desecration, their mutilated bodies left hanging to serve as warnings for others.

Since they make their homes on the shores of the Sea of Silt, turtles often have a rivalry with silt runners and giants, as these races occupy the same habitats and compete for resources. Despite their cantankerousness, turtles typically get along fairly well with nikaal, ssurrans, and other outcasts (such as tareks), and they often interact with silt-faring craft and those that travel upon the silt. It is not unheard of for a turtle or two to crew a silt-going ship as divers for salvage operations, escorts to guide ships safely through dangerous shoals, or rescue divers to retrieve crew members who have fallen into the silt. In cases where they overlap, pterran tend to view the turtle hatchlings as a dangerous menace. But some turtles eventually establish trust with nearby pterran tribes, trading with them, selling fresh or pickled foodstuffs from the Sea of Silt and

objects salvaged from wrecks and sunken ruins in return for crafted goods, especially weapons, as the turtles themselves are poor craftsmen.

Turtles are deeply suspicious of humans, especially templars. They can have some sympathy for muls and half giants, but both races are often seen as still having too much human blood in them for turtles to take any chances with them. Not having encountered many elves, half-elves or halflings, turtles usually extend this treatment to them as well, preferring to be safe rather than sorry. Quite a few dwarves also ply the silt; turtles and dwarves rarely get along, as the focused natures of dwarves and the erratic natures of turtles often lead to their personalities clashing sharply.

While turtles bear no particular hatred for thri-kreen, kreen avoid turtle territories as much as possible, as turtle hatchlings have proved extremely dangerous to thri-kreen young. Occasionally, a clutch of young turtles will hatch near a clutch of kreen. The carnage of these rare events is not pleasant to behold: while the turtle young are vicious and able to strike with surprise when they burst froth from under the sand, the kreen young have a natural pack instinct that often lets them prevail if enough of them survive the initial onslaught. Regardless of the outcome, the carnage of these rare events is not pleasant to behold, and kreen that encounter turtle hatchlings quickly learn to lay their clutches far from turtle hatching grounds.

Turtles of a Different Shell

While this book speaks of driks as the legendary progenitors of Athasian turtles, there are several other unique turtle-like creatures in the Dark Sun Campaign Setting that could also serve as progenitors for turtles - either as alternative progenitors, or as inspiration for strange and exciting new types of turtles. The cha'thrang, flailer, and even the earth drake are all excellent candidates; different explanations of their origins may be appropriate.

- **Cha'thrang turtles** may have been created by an exiled and mad hermit, to help capture new test subjects for their deranged experiments.
- **Earth drake turtles** may have been Nibenay's answer to Hamanu's high driks, creating elementally and psionically empowered soldiers by corrupting earth drake eggs.
- Perhaps **flailer turtles** were created by the high templar in charge of a city's gladiatorial games, desperate to create an amazing spectacle to win their monarch's favor, hoping that a four-armed combatant that was less agile, but more heavily armored than a kreen, would entertain their jaded and world-weary tyrant.

Both Dungeon Masters and players are encouraged to be as creative as possible when introducing turtles to the world of Athas. After all, the Dark Sun Campaign Setting is all about new and bizarre creatures and novel interpretations of the familiar D&D races.



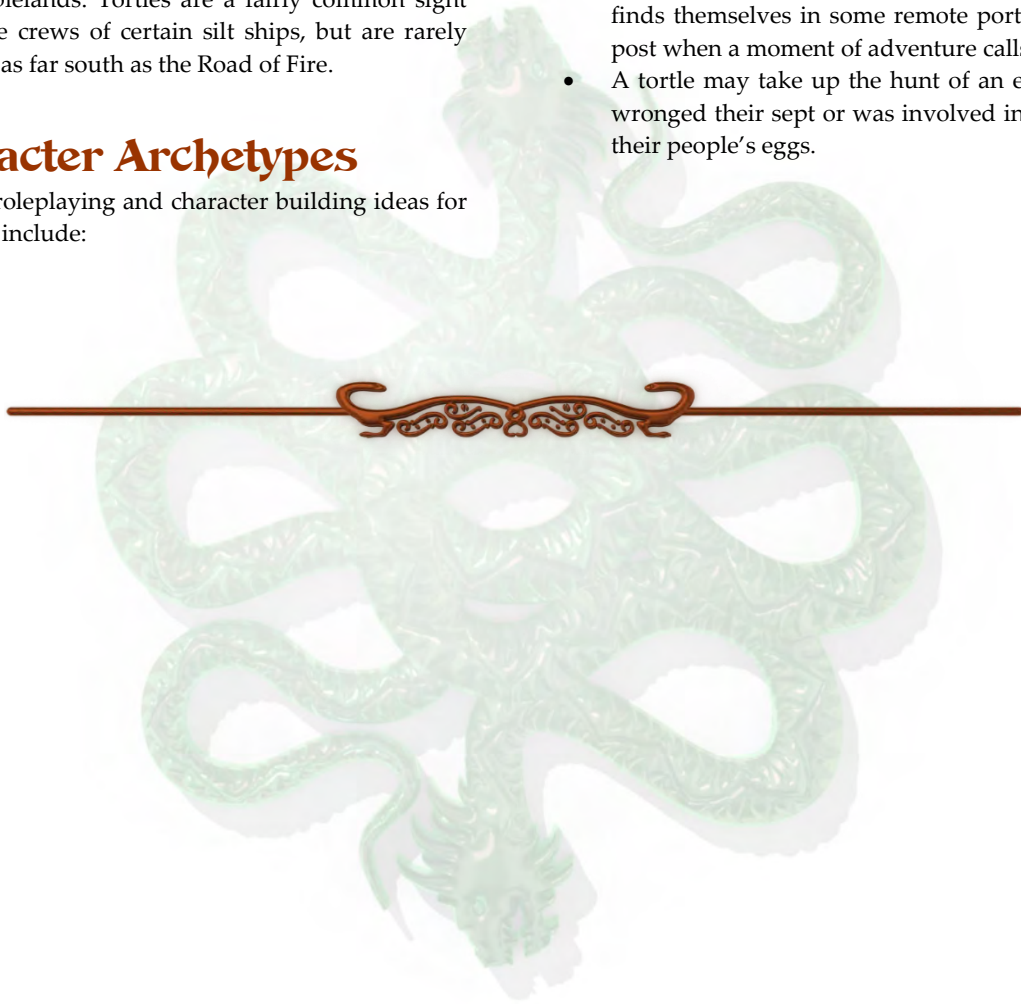
Turtles going on a “wandering” once they reach adolescence is a relatively common phenomenon, though custom dictates they return home at least once to spawn before they are too old, if at all possible.

Turtles are a rare sight in the Tablelands. Most turtles hail from far to the northeast of the seven city-states and simply never range far enough to be encountered in the Tablelands. Turtles are a fairly common sight among the crews of certain silt ships, but are rarely seen even as far south as the Road of Fire.

Character Archetypes

Potential roleplaying and character building ideas for turtle PCs include:

- A turtle determined to travel to the Tablelands, intent on avenging the wrongs of the past, such as learning about the origins of their species (which they believe to be born of the foul practices of templars) or a fervent quest to help improve the lot of the Tyr region’s driks (which turtles view as sacred).
- A turtle who has taken up a life of silt-faring, and finds themselves in some remote port or trading post when a moment of adventure calls.
- A turtle may take up the hunt of an enemy who wronged their sept or was involved in damaging their people’s eggs.





Silt Runners

The tiny and thoroughly inhuman silt runners are at least as fast as even the swiftest elves and kreen. Most people know only two things about silt runners - that they are such extraordinary sprinters that they can run across open silt without sinking beneath it, and that

they can be savage raiders who swarm unsuspecting travelers in large numbers. They are thus generally quite unwelcome among other races, but despite their reputation and savage raiding hordes, silt runner society is actually quite complex and sophisticated.

Scale, Tail, and Claw

Fourth Journal, Entry 2

"We headed north along the silt coast, the skimmer keeping to the shallows and trying to maintain sight of land. It seemed the plan was to travel north and cross the Sea of Silt at the northern strait. Two days into our journey I spotted my first silt runner.

"I spotted him from several hundred feet away, far out of missile range, but I suspect he would have been moving too fast to see clearly if I had been much closer. I had never seen any creature run that fast, let alone across silt itself!

"The details were difficult to make out at that range, but from the general profile, he seemed not unlike the creature I saw in the Kano Swamp, albeit surely adapted to a different habitat."

Fourth Journal, Entry 4

"Just as the strait appeared over the horizon, we were attacked.

"It seems both the crew and I misread the intentions of the occasional silt runners we had seen along our route. I see now that they were sizing us up and waiting until the time was right before striking.

"We had also underestimated their numbers. More than eight dozen of them assaulted our silt skimmer, coming from all sides. While they may have been small, they had come prepared. They reached up onto the ship with their long rods with what looked like tentacles attached to the ends. The tentacles curled around limbs as they found them, and then two of their number pulled one of the crew off the ship, letting them drown or impaling them with barbed spears as they fell.

"In this way they whittled us down one by one, taking bites out of us like a wezer swarm. We tried to head toward the shore, but their tactics were carefully considered, and the attacks only intensified as we moved closer to shore. Apparently, the silt runners planned to overwhelm our skimmer just far enough off shore that they could easily retrieve our cargo, but no one else could.

As the captain started to chant what sounded like magic, a large sack of some sort landed on the deck, exploding into a blast of silt.

"From there, we were all blinded, but the silt runners evidently didn't know about my antennae. I grabbed the yuan-ti by the shoulder and reached out to the turtle and asked her to carry us out of the chaos in exchange for my serving as their eyes. She agreed, and we clung to her back, holding our breath, as she pulled us toward the shallow silt.

"The turtle moved quickly through the silt, though unable to breathe, the trip felt excruciatingly long. When the silt finally became shallow enough that our heads could grasp for breath, we were hundreds of feet from the attacking silt runners. They were so focused on their attack that it seemed not to have occurred to them that someone could travel so far under the silt as we had.

Eventually we managed to reach the shore. As she pulled us along, my turtle ally told me that this was an unusually large and brazen raiding party. We then discussed what we knew about the silt runners, and I have documented what I have learned below."

-Journals of Kil'mma'aktho (translated)

Physical

Silt runners are a small, upright, and bipedal race of reptilian humanoids with a proportionally long snout and somewhat crocodilian appearance - having large, narrow eyes set under heavy ridges which stand up noticeably from the surface of their heads. Standing somewhere between 3 1/2 and 4 1/2 feet tall, and weighing a mere 40 to 55 lbs, silt runners are lean and muscular with large webbed feet and oversized clawed hands. Silt runners are covered with fine dull scales matching the colors of their dusty and rocky environments. Their eyes are equipped with two sets of eyelids, including a transparent dry covering which prevents dust from accumulating on them. Their snouts are also adapted to running in dusty environments, naturally filtering out even the finest dust and silt from in-drawn air before it reaches the lungs, even while running.

Their most distinctive physical features, however, are their legs and feet. Silt Runners are not only the smallest but also the fastest intelligent reptilian species on Athas. Although fast when running across solid land, it is upon the surface of the silt that their unique physiology truly comes into play. Their spring-loaded legs are capable of cycling incredibly fast, and their webbed feet stretch out paddle-like when they hit the silt, allowing their long toes to spread out, forming a large triangular surface to push against the silt and propel them across the surface without sinking. While running, a silt runner's posture angles forward to maintain their balance with help of their stubby tails. While this is true whether running on solid land or across silt, when running across silt, the angle of a silt runner's body becomes even more extreme. If not for the incredible speed with which their legs spring forward to begin another stride, and their preternatural ability to balance, silt runners would surely fall over or sink down into the silt, especially when quickly changing directions.

Silt runner males tend to be somewhat larger than females, with slightly longer snouts and more elongated skulls. Females tend to have wider snouts and rounder skulls and can be slightly broader in the hips and abdomen. The largest males are often the most dominant, though there are usually limits to how large they can become, because at too great a size silt running becomes impossible.



Combat

Silt runners are often described as cowards in combat. It is, however, more accurate to say that they know when they are outclassed and know that their single biggest asset is their speed. When they do engage in combat, silt runners work as a group, relying on high-mobility tactics to outmaneuver and confuse their enemies, and using missile weapons to soften up and

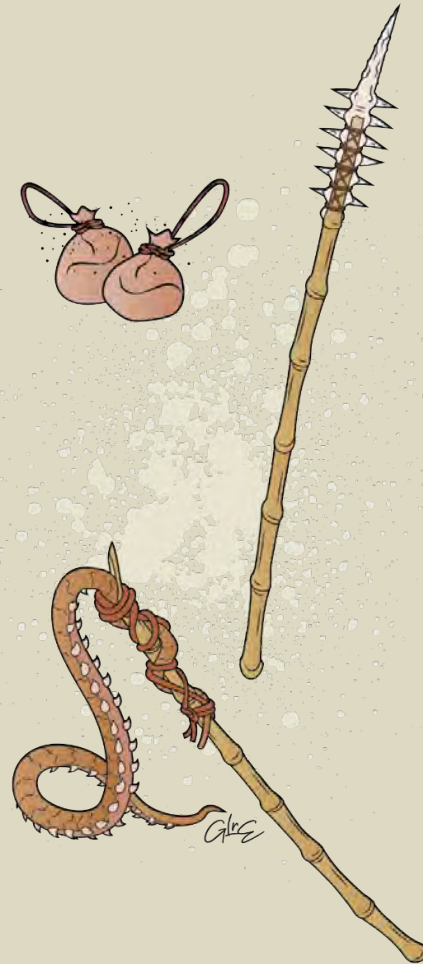
immobilize their enemies before overwhelming them with numbers.

Most tribes tend toward a rigid hierarchy in combat. Chieftains are the most dominant physical combatant in a tribe, which often means the largest silt runner, although a well-trained fighter, whether male or

Silt Runner Weapons

In addition to their paralytic darts, silt runners use a handful of other novel weapons in their attacks:

- **Razor spears** – the razor spear is a nasty invention, featuring an extremely sharp edge at the end of a very light-weight piece of sun-hardened silt bamboo (which often grows at the edge of mudflats). Silt runners wield this weapon differently than a typical spear – a small queue of silt runners will frequently charge past enemies, dashing to their left or right, while swinging the razor spears horizontally into the enemy. When successful, a series of painful lacerations will be inflicted and the silt runners will be out of range before the target can react.
- **Dust bombs** – a favorite tool of silt runners are dust bombs. These objects are created by taking the lower stomach of a dead erdlu, specially treating it in a process known only to the silt runners, and then filling it with silt and squeezing all the air out. This process can be repeated a number of times until a surprisingly large amount of silt is stored in the organ. These stomachs are then hurled at enemies; they do little to no damage when they hit, but they rupture into an enormous cloud of dust that chokes the lungs and makes it difficult to see.
- **Silt tripper** - fashioned from the tentacles of silt horrors, silt trippers consist of a long bamboo rod with the tentacle attached at its end. They are designed to be swung so as to wrap around an opponent's limb, pulling them off balance. Even once separated from a silt horror, the tentacles have a natural tendency to coil tightly around whatever they strike, so silt trippers can be used to grab and pull opponents. Though silt runners are individually small, there are tales of enough silt runners casting tentacles around the legs of a giant that they were able to drag the unfortunate creature down into the silt.



female, can sometimes best the largest member of a tribe and thus assume the rule of chief. The chieftain is the leader in battle, and typically makes the tactical decisions for an assault, with the attacking silt runners fulfilling one of three combat roles: darters, ragers, and inciters. Both male and female silt runners will be found performing any of these roles.

The rare silt runners with paralytic saliva serve as **darters**, which conveys a double meaning: they cover darts with their poison, and then they dart out from hiding places and then use blowguns to fire the paralytic darts at enemies, attempting to immobilize them or at least slow them down. The dose in one dart

is fairly mild, only slowing someone down slightly, but their effect is cumulative, with each dart's poison

potentially slowing their target a little further, and when a large number of silt runners attack, they often have a large number of darts to launch.

Ragers is the term for silt runners that engage in combat directly. They typically carry long spears and will charge at enemies with their incredible speed, attempting to strike and then immediately run out of range. In combat, targets of these attacks might face the prospect of 4-6 silt runners charging toward them at once, making it difficult to avoid their attacks or to strike back at more than one. In addition to directing

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the tactics of the other silt runners, the chieftain also typically engages in combat as one of the ragers.

Finally, a few silt runners will perform as **inciters**. The inciters are typically (though not necessarily) psionicists, who use their psionic powers to create

chaos and confusion. One common technique is to use psionic detonation to stir up giant clouds of sand or silt, or to throw rocks into the faces of opponents - harming them, but more importantly distracting and confusing them.

Personality

Jittery and intense when animated or eerily still with an unwavering gaze, silt runners can stand completely motionless, unblinking and seemingly not even breathing for several minutes before suddenly bursting into a flurry of activity. Their personalities are similarly dichotomous, shifting back and forth between very calm and quiet and loud and aggressive very suddenly. Silt runners also have an unnerving tendency to stare at people, sometimes even seemingly random people who wouldn't normally be expected to be the center of attention in a particular situation.

Silt runners have a distaste for anything that could be considered an encumbrance. This is partially a

practical consideration for running across silt, but is also a philosophical principle, as silt runners, to the extent they are philosophical, are drawn to metaphors about the importance of not being weighed down.

Many silt runners like to display trophies from their raids. For males, this is often souvenirs from major kills, whereas many female silt runners have acquired a taste for jewelry, copying the styles favored by wealthy women of other species they've encountered. Silt runners appreciate that jewelry allows for a great deal of personal expression while weighing very little.

Society

Most silt runners live in large tribes of up to around 200 individuals, which exist within larger groups centered around the spiritual authority of their silt priests.

The histories of these groups are complex and the composition of them ever-shifting as groups split-off, rejoin, and war with each other. Silt runner politics are often based on local circumstances, or the petty disputes and power games of their envious, superstitious, and suspicious religious leaders. The vast majority of tribes live in chaotic warrens that are typically dug out of sandy areas near the shores of or islands in the Sea of Silt. The entryways to these sandy lairs are built with tightly-woven thatch walls and ceilings, constructed from dried out scrub plants, that are stable enough to keep the sand from collapsing and weaved tightly to keep silt and sand from blowing through their tunnels. Silt runners choose lair locations that are remote, hidden, and defensible, but if faced with serious threat they are quick to abandon their warrens, either returning later to ambush and drive off intruders, or permanently leaving to find a new location to inhabit.

While silt runner tribes often strive for rigid hierarchy, their organizational structure is actually quite fluid and complex. All tribal groups are led by a war chieftain, often the largest among their kind, who has repeatedly prevailed against challenges to their dominance. War chieftains inspire and lead their tribe's warriors into battle, including leading the raids for which silt runners are so famous. These war chieftains influence their tribe by instilling a sense of pride and power in their warriors, as well as handing out honors and spoils. War chieftains are also responsible for punishing egg breakers. The position of war chief is always up for contention, and there are two ways to become a war chief: challenge and overthrow an existing war chief, or inspire enough silt runners to leave the current tribe and follow you to glory and opportunity.

The second important figure within a silt runner tribe is the "kakali", a silt runner word which translates to something like "administrator." While a kakali might seem subservient to the war chieftain, this leader is responsible for the construction of warrens, the tracking of food supplies, and many other organizational and planning tasks. Kakali are always

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among the most clever and charismatic members of their tribe, and they may be young or old, male or female. Though they show deference to the war chieftains, kakali wield a tremendous amount of influence, often precipitating or squashing challenges, schisms, and reconciliations, both within and between tribes. Kakali are responsible for attending to the many matters outside of war and raids, top among them making sure the eggs are safe, resolving disputes, and attending to the prosperity of the tribe. While the war chieftain must punish egg breakers, it is the kakali that makes the accusations. He or she is the plotter and schemer who pulls the strings in a silt runner tribe. It is also traditional for the war chieftain to hand over the majority of the spoils of war to the kakali. There is a performative aspect to how this is done which elevates both the war chieftain in their role as provider and reinforces the kakali's perceived role as subservient, but a war chieftain who fails to please their kakali may soon find their tribe much diminished or themselves supplanted by an eager young warrior.

The third pillar of silt runner society are the silt priests who in many ways stand apart from the tribes. Silt priests are always welcome within any silt runner tribe, though sometimes only out of fear and superstition. As long as they don't openly turn against their people, it is unthinkable to kill or challenge the spiritual authority of a silt priest. A silt priest's role is one of tradition and superstition: they are the keepers of lore, and not only serve as bridges between tribes, but also as the bridge to the spirits and other realms.

All kakali must receive the blessing of a silt priest before officially taking on that role, and silt priests are not allowed to interfere with the war chieftains' disputes, challenges, or authority. However, their influence over the kakali gives them an indirect way of interfering with war chieftains that displease them. Wise silt priests spend a good deal of their time talking to the kakali, offering them advice and support as well as information about other tribes and outside groups.

Tribes tend to patrol different territories, but those territories can shift dramatically from generation to generation. Tribes rarely cooperate, and if resources become desperate, they will viciously fight each other to survive. Silt runners who find themselves cast out from a tribe or who leave their tribe for other reasons will often seek to join another tribe or rejoin their former tribe. Such outcasts will be admitted graciously if they agree to accept a role at the bottom of the hierarchy, but only if they offer up any egg breakers among their number for sacrifice. Silt runners who flee

large tribes (often for the minor crime of attempting to fertilize eggs outside their proper place in the tribe's hierarchy) will sometimes join or form smaller bands of 10-40, or even form gangs of just 3-8 silt runners.

Family Life

Silt runners lay eggs. An especially strong insult in silt runner society is that of "egg breaker" - those who break the eggs aren't just killing the next generation, but are also challenging the tribe's authority figures as it is often presumed to be their eggs which are being destroyed, as silt runner tradition maintains that all eggs are the young of the tribe's chief, kakali, or associated silt priests, although this is rarely true in practice.

Females lay 10 to 20 eggs in a clutch, usually in nest chambers in their warrens. As tribes are frequently on the move, these eggs are often not closely guarded, and it is not uncommon for entire clutches to be found by predators and lost, or to hatch while unattended. The females of a given tribe therefore tend to lay eggs in a variety of locations. Occasionally, a clutch will remain undisturbed and all 20 or so eggs will successfully hatch, perhaps even with adults present to immediately begin caring for the young. Though "egg breaking" is a heinous crime in silt runner society, eggs are broken for many reasons, and "egg breaker" is often an accusation falsely leveled at a rival that a leader simply wishes ousted from the tribe. Egg breakers are accused by the kakali and will either be slain in ritual combat by the chieftain or offered up to a silt priest for ritual sacrifice. In rare cases, an "egg breaker" survives their ritual combat, fights and kills the chieftain, and becomes the new chieftain; tribes with an egg-breaking chieftain are generally considered the most savage and evil of all by other silt runners and their priests.

Silt runners usually do not know exactly who their father or mother is. Silt runner hatchlings are raised collectively by their tribe; silt runners will often muse and speculate about their exact relations, often based off distinguishing characteristics such as a coloring pattern or other slight differences in physical appearance.

Most silt runner warchiefs regale the young of their tribe with tales of their adventures and conquests, like "The Three Races of Takaloo" or the recounting particularly successful raids. The tribe's kakali teaches the young about more practical matters and values, such as the principles around the sharing of food. Silt

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priests teach the young about the nature of silt and prepare them for the blessing of the feet. When not otherwise engaged in combat, the tribal leaders will spend several hours a week with the young of their community.

Of special significance in silt runner society is the coming of age ritual known as the "blessing of the feet". All silt runner young must be blessed by a silt priest before they attempt a run across the open silt,

and is typically held around a silt runner's twelfth year. After completing their first open silt run, a youth is treated as an adult by their tribe. While a silt runner's ability to run across silt is likely entirely a function of their physiology, the silt priests contend that it is the special favor of the Silt lords that they impart during the blessing that gives silt runners their speed and ability to run across silt. Within their savage tribes, very few silt runners reach old age, but outside of the tribes, some have been known to live into their 70's.

The Three Races of Takaloo

Perhaps a thousand years ago, the arenas of Athas would fill with spectators who wished to see not a fight, but a race. An elf named Ekee was famous for traveling the cities and outrunning any who challenged her.

As Ekee traveled near to race in their city, the people of Draj grew excited. Even in the gladiator pits, they were excited; ll except a young silt runner named Takaloo. As Ekee's visit approached, a templar gleefully told Takaloo the truth: it was Ekee's tribe of elves that had stolen her as an egg. Ekee's tribe had stolen the entire nest of eggs, and feasted on all but one, the templar laughed. The last egg was mottled and disgusting, so they sold it to the arena for a mere ceramic piece.

When the day of the race came, Takaloo begged to race, but as a young hatchling, she was not selected and was instead placed in a cage to watch. So great was Takaloo's anger that as the beginning of the race neared, she gnawed through the giant-hair ropes that held her cage shut. The race began with the waving of a flag, and Takaloo, who had just escaped, was 500 paces from the start of the race, and the race itself was only 500 paces. Takaloo overtook Ekee and won the race, and the crowd roared with approval, but Ekee insisted she had not lost, because Takaloo had a running start.

The next day the templars arranged a second race between only Takaloo and Ekee. Nearly the entire city of Draj came to watch this rematch. They had two paths to run, identical in length, with rows of half-giants guarding the sides of the course.

They began running, and Takaloo emerged with an early lead. Suddenly, however, the half-giant guards pulled aside giant trap doors, revealing small pits of silt. It was perhaps only 20 paces in length. Takaloo knew that her people were famed for running across the silt, but she'd lived in the pits since hatching and had never seen silt before. She froze, Ekee charged onward, and the crowd roared with laughter at Takaloo and applause for Ekee.

That night in her dreams, Takaloo stood on the shores of the great Sea of Silt. A priestess approached her and said, "I am your mother, Takaloo. Though Ekee's elves took you, I have thought of you and your nestmates every day." "How did you find me, mother?" Takaloo asked. "This is my dream, not yours," her mother replied. "I have dreamed all my life that one day I would find even one of my children and bless their feet that they might run across the silt with their people." In the dream, Takaloo's mother knelt before her, held her feet, and prayed.

Takaloo awoke with purpose and rage - she knew Ekee was leaving Draj that evening. Takaloo charged into the gate of her cell so fast that it broke open, sprinted past all the guards, out of the pits, and down the great avenue of Draj. A great shout went up the main avenue, as the crowds watched her run.

Ekee's party was exiting the great gate of Draj and walking onto the drawbridge that led from the city. Hearing the great commotion, Ekee had the guards pull the drawbridge up after she had crossed. It was quite dry that year, and the mudflats that are Draj's fields had all crusted over and were deep with blown in silt.

More and more people gathered to watch along the great avenue. Takaloo could see a smirk on Ekee's face as she neared the silt moat. She thought of her mother's blessing as her feet hit the silt for the first time and did not break her stride or even wobble, instead sprinting straight across the deep silt as if it were solid ground. Ekee turned to run, fear in her eyes, but it was too late: Takaloo caught her and brought her down with a single, ferocious bite.

The crowd roared a third time. It was a roar that the people of Draj have never forgotten, it proclaimed: silt runners are the fastest people of Athas, elves merely the most treacherous.

Language

The silt runner language sounds nearly avian, being largely composed of whistles, chirps, and piercing calls, though it is the silt runners distinctive snout that creates the sounds. Part of this vocal register is too high-pitched to be heard by most other humanoids. The greatest advantage of these sounds is that they can be heard even during mild silt storms (though the roar of heavy storms drowns out even the most piercing of the sounds). The silt runner language is extremely difficult for other species to master, and the highest-pitched sounds cannot be replicated without magical or psionic assistance.

Common Silt Runner Names

Silt runner names often sound like chattering shrieks to other races, and tend to have a heavy emphasis on the final syllable of the name.

Male Silt Runner:

- Akatsaw,
- Chiindaw,
- Gamiriit,
- Mikkha,
- Uryiit

Female Silt Runner:

- Amaiha,
- Hiyani,
- Niyakkha,
- Wiimok,
- Kinuri

Relations

Silt runners are perhaps the least welcome reptilian people in general Athasian society. Most silt runner tribes interact with the broader world only as raiders and ,as a result, they are largely viewed as dangerous pests who are individually weak but dangerous in large numbers.

Silt runners are not adverse to trade, but they typically only trade with ssurrans and the nikaal. Silt runners have no particular loyalty to their trading partners and would happily ambush ssurran and nikaal traders if the food and treasures to be gained seem greater than the short term benefits of continuing their trade relationships. For their part, ssurrans and nikaals are usually willing to take the risks because silt runners

occasionally come across rare or unusual items, since they live in and travel through places that are inaccessible for most peoples. These traders wisely only approach silt runners from positions of strength, setting up trade arrangements that disallow ambushes by the opportunistic silt runners, as traders from both races often have sufficient understanding of silt runner tactics and psychology to avoid falling prey to their typical tricks and traps. Most other races, by contrast, view silt runners as untrustworthy raiders and generally won't attempt to trade with them; accordingly, most silt runners know they will be viewed as raiders even if they attempted to initiate trade and so they rarely bother to peacefully approach other races.



Silt runners generally see turtles as interloping enemies. Since the turtles arrived in the far northern reaches of the Sea of Silt, they've taken up a large swath of the habitat and continue to compete with indigenous silt runner tribes for many of the same resources. The vast number of silt runners in the area may be responsible for pushing turtles out of the island rich territories of the Tyr region and ever further north.

It is not unheard of for small gangs of silt runners to be encountered in the cities of Balic and Draj or in villages near the Sea of Silt. Most Athasians consider silt runners to be little better

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than animals, and are thus often surprised to learn that quite a few know how to speak the Common tongue and seem to be capable of normal conversation. Silt runners are not welcomed in Athasian society by any means, but since individual silt runners are seen as being weak, a small gang of them is not viewed as particularly threatening (beyond the likelihood that they might attempt to pilfer items and run off). Many templars view silt runners as not worth the hassle to chase down or run out of a settlement. The innkeepers

and merchants of Athas have seen countless strange customers in their lives and if a few silt runners walk in and offer to pay (upfront) for a room or some trade goods, most will shrug and take their money.

Silt runners have a fairly extreme hatred of elves, although elves themselves aren't always aware of this, and other peoples are generally oblivious to silt runners having any sort of passions or opinions other than a desire to swarm and attack.

As PCs

Though Silt Runners are typically tribal, violently petty and mendacious by nature, they are also intelligent creatures that have their own opinions and agendas, and thus it is not unheard of for a silt runner to end up on its own, and perhaps find their way to an adventuring party. Once they are outside the confines of their tribe, silt runners are not necessarily drawn to cruel behaviors. Many, in fact, are surprised to find that they can thrive outside of their savage tribal hierarchy.

Character Archetypes

Potential roleplaying and character-building ideas for silt runner PCs include:

- A tribe is decimated or hunted to extinction, with only a few survivors. Alternatively, sometimes when tribes flee danger, some of the members become lost or separated and join an adventuring party;
- Silt runners are occasionally captured and sent to the arenas as novelty gladiators, severing them from their tribes.
- Sometimes silt runners are expelled from their tribes for running afoul of a chieftain or allowed to flee rather than being killed.
- Some silt runners bristle under the demands of tribal life or reject the brutality of their kin and set off to make their own way in the world, and gain the acceptance of other races

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Ssurrans

The hardy, nearly fireproof ssurrans blend reptilian predatory voraciousness with an all too human love for trade and the obtainment of riches, a mixture of traits that serves them quite well in understanding and dealing with various races - both mammalian and reptilian. Despite this, their relations with other races, though frequent, range wildly between reliable trade

partners to violent desert raiders who have no qualms of devouring their defeated opponents. As such, their frequent dealings with other humanoid races are often awkward or even violent. They are naturally difficult for races besides their own to understand and as such, much prefer their own company to outsiders.

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Third Journal, Entry 1

"North of the city called Draj, I encountered my first ssurrans. While not tall, their bodies are thick and bulky like dwarves. Their presence and behavior was full of contradictions: they had no trouble communicating and socializing with the other humanoids, yet they did not seek their company; they came to the city to trade, yet their reasons and strategies for trading were very alien to me. They even proved the most patient with my direct questioning of any race I have encountered so far.

"Speaking with a ssurran elder, I learned their reason for traveling to trade was not for material gain, but to fund their pilgrimage. When I expressed an interest in understanding this, my subject was surprised. He informed me he was returning to his people in the next fortnight, and invited me to join him. This was an exciting invitation until he warned me he could not guarantee my survival...

"I will report here my full findings if my journey is successful."

Third Journal, Entry 3

"I killed a ssurran today. Now I understand what the elder meant with his warning.

"The journey from Ket northwards took us through many harsh and hostile lands, where the dust storms tore at flesh and the winds screamed endlessly like dying animals, but our destination was somehow worse.

"I recall the first time I looked down into the caldera - an endlessly expansive rift, filled with scorching hot lava that scalded the face if you looked down into it for too long.

"At first, I did not believe the elder when he said we would be walking down there, to the bare ground next to that punishing liquid rock. But then he did it and I had no choice but to follow. I knew there would be pain, I had been warned.

"When we reached the open ground at the bottom of the caldera we were not alone. There were untold hundreds of ssurrans, all in clusters - perhaps family groups? I could see several different subtypes of ssurrans, or could I? It was hard to tell if my eyes were being affected by the heat or if they had different colors and textures of skin: had they adapted themselves to different environments?

"My host brought me to his own group, which featured several ssurrans of different ages. They were aggressively physical with each other in their affections, but more cautious with me. It was clear, however, that I had gained their esteem by simply having the stamina to be there.

"That proved only the start of the... what? Ordeal? Gathering of clans? Bloodbath? Feast? We engaged in conversations with many very different ssurrans. Some of these encounters came to blows, and some of those became lethal fights. After one particularly heated disagreement, I was myself drawn into the violence; the young and pugnacious attacker was taller and thinner than my host, with longer claws. It took my best efforts to fend him off, but he would not stop fighting until death. So be it.

"As I stood recovering over the body, adding lacerations and a crushed arm to the pain of the heat, my host turned to me, nodded, and said 'You have now earned the right to eat him.'..."

-Journals of Kil'mma'aktho (translated)

Ssurran are heavy-framed bipedal reptilian folk that tend to range in height from 4 to 6 feet tall, weighing anywhere between 200 and 250 pounds. Their thick, leathery hide comes in all manner of earthen tones, from sand yellow to reddish brown, granting them a modicum of natural camouflage in the wastelands of Athas. Male ssurrans boast large throat sacs, used to advertise their suitability as mates, attract females, and carry hatchlings safely during long and dangerous journeys (though many also use their sacs as hidden cache to smuggle illegal goods). Female ssurrans are slightly heavier, with thicker skin and often with a more reddish hue to their coloring. Females will sometimes weigh up to 275 lbs.

Although all ssurrans share similar bone and body structures, there are three distinct subspecies of ssurrans, each of which belongs to a different nomadic tribal groups. Common among all of these is a heavy-set body, pronounced toothy snout, small dark eyes, and a thick, lizard-like tail.

Ssurran Subspecies

The elders of the Lava Gorge are aware of three different subspecies of ssurran, each centered around different volcanic regions as their primary homeland.

Scorched-scale

These are the most common ssurran in the Tyr region, hailing from north of the Tablelands. These ssurran are avid traders or hungry raiders. They are marked by having relatively short arms compared to their torsos, and faces that are a mix of land iguana and gila monster features. Most of this subspecies refers to the Lava Gorge as their homeland, though some center their travels around smaller volcanoes.

Sandscale

These ssurrans can mostly be found in the volcanic islands of the Sea of Silt, though some have established a small presence in the Smoking Crown mountains near Urik. Unlike their northern brethren, these sandscale ssurrans have a more stout physique, with longer arms that are adapted for climbing and stability. Their sure-footedness allows them to traverse terrain that others find impassible and find refuge high aboveground and to escape predators – the giants of the silt and the armies of Urik keep most intruders away from their islands and mining territory, but the ssurrans are able to make their way up out of their enemies' reach, to find safe, protected lairs. Sandscales often seek out secure burrows in which to rest,



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favoring volcanic vents whenever possible, even going so far as to dig out and enlarge existing cavities with their claws and long arms. Sandscale ssurrans also have blunt, thorny heads reminiscent of horned lizards, and a frill that begins at the top of their heads and runs all the way down along the body to the tip of their tails. When not wandering, they spend much of their time in rugged, mountainous regions, which is partly why their existence is so unknown in the Tyr region.

Obsidian-claw

Nearly unheard of in the Tyr region, save for in rumors and ssurran legends, the least known subtype of

ssurran is based far to the east. For generations, they were isolated from the other subspecies, but are now beginning to trickle back into the western lands as their migratory pattern edges ever larger. These ssurrans, while still relatively heavy-set and as pot bellied as their relatives, are more lanky, and have the longest arms and necks of all ssurrans. Their faces vaguely resemble those of monitor lizards, and like the sandscales, they have a frill running down from their heads, though theirs end just above their nape. Their name comes from their dark smooth claws that resemble sharp shards of volcanic glass.

Combat

Ssurran are fierce combatants, favoring a mix of armed and unarmed combat styles. Their claws are especially sharp and dangerous, often having been sharpened by years of climbing over or across rocks. Ssurran also have a dangerous bite.

Combat with a ssurran tribe will oftentimes feel extremely chaotic as the members will, whether by inclination or necessity, utilize a wide-range of fighting

techniques and weapons, making them extremely unpredictable opponents. In cases where a ssurran tribe is evenly matched or overmatched, they are noted for using a tactic in which, instead of attempting to meet their combatants one-on-one, they swarm and overwhelm a small number of their opponents while ignoring most of the rest. This tends to create a feeling among their foes that it is impossible to fight ssurrans without sustaining savage losses.

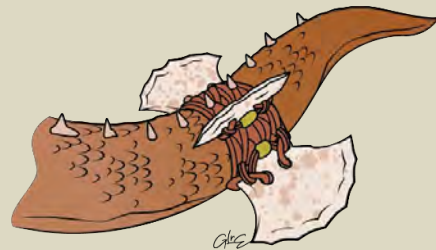
Ssurran Tail Weapons

Known as *thagos* among ssurrans (and known as *thagos* among lizardfolk, who use nearly identical caudal whips and tail razors - lizardfolk do not use fire slings), these weapons are attached to the tail via customized straps that are specially fitted to the protrusions of an individual's tail to hold it tightly in place. A key advantage of these weapons is that they add an additional (and perhaps surprising) attack to the wearer's repertoire, potentially freeing up another limb to carry a shield or perform more dexterous tasks.

Caudal whip - consisting of an up-to nearly 8-foot long lash with a small collection of barbed spikes - often made from teeth - at its end, caudal whips are typically designed to be coiled up when walking, but can be spooled out behind the tail with a practiced flick. In combat, the barbed whip flies out at its target with a quick snap of the tail. While most tail weapons are designed to be difficult to disarm, the caudal whip is designed to easily release from the tail if it is grabbed from the other end.

Tail razors - a set of up to 8 different foot-long extremely-sharp blades, typically made of bone, that extend radially out from the tail, tail razors rely on their extreme sharpness, rather than raw strength, to do damage. When properly fitted, tail razors cannot be disarmed. Unlike whips and slings, they are still effective underwater.

Fire sling - consisting of an L-shaped basket (known as a *xistera*), that is woven from heat-resistant reeds and grasses (such as the *yarrow* grass that can sometimes be found clinging to patches of soil in volcanic regions), and then strapped to the tail, the end of a fire sling's basket is ringed in flint. For projectiles, extremely dry balls of brambleweed dipped in alcohol are used. The brambleweeds catch fire when they are then flung from the basket, and while they do no damage by themselves (if flung as fast as from an ordinary sling, the wind might extinguish the flame), they are very effective at igniting other combustible materials.



Personality

The ssurrans, like many other Athasian peoples, are highly pragmatic. Their primary concern is the survival of themselves and their tribe above all else, often at the expense of anyone else they encounter. This is especially the case when it comes to food: ssurrans tend to view any animals as fair game - available to be taken when hungry - and they find it unreasonable for other species to be unwilling to trade after ssurrans have raided their livestock. This fact, as well as their prevalent use of ambush tactics where they overrun their targets and overwhelm them with sheer numbers, has led many to consider the ssurrans a true blight of the wastes. While not all ssurran tribes engage in barbarism, tales of the species' savage nature tend to grab hold more easily in the minds of most outsiders, permeating the perception of ssurrans among more "civilized" Athasians.

Most ssurrans are actually quite devout, venerating spirits of the land and sun, and looking to their shamans for guidance in all manner of things. They naturally are attracted to magma, fire and sun, though are capable of appreciating that it is the interplay of all elements that sustains the world. Some tribes are even

strangely honorable, preferring to let settlements know of an attack in advance so that it can be safely evacuated before the ssurrans strike, and then only killing those who actively resist.

Ssurran are natural hoarders, believing one never knows when an item might be useful, and have a tendency to keep any item that they come across that can be easily carried or transported. The ssurrans tend to view this practice as merely practical and wise, but many trading partners tend to view them as packrats and junk peddlers. Ssurran often try to collect friendships the way they collect junk, never knowing when a friend will come in useful. This gregariousness is not always welcome, however, and often leads to misunderstandings. Ssurran might describe someone with whom they've traded once as a friend, only for that person to barely remember the ssurran, who happened to have a peculiar good for sale. This is especially the case with species who view ssurrans as savages or junk peddlers, and strongly contributes to many ssurrans feeling disrespected and looked down upon.

The World Egg

"Children, gather round, for I have a story to tell. The Als'ssal tribe has recently returned to share our presence after a long and arduous journey to the ancient city of Tyr. They were well received and the wares they offered were keenly needed, and the journey was a great success. We celebrate their good fortune.

"After they returned, a young female named Lieth came to me. While in Tyr, she met and befriended a young human boy while playing among the market stalls. The boy told her that his parents had said that ssurrans were savages; that humans built great and ancient cities like Tyr but that ssurrans have no great and ancient cities because we are brutish and primitive. The little boy said he didn't believe his parents - young humans naturally tend toward kindness but their world bends them away from it - and that he liked ssurrans. But his remarks made Lieth wonder - 'if that boy's parents are wrong, then where are our great and ancient cities?'

"Your parents have heard this story many times, and now you should hear it as well.

"The ssurrans are the most ancient of peoples. Athas, in fact, is a great World Egg, a ssurran egg, so enormous in size that when you stand upon the surface it appears flat. For aeon upon aeon we lived inside this great World Egg. Every year, as the sun grew stronger, the World Egg warmed.

"On the surface, humans built their great cities. The sun grew stronger, and the World Egg warmed.

"On the surface, humans built their great armies. The sun grew stronger, and the World Egg warmed.

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“The sun started to grow too warm for the humans, their crops began to fail, and so their armies rampaged in a desperate fight for food. Humans say that they are not savages, but tell me then why they build great armies to devastate their own cities? The sun grew ever stronger, and the World Egg warmed.

“Human civilization collapsed. All their great cities are ancient. All their kings are evil and mad. They stopped building new cities because for them, Athas had become too hot and too dangerous. The sun grew stronger, and the World Egg warmed – until, one glorious day – the Opening! The World Egg cracked as great volcanoes burst forth from the ground and our people awakened. Our eyes opened as the egg opened, and we emerged from the volcanic cracks of our egg to claim the surface of the world which is rightfully ours.

“The sun grows ever stronger, and the World Egg ever warms. The humans lament the heat in which we thrive; they only cling to the world via their twisted and evil magicks. We were not here before, because the world was not ready for us. But now, the egg has opened and it is our time beneath the glorious heat of the searing sun. Their civilization is in the past; our civilization is the future. The world is our egg and our time is now. The sun grows ever stronger, and the World Egg ever warms.”

Society

Most ssurrans live in nomadic tribes of about 30 members, typically consisting of an extended family. These tribes migrate along huge, arcing loops and typically return to a volcanic region that the tribe considers their homeland after about a year of wandering. All the interrelated tribes that call a particular region home are considered members of the same clan. While there are no strict rules attached to these wanderings, spending a month in their homeland and then a year wandering is a common pattern. Over time, the tribes’ nomadic routes have become longer and longer, allowing the ssurran tribes to explore and interact with ever more of Athas.

The urge to explore, but then ultimately return to their homeland – which is usually the particular volcanic region where most of the family members were hatched – is deeply embedded in the subconsciousness of every ssurran. Those who are lost or reside near other volcanic hotspots feel the pull of their ancestral home and often long to return one day. When a tribe of ssurran returns to their people’s home, they “reconcile” with the ssurrans based there - their clanmates. This reconciliation is a sharing of their knowledge of the world and tribal histories, strengthening the clan as a whole and ensuring that the disparate tribes and sub-tribes remain a single people.

Ssurran have developed a reputation for savagery partially due to the scorching regions they prefer, which are quite poor habitats for the creatures that ssurrans – strict carnivores – consume; ssurrans often emerge from from their homelands ravenously hungry

and desperate for food. Though they may attempt to trade first, ssurrans are notorious for raiding livestock when hungry, and thus are often a scourge to herders. Like halflings and thri-kreen, they will also eat other sentient species. Ssurran perceive this type of destruction (and indeed all types of destruction) as being similar to the way lava reclaims earth and stone, breaking it down and reabsorbing it to create something new and pure, and so see devouring enemies as a practical but respectful action, though their victims seldom see it this way. As their diets are carnivorous, whenever ssurrans pass through an area, they leave behind only stripped carcasses and bones, further contributing to their gruesome image.

The Butsaaj Morgol

“Magma melts all and reforms, and so must we.”

Most ssurran journeys consist of a long trip beginning in their homeland and returning to that same spot a year later. However, able-bodied ssurrans structure their lives around one great journey, which they refer to as the “butsaaj morgol”, or the returning pilgrimage, and is different than their typical annual wanderings. Ssurran spend years of their lives conditioning themselves to withstand various environments and threats before embarking on a journey of hundreds, if not thousands, of miles. These journeys take them across Athas, through the Tablelands and far to the south, west beyond the Jagged Cliffs, and even across the Sea of Silt. Such journeys take years, and are often (though not always) done in small groups. Because of

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these great pilgrimages, ssurran tribes can be encountered nearly anywhere.

Most of these pilgrims will ultimately return to their homeland, and reunite with their tribes in an especially grand version of their reconciliations, sharing the gathered experience, knowledge, and treasure they have accumulated on their long journey. Occasionally, however, after a period of great wandering, a ssurran tribe will discover some new volcanic region and adopt it as their new homeland, rather than returning to their original homeland. While some members of the tribe (most often the older generation) may still feel drawn to their original homeland, the majority will perceive this to be their home. Some elders believe that the different subspecies of ssurrans developed from tribes that undertook such a great butsaaj morgol so many generations ago that they eventually lost any urge to return to their mythical homeland that they never knew and became isolated from their brethren.

Trade Nest and the Lava Gorge

Most scorched-scale ssurrans describe a distant homeland called Trade Nest that they claim is near the shores of an enormous open sea of magma called the Lava Gorge. It is usually unclear to outsiders whether this homeland is real or mythical, and many in the Tablelands believe ssurrans are itinerants who are incapable of founding any permanent settlements and are unlikely to travel nearly as far as they claim. In truth, however, Trade Nest is indeed a major settlement that hundreds of ssurran tribes consider

their homeland. In fact, some ssurran tribes do not pursue a nomadic life, instead living in the Trade Nest continuously generation after generation.

Trade Nest hosts unusually large assemblies of ssurrans, especially during the week before and after High Sun and Low Sun, which serve as festival periods of a sort for the ssurrans. Once every 22 years (every other year of Ral in the Athasian calendar's Endlean cycle), the ssurrans hold a "great reconciliation" near Trade Nest on the shores of Lava Gorge itself, and even ssurrans who do not consider the region around Lava Gorge to be their homeland often make an attempt to travel there for this great reconciliation. The tribes gather to share their experiences, knowledge, and attempt to show up each other tribe's successes with their own. These great reconciliations are far more likely than other ssurran gatherings to turn violent, and have occasionally led to grand falling outs between tribes, some of which have resulted in significant tribal wars. Minor disputes are traditionally settled by one group leaving and going on an extended wandering; which group is chosen to leave depends on the situation; some draw lots, others engage in ritual combat, and still others submit to the judgment of the OverChief - the ssurran who serves as the political leader of Trade Nest. In any event, due to their normally long migrations and the short amount of time they spend in their homelands, ssurran feuds rarely last long enough for the same two tribes to encounter each other again.

Lava Gorge is also a significant location to ssurrans because the surrounding region is the only known location where an item of special significance in



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ssurran society can be found, the stone known as “fire vermilion”. Veins of this scarlet rock can only be found near open lava and, even if mined, the eerily translucent stone continues to store and radiate heat for years. A common ritual is for ssurrans to bury a chunk of fire vermilion (known in the ssurran tongue as a “sasslassir”) alongside their eggs, both to provide the warmth needed for incubation and for good luck. Ssurran also mount the stone into bracelets, amulets and staffs.

Family Life

Ssurran eggs require consistently high temperatures (even by Athasian standards) to develop properly, so it is no accident that ssurrans always return to volcanically active areas after their travels. When preparing to lay eggs, females become especially fire loving (and especially uncomfortable in the cold) and seek out extremely hot environments during this period. Ssurran females typically lay 5-8 eggs at once, but a suitable place for ssurran eggs can be difficult to find: it must be extraordinarily hot, but at the same time, volcanic vents are dangerous and even ssurran eggs cannot survive being subsumed by flowing lava or a searing plume of superheated gasses.

Ssurran eggs take nearly a full year to gestate but have very few predators – few creatures can survive in the

volcanic regions that ssurrans favor for their eggs, and even fewer creatures find the embryos edible. Thus a couple who lays eggs will sometimes travel for a full year before returning to check on their clutch. When traveling over long distances, male ssurrans will carry young hatchling in their large throat sacs to protect them from danger, another practice that may have contributed to the image of ssurrans as cannibalistic savages, as members of other races who briefly see a young ssurran peeking out from an adult’s mouth could easily get the wrong impression and think its being devoured.

As many ssurrans gather annually in volcanic regions, this is a prime time to lay and check on eggs. Not all ssurrans lay eggs near their homeland of the Lava Gorge, however, as volcanic activity and vents can be found across Athas.

Ssurran do not wish for their tribes, which are generally extended families, to grow too large, recognizing that it becomes difficult to maintain unity. If a family does become too large, the eldest members of the tribe will sometimes split it into two tribes, each taking their descendants with them. Alternately, tribes will sometimes forgo several egg-laying cycles entirely, which allows them to wander in a much wider arc without needing to return to their nests. Consequently, the tribe’s population growth slows (as



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the tribe members can less frequently access their hatching grounds), or reverses as attrition during the increasingly long and dangerous routes grows.

Ssurrans mature more slowly than most other reptilian species, not reaching full maturity until around age 25.

Ssurrans rarely leave their tribe before reaching full maturity, after which they might choose a mate in a different tribe or set off on their own. Ssurrans are fairly long-lived, with elders of their society sometimes reaching well over 100 years of age.

Language

The Ssurran language is a long, seemingly rambling and droning language composed of sibilant tones and basso rumblings from the chest cavity; tail posture is often used to add emphasis and tone. Nonspeakers occasionally mistake the Ssurran language for a meditative mantra or even a kind of low tonal music. Ssurrans themselves almost universally have difficulty pronouncing other languages, and their voices tend to have a hissing, polytonal quality when doing so. While races without tails cannot hope to fully communicate using the Ssurran language, it is possible for them to understand the language and even manage some limited communication.

The Ssurran language is noted for its unusual vocabulary: it has dozens of words for different types of heat, extremely complex classifications for geographical features, and the most extensive array of words in any language for the biological features of reptiles. This reflects not only the extent to which ssurrans encounter other places and species, but also

the role that their reconciliations play in sharing and spreading information. Many human concepts, however, have no role in the Ssurran tongue - they have no word for shame or modesty, for example.

Common Ssurran Names

Male:

- Chava'ssh
- Iss'orin
- Holo'ssh
- Sta'ssa
- Thuuss
- Ule'uss
- Zath'ess

Female

- Kanaka'ssh
- Ist'uessh
- Lieth
- Mok'uahi'ssh
- Ss'aiana
- Uth'ess
- Vassh'ess

Relations

Ssurrans make natural and pragmatic traders. The ssurrans have a great advantage in barter and commerce, in that they are capable of traversing some of the harshest hottest terrain of Athas and have no compunctions about dealing with nearly any race. Between this and their near-constant travels, most ssurrans have had extensive interactions with most other sentient races on Athas.

The ssurrans' shared reptilian nature helps keep some of the more exotic races, such as the secretive jozhals and remote turtles, comfortable around them - neither species tends to herd flocks, and therefore lack the concerns that other races might have with ssurrans stealing their livestock. Moreover, many of the seemingly useless items that ssurran collect are of use to the industrious jozhals and isolated turtles. Ssurrans often have goods for trade that jozhals would

otherwise have difficulty obtaining, and while ssurrans do sometimes compete with jozhals for resources, their shared respect for the land often allows them to find a way to mutually respect each other. Turtles can rarely muster enough trust in the more common mammalian

races to trade with them, but feel a kinship with the nomadic ssurrans that allows sporadic trade between the two races. Ssurrans do not particularly trust silt runners, instead ensuring that their tribes are large enough that silt runners will choose to trade rather than attempt an attack. Ssurrans are one of the few races that the rare lizardfolk feel comfortable interacting with, as lizardfolk take comfort in the many biological similarities between their two peoples. Most of those who have heard the legends of lizardmen do

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not believe them, but anyone conversing with ssurrans will quickly realize that ssurrans believe the legends.

Ssurrans are well-known to the human and demi-human peoples of Athas. They are not unfamiliar presences in the markets of the city-states, where they occasionally offer wares that no one else has ever seen before. Among the more common races, they have a reputation for savagery, most likely because of experiences with them in combat or stories of their cannibalism, and are especially unwelcome among

herders, whose flocks are frequent targets for the ssurrans. Ssurrans are often uneasy with thri-kreen and elves, as thri-kreen clutches and elven tribes will sometimes attack a ssurran tribe in the deserts or the wastes, and when such battles occur, they tend to be extremely vicious, with heavy losses on all sides. Though they know to be wary of kreen clutches and elven tribes, most ssurrans have no particular animosity for individual kreen or elves, unless they happen to be from a tribe that was decimated in a conflict.

As PCs

The nomadic nature of ssurrans naturally lends itself to a life of adventuring. Though they are tribal by disposition, individual ssurrans have their own interests and motivations, and with the blessing of their tribe, they will often strike out on their own. Ssurrans generally do not like to stay put – one will rarely find a ssurran settled into a home in a city-state, for example – but as long as they are on the move, they are happy to explore Athas, even with a group of non-ssurrans.

- A spiritual traveler just starting out on a solitary butsaaj morgol.
- A cynical warrior-turned-trader who has learned it is more advantageous to make deals with the “soft skins” than to fight with them.
- A ssurran, so deeply offended that ssurrans are seen as savages by the other races, that they’ve resolved to integrate into Tablelands society to restore their race’s good name. If they are not careful, however, their outrage might be seen by other races as proof of ssurran savagery.

Character Archetypes

Potential roleplaying and character building ideas for ssurran PCs include:



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Lizardfolk

Very few Athasians have ever even heard of lizardfolk. Of those who have, many assume the creatures are legends or misidentifications of one of the more common species of reptilian humanoids; even among those who believe in the legends, most assume that the lizardfolk are long extinct.

Rare tales tell of ancient lizardfolk that were different from any other scaly creatures on Athas, as much at home underwater as they were on land. Some legends say they could breathe the water itself and that they could swim in water as easily as a silt horror moves through silt. If true, only a handful of tiny settlements

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of these lizardfolk could possibly still exist; perhaps these rare individuals are able to simply sink into hiding whenever someone approaches their oasis.

Those rare and lucky individuals who meet a living lizardfolk often discover the creatures to be even more enigmatic in person than the legends ever claimed: much of their communication and emotional expressions are entirely alien, even to other reptilian races. With their ability to not only change the color

and texture of their skin but also their actual sex, the adaptiveness of lizardfolk is truly remarkable, perhaps even explaining how an amphibious race has lasted so long on a desert world.

Note: because of their rare status, this race should only be allowed for player's use at the DM's discretion. For campaigns set in certain time periods, locations, or using certain interpretations of the lore, the race may indeed not exist at all.

Third Journal, Entry 4

"As I had hoped, all the pain I endured while attending the ssurran reconciliation near the lava basin had rewarded me with the rare knowledge I had been seeking.

"One ssurran individual I spoke to told a fascinating story of encountering reptilian brethren who lived in a large body of water, emerging soaking wet to engage in trade and retreating back into the water as soon as the exchange was completed. Just as ssurrans seem more comfortable near lava than away from it, these creatures prefer to have their skin soaked at all times, he said.

"Judging from the description, it appeared to be similar to the creature I spotted swimming in the Kano Swamp. Logically, such beings would be as rare as open water.

"All of the information I have gleaned from our conversation has been recorded here. Unfortunately, I have no way of substantiating the truth of his account. The ssurran refused to share any information about the location of this encounter, which made me somewhat more inclined to believe him - I had the sense that he felt it was perhaps a valuable trading relationship for which he wanted no competitors. This particular species (simply called "lizardfolk" by the ssurran) has never been reported anywhere else in recent history."

-Journals of Kil'mma'aktho (translated)

Physical

Athasian lizardfolk bear resemblance to several different types of reptile, but perhaps most notably crocodiles. They can change their skin coloration in chameleon-like manner, altering it to blend in with their surroundings, though, due to their preferred habitats, the natural coloring of lizardfolk tends to be the grayish-brown of wet rock or sand. Lizardfolk are covered in thin scales meshed closely together which provide protection while still remaining flexible. Fin-like leathery ridges, similar to those found on crocodiles, run along their spine from atop their heads to the tip of their tails, as well as along their forearms. These may, in addition to their webbed hands and feet, serve to improve their maneuverability underwater.

The crimson rays of the Athasian sun are harsh on lizardfolks' skin, causing it to quickly dry out and become brittle, so they avoid direct daylight as much as possible, preferring to stay underwater most of the time or move under the cover of night when forced to leave the safety of their watery homes.

Like many marine reptiles on other worlds, Athasian lizardfolk are capable of holding their breath underwater for an exceptionally long time, though they are not capable of breathing water. Lizardfolk require very little air when underwater, and have adapted to life underwater in other ways as well: building structures that trap air bubbles and keeping air-refreshing plants within their structures,

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cultivating kelp and other aquatic plants that produce air sacs which can be consumed to satisfy their air needs, and relying in some cases on psionics or elemental magic.

Standing erect, lizardfolk are between 6 and 7 feet tall (not including their tail length) and they typically

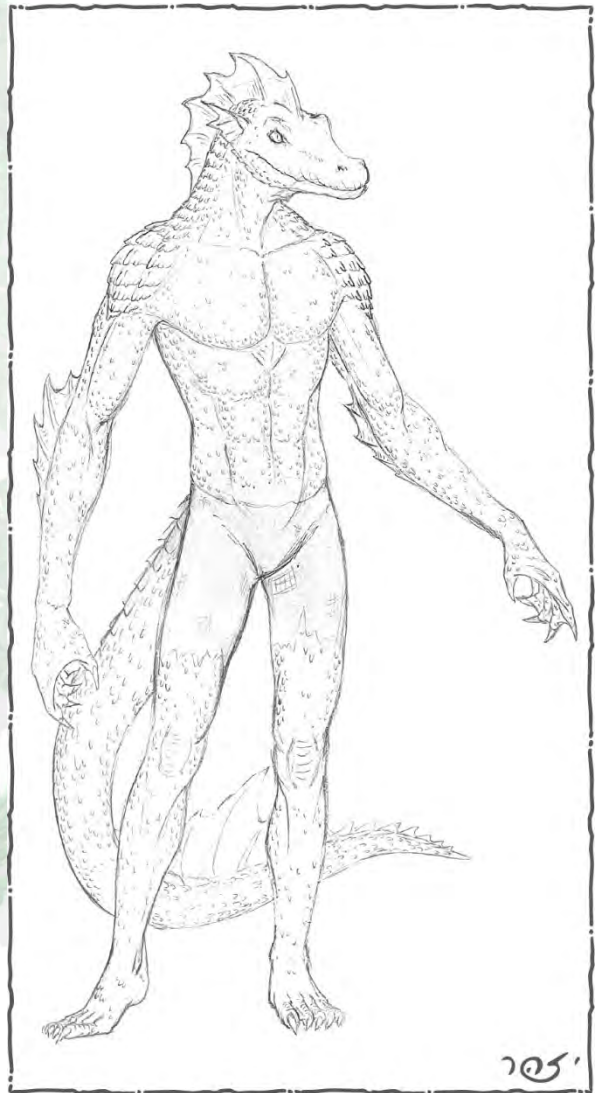
weigh between 200 and 250 lbs. Only lizardfolk themselves (or someone who has studied them for years) can tell the difference between a lizardfolk who is currently presenting as female or male. The tail of a lizardfolk is three to four feet long, but not prehensile; instead, it is used to keep the creature balanced when swimming.

Personality

Lizardfolk can be frustratingly inscrutable: a long history of genocides and environmental devastation have taught them to not trust most humanoids, especially humans or halflings. Their avoidance of other races, as well as sunlight, often make them seem even more mysterious and alien to those few who encounter them. Toward strangers and unfamiliar species, lizardfolk tend to be untrusting in the extreme.

This is not to say, however, that they are incapable of expressing emotion, they simply only do so with those who have earned their trust. Within their own communities, lizardfolk are protective and warm toward their families and their young. They often have a deep philosophical commitment towards appreciating the mundanity of day-to-day life, never knowing when things might change, but they are stern toward any behaviors they view as placing their community at risk. Their families thus tend to be caring but overbearing.

Lizardfolk can be very slow to develop trusting relationships outside their communities, often keeping new people at arm's length for years until they feel that they understand the person's character. Lizardfolk are perplexed by the willingness of other races to make friends quickly, but when they do develop trusting relationships with outsiders, lizardfolks' attitudes toward their own communities often carry over to traveling companions or trusted members of other races. Lizardfolk place great value on those they trust, and seek to protect their friends fiercely. They are also deeply uncomfortable around any sort of reckless behavior, and will sometimes badger those whom they believe are insufficiently cautious. Lizardfolk can tolerate those who place their own lives at risk, but have a very difficult time with anyone who puts the lives of others at risk.



Combat

Lizardfolk know what is at stake should they be discovered. Their unique mastery of aquatic combat and their natural chameleon-like abilities serve them well in guerrilla warfare: lizardfolk hide from their foes for as long as possible, and then strike first and hard, fading away before any surviving targets even know what happened.

Lizardfolk prefer weapons like spears and tridents, as they function well underwater. The most prized weapon of the lizardfolk, however, is the specialized trident known as a manfisher, which has serrated tines that can be used to snare opponents and knock them off balance or drag them under the water. Originally nothing more than a simple fishing spear, the

manfisher evolved as the lizardfolk were being hunted down to extinction by humans. Adapted by lizardfolk warriors to be more suitable for combat, it is especially deadly against the softer-skinned humans, its many spikes inflicting horrible wounds upon them, sending clear a message to other would-be enemies of the lizardfolk of the dangers of threatening their lives.

Lizardfolk also occasionally use tail weapons that attach to the ridges of their tails via custom strap, which they call *thagos* (intriguingly, ssurrans use an almost identical name - *thagos* - for their tail weapons). The most common types are caudal whips, which are barbed whips controlled by flicking the tail, and tail razors.



Society

Any lizardfolk tribes encountered are likely to be extremely isolated and insular. Tribes typically consist of 20-30 extended family members, who are predominantly close-knit and protective of their tribemates. One family rarely lives in proximity to another family, and thus large tribes or even permanent settlements are practically the stuff of legend.

As a species on the cusp of total extinction, most of these tribes have two primary objectives which put conflicting pressures on their behavior. The first goal is to preserve the life of the tribe. After centuries of genocide and destruction of their water habitats, they believe they are a people being hunted, and therefore

have a strong instinct to hide. Lizardfolk are also fanatically protective of their young and believe that no life can ever be casually discarded.

The second goal of most lizardfolk tribes is to continue the life of their species. This means that lizardfolk are constantly searching for other tribes with which to intermarry so as to prevent dangerous inbreeding in their bloodlines. This means that tribes must periodically go on the move, hoping to travel by cover of night or – preferably – during a thunderstorm (rare as they might be), hoping to find signs of another tribe. Tribes will sometimes travel for years or decades without locating another tribe. In the rare event that another tribe is located, the tribes will celebrate with

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an exchange in which as many members of the two tribes choose mates and form new families, with many members leaving their families to join their new tribes, with the tribes attempting to exchange members on a one-to-one basis. Departures are bitter sweet once the celebrations end, as the two tribes will typically travel in completely opposite directions – one to the northeast and one to the southwest, for example. They will not share any information on how to remain in touch, so that if an enemy encounters one tribe, it cannot possibly reveal the whereabouts of each other.

If the reproductive situation becomes sufficiently extreme and dire, and the ability of the tribe to survive appears to be in doubt, lizardfolk are capable of switching their sex to ensure the ability of the tribe to reproduce. Through a combination of willpower and exposure to sufficiently hot or cold temperatures, a lizardfolk can elicit a total biological change of their sex. This can be done multiple times in a lifetime if necessary, but it takes a significant amount of time and it is by no means a simple process for the lizardfolk.

Lizardfolk Changing Sex

Lizardfolk are remarkable among even reptilian races for their ability to switch their biological sex, an adaptation they seem to have developed to preserve their species from repeated extinction events. Once a lizardfolk decides to change, it takes 3-5 (1d3+2) months for the lizardfolk to have completed the transformation, at least a week of which must include exposure to extreme temperature (extreme heat for males to become females, and extreme cold for females to become male). Other than their role in reproduction, there are no other changes to the lizardfolk's abilities or stats (male and female lizardfolk do not differ in size or ability).

Family Life

Within their extended families, individual lizardfolk family groups are often composed of three adults (with an equal likelihood for two males and one female, or two females and one male), to ensure the ability to procreate even if one of their family members is lost to tragedy.

If it were known, the lizardfolk process of reproduction would be just as alien and baffling to an outsider as the other aspects of the race. While they possess the organs for internal sexual fertilization, lizardfolk anatomy is unlike that of any other creature

on Athas, as it seems to be possible for several males to fertilize a female's single clutch of eggs. Once this has been done, the female lizardfolk will lay between 1-3 eggs within a day of fertilization, each of which will take approximately 10 months to hatch. The eggs must stay submerged in water in order to survive, and lizardfolk are usually fanatical about guarding their eggs until they hatch, being extremely reluctant to abandon eggs except under the most dire of circumstances. Once hatched, the young mature quickly, reaching adulthood by age 10. The young help the family group until they are old enough to form their own groupings. Lizardfolk elders can reach around 120 years of age.

Language

Lizardfolk have their own ancient language - a hissing, rumbling, crocodilian speech combined with head and body gestures. The vocal sounds in the Lizardfolk language are particularly deep, and are specifically pitched to be heard for long distances underwater, potentially making Lizardfolk the only Athasian language that can be used underwater.

Much of the nonverbal components of the Lizardfolk language are conveyed by the degree and direction of a head tilt, and the way the tongue flicks out and touches different places on the outside of the mouth. These cues are noticeable to non-lizardfolk but are not easily understood. Many of the cues cannot be replicated by other species as their tongues simply do not stretch out far enough. To lizardfolk, this communication is largely instinctual and sub-

conscious. Outside observers of lizardfolk conversations often find these flicks of the tongue to be quite off putting.

Common Lizardfolk Names

All Lizardfolk names are unisex:

- Nelyrox (MLotLS, p52)
- Malani
- Mobji
- Jhoban
- Xhenrid
- Sleub (In the Lands of the Last Sea, p23)
- Jusky

Relations

Some lizardfolk are so isolated that they've had few interactions with any other race, but rare tribes have learned to peacefully interact with other races.

The race that lizardfolk feel most comfortable openly communicating with are ssurrans, though the nikaal are a close second, though even then the interactions are limited and cautious. Members of the two species often cannot help but wonder if they share an ancient kinship: both ssurrans and lizardfolk tend to travel in tribes of similar size (which adds comfort in that neither tends to outnumber the other) and their

languages seem to share some unusual similarities (for example, ssurrans call their tail weapons *thagos* while the lizardfolk word is *thogos*) and both prefer to retreat to the safety of extreme environments: lizardfolk to rare sources of water and ssurrans to places of extreme heat. Some lizardfolk have also decided that nikaal can make trusted trading partners, appreciating the nikaals' ability to keep secrets.

Due to their extremely limited contact with other races, lizardfolk are generally unclear about the distinctions between different mammalian humanoids. They are

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largely unsure about questions such as whether half-giants are simply particularly large humans, if halflings are different from young humans, and if muls are simply just bald and burly humans, or if each is a separate race. As most lizardfolk believe that human cruelty is primarily responsible for their current predicament - a belief strongly reinforced by oral histories that speak of their being hunted to near extinction by humans - lizardfolk generally view nearly all humanoids as potential existential threats and believe it is best to not examine the matter more closely.

Because it is nearly unheard of for lizardfolk to have learned Common, the vast majority of their interactions with other races happen with psionic or magical assistance, preferably from a position of great safety. Often, a lizardfolk psionist located safely underwater will attempt to communicate psionically with a visitor at the water's edge, perhaps even arranging to trade this way, convincing the visitor to throw an item into the water and for the hidden lizardfolk to throw something back in exchange; the trader might be left unsure what exactly has happened, or who they really traded with, but a trade is a trade.

As PCs

Athasian lizardfolk can be particularly challenging to play in the harsh desert world of Athas as presented in most versions of the campaign setting. Their isolation and reliance on watery habitats are difficult hurdles to overcome, and players and DMs should carefully consider how to construct an appropriate background to have led a lizardfolk to have become an adventurer.

Character Archetypes

Potential roleplaying and character building ideas for lizardfolk PCs include:

- As many lizardfolk view their people as being on the precipice of extinction, a lizardfolk PC might be strongly motivated to explore and understand the world in order to find a more hospitable or safer home for their people.
- A lizardfolk that has struck out on their own in pursuit of another tribe, hoping to strengthen their people's bloodlines and ensure their survival.
- A lizardfolk warrior, hunting for enemies (real or imagined, past or present) so as to thwart their would-be predators and ensure their people's ongoing survival.



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Nikaal

The nikaal are a strange and elusive people, wandering the most remote and unforgiving parts of Athas. They are so elusive, in fact, that visual accounts and depictions of their appearance have been wildly inconsistent for King's Ages.

Nikaals are close enough to humans in appearance that they are often merely considered to be "exotic" looking, rather than truly strange or inhuman, and this has served to ease their interactions with various other humanoid races. Over the King's Ages the nikaals have taken full advantage of this access to both humanoid

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and reptilian species, earning the respect of many races across the world as traders and intermediaries.

Despite their resemblance to humans, nikaals have deeply unusual traits born from their reptilian heritage. Nikaals have the ability to slow their metabolism almost to the point of hibernation – a state known as brumation, that can last for just a few days

or for as long as decades upon decades – which has unusual ramifications for nikaal society.

Their strange and mysterious natures only add to their allure, for the nikaal are a people unlike any other, navigating the shifting sands of Athas with ease and grace.

Second Journal, Entry 1

“During my stay with the pterrans, a curious caravan of a different type of reptilian people passed through with the intent of trading. They had similar features and build to the creature I saw in Kano Swamp, but with purple skin.

“At first communication was awkward, but they were surprisingly accommodating, and after multiple visits we found ways to understand one another. Perhaps they were intimidated by my size, or perhaps it was curiosity– a sign of civilisation.

“I asked to join them on their upcoming journey, and they accepted me in.”

Second Journal, Entry 3

“We have been traveling south along a trade road through the wastes now for a week, making our way towards human lands. Each night the whole camp has engaged in a strange but spectacular ritual of music and dancing.

“And what incredible music it has been! I had never heard anything like it in my existence. It was so entrancing, I noticed even the local wildlife stopped to sway as the rhythm carried them.

“It was only after several of these nights that I began to understand what they were doing: the music was not simply entertainment, it was also protection! Nothing attacked the caravan because nothing could resist the call of the music. This was a form of psychic effect unlike anything I had ever seen!”

-Journals of Kil'mma'aktho (translated)

Physical

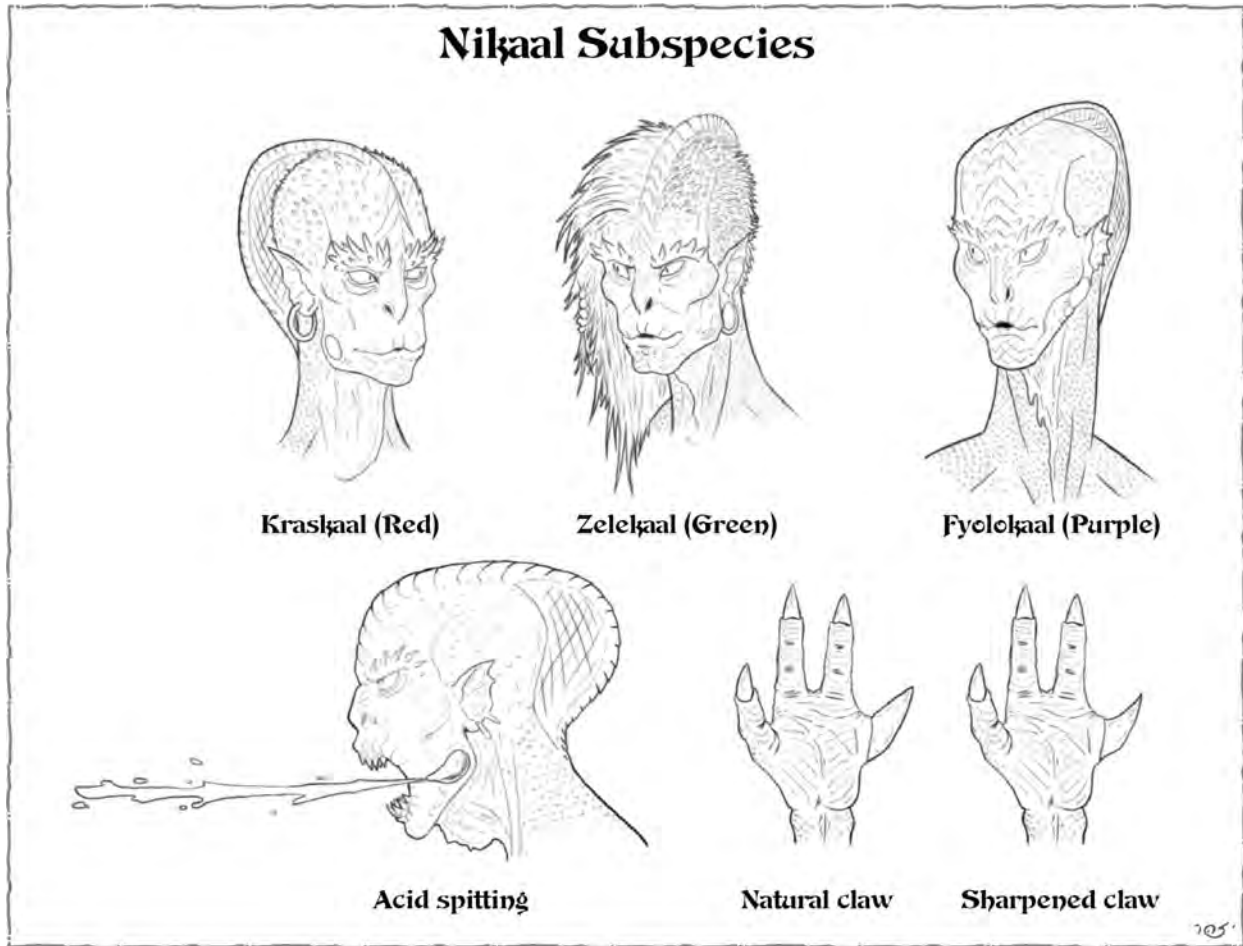
Nikaal stand at around 5 to 6 feet tall and are typically lean, weighing around 150 lbs. They are covered in fine scales and have distinctive serpentine features, such as slit-shaped pupils and recessed ear slits. They also have a series of flexible, elongated scales on their heads, which are sometimes mistaken for hair, and it is not uncommon for nikaal to have bristles resembling hair on their heads, although many do not. Male and female nikaal have slight differences in size and body shape, with each sex resembling reptilian versions of humans without any body fat.

Nikaal have three clawed hands, each with an opposable digit, as well as a sharp spike where a fourth

finger might otherwise be - which they often use as their primary means of defense. Their scales not only protect them much like armor protects humans, but also serve to help regulate their body temperature and prevent vital fluids from evaporating. Wearing additional armor interferes with these natural processes and increases their water requirements, so nikaals prefer to rely on their scales for protection. Their unique physical traits and exceptional endurance make nikaals well-suited to surviving in harsh desert environments.

The nikaal are known for their unique color variations which reflect their maternal heritage. The fyolokaal, or

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purple-scaled nikaal, are commonly found in the northern areas of the Tablelands and Hinterlands. They are frequently observed without any bristles on their heads, either lacking them entirely or removing them at a young age. In the southern regions, the green-scaled zelesaal gather in great numbers - they are most likely to possess long and prominent bristles atop their heads. The kraskaal, or red-scaled nikaal, dwell primarily in lands far from the Tablelands. Beyond their predominant scale color, each of these groups of nikaal is physically very similar to the others. Nikaal directly inherit the coloration of their mother, perpetuating the distinct scale colors within the species, even when nikaal of differing groups mate. Since nikaal are known to wander widely, it is not unheard of to see members of any heritage far from home.

An enemy that wishes to attack a nikaal is often first confronted by their acidic spit. Nikaal have excellent control over their spittle, and they are well-practiced at spitting in the face of an opponent so as to blind them.

It takes several moments after spitting before they can do so again, as it takes time for their acid glands to fill, so nikaal do not spit their acid lightly; if a nikaal feels the need to spit, then the situation is dire indeed.

Nikaal's metabolisms are lower than other humanoids, and even many of their movements are slower. Some sages have attributed this slow movement as a reason their metabolism is so efficient.

Brumation

Nikaal have an unusual and powerful defense against the harshness of the world - brumation. In moments of extreme cold, heavy injury, or unconsciousness, a nikaal's body functions slow to a near-halt, entering a state called brumation. To the untrained eye, a brumating nikaal may appear dead, but in truth, their body is merely conserving energy, requiring neither food nor drink in this state.

To enter brumation willingly, nikaal need an environment that is quite cool, to help their metabolism

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slow down - often an underground location, but at least somewhere heavily shaded. While brumating, the nikaal responds to very little external stimuli; abrupt increases in temperature, however, cause the nikaal to stir ever so slightly - enough to open their eyes and ears, assess their surroundings, and decide whether or not to awaken. Tales speak of an ancient nikaal who brumates for a hundred years at a stretch - a testament to their resilience and endurance.

Wounds and ailments, save for the most dire, can be healed in this brumation state as long as the nikaal awakens occasionally to briefly eat and drink, as their natural process of healing still requires some intake of nutrients. Nikaal who enter brumation willingly can awaken at their leisure, be it after a day or several decades, but if a nikaal is forced into brumation due to injury, they will typically only awaken after around an hour to seek a small amount of water and food, before returning to a state of deep brumation to heal. The nikaal's metabolism does not fully slow until 48 hours

have elapsed in the brumation process, and thus it is only after two days that their aging slows.

Any act of violence will awaken a nikaal from brumation. A nikaal awakened this way will typically be in a blind rage, experiencing a deeply ingrained fight-or-flight-type response, and will reflexively spit acid in the direction of its attacker. Those wishing to wake a nikaal gently may do so using warmth: placing the nikaal near a source of heat, such as fire or sunlight, will cause them to stir enough so that they can be told to wake up.

While in a state of brumation, a nikaal's mind is barely perceptible to psionic or magical attempts at detection. Only those with experience, such as having trained under a nikaal psionicist or studied a brumating nikaal up close, have any real chance of locating or contacting a brumating nikaal's mind. However, those who do understand the nature of a brumating mind can contact the nikaal telepathically and prompt them to wake.

Combat

Nikaal are not combative by nature; but nikaal will fight ferociously if one of their caravans is attacked. The nikaal have slashing talons but their preferred form of attack is their ability to spit a stream of acid. This acid attack is often used to gain the advantage of surprise; if fighting in close quarters, nikaal will attempt to spit in the eyes of their opponents in an attempt to blind them.

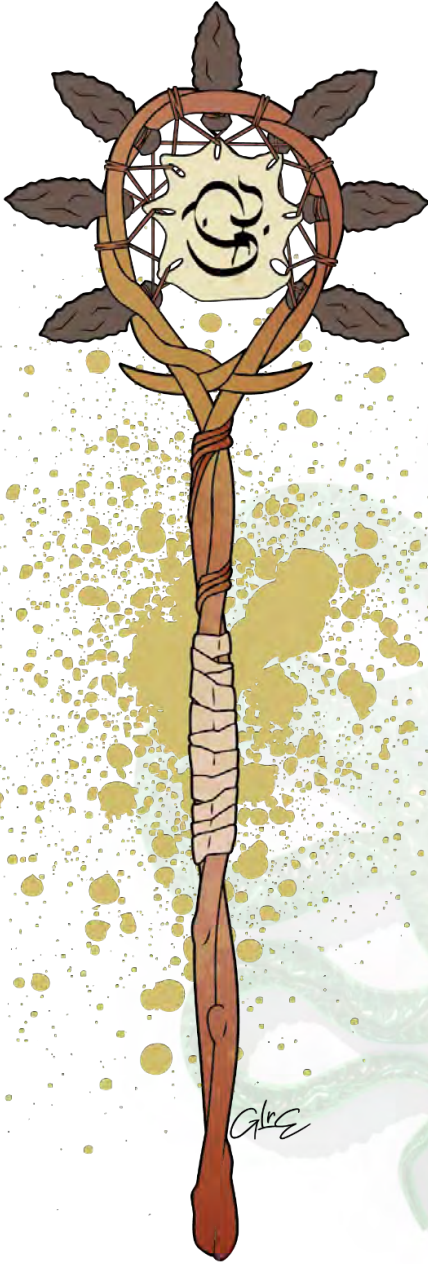
Nikaal prefer to use their acid spit as something of a last resort, as their acid also facilitates digestion and they tend to feel ill when they spit too frequently. As they are somewhat slow moving and their scales are not quite as thick and protective as other reptilian species, nikaals generally favor weapons that keep their enemies at a distance: blow guns, darts, slings, spears, javelins, and polearms are all generally preferred.

An important item within nikaal society is the tkaesali, a revered staff featuring a distinct circular and jagged blade at its pinnacle. The privilege of wielding a tkaesali is bestowed upon esteemed elders, shamanic

leaders, and renowned warriors who have shown their prowess in battle. The possession of a tkaesali commands immediate respect among the nikaal, even transcending tribal boundaries. Although tkaesali are crafted to serve ceremonial and decorative purposes, adorned as they are with intricate runic symbols tooled and dyed onto the stretched skins covering the circular hoop, their blades remain sharp and they nonetheless function as formidable polearms in combat. A tkaesali embodies the honor and prestige associated with its bearer, symbolizing their elevated status within nikaal society.

Nikaal tribes sometimes come in conflict with each other, and if the friction cannot be resolved peacefully, a battle is declared. Warriors are chosen based by decree of the tribes' shamans, and the losing nikaals must serve as thralls for a year to the winners. In many cases, if the combined number of both groups is not too great (over 100), they may continue on as a single unified group even after the year of servitude is up.

Personality



The nikaal, shaped by their nomadic lifestyle and the challenges of the desert, possess a distinct set of personality traits that reflect their resilient and adaptable nature.

They are masters of observation - both of the natural world and of people - with a pragmatic, if sometimes inscrutable, approach to life's challenges. Nikaals have learned to navigate the harsh conditions of the desert, honing their survival instincts and developing a deep understanding of their surroundings. This has instilled in them a remarkable centeredness and an enviable ability to shift with changing circumstances, often calmly sidestepping conflict and pitfalls before they manifest. Nikaals are known for their startling willingness to renegotiate or reposition themselves for long term gain and mutual benefit, rarely choosing to meet force with force unless there is no other option.

Nearly all nikaal grow up within tight-knit caravans, and learn to value unity and cooperation, understanding the importance of communal harmony and working collaboratively to ensure the well-being of their tribe. This collective mindset fosters a strong sense of loyalty and camaraderie among the nikaal: they support and protect one another, always ready to lend a helping hand or offer guidance in times of need. At the same time, the nikaal possess a deep reverence for personal freedom and autonomy, allowing individuals to express their unique talents and skills within the framework of the caravan's shared goals.

The nikaals' encounters with various cultures and their role as skilled traders and intermediaries have honed their diplomatic skills. They have a well-developed talent for negotiation, often using their shrewdness and persuasion to secure favorable deals and navigate complex social dynamics. The hardships they face in the desert have also instilled resilience and a sense of determination in the nikaals, allowing them to remain steadfast even in the face of great adversity.

Society

Most nikaal roam the land continuously, their society rooted in the nomadic ways of their tight-knit tribes, known as caravans. Caravans may consist of between 10 and 100 members, usually with a single shaman and a council of elders - composed of the caravan's most respected and seasoned warriors, those among the

tribe who have traveled the furthest in their life, and those who have the most knowledge of the history and lore of the nikaal. Smaller caravans may have only a single elder.

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The nomadic nikaal trade goods, services, and information with all comers. Their caravans traverse the land, foraging and raising herds of the hardiest beasts. Nikaal caravans usually take to the hardy inix, kanks, or the swift crodlu. The largest and wealthiest tribes sometimes even acquire great argosies, pulled by mekillots, to hold the tribe's riches. The treasures of the greatest nikaal caravans often take on a mythic quality, with their alleged size growing with each telling, and some say their wealth rivals that of even the dynastic merchant houses. When the bounty of a nikaal caravan overflows, they hold a revel, inviting all who roam nearby; the feast is free, but gifts are expected.

Nikaal caravans sometimes cross great expanses of desert with most of their members in brumation, and what looks like a caravan with half a dozen nikaal and as many pack animals pulling carts could actually carry ten times as many nikaal. The resources available in some stretches of desert are often unable to support the whole caravan all if they traveled in an active state, particularly the young and infirm, and so occasionally much of the tribe will brumate while traveling the harshest legs of their journey.

Despite their strong tribal bonds, some nikaal do occasionally decide to make their own way in the world, living outside of the tribal structure of their

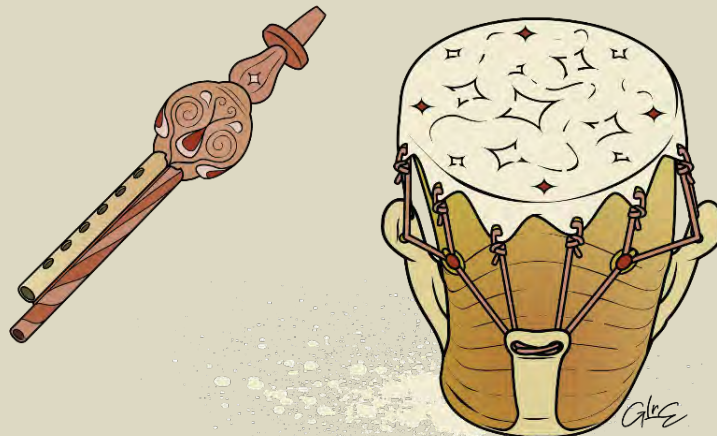
caravans. Nikaal who venture into wider Athasian society still carry with them the teachings and values of their people, and often serve as emissaries and seekers of knowledge.

Nikaal tribes are practiced at navigating by the stars and have extensive knowledge of the constellations and lunar cycles of Athas. This astronomical knowledge, combined with their profound reverence for the elements, is the basis for the nikaals' vast tapestry of mystical beliefs and practices. Guided as their wanderings are by the celestial bodies that illuminate the night sky, the nikaal are accomplished with using the stars as markers of time and celestial navigation tools, drawing inspiration from these celestial guides to chart the courses of their caravans and to navigate the Athasian landscape. The stars serve the nikaals as both calendar and compass, guiding their caravans on their nomadic journeys and helping the nikaal stay attuned to the ever-changing rhythms of the world.

The intertwining of their connection with the celestial and their reverence for the Elements shapes the worldview of the nikaal, infusing their journeys through life with a profound sense of guidance and purpose.

Music and Dance

Music and dance play major roles in nikaal caravan culture, serving as a means of celebration, a tool for structuring the stories of their oral tradition, and as a focus for their magic and psionics. The traditional dance of the nikaal (called ziftele) bears some resemblance to both the belly dancing and interpretive dance sometimes seen among the performers of the city-states, as well as also sharing some elements from other sources such as elven folk dancing. It is unknown whether the nikaal's dancing informed the other races' art, or if the nikaal themselves were influenced by the other races.



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Over many years of travel, each nikaal caravan has developed their own particular repertoire of songs and distinctive styles of music, combining the signature instruments of the nikaal (the ryl pipes, and the tobylk and tymaek drums) with other musical instruments the nikaal have acquired through their dealings with other races. Some caravans sing their inhumanly exotic harmonies as a chorus, while others rely upon a single trilling singer, and still others do not sing at all, relying on the rhythm of the spoken word. In all cases, these songs are structured by the complex rhythms of the tobylk and the warbling melody of the ryl pipe.

Nikaal instruments are made from lacquered wood and cured hide, gradually shaped into their desired forms over time using water and heat. The **ryl pipe** consists of two or three fluted pipes that protrude from a bulbous reservoir. The instrument is played by blowing into the reservoir and changing the pitch by closing different combinations of holes on the flutes. The bulb may range in size from about that of a small pomegranate, which produces a nasally warbling, to a large melon, which makes a deep bellowing tone. The **tymaek** is a disc-shaped hand drum that comes in many sizes, sometimes ringed with clattering bones, while the **tobylyk** drum is shaped like an intricate wooden urn, carried under one hand and played bare-handed with the other. With enough time and care from the hands of a master craftsman, such instruments can and do become receptive to psionic empowerment. The eldest nikaal musicians of each caravan usually have one such instrument in their possession, which is often used to contribute to the caravan's protection as it travels. Playing such an instrument is considered a great honor in the caravan, and is reserved for only the most skilled of performers.

Music punctuates every evening stop of the caravan's journey, with the music sometimes continuing all night if the caravan feels they may be under threat of attack. The repetitive, hypnotic nature and driving tempo of the songs changes on special occasions, accelerating for celebrations or slowing for bereavements. The endless rhythm of the music often serves as a tool of focus for the nikaal's psions and spellcasters, and they have learned to weave their powers and spells into the music, with music and dance often replacing the more traditional the verbal or somatic components of a performing nikaal's spellcasting. Elven wind singers find natural affinity with the nikaal caravans, and it's not unheard of for a stray wind singer to travel with one of their caravans for a prolonged period.

Family Life

Nikaal offspring are born live, often while the caravan is between destinations. Nikaal closely resemble their mothers, especially in color and scaling. They are children firstly of their mother, secondly of their tribe, and often have no particular bond with their father beyond him being another tribe member.

Nikaal family trees and social structures take on a unique dynamic due to their ability to brumate, especially when long brumations are undertaken. A nikaal may awaken from brumation to find that their own grandchildren or even great-grandchildren have surpassed them in waking age and experience. This creates intricately looping family trees and unconventional social hierarchies where younger nikaal, born long after their elders entered brumation, can hold positions of authority and possess wisdom beyond their ancestors. Accordingly, leadership as an "elder" in nikaal society is based on the accumulation of knowledge and experiences, rather than chronological age. In this intergenerational dynamic, older nikaal rely on the guidance of their younger descendants, fostering a mutual respect and



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interconnectedness that binds the nikaal community together.

When nikaal reach the age of 10, they undergo a series of coming-of-age rites, which are transformative experiences that test both the physical prowess and mental acuity of a young nikaal. The rites serve as trials of wisdom and resilience, preparing their subjects for the arduous journeys that they must undertake to prove themselves. A common coming-of-age ritual involves a young nikaal embarking on a solo journey through steep mountains, where they must navigate the treacherous terrain and face formidable challenges to demonstrate their resilience and resourcefulness. Another rite of passage entails undertaking a trade mission to distant lands, where the young nikaal must

showcase their negotiating skills and adaptability in unfamiliar territories.

Most nikaal, should their lives not be cut short early, have around 100 years of active life. For many nikaal, two centuries might elapse between their birth and death, with half that span spent in brumation. It is difficult for an outsider to judge a nikaal's lifespan, due to the nature of nikaal brumation, society, and reproduction. Frequent or extended brumation can spread a nikaal lifetime out over hundreds of years, but does not increase the number of years a nikaal can spend actively living. It is said that one nikaal who is nearing the end of their time remembers the fall of Kalidnay and the time of two dragons.

Language

The Nikaal language is composed of both spoken vocalizations and nonverbal cues. The spoken component of Nikaal is largely made up of hissing, rasping, and clicking noises, while certain words, as well as inflection and nuance are communicated with facial and bodily gestures. The language is intensely difficult for non-nikaal to master, and if nikaal ever tried to share or teach their language to outsiders, that effort has been long abandoned.

Nikaal place great emphasis on learning other languages, and a common pastime on long journeys is for those who have mastered a language to teach it to others. A nikaal tribe will frequently have a sizable number of members that speak the Common tongue, and the Elvish, Pterran and Ssurran tongues are also known by many nikaal. Many nikaal psionics favor telepathic disciplines that facilitate communication across language barriers.

Common Nikaal Names

All of the following are Common tongue adaptations or bastardisations of names in Nikaal, but the nikaal never seem to correct any mispronunciations of their names. It seems they either do not mind or simply assume others will always get the pronunciations of their names wrong.

Male:

- Jesarres
- Kaelal
- Miklaas
- Mutasis
- Taelis
- Tesrar
- Tsaerres
- Zaelen

Female:

- Daelika
- Kilsaen
- Leksai
- Qaela
- Rikala
- Sali'ko
- Skali
- Vikla

Relations

The nikaal roam the scorching sands of Athas with a purpose: traversing the dunes to trade with any and all who cross their path. Their nomadic ways have given them a talent for trade. And so, their tongues, sharp enough to negotiate with the wiliest of merchants, and their caravans, laden with goods from distant lands,

have made them renowned intermediaries between cultures.

When a nikaal caravan comes across a group in the wilderness, with which they wish to trade, they will often have one of their members reach out to the other party with their psionics, communicating their

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willingness to trade and what goods they have available for trade. Doing so eliminates the need for mutual language comprehension and helps maintain a safe distance, reducing the likelihood of conflict. As night falls after a successful exchange, nikaal will often hold one of the musical festivals for which they are renowned. Traders still in their vicinity often find the music irresistible, and likely do not realize that it is a hidden defensive measure - reducing the likelihood that the nikaal will be attacked. Other races usually find the festivals an exuberant but sometimes unsettling experience, as once the music has stopped they often realize that they were slightly dazed and not completely in control of their actions. As a rule, however, nikaal do not steal items or otherwise harm anyone in a musical trance, and so no one has reason to seek reprisal once the music has ended.

The nikaal are an independent people, who prefer to keep their distance from the conflicts and power struggles that ravage Athas. They defend their caravans if threatened, but are not known for taking sides in wars or battles. Despite the valuable goods and services they bring, the nikaal often face prejudice and discrimination in many places, as their neutrality, nomadic way of life, and mysterious music are misunderstood by some as a lack of commitment or trustworthiness. The nikaal remain proud and strong, undeterred by this intolerance, and they fiercely defend their culture and their place in the world.

Nikaal often have trade relations with other races, many of whom view them as a benign and entertaining curiosity more than anything else. Nikaal are among the few who will routinely trade with silt runners, recognizing that the creatures often come across strange and unique items. When they cross paths with ssurran tribes, they typically interact comfortably, and will seek to exchange goods if mutually beneficial. Ssurran, in particular, are enthusiastic participants in nikaal's musical rituals, and are largely unaware that nikaal use their music to enthrall and distract ssurrans who would otherwise raid their caravans. It is also not unusual for nikaal to visit pterran settlements.

The nikaal's relationship with humans is more complex and can be strained. Some humans see the nikaal as valuable trading partners and allies, while others fear their exotic appearance and nomadic way of life. When nikaal travel near the city-states, some residents seek out the nikaals' caravans for revelry, while others find their hypnotic music to have a sinister and threatening quality.

For the most part, nikaals and elves maintain a kind of unspoken mutual non-hostility. Elven raiders have long since learned not to attack a nikaal caravan unless they are truly desperate. Legends of those tribes who dared to prey upon the nikaal suffering calamitous misfortune in the coming years and decades are common and a source of superstition among elves. Elven tribal leaders are generally concerned about the nature of nikaal music. Some elves, especially the young, embrace the caravan festivities and have even been known to abandon their tribes to travel with the nikaal and partake in their dances every night. Olderelves often see this as a sort of threat, and caution their children to plug their ears if they hear the melody of the nikaals' pipes and the rhythm of their drums. There is no lack of competition between elves and nikaal - sometimes of a most intense nature - and because of the perceived threat of their music, many elves steer clear of nikaal groups or establish friendly, if wary, relationships with them rather than come into open conflict.

Though they are known to trade in slaves, nikaal rarely capture and enslave others themselves, except when they emerge victorious in battles against non-nikaal groups - in which case they enslave the surviving attackers and sell them off during their travels. Enslaved foes are allowed to participate freely in the nikaals' musical festivities and the lack of escape attempts by the slaves sometimes serves to tip off other races as to the enthralling nature of the music.

The dynastic merchant houses are at times direct competitors, shrewd customers, or vendors of nikaal goods. A nikaal caravan may, or may not, undercut a merchant house's caravan when traveling to the same locations, and such situations are often left to the augury of a priest or the whims of the nikaal elders. More than one up and coming merchant house has maneuvered into a position of greater power through fortuitous dealings with mysterious nikaal traders, and more than a few have unknowingly had their fortunes fouled by them. The nikaal can be a powerful wildcard in the great game played by the merchant houses of the Tablelands and the outcomes of these interactions can put a particular nikaal caravan and merchant house at odds for years.

The thri-kreen rarely bother hunting the nikaal, and it has been said that a thri-kreen would rather chew on a knot of giant's hair than eat fresh nikaal meat. Some theorize that the nikaal are descended from a race of reptiles whose brightly coloured skin developed as a strong indicator of their foul taste, because many races

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find nikaal to be inedibly foul, and the thri-kreen are no exception. Kreen are usually not interested in trade, and so rarely experience post-trade festivals when they

encounter nikaal. But on the rare occasion when two tribes meet peacefully, even the kreen cannot resist the pull of the nikaal music.

Nikaal PCs

Character Archetypes

Potential roleplaying and character building ideas for nikaal PCs include:

- A daring and adventurous nikaal scout who ventures into unknown territories to gather information and resources ahead of their caravan. Perhaps recently, though, they have felt an urge to leave the caravan and seek out adventure and discovery in far-off lands.
- A shrewd and cunning nikaal trader who has a talent for negotiating deals with other races and a love for acquiring wealth, who has left their caravan in search of new and more profitable opportunities.
- A spiritual and wise nikaal shaman who uses their connection to the stars and elements to guide the tribe and heal its members, but leaves the caravan in search of the origins of the nikaal.
- A charismatic and ambitious young nikaal warrior who seeks to earn prestige and respect from their tribe by embarking on a quest to prove their worth, desperate to earn a place among the great warriors of their tribe and wield a tkaesali.
- A spiteful nikaal adolescent who insists on going their own way independent of their or any other nikaal caravan.
- A nikaal who has awoken from brumation to find that centuries have passed and their tribe is gone. They now seek any clues to their tribe's final fate and their own place in a world they no longer recognize.



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Dray (3rd Generation)

According to their oral traditions, the dray, also known by some as the dragonborn, were once humans that were reshaped by powerful magic to look like miniature dragons and designed to be a race of devout

servants. They were ultimately deemed failures by their creator who deemed them too proud and willful to obediently serve him as he wished, and so were cast out. Having long since moved past their intended

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purpose, the dray grew into a fiercely independent and individualistic people instead, striving to prove their ancient creator wrong in abandoning them and claim a place for themselves under the dark sun.

Today these independent dray are still quite few in number in an immediately hostile world. When first seen, many humanoids consider them to be monsters, but their natural resilience and innate talent for psionics and the arcane arts continue to ensure their survival in face of the worst the Athasian wastes have to throw at them.

Note: because of their rare status, this race should only be allowed for player's use at the DM's discretion. For campaigns set in certain time periods, locations, or using certain interpretations of the lore, the race may indeed not exist at all.

The very name "Third Generation Dray" or "Third Children" does clearly suggest that there were two preceding generations of dray at some point, but whatever became of these earlier generations, or whether their existence is only a legend, is unknown to most Athasians. Some even suggest that the sorcerer monarchs do not know the true origin of the dray. Whether players should have any additional information about dray is a matter of DM discretion.

If a PC is going to be a dray, being a 3rd generation dray is likely the most effective way to preserve certain campaign secrets that a dray PC might otherwise be expected to know. Alternately, a 1st or 2nd generation dray PC might be isolated from their people, an outcast among outcasts, or someone who was captured or abandoned, or for some other reason be unaware of the particulars of their race's background.

Third Journal, Entry 2

"Five nights before I left for the north with my ssurran companion, an unusual visitor was smuggled under a cloak into the ssurran's tents.

"When he removed the cloth, I could see it was a member of a people that I'd only heard of in rumor— the Dray! What was so strange was how different she looked in person than what I had read in the descriptions. I expected a hunched and malformed being, while this creature was tall and graceful.

"It was easy to see the need for her concealment— she was a miniature replica of the fabled and feared Dragon which has terrorized the Tablelands for hundreds of years. I guessed she had been discovered by accident by my ssurran acquaintances, and had been brought here for her protection.

"When it became clear that I was not a threat, she was happy to converse with me, and my questioning was met with strangely open and almost guileless answers. She was eager to tell of the greatness of her people, and it was rather clear she had not spent any time around the duplicitous and untrusting humanoids of these lands. She told me many things about her legends and her tribe on the island she came from, and I have recorded all I have learned here."

-Journals of Kil'mma'aktho (translated)

Physical

Most dray encountered are tall and lean, but also quite robust, standing somewhere between 7 to 8 ft tall and typically weighing around 200 lbs. Their distant human ancestry still shows in the differences between sexes, with males and females having size and body shape differences much like those of humans. Atop their slender necks sit draconic heads with sharp and

angular features, and maws filled with straight rows of needle-like teeth. The arms and legs of a dray end in cruel claws, while boney spikes protrude from their knees and elbows. Long whip-like tails extend down from their spine, often barbed in a similar way to their joints.

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The scaly hide that covers a dray's strong and graceful form can come in any number of colors: while colors ranging from bright gold to blood red or even pitch black are common, other colors are just as likely. Unique or unusual colors may even raise the esteem and social status of an individual dray in the eyes of their peers. While scale color is usually an inherent trait, it is occasionally also the result of a strange mutation, thought to be linked to the arcane origins of the dray. As a result, a wyrmling dray born to two golden-scaled parents is likely to be gold-scaled, but might also have blue or green scales.

Each dray, upon reaching puberty, develops at least one external feature that is distinctive, such as large neck frills, a spiked tail, a crown of horns, barbed scales, etc. Like the variation in their scale color, this too is thought to be from a mutagenic trait in their blood resulting from their ancient creator's magic. With great effort, dragonborn are able to call upon this peculiar trait to briefly draw out a related draconic power, allowing them to manifest a deadly breath attack or grow wings from their back.

Combat

Dray are terrifying opponents to face in combat, whether they are using weapons, psionics, magic, or any combination of the three. They relish the opportunity to prove their superior skill, often targeting the strongest looking foes first for the sake of personal glory.

Dray usually open combat by manifesting one of their draconic abilities, depending on the circumstances, using them to sow discord amongst their enemies. A favored tactic is unleashing their breath weapon on groups of opponents so as to inflict as much damage to as many enemies as possible. If faced with non-flying creatures, a dray will often choose to manifest their wings and remain out of range, all the while bombarding enemies with ranged attacks and delighting in their inability to retaliate.

When fighting as part of a group, dray usually have a hierarchy in place to determine the chain of command, for while they hate being ordered about, they are intelligent enough to recognize that they have a better chance to survive and succeed when organized and cooperating. If no hierarchy is established beforehand (such as when a dray joins an adventuring party



comprised of other races), a dray will generally try to take command themselves and expect others to follow their lead, which may lead to tensions and mishaps within the group if they do not accept the dray as leader. If another member of the group proves themselves more capable as leader, the dray will most likely acknowledge them, but will continually seek to improve themselves to eventually replace the current leader and assume the mantle of leadership for themselves.

Though the dray possess sharp claws and fangs, and can use them to deadly effect, they rarely do so, viewing such acts as vulgar and beneath them, only resorting to their use if no other option is available. Dray favor swords and spears as their weapons of choice for melee, and bows for ranged combat. Some have also taken a liking to the dragon's paw, appreciating the skill and finesse required to use such a weapon effectively. Similarly, many dray com-

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munities have adopted the singing sticks as the primary weapons used in duels to resolve feuds, as they display the skill of the combatants for all to see without being outright lethal like swords, as killing the opponent in such contests is almost always forbidden.

Dray who can use psionics or magic usually eschew the use of weapons, save for as weapons of last resort, and instead rely on their chosen craft to defeat their foes. Both dray spellcasters and manifesters have a

penchant for effects that deal fire damage, both because of their racial affinity to that element and because their natural resistance to it means they have less to worry about when unleashing attacks in close proximity to their clan-mates. Many dray wizards and psions also favor abilities that augment their draconic traits even further; such individuals are often called *atavists*, and revel in the brutal power of their draconic heritage.

Personality

Strong of body and of mind, dray take pride in being the ultimate race, and are eager to prove it to themselves as well as to others. Dray are characterized by their fiercely independent nature, strong will, and a devotion to personal freedom that is unmatched by any other race, and will fight and rebel against anything that they might perceive as limitations or constraints forced upon them, no matter how small or petty. If their legends are to be believed, this is one of the reasons their creator cast them out, and it is well known to all who had dealings with the dray that they are opinionated freethinkers who have a hard time falling in line or blindly accepting authority.

Dray follow a brutally pragmatic philosophy born of their abandonment by their creator, an event that had a profound effect on their mentality as a race: they always put themselves first and foremost. While this could be viewed as selfish behavior, to the dray this is nothing but harsh truth, for they know they can only rely on themselves and that those who are not strong enough to protect or claim their own freedom simply do not deserve it. The dray pursue their goals with devotion bordering on fanatic zeal, striving to be the best in every aspect of their chosen craft and to arrogantly lord this mastery over others. This need to constantly affirm their superiority is rooted in a deep sense of insecurity and the racial trauma of being deemed failures by their creator, despite their lack of any apparent flaws. Some dray try to alleviate this

need by tirelessly training and honing themselves, while others try to prove themselves superior by less honorable means, abusing their powers and using them to subjugate or terrorize those they deem weaker than themselves. As a result of this outlook, dray can seem to be avaricious, sly, and amoral beings who are always looking out for their own interests above all else. When dealing with others, they often honor the word of an agreement rather than the spirit if doing so better serves their interests, forcing those they do business with to carefully consider the exact wording of any agreement, lest they get less than what they bargained for. Dray rarely ever break a contract once made, however, as they place a high value on their word and recognize its good business to have a reputation for living up to one's agreements.

Dray are not, however, the wholly selfish creatures as they might seem to be. Dray have a strong sense of loyalty to family and clan, as they know that if there is anyone on Athas they can rely on other than themselves, it is their own kin, and they are therefore fiercely loyal to their clan brothers and sisters. Dray clans are notorious for hunting down and exacting brutal vengeance on those who have hurt one of their own, and this loyalty can also extend to those who have proved themselves capable and worthy comrades; dray are known to suffer no threat or insult to those they call friends.

The Origins of the Third Children

"Come near, dear ones. You must hear an ancient story.

"Many hundreds of years ago, our creator endeavored to create the perfect race of servants. Seeking perfection, he made them in his own draconic image.

"His first children were mighty indeed, but blighted and misshapen.

"His second children were beautiful and graceful, close to the draconic ideal he sought, but they lacked the raw power of the first children.

"Unhappy with either, the creator sat despondent upon his dark throne. Seeing his liege so crestfallen, one of his acolytes had an inspiration to raise his lord's spirits. He dared to form a union between first and second children; their progeny - the third children - benefited from both their parents' strength and grace. They were the perfect children their creator had so badly sought, but alas, the creator's vanity

would not allow him to accept them. Rather, he was furious that his acolyte's creations were better than his. But he was also secretly afraid, for this third generation of children were too perfect in his eyes, and he feared they would soon surpass him in power.

"Accordingly, he punished his acolyte, dubbed his creations a failure, and cast them into a deep underground exile.

"These third children did not stay buried, however. Over time they clawed their way out of darkness and despair and into light and freedom. Then, they left behind their ancient homeland, disavowing their creator just as he disowned them. Now he is gone and forgotten, while the third children only grew stronger, and set forth out into the world to forge their own path.

"Where they ended up, dear ones...is where you now sit today."

As fiercely independent as the dray are, their society is quite remarkable in that dray communities tend towards some type of direct democratic system of governance, as it is the only way for the prideful and opinionated dray to work together. Usually all adult dray of the community have an equal vote in decision making, but commonly elect a leader, called a clan father/mother, to run the day to day affairs. Dray live in tight-knit clans consisting of several families that are settled in hidden and easy to defend locations. Clans rarely wander, but do regularly send groups out to trade or raid far and wide. The life of a dray within the clan is divided between personal pursuits and community duties. As a general rule, each clan member is free to engage in whatever practice they so desire, so long as they fulfill certain tasks and aid in the effort of ensuring the clan's survival and prosperity. Such duties are usually assigned by the clan leader based on the needs of the clan and the individual's skills, and may range from guard duty, hunting, crafting or even teaching, as the dray place great value on the education of their young, rightly believing that this improves both their and the clan's chances of survival.

With the dray being such proud folk, one might expect they would constantly fight each other over petty grudges and small feuds, but the truth is quite the opposite. With the dray being so few in number, the clans enforce laws that prevent dray from harming one another and usually allow feuds to be settled in non-lethal ways, such as tests of skill. On those rare occasions where one member of the clan seriously harms another, a severe punishment is swiftly decided on by the rest of the clan, such as servitude, exile, or even death.

At times, an individual dray may feel they cannot accomplish their personal goals while staying with the clan. In such instances they are usually given the blessing of the clan to set out into the world, provided they keep the location of their home a secret and that the clan can afford for them to leave. The need for self-realization is as essential to a dray as breathing or eating, and both individual families and the clan itself recognize this fact and try to accommodate as much as the harsh reality of life on Athas allows. For many dray, this is simply a rite of passage, and they return to their clan after some time, stronger and wiser for the

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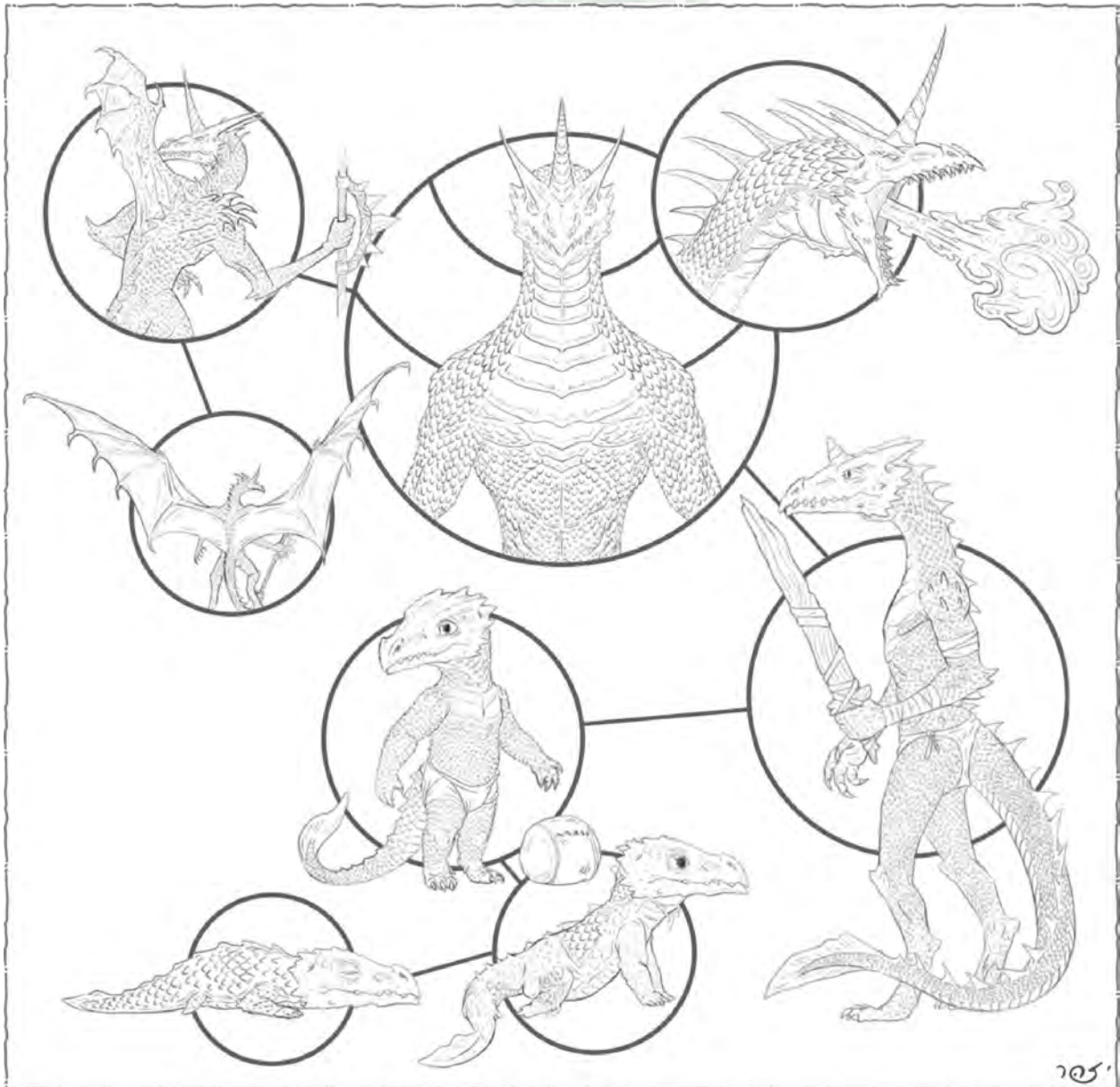
experience. For others, this is just the first step on a journey that will never lead them back home.

Family Life

Dray birth live young, called wyrmlings. Most often, a female dray will give birth to a single wyrmling, with twins being rare but not unheard of. Wyrmlings begin life hapless and blind, possessing a long tail, two weak arms, and a pair of small stubs that will eventually develop into legs. Too weak to even lift their large heads, wyrmlings are wholly dependent on the adults during this period, and feed solely on fresh blood in the same way a human infant would on milk. A month

after they are born, the wyrmlings' eyesight develops, and molt constantly as their first year progresses, and they grow legs and begin to walk. After their legs are fully developed and they can walk on their own, the molting stops and they become draylings.

While the dray are very protective of their young, they are not what other races would consider doting parents; instead, children are considered the responsibility of the entire clan and are raised communally. In fact, the words for "father" and "mother" are nearly obsolete words in the Dray language, only used when applied to other races. The Dray term for parents is ironically devoid of any parental sentiment, and can be approximately



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translated as “sires”. Sometime after being born, wyrmlings are given over to the care of the clan’s broodhouse, where they are looked after by those dray who chose to become caretakers and educators, or by the old or crippled members who cannot contribute in more physically demanding ways. This is done to free the parents to aid in other efforts essential to clan life and to further their own pursuits without the burden of child rearing.

It is both a matter of pride and long-standing tradition among the dray to rigorously cultivate both their minds and bodies. As they grow and develop, draylings are taught reading and writing, as well as mathematics and dray lore. At the same time they also undergo an increasingly harsh training regiment that is meant to both prepare them to survive in the

dangerous world they will eventually face, as well as discover their particular aptitudes. Once they reach puberty around their thirteenth year, young dray leave the broodhouse and are required to choose a vocation, after which they are assigned as an apprentice to a clan member who has mastered the activity in question (usually a member of their family) to shadow and train under, while they begin to share in the responsibilities of the adults.

Dray reach full maturity around age 16 and have been known to live over 120 years in some cases. Adult dray rarely live together under the same roof and don’t form traditional nuclear families. Instead, the expanded families all live in clusters, with each member having their own house, even those sharing a romantic relationship.

Language

Outsiders who listen to the Dray language might notice that it seems to have a number of words which are similar to those in other languages of the Tablelands, suggesting a possible common origin. The dray themselves believe that their language was once much more like the other languages of the Tablelands, but over time the dray adapted their language to better suit their new mouths and tongues. Due to the needs imposed by these physiological differences, the Dray language is often difficult for non-dray to learn without extensive practice, but the substantial number of words it shares with other languages means that even a non-speaker can recognise quite a few root words and sounds in the Dray tongue.

Common Dray Names

Male:

- Akrag
- Abzharom
- Balaar
- Falrom
- Gatlakk
- Kaserex
- Mafoun
- Manverom
- Monwroth
- Mosak
- Zar'kat Dar

Female:

- Adheva
- Bitasha
- Casskka
- Freiha
- Lodgden
- Marai
- Venagi
- Xayana
- Xontra

Relations

Given their draconic appearance and prideful dispositions, dray often have difficulty when interacting with other races, as many are put off by their monstrous physiques and arrogance. Most dray live in isolated communities and have little to no contact with outsiders, as their history has taught them to be self-reliant and wary of anyone who isn’t a member of their clan. Moreover, because of the

vulnerability of their young, entire dray clans do not travel or migrate except in extreme circumstances, so more often than not, a dray will only encounter members of other races when they are trying to defend their homes from intruders or are driving off competition for resources.

That being said, there are clans that do engage in trade in order to procure goods that they cannot produce

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themselves, though they never do so in their own villages. Instead, they send parties to other villages and city-states while making sure the locations of their homes remain a secret. Such clans are also known to offer their services for mercenary work, and parties sent by them have their reputation preceding them as efficient caravan guards, bounty hunters, assassins, and even wizards for hire.

Almost all who had dealing with the dray believe them to be New Race, one amongst the many who constantly emerge from the deep desert, and even though this is far from the truth, the dray rarely claim otherwise, preferring to leave information about themselves as obscured as possible so as to prevent any potential threats to their homes.

When it comes to other races, dray find that they have an easier time getting along with the more reptilian ones, as they are less likely to be shunned by them for the way they look. Many traveling dray prefer the company of ssurrans and nikaal when on the road over that of the more mammalian races.

While they rarely come in contact, the Jozhal and dray both share insatiable curiosity, fierce independent nature, and can face prejudice over their monstrous appearance. The jozhals' quiet and more agreeable

personalities allows them to look past the drays' arrogance to find common grounds and build rapport, especially over their love for the mystic arts.

When they have silt-side settlements, the dray are powerful enough that silt runners seek to avoid them. Turtles and dray rarely cohabit the same areas.

Dray and humans often develop a competitive relationship once they pass the hurdle of the dray's intimidating draconic form. Many humans share the dray's competitive nature and a friendly (or even unfriendly) rivalry may flourish where the two races push each other to be better as they strive to prove their own superiority.

Dray mistrust elves and regard them with suspicion, but can appreciate the dedication the pointy eared desert runners have to their freedom and personal happiness. Likewise, they can respect dwarves' devotion to their focus, but ironically find them frustratingly stubborn, failing to recognize those same qualities in themselves.

Under the right circumstances, dray and thri-kreen can get along surprisingly well, for while they too find the mantis warriors strange and savage, the fierce loyalty they have to their clutch-mates can strike a chord with the dray.

As PCs

The dray inborn drive to excel and exceed all others in whatever field they pursue often leads them to leave the seclusion of their hidden homes and strike out as adventurers. Many dray get their first taste of adventure while serving as merchants or mercenaries on behalf of their tribes, and when the time comes to go back to their homes, they sometimes part ways with their clan-mates and instead continue their journey alone or with whatever friends and companions they have made along the way. Other dray simply feel hedged in their communities, believing that there's no more room for growth there and that their clan and family has nothing left to teach or offer them. These individuals are likely to take off in search of masters who may teach them more than the clan could, or test their mettle and training along with other like-minded folk.

Character Archetypes

Potential roleplaying and character building ideas for dray PCs include:

- A dray preoccupied with the notion of being accepted as a hero by other peoples as a means to demonstrate the superiority of their kind.
- A dray deeply pained by rejection, striving for acceptance, but languishing in despair, perhaps even with a self-pitying nature.
- Determined to learn the truth of their origins, a dray may have set out on a quest that could lead them and any companions into deeply unexpected territory.

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Pterranns

Among all the intelligent and civilized species of Athas, there are only two that have ever really achieved a birds-eye view of the world - the aarakocra (of course) and the pterrax-riding pterranns. Mounted atop pterrax (see the pterrax sidebar), pterranns have seen otherwise inaccessible valleys, remote islands in the silt, and the war camps of raiding parties too

fearsome to be approached by land. But this is only half the story.

Perhaps due in part to this ability to travel, the pterranns have had millennia to become more diverse than any other sentient species on Athas, reptilian or otherwise, and their appearances and abilities vary more widely than those of most other species.

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First Journal, Entry 3

"Logically, my first encounter with a reptilian people was always going to be the closest species we were aware of—the pterrans. I headed south to a pair of twin settlements, each so large as to nearly be considered a city.

"My first sight of the species was of several of the bird-like reptilians riding flying creatures that looked dramatically similar to the pterrans. In the time it took me to approach the villages, I lost count of the number of these avian reptiles and their riders that I saw as they flew through the sky.

"As I came into their settlement and took in the sight of their huts, it became clear these beings had a relationship with their animals and the natural world that was quite unlike anything I had ever seen before. They were quite welcoming to me, which I found rather strange and disturbing. Their imposing size and physical builds led me to assume most of them were warriors, whether or not they were, and they carried themselves with the confidence I've only seen in those whose life mission had already been set."

First Journal, Entry 4

"I have learned there is not just one type of pterrans, but six! This would explain the inconsistent descriptions in the reports we've had of the pterrans. Apparently, each sub-type (or "tribe" as they call them) has a different homeland, some very far away indeed, even on other continents. I have seen members of three of the tribes so far - those of the Dhecatl, Erix, and Yerrak tribes as I am told - all of which originate from within a few hundred miles of their twin villages. The three other tribes apparently live much further away, and none of them have been seen in these lands for generations."

-Journals of Kil'mma'aktho (translated)

Physical

At first glance, pterrans resemble stocky humanoid dinosaurs (particularly pteranodons depending on the species). It has long been believed by many (even the pterrans themselves) that pterrans are related in some way to the large flying saurians known as the pterrax, although this has never been proven.

Most pterrans are approximately 6 feet tall and weigh between 180 and 220 lbs. They have scaly, typically matte brown, skin. Along with their two arms and legs, all pterrans also have a short, tail-like appendage and two rounded stubs on their backs, which further hint at a relationship to pterrax. A pterrann's head features large, almost bulbous eyes and a long snout, which is also the creature's mouth. The mouth of a pterrann has many teeth, which are used for ripping its food apart. Pterrann's arms end with clawed hands, useful for both hunting and fighting. Females and males are similar in size and appearance, and non-pterrans often struggle to tell them apart, though pterrans themselves can easily identify males from females by the subtle

differences in their bone structure, scaling patterns, and crest details.

Pterrann are always born in pairs, meaning that almost every pterrann grew up with a twin. Though they are not identical twins, strictly speaking, and can even be of opposite genders, pterrann twins tend to look almost exactly alike, and will have nearly identical crests.

Pterrann Tribes

As an ancient race, the pterrann have long since spread far across the face of Athas. Some tribes have become very isolated, developing appearances so distinct that outsiders might have trouble recognizing them as the same species, but to the pterrann themselves, they are all one people. No matter the time or distance that separates them, all pterrann are the children of Athas and walkers of the same paths.

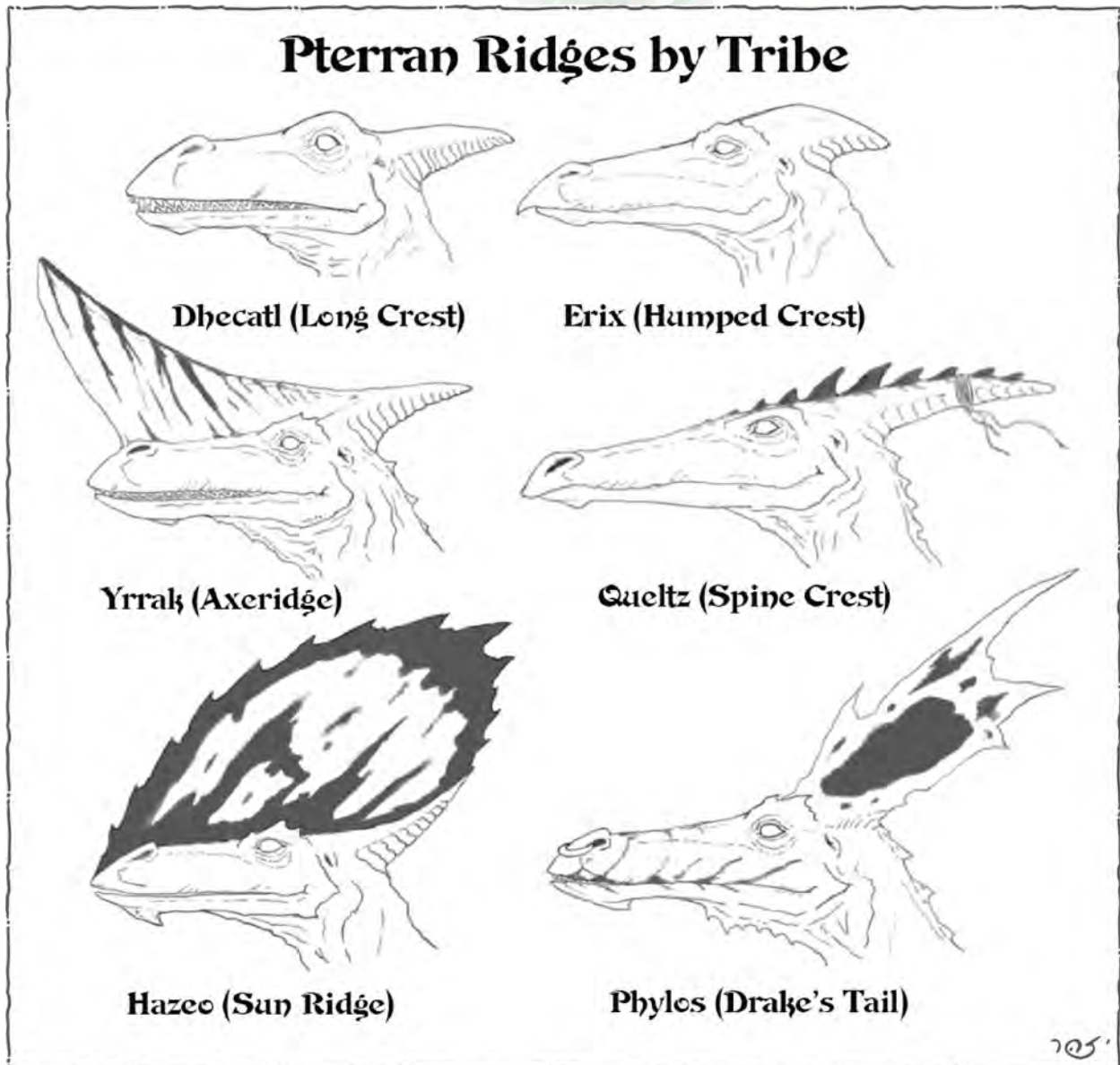
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There is significant variation in size and build among the pterrann tribes, though the general body contours are the same for all: short thick tails, four limbs, clawed hands, and rounded protrusions on the back where wings might have once emerged. It is in the length and shape of the snout, placement of the eyes, and, most dramatically, the crests and ridgelines along the back of the neck that pterranns differ most, and it is the crest that most clearly sets different tribes apart.

In the Tablelands, the vast majority of pterranns encountered are long-crested or hump-crested in appearance. Settled pterranns have a tendency to be long-crested, while the hump crests are more common among small highland and mountain tribes. There is, however, still occasional mixing between members of

these tribes, and so there is a continuum of long and hump-crested pterranns that might be encountered.

The other tribes of pterranns have been isolated for many centuries, and in that time, their appearances have become far more distinct. Recently, however, an instinctual call has rippled through the hearts of all the tribes, and with the sense that something is perilously wrong with the world the tribes have begun to seek each other out once more. The axeridge, spinecrest, sun crest, and drake's tail tribes have all sent out expeditions into new and forgotten lands, trying to determine what has so unsettled the Earth Mother. This means that pterranns of any tribe might be encountered, and may even be suitable for PCs to play.



Scale, Tail, and Claw

Note: Because some of the more obscure tribes of pterrans make their homes in remote or secretive regions, DMs will need to decide whether these subspecies will be allowed and, if so, how much such PCs should know about their homelands. Knowledge of anything - especially travel or trade routes - far beyond the Tablelands is valuable and rare information. A DM might consider allowing some

pterran PCs to know the name of their homeland and its general direction, but have little knowledge as to how they would get back there. This may be the case, for example, for a pterrax who ventured away from her homeland during her youth, and for whom the precise path traversed over countless months is but a vague childhood memory.

The Pterrax

The pterrax is a type of flying pteranodon-like lizard that in many ways closely resembles a pterrax, and the species are generally assumed to be related in some way. Pterrax are slightly taller than pterrans from feet to crown, while their bodies are somewhat leaner, but the scales that cover their skin are nearly identical in shape and coloration. They have similar shaped heads. Pterrax also have similar jaws but their teeth are much larger and sharper than those of pterrans. The most obvious difference is that where the pterrax has arms and bony protrusions extending from the back of their shoulders. A pterrax' forelimbs are a full set of wings that stretch to a wingspan of over 20 feet for young adults and can grow to be much larger, sometimes as big as 35 feet. These largest are most frequently chosen to become the mounts for pterrax riders.

Unlike the civilized pterrax, the pterrax is a wild creature with an animal intelligence. They are often domesticated by pterrans and are used as mounts in a highly ritualized process. Pterrax are ideally trained at about two years of age - when they are large enough to carry a rider but before their pliability fades with maturity. Pterrax are deeply protective of pterrax, and once trained and bonded, a pterrax is instinctively protective of its rider as well. While pterrans give live birth, and pterrax lay eggs, both nearly always produce young in pairs.

Pterrax tend to glide more than they fly, using high cliffs to launch themselves into the air and taking advantage of thermal updrafts to conserve energy. When they do pump their enormous wings, it is most often to gain elevation to continue soaring. It is more difficult, though not impossible, for a pterrax to get into the air from the ground - they must crouch and then leap high enough into the air to have room to begin flapping their wings.

Though not particularly fast for flying creatures, pterrax are capable of flying while carrying significant weight. A pterrax can carry as much as a heavy warhorse might on another world - enough for a pterrax, a companion (or two smaller companions), and equipment.

In combat, a pterrax will dive from the sky, attacking with bites and claws. If their prey is not too large, they'll attempt to grab creatures, pull them into the sky, and sometimes drop them back to earth to weaken them, and then dive upon them again. With a pterrax rider's help, the pterrax doesn't need to resort to such exhausting tactics to hunt their prey, which may go a long way toward explaining their willingness to carry the added burden of a rider.



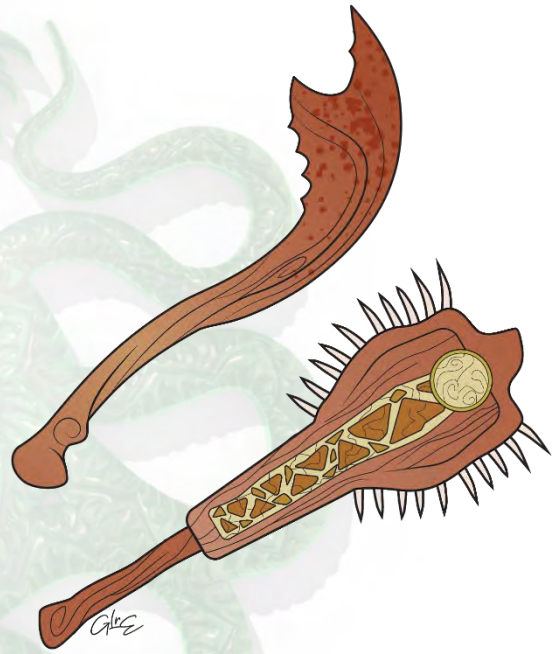
Combat

For the most part, pterrans are as capable as any other humanoid race in combat, and when on the ground their tactics are fairly similar to those used by humans or halflings. The biggest difference, however, comes when they can employ aerial support. Pterrans are well-versed in coordinating between missile, melee, and aerial forces when attacking, and some of the mightiest pterrann warriors are also some of the most talented pterrann flyers.

The pterrann have three weapons that are largely unique to their race:

- **Slodak** – the slodak is a type of sword, fashioned from hardwood and hardened by coating the weapon in a slurry made from id fiend blood and tree sap. This slurry seeps into the cracks and grain of the wood, sealing it tightly and making the weapon extremely strong.
- **Thanak** – the thanak is a particularly-deadly form of saw-toothed weapon. A row of pterrann teeth are affixed between two hardwood boards, and the weapon is wielded much like an axe; when swung, the teeth of the thanak sink into the target's flesh and then are ripped out like a saw blade. In addition, pterrann often coat the weapons with debilitating poison, leading to ferocious consequences for the first victim of a thanak swung during combat.
- **Oslak** - the Oslak, also known as a "pterrann overclaw" is essentially a glove or gauntlet designed to snugly fit a pterrann's hand. Large

claws, fashioned from the same material as a slodak, protrude from the gauntlet. The weapon delivers a painful rake attack. An overclaw can be worn on each hand, and those hands can still be used for carrying other weapons, although one cannot attack with both that weapon and the oslak at the same time. Because they are tightly fastened to the pterrann wrist and hand, an oslak cannot be disarmed.



Personality

The intense theological nature of most pterrann is quite unusual on Athas, and so their religiosity is often what stands out the most when they interact with other races. Pterrann discuss their religion often and speak of even mundane actions in the context of their faith. Pterrann often seem stoic and contemplative: they are generally slow to anger, but when convinced of the righteousness of a course of action, can be extremely stubborn. Many outsiders find their philosophy of life to be simultaneously dispassionate and overly intense – all zeal and no emotion.

When a pterrann undertakes a mission, they are rarely erratic or half-hearted, but rather pursue their tasks with the firm conviction of one consumed by dogma.

They are not easily persuaded to do something, but once they are persuaded their conviction is firm. Pterrann are not so much focused relentlessly on a single given task, the way that dwarves are - they can believe strongly in a wide variety of things - but once they've concluded some course of action or goal is right, they will often persistently return to the issue to the point of irritating those around them. Those who spend a significant amount of time with pterrann often find that they tend to adopt very strident viewpoints about things that most others don't consider important.

A pterrann might, for example, become convinced that mekillots drink too much water, and that they should

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not be allowed near small oases because they risk running the water dry. A pterrann who has reached this conclusion won't go out hunting mekillots, but they would return relentlessly to the topic with theological zeal every time they encounter a mekillot at an oasis, and will be prone to discussing it with the mekillot's handlers, in a manner that is likely to come across as hectoring.

Pterrann carefully consider how their actions and their behavior conform to their religion: a pterrann might spend hours lost in thought, wrestling in his own mind with what course of behavior best serves his religious principles around protecting his community, the Earth Mother, and his own mind and soul.

Given their general perspective, pterrann are instinctively distrustful of anyone they perceive to be overly emotional or impulsive.

Society

Pterrann society strongly emphasizes three main Life Paths. Translated to the common tongue, they are the Path of the Warrior, the Path of the Druid, and the Path of the Psion.

The Path of the Warrior (also known as the Path of the Body) focuses on physical reliance. The values of the warrior also emphasize cooperation and coordination with others to protect pterrann society. Those who follow this path are the members of pterrann society who are most focused on community. A pterrann of the warrior's path will rarely harm another pterrann; their fighting prowess is typically directed toward what they perceive as threats outside the community.

The Path of the Druid (or the Path of Nature) focuses heavily on natural reliance. Those who follow this path are the most devoted of all pterrann to worshiping and tending the great Mother Earth. Some tend to pterrann holy sites, while others are primary food producers - practicing a unique form of agriculture focused on harvesting seasonal produce only as it falls to the ground. The agriculture practiced by pterrann is considerably different than that practiced around the city-states, and is focused on establishing a thriving web of relationships between plants and animals in order to produce food, preserve the health and balance between fauna and flora, and enrich the soil.

The Path of the Psion (or Path of the Mind) is devoted to personal reliance and the inner strength of the individual. Within pterrann society, members of this path pursue tasks centered around enriching the intellects of themselves and the rest of their community. They tend to be the teachers, scholars, and historians of pterrann society. This path tends to attract the most spiritual of pterrann, because it has an intensive focus on contemplation, self-examination, self-esteem, and self-actualization.

Bonding with a Pterrax

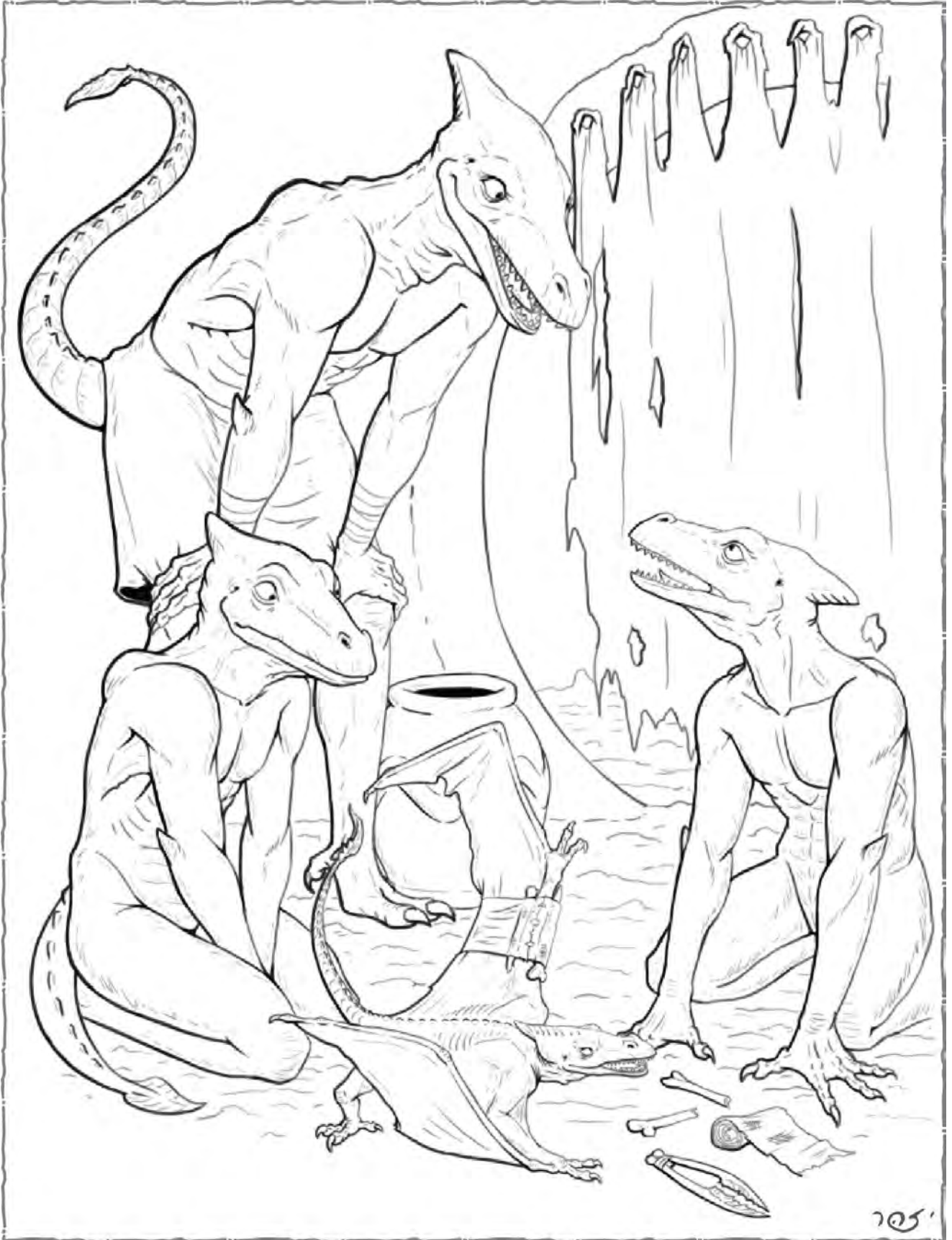
Catching and training a pterrax is the defining right of passage for many young pterrann, and there are many important and ritualized steps on this path, for it is an effort that requires years of investment in physical practice, relationship building, and both mental and spiritual development.

Pterrann know not all pterrax are suitable mounts, so an aspiring rider must find and closely monitor a pterrax nest to learn which have the right temperaments and characteristics. Then, the pterrann must devise a way to successfully capture the creature - a challenging task, as pterrax do not take kindly to their young being taken from their nests. An untrained pterrax will almost always attempt to swiftly take flight, and the young pterrann must use its training to try to coax the creature to land (sometimes a matter of simply remaining hold atop the creature for hours upon hours until it exhausts itself). After the creature has been grounded, the training can begin.

After three to six weeks, most pterrax that are suitable as mounts will have bonded with their pterrann trainer, but the young pterrann must demonstrate the success of this process in front of their peers.

The pterrann believe strongly that it is the balance of these three paths that keeps their society healthy and vibrant. It is the trifold bonds of the physical, the natural, and the mental that hold pterrann society together. Their art and clothing often incorporate motifs of trifold imagery, such as three different-colored strands wound together in rope. Most pterrann

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villages are led by a triumvirate composed of one elder from each path. The elders frequently regale their people with stories about the interdependence of the paths, preaching about the beautiful balance of the paths, about how nature provides sustenance for body and mind, body provides safety for nature and mind, and mind provides knowledge about nature and body - only when all three are in balanced harmony is the society whole.

While one might assume that the Life Paths are narrow concepts that strictly define their followers, the truth is that the Life Paths are flexible in their expression. Indeed, the Life Paths are viewed by the pterrans as a spiritual focus rather than an occupation. Although the paths skew considerably toward certain generalizations, such as druids following the Path of Nature and fighters or rangers following the Path of the Warrior, a ranger might instead follow the Path of Nature and use his skills to track and tend to the animals that graze on Mother Earth or a beast master psionicist might belong to the Path of the Warrior, focusing on training pterrax riding warriors and tending to their mounts.

Once a year, on the date corresponding to Anabasis 1 on the Merchant's Calendar, pterrans hold a festival known as the Day of the Bounty of the Earth Mother, a holiday typically marked by great harvest feasts. Around most of their major settlements, pterrans practice agriculture extensively, and the Day of Bounty.

The pterrans are generally known to have a major homeland somewhere in the western Hinterlands – the towns of Pterrann Vale and Lost Scale are known to the merchant houses of the Tablelands, although it would be fairly difficult to find someone actually capable of serving as a guide on the difficult trip across the Ringing Mountains and Forest Ridge to these settlements. Over the centuries, however, many pterrans have settled across the Tyr region and no longer have close ties with their western homeland. Nearly all such pterrans still profess devotion to the Earth Mother, but sometimes these far-flung pterrans still keep few of the religious practices. It is also not entirely unusual to encounter small families of pterrans who have settled in the city-states or wandering pterrans who have left their communities behind almost entirely.

It is worth noting that while most scalyfolk of Athas have societies that are tribal in nature, the pterrans view themselves as one large religious community. Despite having different appearances throughout the

different tribes, the pterrans tend to view themselves as a single pan-Athasian civilization that consists of their different tribes.

Family Life

Pterrans give live birth and in over 95% of cases, they are born as twins. Thus, most pterrans grow up with a sibling to whom they are extremely close. Despite this bond, however, there is no expectation in pterrann society for twins to follow the same Life Path, in fact, there is somewhat of a preference for twin siblings to pursue different paths. About three-quarters of pterrann twins join different paths, and many pterrans view it as a strength of their society that members of one path have a twin-bond with a member of a different path, viewing this as something that helps keep the paths in harmon.

Pterrans are ovoviviparous, meaning that pterrans develop almost entirely within eggs that are carried in utero by the pregnant mother, with the pterrans "hatching" from these eggs only a day or two before their birth. Because pterrann twins come from two different eggs, they are fraternal, not identical twins, and so twins may be of different genders. Interestingly, pterrax, which seem to be closely related to pterrans, also fertilize and carry their eggs in utero for quite some time, only laying their eggs a few weeks before hatching. Thus, despite one species giving live birth and the other laying eggs, their gestations are more similar than they seem.

Pterrans tend toward family units that consist of a pair of parents and 1-3 sets of twins, generally spaced several years apart. In their largest settlements, pterrans have very high survival rates (especially for Athas) and smaller families are common. This high survival rate and their relatively large families have allowed pterrans to establish some of the largest non-human settlements. Ultimately, however, the omnipresent resource constraints and horrors of the wastes have prevented their communities from becoming much larger. In more isolated communities, families of 4-6 sets of twins are not unheard of. Isolated tribes, of course, face even higher dangers from predators and other natural disasters.

Pterrans reach maturity by the age of 15. They are not long lived, a fact that their religion has embraced as simply the natural yearning to return to the Earth Mother; pterrans often describe their desire to return as becoming overwhelming after they conclude their fourth decade of life.

Language

The Pterrann language is a combination of vocal sounds and clicks and taps made with the claws. The vocal sounds are largely hisses and pops, with occasional snarls and growls. It is very difficult for many humanoid to learn to speak the Pterrann language fluently, as it can be difficult for them to properly create the necessary sounds, but with time they can learn to make themselves understood.

Common Pterrann Names

All pterranns have both a first name and a path name (which relates in some way to their chosen Life Path). Each name translates easily into some kind of poetic metaphor in the Common tongue, and it is not uncommon for pterranns to just adopt the translated meaning of their name rather than to force other humanoids to stumble through the pronunciation of their name in their native tongue, though there are of course exceptions:

Life Path Names:

- Dreamflight, Goldeye, Onesight, Rainkeeper, Spirit-ally, Terrorclaw, Watertender, Windspine
- Untranslated examples: Aandu, Caril, Dsar, Everin, Illik, Myril,

Male Pterrann Names:

- Airson, Darksun, Earthsong, Quest, Suntail.
- Untranslated examples: Chensal, Qwes, Pex, Ptellac, Ptoby, Ristu, Xandu.

Female Pterrann Names:

- Cloudrider, Greenscale, Lifehearth, Windance
- Untranslated examples: Adshi, Odten, Ptalán, Ssrui, Tilla, Xandu.

Relations

Pterranns are taught, and almost universally believe as a matter of faith, that they are the first and best children of the Earth Mother. Though they feel great pride in their peoples' unique blessings, pterranns are peaceful and patient in nature and therefore view other races more with sadness than anger or contempt. There are, however, some among the pterranns that look upon other races with pity, convinced that they need the guidance of the pterranns to be led back into harmony with the Earth Mother.

The pterrann religion is largely peaceful, and because of this, pterranns will almost never instigate combat unprovoked and pterrann raiders are almost unheard of. Members of the Path of the Warrior, however, are keenly aware of the importance of good tactics and aware that sometimes the best defense is a good offense. Therefore, while pterranns are unwilling to attack as raiders or in bloodlust, if pterranns perceive a threat to their community, they will strike first when possible and fight fiercely and to the death to protect their loved ones.

Most pterranns are reflexively hostile to any sort of arcane magic, because of their devout worship of the Earth Mother, and many never learn the difference between preserving and defiling magic. Pterranns are not unreasonable, however, and can be taught the difference between preserving and defiling. Once they learn the difference, pterranns will generally accept preservers warily, worried that preservers might fall prey to temptation and desecrate the Earth Mother. Because of the effects of defiling magic on the earth and the ever-present temptation to defile, a pterrann practicing arcane magic is nearly unheard of.

Pterranns interact comfortably with most other reptilian species, and it is common for nikaal and ssurrann traders to visit pterrann settlements, especially the larger ones. Pterrann druids interact quite comfortably with jozhals; pterrann druids are often quite willing to welcome jozhals onto their guarded lands and jozhals will nearly always welcome the protection of the druid.

Scale, Tail, and Claw

Pterrans traveling into the Tablelands from the west often journey through the Forest Ridge where they face the threat of halfings, and pterrans elsewhere often encounter dangerous packs of thri-kreen; pterrans tend to be sympathetic toward both these races, viewing them as closer to nature than most other humanoids, but they are also wary because they know these peoples are numerous and quite violent.

Due to their use of pterrax mounts, pterrans often come into contact with aarakocra tribes in the mountains of the Tablelands. While many aarakocra tribes are hostile to any other species, the pterrans have managed to earn the respect and cooperation of some tribes.

As PCs

Pterrans do not necessarily feel disconnected from their own people when they live in human cities or settlements – they may still follow their Life Path and honor their religion even outside of their people’s settlements, and it is not unusual for pterrans to live among other races. Though they take their religion seriously, and will remain devoted to their Life Path, pterrans feel entirely comfortable pursuing their path in the presence of non-pterrans. Their Life Path and religion exist to provide motivation and guidance for a pterrann. Pterrann PCs should consider how their character’s actions align with their chosen Life Path and how that Path might drive their choices.

Although all pterrann PCs will have a twin who should be a part of their backstory, pterrans do not feel compelled to travel in the presence of their twin. They will, however, nearly always make an effort to remain in touch with their twin, sending missives and keeping abreast of their whereabouts. If a pterrann learns their twin is in distress, they will very much want to offer aid.

- A pterrann eager to partner with those who share their mission to protect and restore Athas, possibly in concert working with druids, farmers, rangers, preservers, and any others who seek to restore the planet.
- A pterrann driven to punish those who have desecrated the Earth Mother, having perhaps witnessed the use of defiling magic now having devoted their life to hunting down defilers and all those who would further damage the planet.
- With a Life Path fated to take them far from the Tablelands, a young pterrann’s fate been foretold - to travel across Athas and reconnect the far-flung pterrann tribes with those of their homeland.
- A lone pterrann, left behind after a disaster decimated their village. With nothing left to fall back on and nothing left to lose, perhaps they decide to follow in the footsteps of that legendary pterrann traveler, the great hero Cloudcutter, who departed to the west and was never heard from again.

Character Archetypes

Potential roleplaying and character building ideas for pterrann PCs include:



Scale, Tail, and Claw



Yuan-ti (L'sstan-ti)

The yuan-ti are a race of serpent people who are the source of many horror stories across Athas. Tales depict the yuan-ti as relentless cultists, constantly in pursuit of fresh blood and always attempting to poison innocents and turn them into snakes. For once, the legends are more than a little true. The yuan-ti are

organized into cult-like collectives, known as coils. The members of these coils begin as humans who become tainted with yuan-ti poison and then, through a series of bizarre psionic ascension rituals, undertake a series of transformations to become increasingly more snake-like.

Scale, Tail, and Claw

Nearly all yuan-ti player characters will be proselytes or heralds (corresponding to tainted ones and purebloods in other worlds), which are the early stages of advancement in a yuan-ti cult, and they will also be “I’sstan-ti”, a term in the Yuan-ti language for apostates and outcasts from one of their collectives. Yuan-ti who are still fully in their cults will often lack personal agency, and thus may be unsuitable as PCs without careful consideration of how to roleplay an active member in a secretive cult.

Note: due to the possibly contentious nature of this race, players should consult the DM as to whether they will allow children of the cult of the snake into their campaigns as player characters. The information in this section is general information that proselytes and heralds would become aware of in the early stages of their initiation. It contains general information about the terminology and structure of yuan-ti cults, but no information about any specific cult.

Fourth Journal, Entry 3

“Through all of my travels, there was one reptilian people I could not find - the yuan-ti. In fact, due to some arguments over their classification, I almost didn’t include them in my research, but with their clear link to snakes and as there are other reptilian peoples which had been artificially created, I finally decided on their inclusion. All the while I was unsure what would happen should I actually encounter them – every recorded encounter with the yuan-ti had proven deadly.

“It never occurred to me that I had been traveling with one on the silt skimmer all along.

“As I was first taking stock of the crew - six humans, two half-elves, three tareks, and one turtle - I couldn’t help but notice one of the humans smelled different from the others, and always kept her head wrapped. No one seemed to give this any second thought, as covering your face from the dust is a common practice, but I had been watching, and I noticed she never took off her scarf even below deck.

“It seems she knew I was watching as well, as she gave me looks of distrust and kept her distance.

“A few weeks in, when a silt horror attacked our silt skimmer and she was knocked overboard, I got a glimpse beneath her scarf. At first I thought she looked more like a small mul, with no hair and very flat ears, but then I noticed the scaly skin on the back of her head.

“I knew many of the humanoid races were known to occasionally have strange superficial mutations, but based upon my years of research into reptilian races, I recognized this was different. These were dorsal scales like those along the body of a snake, tiny and almost perfectly symmetrical. She had surely heard of my interest in reptile peoples, and must have suspected I’d figured out her secret, for she gave me a look as if to say ‘Now you know! If you’re going to let me die, get it over with!’. Of course my curiosity was far greater than my sense of threat she posed, so I pulled her back aboard and straightened her hood before anyone else could see.

“From that point on, she was much friendlier: she admitted she was a yuan-ti, had left behind her ‘coil’ (a deeply religious cluster) under bad circumstances, and was looking to return after the misunderstanding could be cleared up. I also found out she was of a rank called a ‘herald’. It seems I had underestimated the intricacies of the yuan-ti religion, and she was happy to share such information once she discovered I wished to know more. I have documented all I have learned below.”

Fourth Journal, Entry 6

“My powers of observation have failed me.

“I did not question the sudden friendliness of the yuan-ti female, nor did I question such a large attack on such a small silt skimmer. It seemed my yuan-ti friend was being hunted herself. The silt runners had been paid to follow us, and to damage our vessel, stranding us near this particular set of northern hills.

“The trap was not sprung until the night after we arrived in the turtle village, waiting until the guard was being changed. They struck without warning from the shadows, half-blood zealots slithering in to overwhelm the watch and capture the village leaders. My turtle friend fought bravely but she was overwhelmed as well.

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"When at last they found me and the yuan-ti in our hiding place, she turned to them and shouted 'I have brought you a kreen sage - a sacrifice with which to buy my way back into the coil!'"

It seemed to work. I am now being carried off in a cage, no doubt to some underground location where I will meet the prophet of the coil.

"But I knew my journey would require pain and sacrifice, and I have come prepared.

"If you are reading this journal, the beacon crystal I had attached to this pouch of holding has been found - this means my knowledge has survived, and may yet benefit the Kiltectet.

"And so I leave you with this last lesson: never trust a yuan-ti.

"For the Empire!"

-Journals of Kil'mma'aktho (translated)

Physical

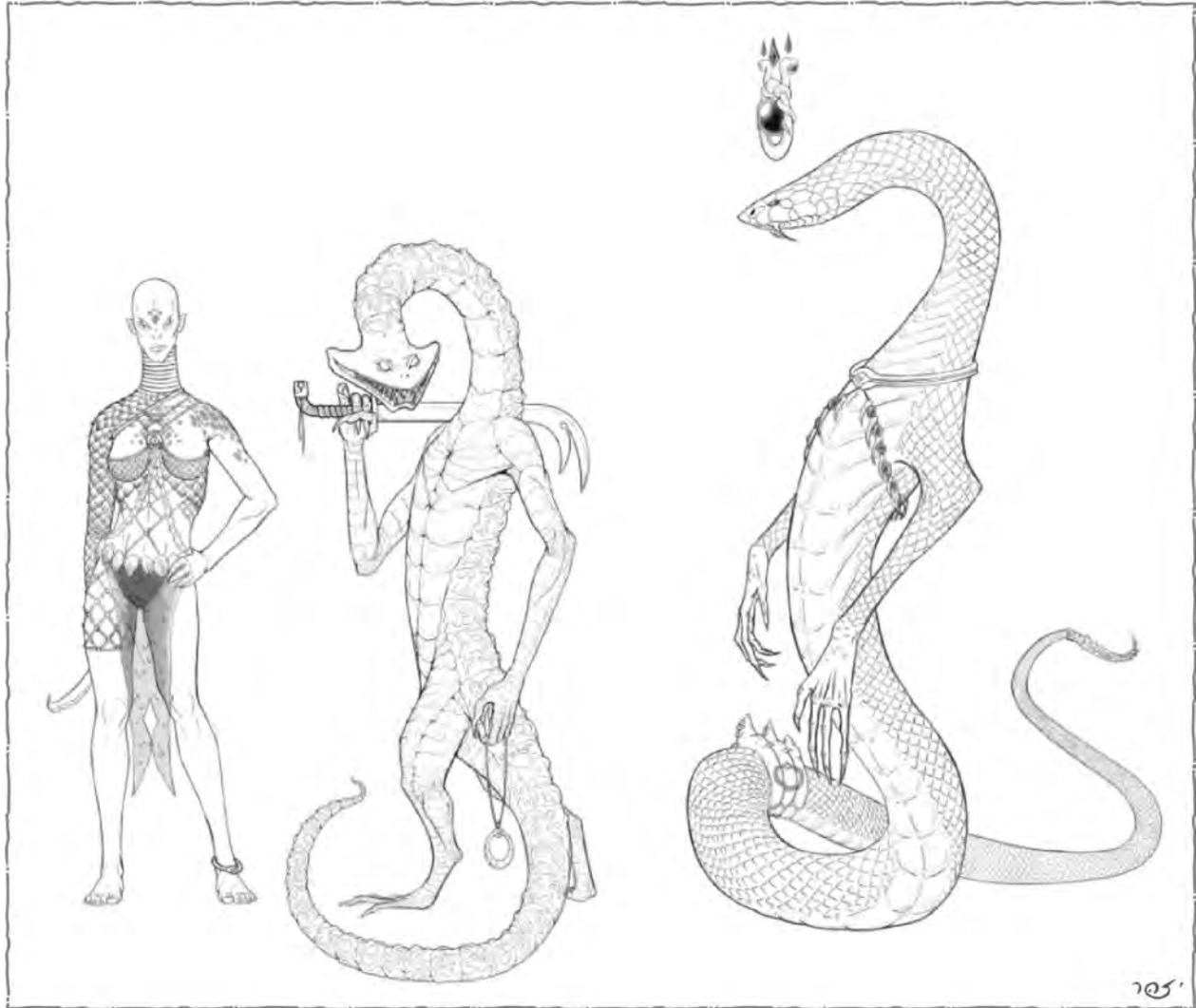
The appearance of a yuan-ti depends on what level of advancement they have achieved within their collective. It is generally believed in the city-states that yuan-ti primarily target humans for ascension into their coils, although other humanoid races take the threat of yuan-ti quite seriously as well. Perhaps the yuan-ti have perfected the use of their twisted rituals on humans, but who is to say the limits of the rites that the yuan-ti might attempt?

- **Proselytes** (or tainted ones) typically appear as normal humans – indeed they were born and raised as such – but they have been introduced to the very early stages of yuan-ti transformation via ingestion of yuan-ti venom. Over the course of their time as a proselyte, greater and greater doses of venom are consumed, and as their body becomes accustomed to the poison, the poison subtly changes their nature; their outward appearance remains unchanged, however. The poison erodes their free will and clouds their ability to think clearly – one feels intensely that only more poison can provide relief and clarity. Proselytes also begin to produce poison themselves (with normal human teeth, it is difficult to bite someone in combat, but somewhat easier to bite people by surprise). A coil will typically brand their proselytes with a symbol of the cult. The branding will generally be in a place that is easy to hide unless one is captured and searched. The brand is shed along with the rest of

the skin when a proselyte undergoes their first ascension. A proselyte who abandons the process and stops consuming yuan-ti venom undergoes fearsome withdrawal symptoms. If they survive, they regain the ability to think for themselves and retain the ability to create poison; their brand, however, remains.

- After having undergone their first ascension ritual, the proselyte has become a yuan-ti **herald** (known on other worlds as a pureblood). Heralds are only subtly different from humans, with one or two clearly reptilian features (slit eyes, patches of snake skin, lack of body hair, forked tongue, fanged teeth, etc.). In the vast majority of cases, the distinguishing features of a herald can be hidden via a strategic choice of clothing, head dress, armor, magic, or psionics. Mutations are common among the people of Athas, so even if uncovered, a yuan-ti herald may sometimes be mistaken for a normal member of their original race. Heralds are nevertheless instinctively paranoid about being discovered, for they know that many people will be unforgiving if they discover snake features (indeed, even a normal human with any serpentine features risks being targeted by overzealous yuan-ti hunters). Yuan-ti in the same coil will often develop features reminiscent of the same snake-like creature; in a given coil, for example, it might be the case that many develop features that resemble kluzds or the slimahacc.

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This is usually the most advanced physical stage of transformation reached by l'sstan'ti before their estrangement or exile.

- If an ascension ritual goes wrong, a yuan-ti becomes a **failed one** (histachii), a hideously malformed creature with a deeply damaged mind.
- The **zealots** (halfbloods/malisons) are what most people would describe as "snake men", with much of their body possessing snake-like qualities, typically including a snake head and tail. A zealot is well past the point of being able to hide in normal society through anything other than powerful magics or psionics. Zealots manage the daily operation of the coil, lead the heralds and failed ones (histachii) in its defense, and direct the heralds in their infiltration and recruiting efforts. They are sometimes introduced to proselytes so as

to tantalize them with the potential power they might someday achieve.

- **Apostles** are said to be almost entirely snake-like, except for one or two features which are still humanoid (such as the head or arms). Few people, outside of yuan-ti cults, have ever seen apostles and lived to tell about it, but proselytes and heralds will at least be aware that they could attain this powerful status if they continue to strive for advancement.
- **Idols** are depicted in artwork as elaborate serpentine monstrosities, often with multiple snake heads protruding, intertwined, from their shoulders; instead of arms or any sort of humanoid limbs, they often have additional snake-headed appendages. Despite their hideous nature, they are often creatures with strange symmetry and breath-takingly beautiful patterns

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in their scaling that make them mesmerizing creatures to look at, especially for yuan-ti.

Each individual yuan-ti chooses (occasionally unconsciously) a snake they style their forms after, usually a species of snake found near their home or one they particularly admire. Each coil also has a snake or snake-like creature that they have adopted as their totem. As yuan-ti advance through their various transformations, they become increasingly more serpentine, developing scales, snake eyes, or fanged maws that often resemble their preferred species of

snake, their coil's totem, or (most often) some combination of the two.

When a yuan-ti goes through an ascension ritual, they almost always shed their skin, quite literally discarding their old form for a new and more perfect - more serpentine - form. After this molting, a number of yuan-ti opt to keep their shed skin someplace private - usually as a reminder of their past, with those who learned an especially harsh lesson the most likely to keep the skin as a memento of the lesson (or treatment) they received.

Combat

Since proselytes come from a variety of backgrounds and have a wide variety of skills and abilities, they have a wide variety of approaches to combat. As those targeted to become proselytes are usually desperate or weak-willed, few have any significant life or combat experience of any sort; proselytes often get their first real taste of combat when they are sent on their earliest missions by their coil.

Heralds are the diplomats, infiltrators, and thieves of their collectives. Their strongest weapons are subterfuge, stealth, and the element of surprise. That is their role in the collective after all. Heralds commonly favor weapons that are laced with poisons, such as daggers, bard's stingers or darts. Though proselytes and heralds create poison with their bites, it is difficult for them to use this bite directly in combat.

In general, the zealots are the members of a yuan-ti coil that engage in direct combat, carrying out attacks or protecting a temple, and often operate in patrols of 6 to 12. At this stage of the transformation process and

beyond, a yuan-ti has a powerful bite attack as well as the ability to grab and constrict opponents with its tail.

More advanced stages of yuan-ti are rarely encountered individually, and are nearly always surrounded by at least one patrol of zealots. Yuan-ti of any stage may be of any class, and will fight according to their particular skill set. Heralds who are not thieves or rogues, for example, may simply be recent converts who have not yet learned the skills that are common for heralds to possess.

L'sstan-ti heralds are no exception to this rule- they have simply taken the strategies they have learned in service of their collective and applied them to self-preservation and concealment. However, as L'sstan-ti are usually painfully aware they lack the kind of support they were accustomed to while serving their coil, they are far less likely to risk a fight they may not easily win. Instead, even more so now than before, if victory can be achieved through persuasion or blackmail, that is better.

Personality

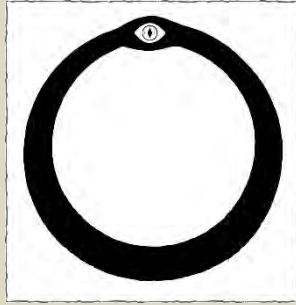
Those who become proselytes are targeted by yuan-ti either because their backgrounds make them particularly vulnerable to conversion or because their backgrounds make them particularly valuable as converts. Yuan-ti prefer vulnerable targets, and thus often pursue individuals who are down on their luck, marginalized, or estranged. They fill their targets' heads with promises of acceptance, becoming individually powerful, being part of something collectively powerful, and of being safe. Just one more dose, one more commitment, one more mission, and

they will be closer to a new family, closer to secret knowledge, closer to power, closer to perfection. Even in the case of proselytes who are specifically targeted to infiltrate a powerful family or organization, the yuan-ti prefer young individuals who are for some reason angry and susceptible to the temptation of a hissing whisper.

Proselytes and heralds are therefore typically people who are somewhat broken deep down and searching

Core Religious Beliefs of the Yuan-Ti

The yuan-ti religion as it stands today revolves around the Seven Idols. Each is



the leader of one of the major subspecies of yuan-ti, and one of the aspects of the Sevenfold Serpent. Proselytes and heralds do not always fully understand this philosophy but they are taught to repeat these teachings, and promised that if they continue to advance, they will learn more.

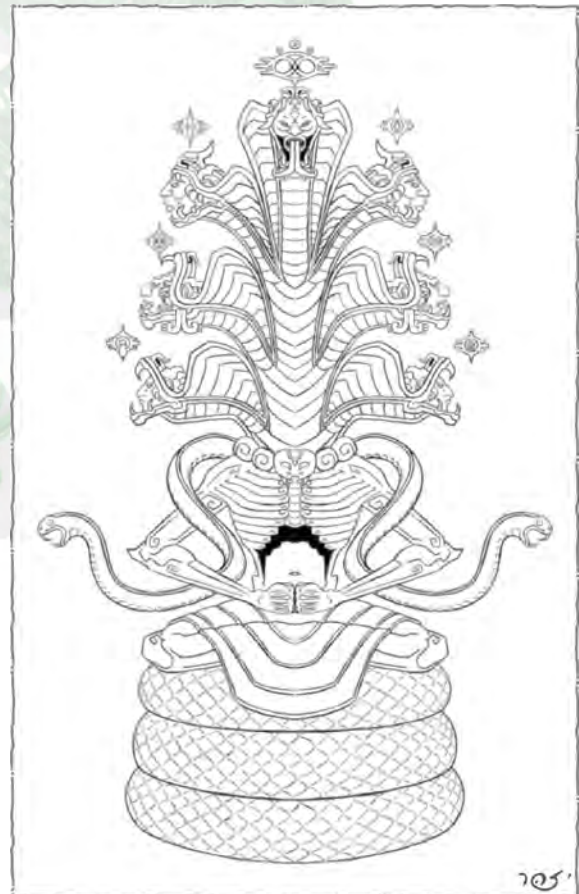
- The Idol is the voice of the Sevenfold Serpent, and none shall disobey.
- All yuan-ti strive for the perfection of their physical and spiritual forms. This occurs through acts of ascension, which are wicked rituals generally in front of many members of the collective, wherein a higher caste member bestows their venom through an ascension ceremony. Each act of ascension allows transformation to the next caste, proselyte to herald, herald to zealot, zealot to apostle.
- The role of the most highly ascended members is to meditate and bring about the return of the Sevenfold Serpent.
- The pursuit and acquisition of personal power is the path to enlightenment and the means of achieving closeness to the Sevenfold Serpent.
- Each action advances or hinders the attainment of enlightenment, and shall be weighed and measured accordingly.
- Material wealth is meaningless, and only exists to further the goals of physical and spiritual perfection.
- Morality is a facade that the unenlightened use to give themselves a sense of order in a flawed reality.

The level of fanaticism with which they insist on following these rules may vary between coils, which have different levels of tolerance for free-thinkers, but in all cases, breaking the rules leads to excommunication if not execution, and loss of any chance of further ascension.

for something more. On the surface, they are often extremely charming and persuasive, constantly working to hone their ability to blend in. They are especially effective when they are trying to entice new recruits. With each successful mission, proselytes and heralds are gradually introduced to more secrets of the yuan-ti coil, which they often find to be exhilarating – for a person adrift to suddenly find direction is intoxicating.

Proselytes and heralds usually spend most of their time amidst human society, subtly monitored by their coil (heralds are also often tasked with spying on other heralds) and dispatched on missions to further its aims, all the while goaded to become more deeply invested in the cult. Eventually their personalities become nothing but a mask as they continuously assume false identity after false identity, and are gradually pulled deeper and deeper into a fanatical system of beliefs.

Between the intense ascetic faith they previously held, the hostility they would surely face from other races if their nature as yuan-ti were to be discovered, and the fact they are hunted by their own former adoptive



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family, outcast proselytes and heralds (l'sstan-ti) tend to be reserved, guarded, and untrusting. As exiles, they are not necessarily duplicitous, but need to be very careful, lest anyone discover their true nature.

There are three common types of l'sstan-ti, who have been cast out of or separated from their collectives. They are divided by their beliefs and by the circumstances under which they became estranged from their coil:

Ssing-Je (ascetics)

Many l'sstan-ti have not yet abandoned their original beliefs (see sidebar), and still spend long hours training and meditating in order to achieve spiritual enlightenment, despite being exiled or otherwise separated from their collective. This is not necessarily something that happens because the herald did anything wrong. For example, because yuan-ti are deeply secretive, a herald on an infiltration mission can become separated from their coil if their points of contact are killed, or if they are sent on a lengthy mission and plans for resuming contact after the mission somehow fall through. They may also be abandoned if their mission has failed or if their coil needs to flee.

These "ssing-je" (or ascetics) still pursue the same goals of enlightenment and increasing their personal power as they did in their coil, even though they are now denied the mechanisms for achieving that advancement - sometimes on pain of death at the hands of their former spiritual leaders.

Ssing-je PCs might actually have a chance - on account of their continued devotion - of returning to their collectives if they manage to resolve the original cause of their banishment (though the manner and appropriateness of that should ultimately be decided by the DM and player).

An-Sshao-Je (apostates)

Some l'sstan-ti have completely abandoned their faith. These bitter, cynical beings are called (not without condescension and disdain from other yuan-ti) "an-sshao-je" (apostates). These are almost always yuan-ti who achieved herald status but were asked to perform abominable acts that they could not go through with or who were too free-thinking to fully submit to the indoctrination of the coil and decided to escape while they still could. By the time a yuan-ti becomes a zealot, they have typically demonstrated to their coil that they

no longer have any qualms about what they are asked to do, and almost never become apostates.

In their efforts to recover from a lifetime of intense spiritual programming and personality imprinting, an-sshao-je often find themselves feeling lost and searching for a sense of identity. These feelings can often lead such apostates to abandon their deepest-held beliefs and philosophies, sometimes driving an an-sshao-je to the depths of depravity and turning them into selfishly rapacious monsters in the truest sense. Other an-sshao-je sometimes embrace a kind of tragic heroism, seeking to atone for their past evils and selfishness with an altruism that may not be welcomed by the society they seek to serve.

Su-Shenwan-Ti (heretics)

The third type of yuan-ti exiles are those who have developed the conviction that there are other ways towards perfection, independent of their coil's hierarchy. These exiles have adopted beliefs - viewed by other yuan-ti as blasphemous - that the primordial version of the yuan-ti faith is the true faith, focused as it is on individual perfection rather than fanatical conformity to a collective, and that the yuan-ti faith practiced by most coils has been corrupted. The exact nature of these beliefs varies, but the common thread is simply that the su-shenwan-ti (as such exiles often call themselves) thinks they know better than their coil.

It is nearly always heralds who become su-shenwan-ti; higher ranking yuan-ti are typically so deeply indoctrinated in their cults that abandoning its teachings and their status is unthinkable, while proselytes know too little about the faith to have alternate views on it. When a herald is discovered to be dabbling with these beliefs, they are declared su-shenwan-ti (to most yuan-ti, this word means heretics; though such yuan-ti prefer an older, alternate meaning - the followers of the ancient way) and branded to indicate their heretical status.

Once branded, the su-shenwan-ti is forced to abandon their infiltration activities and remain within the coil, relegated to only the most menial of tasks. Su-shenwan-ti are looked on with derision within their coil, but may win their way back into the cult's good graces if they work hard without complaint and successfully convince their brethren that their beliefs align with those of the coil once more, and they have abandoned any heretical thinking. Reformed su-shenwan-ti have their brands amended, with a large "X" being seared into their scales and flesh atop the

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original brand to indicate both their renewed value to the coil but that they still bear further monitoring. Such former heretics are allowed to resume their path towards perfection, and if they are allowed to ascend to become zealots, their branded skin is shed once and for all.

Many su-shenwan-ti never redeem themselves in the eyes of their coil, either ending up worked to death, much like a “failed one” (see Society, below), or making their escape. Yuan-ti still within a coil are under explicit instructions to not attempt to reason or

converse with fugitive su-shenwan-ti, but to instead kill them on sight. This makes the life of an escaped su-shenwan-ti far more dangerous than those of other l'sstan-ti, but unlike other yuan-ti outcasts, su-shenwan-ti have the advantage of being able to readily identify other su-shenwan-ti. Knowing that there is no going back to their coil for either of them and nothing to be gained from betraying each other to their former collective, escaped su-shenwan-ti occasionally manage to befriend and almost come to trust each other, often forming small cabals of like-minded fellows.

Society

Everything in yuan-ti life revolves around their coil or cult. In the early stages of joining a yuan-ti coil nearly every conversation revolves around demonstrating one's loyalty to the coil in exchange for the promise of future advancement. Proselytes and heralds are constantly being tested and observed by their coils to search for any signs of disloyalty or even dual loyalties. They are pressured to demonstrate that they prioritize the coil above any family or friends from their old life, but because they are still earning the trust of their collective, proselytes and heralds know little about the exact size or structure of the coil.

Ranks of Yuan-Ti Society

The goal of every yuan-ti still in their coil is to move up through the ranks via ascension rituals. Herald's often work closely with their zealot handler, but proselytes and heralds often become aware of the upper tiers through religious artwork, participation in ceremonies, and as a means to tempt them with the promise of ever-increasing personal power. The tiers of yuan-ti society, in order of ascending rank (along with their equivalent type from other settings), are:

- **Failed Ones (histachii)** - The bottom rung of a yuan-ti collective are those who somehow failed an ascension ritual. Not only their bodies, but their minds, have typically been mangled beyond repair. Pitiful and misshapen creatures, they are kept to perform menial tasks until worked to death.
- **Proselytes (tainted ones)** - These are recruits in the initial stages of the yuan-ti transformation, having consumed repeated doses of diluted venom in narcotics distributed by the heralds.

- **Heralds (purebloods)** - Herald's are the spies, infiltrators, and recruiters of the yuan-ti.
- **Zealots (halfbloods/malisons)** - These are the warriors and enforcers of the yuan-ti society. They may be warriors who leave the coil to fight the cult's enemies; enforcers within the coil; or the bodyguards of the higher ranks.
- **Apostles (abominations)** - Yuan-ti of this rank spend all of their time either meditating or governing on behalf of their coil's Idol. They are the arbiters of justice and discipline.
- **Idols (anathema)** - There are seven of these in total on Athas, one for each coil. They are worthy of worship in their own right, and they are the voice of the Sevenfold Serpent (the yuan-ti god), and their word is final.

L'sstan-Ti and Yuan-Ti Society

Exiles, by definition, have given up or become estranged from their hierarchy and collective. It is quite rare to see more than one l'sstan-ti at a time. These outcasts are frequently hunted by their own kind, and given the clandestine ways in which the yuan-ti work, it is no surprise that all l'sstan-ti are paranoid. L'sstan-ti are slow to trust anyone, especially other l'sstan-ti who might seek a means to return to their coil.

Family Life

Once a person ingests enough yuan-ti venom and becomes a proselyte, they are rendered sterile, so coils can only grow by recruiting new members as

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proselytes. At first, a proselyte may still have some ties to their original family, but as they ingest more yuan-ti poison and become more deeply entwined in the yuan-ti coil, they usually become estranged from their family (a notable exception to this is when a coil is attempting to target and infiltrate a proselyte's family, in which case the recruit is expected to maintain a relationship with their family for the purposes of furthering the coil's goals). Each of these members spends a certain amount of time (usually a few years) as proselytes before being sufficiently prepared for their first ascension ritual to become heralds.

Just like any other particularly intense cult, the coil sees itself as one extended family - one which replaces the family of birth. But the word "family" fails to do justice to the homogeneous uniformity enforced upon each member. The specific manner in which a coil tolerates and handles dissenting actions (and thoughts) varies between making use of limited independence

("Agency is essential to allowing members to choose the right path towards ascension.") to outright authoritarian oppression and brainwashing ("We are one unified being, we all speak with one voice!").

All l'sstan-ti have been through the first yuan-ti ascension ritual, and have been cast out of their coil some time afterward. They still remember their (often miserable) formative years as a young human, followed by the joy of finding acceptance and identity within the coil. They remember the warmth and sense of belonging that comes from being part of a close-knit group with so many others, and the easy freedom of not having to think for themselves. Many l'sstan-ti have carried out heinous acts in order to reach their next ascension ritual. These are difficult things to leave behind, especially if their entire adoptive family has not only rejected them, but now considers them a threat and actively hunts them.

Language

Common Yuan-ti Names

All l'sstan-ti have four names. The first is the name of their collective. The second is their personal name. And the third is the name they have adopted after they left their collective. The final name is the birth name they had as a human, before becoming yuan-ti. This identity is usually considered to be lost, but the name may be known to figure's from one's life before becoming a yuan-ti. L'sstan-ti should treat both their collective name and their personal name as dangerous secrets.

Collective Names:

DM's will provide the name of the yuan-ti's collective based off a character's backstory. This name will be a secret that the PC should closely guard.

Adopted Names:

Any human name is appropriate for a l'sstan-ti's adopted or original human name, often one common to the closest city-state.

Personal Names (Male):

- Chhay
- Nissay
- Sshao
- Jun
- Thann
- Solurnis
- Senturnis
- Jestriss
- Paviss
- Koriss

Personal Names (Female):

- Baian
- Chhau
- Jorani
- Rachhany
- Sshue

Compared to most other reptilian languages, the Yuan-ti language almost seems like a caricature of what a person would expect a snake-person to sound like. The amount of hissing in their speech might be comical were the yuan-ti not so dangerous. Indeed, scholars

who have heard and studied the Yuan-ti language often use it as evidence to insist that the yuan-ti are not a true reptilian people. Instead, Yuan-ti has many similarities to the Common tongue, with many of the changes stemming either from the distinctive religious

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lexicon of the yuan-ti or the use of hissing and rasping sounds to replace many consonant sounds. Yuan-ti has

its own unique alphabet for the language's written form.

Relations

As far as the rest of Athas is concerned, the yuan-ti are an ancient animalistic death cult, with views only differing as to whether they exist only in stories told to frighten children, or if they are insidious menaces that come to threaten whole communities. Rumors abound that entire villages have disappeared from the map after being overtaken by yuan-ti.

In places where the yuan-ti have begun actively recruiting, there is often a wave of rumors, angst, and panic that young people are getting mixed up in something dangerous, falling prey to sinister influences, ingesting substances that are changing their personality, or even disappearing completely. The yuan-ti typically go to great lengths to try to hide the exact nature of the scourge sweeping these communities – until, that is, it's too late for what's left of the community.

Yuan-ti heralds - with their ability to blend in amongst humans - continually attempt to infiltrate the societies

of the Tablelands. Thus when the yuan-ti interact with most races or peoples, they do so via their heralds who are pretending to be human. Familiarity with the yuan-ti varies by city-state - some city-states have had more (universally negative) interactions with the yuan-ti than others, but all templars and sorcerer monarchs are aware of their existence.

In any case, everyone who encounters the yuan-ti soon comes to see them as a menace – insidious and well-organized, but rarely openly violent. In many city-states, the policy is to detain any clearly identified yuan-ti on sight and interrogate them to locate their coil.

Templars (or others trying to root out yuan-ti coils) will generally have no compassion for l'sstan-ti. Since yuan-ti are duplicitous schemers, most l'sstan-ti will find that their claims of being exiled are assumed to be just another insidious plot.

Yuan-Ti PCs

Yuan-ti players should have a discussion with their DM to determine their character's exact status with their coil. Because a yuan-ti in good standing with their cult generally lacks agency (they are continually being fed transformative yuan-ti poison - which clouds their thinking, monitored for dangerous or heretical ideas, and sent on missions with little regard for their wishes) they may be a difficult choice for roleplay. Because exiles are no longer beholden to the cult, they are far more likely to be able to make their own choices, and can therefore be easier to play as PCs. Generally, as part of their backstory, a player of a yuan-ti PC will want to consider their life before becoming a yuan-ti, why they were tempted by the cult, and what aspect of their personality or situation led them away from their coil.

Owing to their often severe personality changes, a DM might decide to allow an apostate (an-sshao-je) l'sstan-ti PC a one-time chance to change their alignment completely, with none of the usual penalties or

ramifications, provided the player can explain the reasons for the change.

A DM should consider allowing the heretic su-shenwan-ti PCs to begin play with a small number of acquaintances who are other su-shenwan-ti. Su-shenwan-ti have much more dangerous lives compared to other yuan-ti outcasts, as other yuan-ti will either attack them on sight or attempt to report them to their coil in hopes of forgiveness. Therefore, they may be allowed to begin play with several (perhaps 1-3) other su-shenwan-ti as relatively friendly acquaintances (such as a mentor, siblings-in-arms, etc).

Character Archetypes

Potential roleplaying and character building ideas for yuan-ti PCs include:

- Excommunicated due to a tragic misunderstanding (such as misplaced blame for one or more deaths, revealing their location to templars,

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the destruction of a sacred relic, etc.), the l'sstan-ti has dedicated their life to clearing their name and returning with honor to their coil (though they may not want to rejoin their coil anymore when the time finally comes).

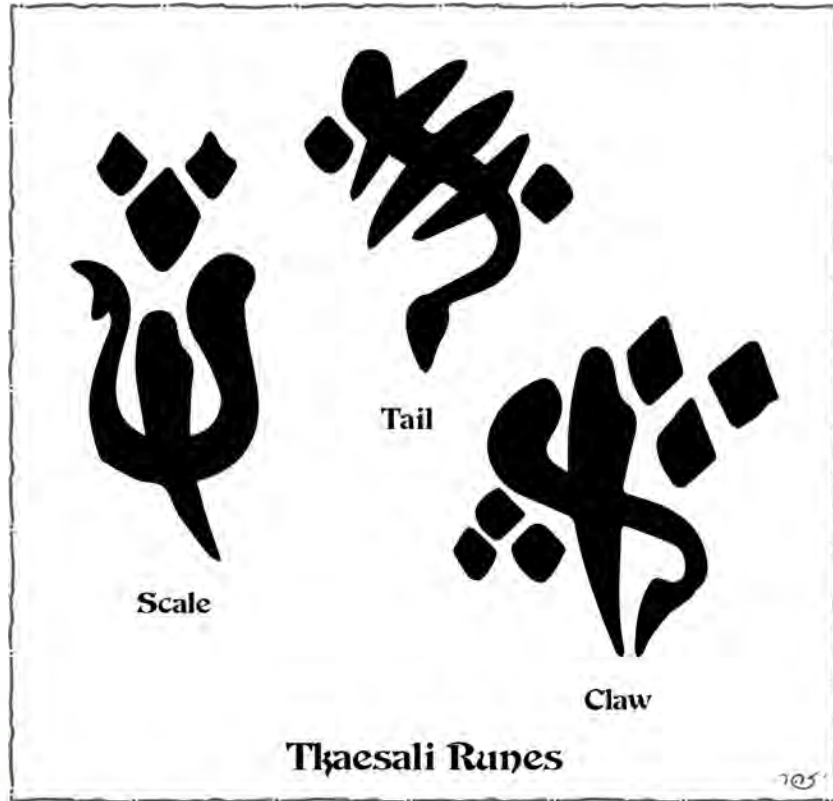
- A yuan-ti has been taken in by a group of criminals (a small group of thieves, a Veiled Alliance cell, etc.) who have found value in their unique set of skills. Their leader has taken them under their wing, but the young PC has not yet revealed their true nature, fearful of how they will react.
- A l'sstan-ti, left for dead during their banishment and wandering the desert alone, is discovered by traders and mistaken as a victim of some sort of mutation. Retaining few memories of their former life (and even then only fragments that return in the form of dreams), they have been taken in by

the merchant caravan and given employment (or enslaved and put to work). The PC does not recall their name or that of their coil, and will likely be quite shocked when the yuan-ti find them again!

- Born in a slum and forced to live by thievery from a young age, the PC's recruitment into the local yuan-ti coil was a natural fit and a welcomed new way of life. Not long after their recruitment, however, tensions arose between the PC and one of the coil's higher-ups. The night after their ascension to the rank of herald, a misunderstanding resulted in their excommunication. Now a l'sstan-ti, the newly-changed PC must now search for a way to clear their name to return to their coil, but they may discover there is more to life than what the slums or the yuan-ti could ever offer them



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Part 2 - DM's Guide

Overview

The purpose of this section is to enable and inspire DMs to build campaigns and encounters suitable for the unique races contained within, with information about their history, their lands (both where they range in general and some example settlements), a selection of NPCs of that race, an assortment of myths and legends for each race, and ideas of specific adventure hooks that could feature these races.

The reason for a separate DMs section for each race is that much of this information might not be suitable for players to generally know. For example, for some DMs, the history of the Cleansing Wars, geographical regions far outside of the Tablelands, the survival of Dregoth as an undead dragon king, or the existence of Marnita, the Last Sea, are potentially significant spoilers. If these topics are cavalierly introduced to players, it may ruin some of the most exciting twists

and discoveries that were ever designed for Dark Sun campaigns.

With that said, DMs are certainly encouraged to consider whether an individual character might know details contained in this section, especially if they are members of one of these races. For example, if someone expresses interest in being a turtle, a DM might inform them of the turtles who work as sailors in the fleets of the distant land beyond the Sea of Silt. If a player is interested in being one of the rare surviving lizardfolk, a DM might decide that it is appropriate for this player to know some of the legends regarding the ancient efforts to exterminate their race or to know about their refuge in the Last Sea. Or a DM might decide that turtles can only be from the western shores of the Sea of Silt and that any lizardfolk should come from a more

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isolated tribe that is unaware of their people's history over the past 2000 years.

There are no absolute right or wrong answers! As always, DMs are encouraged to do what they find inspiring and what they think makes sense. As a general principal, lean into the things your players are excited about, and don't dwell too much on aspects of the setting that don't capture their interest.

Each entry will begin with an overview of considerations for use of that race in a campaign. The sections on **History** and **Their Lands** are based largely upon gathered canon and fanon sources, as well as extrapolated and original information included to fill in any gaps. **NPCs** can serve several purposes - they can be bitter enemies for PCs, as allies and traveling

companions, as interesting people encountered during an adventure who send the PCs off in new directions, or they could be used for building backgrounds for characters of those races. The **Myths and Legends** section reflects on some of the key information that members of this race might have: when interacting with characters of these races, these stories can expose PCs to new corners of the world with unique mysteries to unravel. Finally, **Adventure Hooks** contain lists of practical adventure ideas utilizing the race in question. These adventures are generally suitable for parties consisting of any races, but because they feature one or two reptilian races, they may be particularly intriguing to members of those races, giving them an opportunity to shine among their own kind.

Interactions Between Reptilian Races

To summarize the descriptions from the various Relations sections in the Player's Guide above, DMs can consult the following relationship matrix. Most of these connections stem from geography, alignment, or demeanor of the respective races.

Reptilian Races Relationships

	Jozhal	Tortles	Silt Runners	Ssurans	Dray	Lizardfolk	Pterrans	Nikaal	Yuan-Ti	Humanoids	Kreen
Jozhal		N	F	N	X/F	X/N	N	N	X/A	A	N
Tortles	N		H	N	X/N	X/N	X/N	F	H	A	N
Silt Runners	F	H		F	H	X/N	H	F	H	A	A
Ssurans	N	N	F		F	F	F	F	N	F	F
Dray	X/F	X/N	H	F		X/N	X/F	F	X/H	A	X/A
Lizardfolk	X/N	X/N	X/N	F	X/N		F	F	X/H	X/F	X/A
Pterrann	N	X/H	H	F	X/F	F			H	S	F
Nikaal	N	F	F	F	F	F	F		N	S	F
Yuan-Ti	X/N	N	F	N	X/N	X/H	N	H		S	H
Humanoid Races	N	N	H	F	H	X/F	S	S	H		F
Kreen	N	N	N	N	X/N	X/N	F	F	H	F	

To be read as first column's reactions to other races listed in their row

Key

S	Sociable, is just as likely to be found in their company as their own species
F	Friendly, will engage in trade
N	Neutral/ambivalent
H	Hostile (usually some sort of longstanding disagreement or distrust)
A	Avoids (usually out of fear)
X/?	No contact. Symbol after the slash indicates most likely reaction

Note this chart is meant to provide a starting point and overview of relations between species. Consult each respective section of the Players Guide for more nuanced detail to these relationships.

Secrets of the Jozhal

Design Notes: *The jozhal are one of the original lizard races of Athas – detailed in the original Dark Sun Boxed Set and even featured in The Obsidian Oracle, the fourth book of the Prism Pentad series. As such, they should easily fit within the lore of any campaign.*

As the “least human” of the reptilian races, jozhal PCs and NPCs will certainly stand out in any human settlement. They are small lizards, not even particularly recognizable as

“humanoids,” and thus these are not characters who can put on robes and easily blend into the crowd. Because they tend to live in small family units, jozhals will also not naturally have large social networks or especially complicated back stories.

The two subspecies of jozhal are inspired by the slightly different depictions of jozhal by artists Tom Baxa and Gerald Brom in the original Dark Sun 2E materials.

History

Jozhal are naturally risk-averse, and will often simply avoid human civilization during periods of instability. As such, they rarely appear in accounts of major historical events. Jozhal numbers have always been small, due to their natural desire to keep to their own families and independent natures. Their care for the land also prevents them from collecting in large numbers.

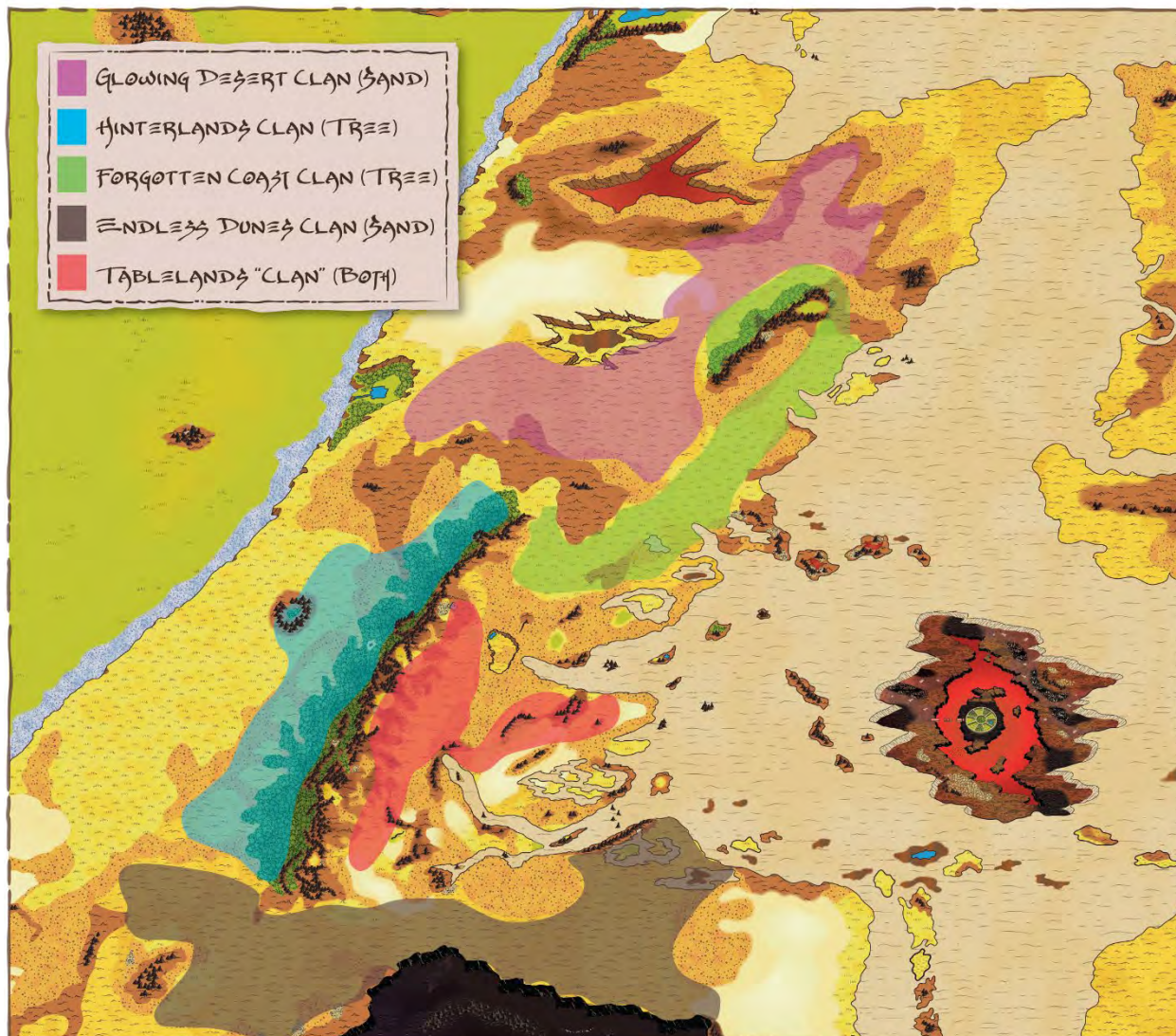
Unlike many of the other reptilian peoples of Athas, the jozhal clearly do not trace their lineage from the lizardfolk. Though no historical texts speak to their ancient history, one possibility is that Rajaat and his minions simply saw the jozhal as so animal-like that they did not merit attention.

Although jozhal are extremely intelligent, they look as though they could be a common desert lizard. It seems that for much of their history, the jozhal deliberately

avoided revealing the extent of their intelligence to the residents of the city-states. For King’s Ages, they were presumed to be simply an animal; even today, when managers of gladiator pits happen to obtain a captured jozhal, they will often place them in pens with the beasts, rather than with humanoids. As these pens are built to restrain with force, rather than craftiness, the jozhal frequently escape.

Recently, jozhals have begun to establish a greater presence in the city-states. Thus, there is a growing awareness among the learned - such as templars and the merchant houses - that jozhal are just as intelligent as humans, though the general population often continues to view them as unintelligent beasts. Most jozhal don’t seem to mind, however, it gives them the element of surprise to be so thoroughly underestimated.

JOZHAL CLANS BY REGION



Jozhal families generally have an area of scrub plain, sandy wastes, or verdant belt that they claim. Depending on the amount of resources available, this can be as little as a few dozen acres to as much as several square miles. Within this area, each family has several camps or hiding spots at the ready. Each camp is cleverly hidden, with a cache of goods, food, and water available should the family need them, usually after escaping an attack from a beast or group of humanoids. If a family of jozhal sees a group of traveling humanoids in their lands, they usually watch

them from a distance, only approaching to steal magic items or to trade for something they cannot make.

There are five known societies, or groups of clans, in the area surrounding the Tyr Region. They are informally known as the Glowing Desert Clans, the Forgotten Coast Clans, Hinterlands Clans, Endless Sand Dune Clans, and Tablelands Clans. With the exception of the Tablelands region, which contains both subspecies of jozhal, each society is composed of only one jozhal subspecies.

Jozhal NPCs

Nymos

Male 8th level Preserver

Notable Items: Spellbook

Nymos is a blind preserver who favors broy and has lived on the roof of the Furred Sail tavern in Balic for the past dozen years. Nymos collects information and uses deception where possible, often acting the part of the blind beggar to gain information to aid the local Veiled Alliance and his bar tab. His magic, similarly, is focused on deception and illusion. Nymos is friends with Kester, smuggler captain of the Dark Viper. Nymos dies in FY 9 while helping Agis break into Castle Feral (See *The Obsidian Oracle*)

Taja

Female 8th level Ranger

Notable Items: +1 Short Bow

Taja is a lithe, agile jozhal with piercing green eyes and bright blue skin when amongst her kind. She is a skilled ranger and tracker, able to navigate even the most treacherous terrain with ease, and calm and collected in the face of danger. Taja is also fiercely protective of the natural world and will not hesitate to defend it against those who would harm it.

Rather than avoiding humanoids, she sells her pathfinding and game warden services to groups passing through jozhal lands. This allows her to keep an eye on them, direct them away from important jozhal locations, and gather information on the humanoid lands for her tribe.

Zitha

Female 6th level Rogue

Notable Items: +1 Rapier

Zitha is a sly, cunning jozhal with smooth purple scales and piercing red eyes. She is a skilled sneak and burglar, able to slip into and out of even the most heavily guarded places with ease. Fiercely independent, Zitha values her freedom and autonomy. she is also highly protective of her own interests and will not hesitate to bend or break the rules if it serves her purposes.

Zitha currently serves Merchant House Inika, playing the role of innocuous scavenger or hidden eavesdropper, as her small size helps her deceive others into ignoring her. Her loyalty is only mercenary, however, and she could easily be bribed into betraying her employers.

Vithar

Male 9th level Cleric

Notable Items: +2 Club, holy element

Vithar is a wise and devout jozhal with shimmering silver scales and piercing white eyes. He is a skilled cleric and healer, able to call upon the power of his element (Air) to aid and protect those in need. Though fiercely independent, Vithar is also fiercely loyal to his family and will go to great lengths to protect them. He is deeply committed to upholding the traditions and values of his culture, and is respected for his wisdom and devotion. Vithar will not hesitate to defend those he perceives as being in need, and stands up for what he believes is right. Vithar's club is a fused amalgamation of bones from his fallen tribemates and ancestors.

Razzik

Male 12th Level Druid

Notable Items: Staff of the Elements, Elemental Gemstone

Razzik is a quiet and reclusive jozhal, deeply devoted to the elemental forces of nature. He often spends long stretches of time alone in his guarded lands, communing with the elements and seeking their guidance. Despite his solitude, Razzik values his relationship with his family and will go to great lengths to defend them. He wields a staff imbued with the power of the elements, and carries a gemstone that allows him to summon a powerful servant of Air.

Razzik has sheltered other jozhal families in times of need on his guarded lands and is respected as a leader and facilitator. His lands often serve as a gathering place for all the jozhal families of the area to participate in rituals of sharing, competition, and storytelling.

Myths and Legends

The First Egg

The jozhal origin myth is their story of the First Egg. From this mythic egg, the first of their number was birthed into a land of trees and plenty. Some of those who know of the lost histories of Athas have postulated that this primordial egg was in fact a creation of the ancient Life Shapers, while others suggest that the first egg actually describes the transformation and rebirth of a pyreen into the first jozhal.

The Transcendent Key

Jozhal are often seen by outsiders as curious creatures who will go to great lengths to obtain magic items. Within jozhal society, it is known that this is not just due to mere curiosity: the jozhal clans are seeking out specific magic items of particular importance. Some clans have well-loved stories of the magic they seek, while others are more vague, believing that they will know it when they behold it or hold it in their hands. Many elders say these items will allow the jozhal who find them to ascend to a higher state of being,

transcending the wastes of Athas forever, while others say they are items that will allow the families to remain hidden from all who come to their lands.

Chariots of Guthay

The tale of the Chariots of Guthay is a common bedtime story told to young jozhal, to help them with their fear of the dark.

It is said that when night falls, one member of every jozhal village gathers up the most beautiful valuables taken that day, places them in their cart (their “chariot”), and pulls them up to the moon of Guthay to meet with the King of the Moon, where the items are appraised before being returned. As payment for his services, the single shiniest item is kept by the King to ensure the moon still stays bright in the night sky each night. It is a bumpy ride through the night sky, however, and every so often an item is dropped. The glinting stars seen in the sky are said to be these dropped precious items and gems.

Adventure Hooks

- A jozhal druid approaches the party shyly. Apparently a defiler has moved into the druid’s guarded land, but the defiler and its minions are too powerful for the jozhal to handle alone. In exchange for the PCs help, the jozhal offers a selection of magical items.
- The party witnesses a small group of jozhals approaching a seemingly unaware camp of humanoids. Perhaps the jozhal are raiding the camp for magic items or perhaps the humanoids in the camp recently raided some jozhal stashes and stole items the jozhal want/need.
- A merchant is looking for someone to track down the jozhals that stole some valuable items from a caravan. The PCs must locate and search the jozhals’ territory to track down the hidden items.
- The party is hired to transport a large egg-like item to Tyr. On the way, they must defend against jozhal raids. If the jozhal see the egg, they attack with even greater fury for some reason. If they manage to steal the egg, the PCs must track the jozhals down to recover it. Regardless, word of the egg spreads among the jozhal and in the coming days, the characters’ caravan/group is hounded by several jozhal families. Is the egg perhaps the “First Egg” mentioned in jozhal myth?

Secrets of the Turtles

Design Notes: *Though turtles were first imagined as a Dungeons and Dragons race in the 1980s (and have been a fan favorite ever since) they were never proposed as an official race for Dark Sun. Nonetheless, Athasian turtles can be a fun and natural addition to the world of Dark Sun.*

Turtles often seem like a good fit for Athas, to the point where there have been Dark Sun campaigns featuring them (such as the LFM "Rise of the Veiled Alliance" livestream campaign). Their protective shells and nasty demeanor fit well in a world with braxats, drakes, cha'thrangs and other hard-shelled reptiles.

*Although turtles were never included in an official Dark Sun product, experimentation to create an intelligent turtle race is already a part of the Dark Sun canon with the inclusion of the drik and high drik (in *Terrors Beyond Tyr*). The proposed origin of turtles as a dark experiment of a Sorcerer King's twisted magic is similar to that of both high driks and half-giants. Indeed, we suggest as their backstory that turtles result from the same experimentation process that led to high driks.*

Nevertheless, because turtles are not an official Dark Sun race, they may not be suitable for every campaign.

History

The origins of turtles are rumored to lie in the early experiments by servants of Hamanu that ultimately resulted in the creation of high driks. Those early attempts were said to have produced stunted human-sized beings, derisively dubbed "petty driks" by their creators, that fell short of the Lion King's expectations. Nonetheless, they were enslaved, experimented on, and sent to the arena to fight and die.

How they escaped is anyone's guess, but persistent rumors claim that a pyreen or an agent of the Veiled Alliance managed to secret many of them away from under the Lion King's nose. Being less corrupted than the high driks that followed, turtles could successfully breed and have increased in numbers since they first escaped. Though they are far from a numerous people, the turtles have slowly spread over the many generations since their escape.

Competitive pressures from more established races have steadily pushed the turtles further and further northeast, until they reached the relatively unpopulated region around the Strait of Arala, far to the northeast of both the Tablelands and even the city-states of Kurn and Eldarich, where they could carve a home for themselves. Luckily, turtles possess unexpected mutations that have proved beneficial for life along the Sea of Silt.

Turtles have long struggled with their own natures. Seemingly made for combat and inherently aggressive, their nature has actually proven to be somewhat of a hindrance to the success of their species, as it has so far interfered with the development of a true turtle society and resulted in far fewer turtles being able to inhabit a given stretch of territory than would otherwise be possible if they were more capable of cooperation and cohabitation.

Their Lands

Unlike many other species, the turtles have only one homeland - in which they settled after their flight from the Tablelands. This homeland is located on the shores of the Strait of Arala, adjacent coastal areas, and nearby islands. In the Green Age, this strait was the location of a great port city, known as Arala, from which the strait takes its name. Today, the shores around Arala are known by those who travel there as the Carnivore Coast.

In recent years, turtles have attempted to expand their territory to include the western shores of the Strait and neighboring areas further south of Arala along the coast, although the latter has been met with strong opposition from local wildlife and humanoids.

Despite their presence in the area being almost common knowledge among local silt-sailors, the turtles have been able to live largely unmolested due to their ferocious natures and how little is to be gained

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from challenging them. They have proven to be a menace to nearly all life in the area, driving other creatures out of places they wish to claim for themselves, preying on many species, and leaving their dangerous and voracious spawn strewn about the area. Only their small numbers - due to challenges related to breeding and the survival of their young - have prevented an ecological catastrophe from occurring in the region.

What little turtle society that exists is largely matriarchal, as turtle males can be quite aggressive with each other. This often leads many males to strike out on their own, bereft of a community. This suits many of the male turtles just fine, but some chose to interact with the humans and other races of the region,

as it can be easier for adult male turtles to get along with other races than others of their own kind. Turtles are considered to make very useful members of silt skimmer crews, and despite their surly natures and foul tempers, turtles are gladly tolerated for their unique abilities.

Turtles can occasionally be found much further up and down the coasts from their homeland, and even occasionally near inland dust sinks. These are almost always solitary males who have sought territory further from their own kind. These individuals can easily outmatch individual silt runners and even drive off small groups, but are unable to succeed in the face of organized efforts by tribes of the smaller reptilians to drive off or kill them.

Turtle NPCs

Baloor

Male 9th level Fighter

Notable Items: Iron harpoon

Baloor has spent much of his life as a sailor on various silt skimmer and silt skiff crews. He has a reputation as a fearless hunter of silt horrors and silt spawn. His most prized possession is an iron harpoon that he salvaged from an ancient ruin and restored, which he uses against predators in the silt. Baloor's great love, aside from hunting the creatures of the silt, is cooking them, and he will often foist his strange dishes on crewmates, even those with very little interest in eating such creatures. He has become a fairly skilled cook

over the years, and his more conventional preparations of meats such as z'tal, aprig, and carru are quite popular.

Guanggong

Male 8th level Druid

Notable Items: Potion fruits (dates)

Guanggong ("The bay near the vast shore" in the Turtle language) is a healer and mystic who protects an otherwise unknown lake at an obscure oasis from raiders and defilers. He tends to the dates, palms, and hives that thrive there, but he also tends to the tribe of

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jozhal who live near the lake and help defend it from any who come to despoil its life-giving waters.

Guanggong is in no way a fearsome combatant, but he is extremely hardy and his magic is potent. Guanggong has trained many nearby turtles and jozhal shamans in the arts of healing and in nullifying defiler magic, and is well known for infusing simple drinking water and sweet dates with such potent magic that they can feed a small army for days. Guanggong has recently left his oasis after training several replacement turtle shamans and is now traveling on a holy quest to bring back water to Athas and life back to the dying land.

Ookuulaanai the Horde Shepherd

Female 12th level Ranger

Notable items: Ornate tortoise blade

The name of Ookuulaanai is known far and wide in the coastal lands around Arala, and the turtles there regard her with great honor and respect. Even members of other races living close by know of her.

The reason for her renowned, as well as for her epithet of "Horde Shepherd", is that this formidable turtle matron has made it her life mission to gather every turtle hatchling possible, make sure they reach adulthood, and bring them together in the burgeoning turtle society in Arala. A significant number of the turtles now living in the city have passed under her hand when they were young foundlings - a debt many of them feel can never be repaid - and they are eager to show their gratitude whenever they can, by bringing her gifts whenever she visits the city.

Even in her advanced age, Ookuulaanai is an impressive sight. Large even by the standards of

female turtles, her blood-red hide is covered in bite marks and old scars, almost all of which are from handling her adoptive children rather than from encounters with deadly beasts on her journeys. Her eyes are a milky white, though she isn't blind, and her hearing is as sharp as ever, even if her now broken and jagged tusks are not.

Unlike matrons of other wandering septs who usually only drive out adult females, Ookuulaanai doesn't allow for any individual beyond the age of ten in her immediate company. As a result, she is constantly accompanied by a mob of ravenous foundlings that she took under her care, barely kept under control by her imposing personality and the flick of her silt tripper (an unusual weapon fashioned from the tentacles of a silt horror that she uses to wrangle young turtles). Ookuulaanai wanders between the turtle breeding grounds near the coasts and oases, gathering every hatchling she comes across. Once in a while, she will head to the gates of Arala to drop off those foundlings that have mellowed enough to enter the city, though Ookuulaanai herself never does, as her firm hand is needed at all times to control her other foundlings, lest they run amok and cause harm to themselves and others. The residents of Arala come to her instead, giving gifts and adopting the foundlings she delivered, with the entire affair almost always taking on a celebratory feel.

Ookuulaanai is always seen carrying a tortoise blade whose shell and bronze blade bear beautifully carved inlays and gold filigree: a gift given to her by the turtles of Arala as a sign of their admiration. In her other hand, Ookuulaanai usually holds her silt tripper, a signature weapon of the silt runners, which she took from an unfortunate silt runner who was eaten by her horde. She uses these two weapons to protect her sept just as often as she uses them to defend herself from her rowdy children.

Significant Locations

Arala

Former home city of the Champion Sacha, Curse of Kobolds, Arala is a once-beautiful city of canals and bridges. Unable to fend off the advancing silt, it was completely abandoned in the 159th King's Age. The presence of silt, however, proved no issue for the

turtles when they found the ruins many generations later, and they happily moved into the remaining partially-submerged buildings. Today, Arala is the largest and most developed turtle settlement on Athas. The city has become, in effect, a grand social experiment by the turtles - a collective effort by several sept leaders to go against their inherent war-like

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natures and build a civilization. The first step toward that goal is these dozens of septs and clans managing to live in the same place without killing each other.

Having precious little experience with construction and architecture, the turtles have made do with patch fixes on ruined buildings and crude platforms, and shelters of salvaged stone and repurposed walls, creating the impression of an impressively large and sturdy shanty town.

In spite of its ramshackle appearance, the city remains impressively well-fortified and defended, and the militia is now much-experienced from years defending the city from all manner of silt horrors and other denizens of the silt.

Only foundlings who are deemed sociable and civil enough are allowed into Arala. Wandering septs will usually deliver such foundlings into the care of the city residents, who are charged with further acclimating

them to life in a civilized society. Once they reach adulthood, these turtles are free to stay in Arala or leave - thereafter rejoining their sept, joining another sept, or striking out on their own.

Gombek Shore

The turtles long ago learned to keep their spawning grounds separate from their settlements. Up along the northern coast, about half a day's travel northeast of Arala, is a stretch of shoreline with several semi-permanent buildings. The area, known as Gombek, features an impressively large swath of open beach used for the laying of turtle eggs. Gombek is sufficiently distant from Arala for the hatchlings not to cause the turtles much trouble, although the same cannot be said for the local wildlife or the nearby populations of thri-kreen and pterrans.

Myths and Legends

Olgkorkoi

Even since their flight from the Tablelands, the turtles have been traveling the Sea of Silt and they have many legends regarding the silt. One such tale dates back to when turtle refugees were first crossing the Sea of Silt.

As they crossed the powdery sea, their craft encountered and engaged an especially large and malevolent silt drake - apparently they had inadvertently crossed the drake's territory, and a terrible battle ensued. The silt drake was driven away at great cost to the ship's crew and the turtle refugees, but it continued to hunt them for the remainder of the journey, damaging their vessel and hungrily snatching survivors off the deck time and time again. They fought the drake and drove it away each time, but it relentlessly kept coming back.

By the time the ship reached the far shore, the survivors had named the drake "Olgkorkoi" (or the death wyrm), and claimed that it had developed a taste for turtles. It is said that, even after all this time, Olgkorkoi lies out there beneath the silt, just waiting for impetuous turtle siltfarers to stray into its territory.

Of all the turtles, the silt clerics of Arala are the most fervent believers in the existence of Olgkorkoi, and they hold that there is a way to defeat it once and for

all. The Silt priests claim that the drake has a special agreement with the Silt Lords themselves, and this agreement must be broken for Olgkorkoi to become vulnerable. This, of course, could just be an attempt by the Silt priests to gain more power and prestige in Arala...

The Remnants of Sacha

The Remnants of Sacha is an old story that is often used to scare adolescent turtles. When the first turtles came upon the ruins of Arala, they found it to be strangely silent and devoid of any living activity. These refugees thought nothing of this until night fell and undead rose from the silt, eager to tear them apart while they slept. This first group of turtles was entirely lost save for one shell-shocked survivor, and it took several additional expeditions to clear the ruins of any remaining undead.

Upon examination of the bodies, they seemed to all possess ancient weapons and armor. Divinations by the elders revealed that the undead were known as "the Eternal Guard of Sacha." Since that time, there have been no undead attacks for many centuries, but there are some that claim that not every sealed ruin in Arala has been opened and that there may still be a few that lie beneath the silt, awaiting only the right

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earthquake or low tide to disgorge their gruesome inhabitants.

The Fighting Hatchlings

When asked why the newly hatched are so bloodthirsty and violent, turtle elders share this story: when the first turtles were hatched, they were offered no mercy or kindness by their creators. Indeed, if there were any imperfections or signs of weakness, it is said the templars promptly fed the new hatchlings to the beasts of the gladiator pits. Nothing could be done about this – the turtles simply had to accept the fate of their hatchlings. But then one day, after several years, screams came from the gladiator pits. When the templars investigated, they discovered that these newly hatched turtles had begun to savagely fight back almost immediately after birth.

The templars decided to capitalize on this, breeding the surviving young turtles to accentuate their aggressiveness as hatchlings and experimented with mining enemy positions with the resulting turtle eggs, where the young turtles would hatch and attack any living creatures; almost none of these hatchlings survived, but no one cared. Except, of course, for the turtles.

These last experiments were the final straw; the turtle adults rose up and fought their way out of Urik, scooping up what eggs they could and rampaging their way to the north and east.

When the rescued eggs hatched, however, the adult turtles discovered there was nothing that could be done with these hatchlings except to give them the time and space to come to their senses. And so the breeding habits of the turtles were established.

Adventure Hooks

Turtles lend themselves well to silt-faring adventures, but that doesn't mean a campaign involving turtles has to stay near the silt.

- When journeying via silt ship, the PCs encounter a wrecked ship in the shallows off the shore of an island. Most of the crew is gone, but there is one remaining survivor - a mortally wounded turtle from the city of Arala. As a dying request, the turtle asks the PCs to deliver a few personal items to his apprentice back in Arala.
- A group of slavers manages to catch a turtle PC and the rest of their party. Having never seen a turtle before, they assume the turtle is a New Race mutant and sell them as vicious fodder for the arena. The turtle and party are soon taken to the nearest city to feature in the next celebratory games but, unfortunately, that city happens to be Urik...
- In the shallows south of Arala, a turtle silt ship went down after a particularly successful raid on the human settlements. The treasure is too valuable to leave on the silt floor, so the PCs are tasked with accompanying a crew and recovering it, regardless of what creatures might stand in the way.
- The PCs encounter a sept of turtles recovering from a recent attack. They are told that one of the sept's newly adopted foundlings got separated from them and lost during the fight, but with so many of its members injured, the matron can't spare anyone to go and look for the foundling. The matron offers the PCs safe passage and guidance through the silt, if they can return the lost foundling to her. The PCs must not only find the young turtle and contend with the dangers of the waste, but also face the challenge of bringing the foundling back safely without being attacked by the little semi-feral creature.



Secrets of the Silt Runners

Design Notes: The silt runner is a classic Dark Sun race detailed in *Terrors of the Desert* (Dark Sun Monstrous Compendium I) - an unforgettable homage to the basilisk lizard, with their unique capability of sprinting across the silt. This classical conception of the silt runner contains some significant challenges for their introduction as PC races, however.

First, they are very small, even more so than halflings (although kobolds and even the one-foot tall fremlin have

been featured as PC races). Second, they were originally envisioned as unbelievably fast – more than twice as fast as thri-kreen and elves, four times as fast as humans, and eight times as fast as halflings and dwarves, which can present some obvious potential challenges dealing with a character that much faster than the rest of a party.

The silt runner thus presents an intriguing opportunity to portray the misunderstood misfit, to pursue the redemption of the speed demon, and to explore the silt like never before.

Silt Running

How far can a silt runner sprint across the silt? Their original Monstrous Compendium entry says they can “run across silt for short stretches.” But does *short* mean distance, as in, dozens of feet? Or does it mean a short stretch of time - only a few minutes - which at a silt runner’s movement rate might be a mile or two? In Athas.org’s 3rd edition book “Terrors of Athas”, silt runners are said to be able to run only 60 feet across the silt. Yet that same book says that silt runners live on islands near the coastline, and make their living attacking caravans on the mainland. Silt runners are also said to be all over the islands of the Silt Archipelago region which are each several miles apart from each other.

So how do silt runners regularly cross miles of silt from island to mainland if they can only run on the silt for 60 feet?

There is no definitive answer and no wrong answer. Different DMs are likely to prefer different interpretations. DMs could rule that silt runners live on the islands because they are able to maintain their runs for a short *stretch of time* and cover a few miles. DMs could rule that silt runners cannot run to the islands and reach them some other way, perhaps via the magic of their silt priests or psionics. A practical consideration is that being able to run across only 60 feet of silt has limited application in the game, as nearly no locations are depicted as having bodies of silt that are only 60 feet across, and is thus a nearly useless ability for a PC to have.

A compromise approach, hinted at in this book to attempt to satisfy all interpretations, might be to say that silt runners cross longer distances by studying the swells of silt, identifying rocky outcroppings, exposed shallows, solid sandbars, and firm patches of mud, sprinting from one to the other. This might look a little bit like parkour on the silt, and provides a reasonable explanation for crossing more considerable distances.

History

No ancient tales or records speak of the silt runners, and they were not a target of the genocidal campaigns of the Cleansing Wars, so it seems likely that the silt runners are a relatively recent race created by the mutagenic effects of the Pristine Tower since the Cleansing Wars ended.

As the Cleansing Wars ended nearly 2,000 years ago, it is possible silt runners have been around for nearly as long. Their presence near the silty shores of the Tablelands as a menace to caravans and travelers is observed in the codices of the Merchant Houses, which stretch back centuries, so it would seem that the silt

runners spread quickly and in nearly every direction along the shores of the Sea of Silt. It is now common to encounter a colony of silt runners on nearly any of the shores of Athas’ great continental landmasses.

That silt runners survived and developed into a thriving race, when so many other New Races created by the Pristine Tower (if that is, indeed, the source of their genesis) failed to take hold, surely owes to the unique advantage of their incredible speed, and their ability to thrive in an environ, atop the silt itself, that is inaccessible to other races.

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Silt Runners thrive on the small islands that are just a few miles off the mainland. Long journeys across silt can only be accomplished if the silt runners can find solid ground upon which to rest and regain their

footing. Silt runners are adept at identifying currents in the silt that might temporarily expose solid ground, sand bars, or outcroppings to which they can run.

Their Lands

Silt runners can be found along nearly any inch of coastline, and they range into the deserts too, as they are also especially adept at sprinting across the sandy wastes and inland silt sinks. Though they often compete with giants and turtles for territory, they are seldom driven far from settlements of these much larger peoples. In fact, silt runners love to set up warrens nearby large settlements, because they make such rich territories for raiding.

Silt runners travel far and their settlements are rarely anything other than temporary. Though they may inhabit a warren for a period of years, the silt runners generally attach no great emotional significance to the location. Once a warren is abandoned, a tribe has no particular instinct to return to it, although other tribes may inhabit it out of convenience. Warrens are frequently destroyed, either by predators or by storms, and in these cases silt runners don't necessarily prioritize rebuilding in the same place. Silt runners do

not speak of homelands nor give their settlements lasting names. There are also no significant differences to speak of between different tribes or warrens of silt runners, or in fact even between those silt runners in far flung regions, suggesting that silt runners travel far and mix frequently.

Many tribes do, however, have special reverence and attachment to the silt itself. Their elders know of routes across the silt that are unknown to any other species; what is impassable silt to giants or to the navigators of the silt skimmers is often a pathway useful only to silt runners – a gauntlet of rocky outcroppings, sand bars just beneath the silt, tiny islands, or narrow stretches of land. For a silt runner, the depth of the silt in between these footrests matters little, all that matters is that these sort of features can allow silt runners to cross great expanses of silt via strange winding routes. Though flying species could track these routes, they would not be practical or efficient routes for them.

Silt Runner NPCs

Tikareet Tribe

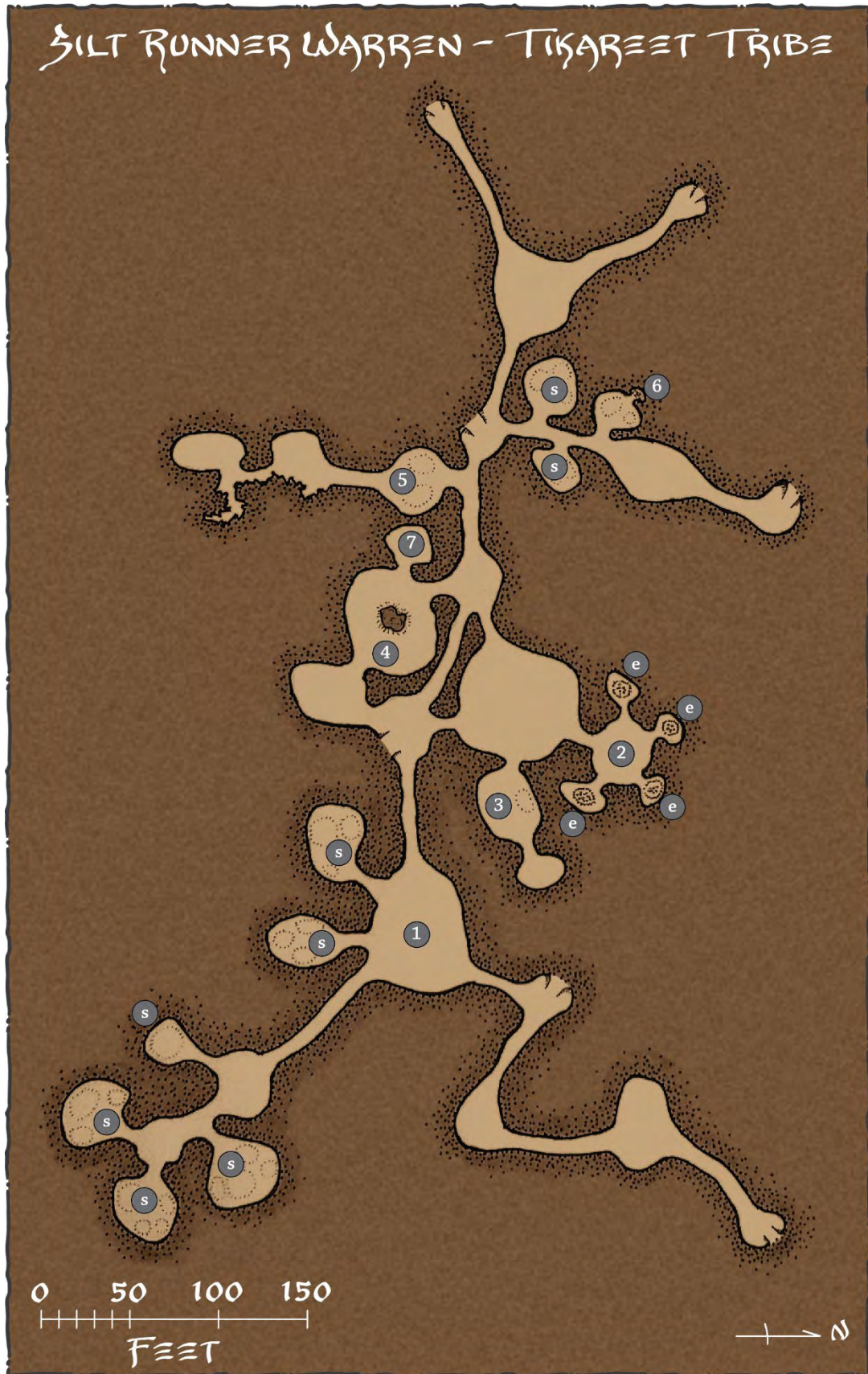
One of the largest and most vicious silt runner tribes is known as the Tikareet, which patrols the northern shores of the Bay of Maray, located south of Raam. They primarily occupy two large warrens, one on the eastern slopes of the Mastyrrial Mountains and another on an otherwise obscure rocky outcropping about a mile into the Silt Sea. When one lair is seriously threatened, the silt runners simply flee across the silt to the other lair to regroup. They have a ferocious rivalry with the Silt Stalkers elf tribe which also inhabits the region. Caravans stopping at Fort Firstwatch are frequent targets of the Chiindaw as well, who frequently raid convoys as they depart the safety of the fort.

The tikareet tribe has around 200 members at any one time, and is ruled by a ruthless chieftain named Chiindaw. Chiindaw claims to have fathered nearly 70 members of his tribe and insists that all of the tribe's

eggs be recognized as his own actual offspring, despite this not being possibly or actually true. The mainland warren of the Tikareet tribe is a typical silt runner warren in many ways, with numerous different entrances into a chaotic cluster of chambers and tunnels. The tunnels are mostly small and narrow – large enough that the silt runners can sprint through the tunnels at great speed while still small enough that most races need to squeeze their way through them slowly and carefully. Most of the entrances are located in sandy ground, but the tunnels and larger chambers are largely dug out of the firmer earth beneath.

1. **Mustering Chamber** – The mustering chamber is where the tribe typically gathers and verifies that they have the equipment they need before venturing out on raids. The entrances to the north of the muster chamber are the primary entrances and exits to the warren.

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2. **Chieftain's Chamber** – Chiindaw, chieftain of the Tikareet, maintains a personal sleeping chamber here, surrounded by four nesting chambers full of eggs that he insists he alone has fathered.
3. **Silt Priest's Chamber** – The tribe's silt priest has a chamber near the chieftain's. In the rear of the chamber is a small basin of holy silt for use in rituals.
4. **Water Chamber** – This is the deepest room in the warren, dug deep enough to reach the water table and create a pool of water in the center of the room. The warren is located at the foot of a mountain and the pool receives steady replenishment. This entire chamber sometimes floods after an all too infrequent rainfall, but the passages leading to this room slope down sharply and the waters rarely make it out of the chamber.
5. **Treasure Chambers** – The Tikareet tribe keeps a supply of food in these chambers, as well as any items not worth carrying as trophies. The entrance to the chamber is guarded at all times by a rotating group of guards.
6. **Secret Egg Nest** – A would-be rival to Chiindaw has secretly dug out a nest here, and supporters of the rival have begun to lay their eggs here in

defiance of the chieftain. If this chamber were to be discovered, chieftain Chiindaw would be enraged, likely smashing the eggs, falsely accusing the rival and their supporters, and exiling them.

7. **Kakali's Chamber** – The tribe's kakali maintains a small chamber here, close to both the tribe's water supply and treasure chambers.

The Tikareet's island warren is similar to their mainland warren in many ways - being, a maze of rounded chambers and winding passageways - as both warrens were constructed at around the same time by the same tribe. Island warrens often have longer passageways leading from their entrances to the chambers to minimize the effects of strong winds and wind-blown silt. The chieftain has chambers in both warrens, and both warrens will also contain a number of egg nests. The silt runner's penchant for laying eggs in every warren helps ensure the tribe's survival if a warren is destroyed but also makes it impossible for chieftains to maintain the control of the tribe's eggs that they desire.

NPCs

Chiindaw

Male 12th level Fighter

Notable Items: Flame tongue Gutaku +2

Chiindaw is the mighty chieftain of the Tikareet tribe, who stands a towering (for a silt runner) 4'8" tall and wields a most unusual weapon – a magical elven gutaku (whose twin blades ignite in flame when the blade's command word is spoken) that he stole when his clan successfully massacred a clan of the Silt Stalker elf tribe. Chiindaw's arms are decorated with what appear to be bracelets; close scrutiny will reveal they are in fact made of the braided hair of elves he's slain. The Silt Stalkers are eager for vengeance, and Chiindaw is eager for further victories against them - the hatred between the Tikareet tribe and the Silt Stalkers runs extremely deep.

Kinuri

Female 17th level Psionicist/Psion

Kinuri is perhaps the most accomplished of all silt runner psionicists, and only a few years of training away from being a potential entrant to the Order. This would mark possibly the first time a silt runner has ever achieved such advancement in psionics and presents a potential dilemma for the Order, which is sometimes unsure how to proceed when new races qualify for the first time. Kinuri is a specialist in psychoportive psionics and an exile from the Tikareet tribe. Kinuri is in fact one of Chiindaw's many daughters, and repulsed by the brutality of silt runner society and having no desire to bear eggs for any of the males of the tribe, used her psionics to flee. She still pays occasional visits to her sisters in the tribe, a fact that outrages Chiindaw, who knows he cannot stop Kinuri from coming or going as she pleases. Driven by a deep curiosity, Kinuri has explored some of the farthest reaches of the silt and is extremely knowledgeable when it comes to distant lands and obscure islands in the silt.

Kitalaroot

Female 9th level Silt Cleric

Notable Items: silt sap

Kitalaroot is a silt runner cleric who travels among different small silt runner tribes near the area where the Estuary of the Forked Tongue opens to the Silt Sea. She is obsessed with understanding the silt of this region, and she is keen to keep tabs on anyone traversing the area. Of primary concern to Kitalaroot are the giant tribes who make their homes on the five mountains at the mouth of the Estuary - Sandar, Mytilene, Heposta, Knosto and Lybdos - which form the Strait of Baza. She views these giants as the great threat to her people, and will consider aiding anyone who is an enemy of the giants.

Old Uyriit

Male Artisan; retired 7th level fighter

Notable Items: A cloak with magnificent dragon patterns

Description: In a village in the Silt Archipelago in the southern Sea of Silt, located southwest of the Valley of Dust and Fire and north east of the Great Salt Flat, there is a strange individual: a silt runner artisan, so old that he can no longer run across the silt, who makes a quiet living as a weaver. Uyriit crafts strange fronds into curtains with fanciful dragon patterns. He primarily makes these curtains to keep the silt from blowing into residences, using the same technique silt runners use at the entrances to their warrens. He has been a quiet and respectful resident of his village here for decades. The people of the Silt Archipelago say that when he first came to the village decades ago, Old Uyriit claimed to have lost his tribe while exploring the Silt Sea's Fabled City of Plenty, though he has not spoken of this in decades. Uyriit still knows the location of the Baxal Shoals, a dense maze of mudflats and mangrove clusters located north of the Silt Archipelago and on the edge of a giant storm of ash. Uyriit claims that in the aftermath of great silt storms, the winds north of the archipelago sometimes shift in such a way that the silt is briefly blown away and a person can travel by foot all the way into the Valley of Dust and Fire.

Significant locations

Silt runners frequently have lairs on islands near the shores of the Sea of Silt, sometimes housing as many as 200 inhabitants. They have also been known to make their lairs near the villages of giants, who consider them vermin.

Banks of Bitter Well

The outer sandbanks surrounding Bitter Well are home to one of the greatest concentrations of silt runner settlements anywhere on Athas. Dozens of silt runner warrens and lairs lie between the edges of Draj's fertile mudflats in the south and the narrow isthmus leading east to Ket.

Draji patrols prevent large incursions into the city's agricultural regions, and Bitter Well itself is sufficiently well guarded to prevent raids, but individual travelers and small caravans are frequently assaulted when traveling in this region. Despite some of the warrens being within sight of Bitter Well, the silt runners have yet to be ousted from the region. Many young silt runners dash from their home warrens to the dusty hills near Bitter Well as a kind of adolescent

game, taunting the humans from afar and basking in their impotence. Some say that House Tsalaxa doesn't mind the silt runners, or even covertly supports them, because the silt runners have no chance against the enormous grain argosies of Tsalaxa, preferring to wreak havoc on the caravans of smaller trading houses. Members of House Tsalaxa, of course, will not stand for such slander.

The Dragon's Palate

The shores along the Estuary of the Forked Tongue are riddled with the permanent lairs and squats of silt runner tribes and families, and the island within the mouth of the Estuary, the Dragon's Palate, is no exception. The giants who reside there have long since given up trying to drive the silt runners away, so the silt runners maintain a happy existence dining on the cast-offs from the giant's kills. Indeed, the caves nearest the giant settlements are considered to be the best place to care for elder silt runners who have lost their ability to run.

Myths and Legends

The Dawn Times

The story of the Dawn Times is a tale that silt runners elders often tell amid any sort of upheaval in a silt runner warren, when they feel the need to appeal to unity, such as following the death of a chieftain, the exile of a rival for egg breaking, or when a chieftain puts down a threat.

Long ago in the dawn times, when the silt was new and fresh, when the great runners of old ran proud and free, and before the slow ones began to trundle through on their great beasts and their shaky paths, there was a single great home for our people. A collection of islands that were near enough to each other and to the shores to dash from one to another in a matter of hours and visit all between the time of the day's first light and the deepening of shadows at the end of the day. In this time, we were a great tribe - as numerous as all the tribes today but dwelling in one place together. Though the people roamed far and free, they would all gather and return to this homeland to find mates, share stories, and lay eggs in great communal clutches to be watched over by the silt priests and kakali of old. In this time, there was no need for war chieftains as there was no war among the people and it was exceedingly easy to raid the slow ones, for they could not follow us onto the silt and to back our homes.

It was in this time that a pair of brothers were born of unusually large and finely colored eggs: Umvoork and Lilitoolon. The brothers fought incessantly from the time of their emergence into the world, ever jealous of each other and always seeking to get the upper hand, for both hungred for the adoration of their brethren. At first, the brothers were encouraged and admired, for they were filled with the energy and glory of the sun shining through a dust storm and they seemed to spur each other on to greater heights of accomplishment with their competition: Umvoork led the people on great and daring raids into the heart of their cities; Lilitoolin slayed the great silt horror that plagued the runners' lands. In their competition, they inspired many other runners to follow them, leading them to greater glories and filling the elders with pride.

But soon a dampness began to creep into the lungs of our people. Not every young and eager runner was deemed good enough to join these two great leaders on their raids or share in their camps. And there were vanishingly few new challenges left with which one brother might prove their superiority over the other. So their competition turned inward, toward their legacies - now the brothers sought to outdo one another in how many females they could charm and how many eggs they could claim as their own.

Those who were left out began to scatter, taking females with them and hiding their eggs on small islands and hidden bits of shore far from the homeland of our people, only to return and find the eggs cracked and broken. "It must be Umvoork" some whispered, "he is jealous of my clutch and would claim all the eggs of our people as his own." "It must be Lilitoolon" others claimed, "he has been driven mad in his quest to defeat his brother - he thinks Umvoork is hiding females and eggs to get the upper hand."

When disaster struck and Umvoork was found dead amidst a pile of broken eggs, it became clear to all that Lilitoolon had indeed been driven mad with jealousy. He was cast out from the islands of the homeland and our people began to scatter. Since that day, it has only been under the blessings of a silt priest and the watch of a truly great war chief that our eggs remain safe, for there are many jealous and petty egg breakers who would seek to raise their own glory by destroying the rightful glory of others.

The Geography of the Silt

When silt runners gather, they are far more interested in telling tales of legendary geography than history. Silt runners are fanatically interested in the contours of the coastlines and the arrangement of islands, and they are proud that their priests know many things about the Sea of Silt that are unknown to any other peoples. They know the locations of the permanent islands, and of the fleeting mudflats. They know the paths trod by giants and where they live, but they know other routes as well, many of which are only capable of being followed by fliers or by those able to run across the silt.

A number of popular geographic legends circulate widely among silt runners:

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- Silt priests often recount the tale of the Fabled City of Plenty, mocking the Tablelanders for believing such a thing could be possible. Instead, the priests insist, there is only a place of ash and death in the very heart of the Sea of Silt, ruled over by the powerful and brutal being in all the world - the Dragon.
- It is said that far to the south, the silt itself turns black. Though it is black, the silt is the same - or so the tales say - but the shores along this black silt sea are incredibly deadly.
- A common tale among silt runners is that an entire other continent lies to the east of the Sea of Silt, sprawling as far north and as far south as the landmass that hosts the Tablelands. They claim that there is no passage between these two great masses that can be undertaken on foot by any of the other races; only the silt runners, flyers, and giants (and perhaps silt vessels, they grudgingly concede) can travel between these two great lands.
- Among the silt runners, there are legends told by the Silt priests that the Sea of Silt is a relatively minor and tame silt sea in the grand scheme of things. The Silt priests claim that there are much greater bodies of silt in the world, where the storms are 10 times as vicious and where the silt is so wide that no silt runner, no giant, no vessel, and no flier has ever found land on the other side.
- Silt runner myths speak of a great permanent storm in the open silt, a never-ending hurricane of dust, lightning and even rain that crawls along at just a few miles a day. In its wake, new mudflats and even lakes form, though as the storm moves further away, these mudflats are gradually reclaimed by the silt. Entire tribes of people are said to live in the wake of this storm, migrating from mudflat to mudflat to keep pace with it.
- Some silt runners tell a legend about the so-called "God in the Dust", whom they say is the mother of all silt spawn and silt horrors, that it has thousands of tentacles which may stretch for miles. Just as the dragon is the ultimate predator of the surface, this great beast is the master below the silt, they say.

On the Relation of Species

There are many - amongst those given to studying the various species of Athas and pondering their origins - who surmise that the ssurrans and silt runners (and possibly the dray, though those that are aware of this species are still very few) are all related in some way, perhaps having sprang from a common ancestor some time in the past. Theories about which species might have been the ancestral species, whether it be ssurrans, silt runner, dray, or even some other unknown people, abound.

A small fraction of those living in the so called "Forgotten North" - the ssurrans who know of the Last Sea and its surviving lizardfolk population, those who live around Saragar and its environs, and the lizardfolk themselves - have similar ideas, drawing obvious and inevitable comparisons between the lizardfolk and the ssurrans to theorize that lizardfolk might be the direct ancestors of the ssurrans somehow (and perhaps even of other similarly-build reptilian races, such as the silt runners).

The Shadow King himself - though to a limited extent - has pondered such questions. Upon first hearing of dray, Nibenay surmised that dray, ssurrans, and silt runners were mutated descendants of the lizardfolk who were targeted during the Cleansing Wars. Nibenay does not believe that the dray, ssurrans, and silt runners existed during the Green Age, instead theorizing that they may be offshoot species that arose during the many centuries of conflict. The Shadow King believes that when Keltis, the Lizardman Executioner, used his magics to determine if he'd completed his task, he failed to account for the evolution of these strange new creatures. Nibenay has yet to fully investigate this theory, but he has attempted his own series of divinations that have left him convinced that Keltis in fact failed at his mission; he has yet to determine what to do about this.

Adventure Hooks

- Unusually large hordes of silt runners are being reported around the Road of Fire in the northern Sea of Silt. House M'ke ships traveling to and from their Charvazz outpost have suffered increasingly savage attacks, and the House believes the outpost may be in danger of being overrun. Investigation will reveal that the silt runners are coming from northeast of the Road of Fire, and are traveling via a chain of far-flung (and temporary) mudflats that connects all the way to the far side of the Sea of Silt. For a short time, it might be possible to cross the silt by moving from mudflat to mudflat via silt ship and discover what, if anything, lies to the east beyond the Silt Sea. Of course, whatever is on the other side of the silt is causing hordes of silt runners to flee...
- A lone elf psionist, who wanders the wastes with no companions aside from his hounds, approaches the PCs on the road near Draj. He introduces himself as Gib Aklem and pleads for their assistance; a tribe of silt runners has repeatedly attacked him and even captured one of his beloved dogs. He is devastated by the loss of his companion, but is especially concerned because the dog wore a psionic crystal around its neck. He fears that the crystal has now fallen into the hands of the wicked psionist who leads his fellow silt runners. If PCs attempt to confront the silt runners, they will likely fail to capture the psionist. Those silt runners they do capture, however, will tell a different story – that Gib Aklem is attempting to use the silt runners to sprint to the Plain of Singing Skulls and recover a dangerous psionic artifact. The elven psionist has already attempted to bully them into complying, and is now trying to psychically dominate the silt runners, but it is a reckless quest, and the silt runners' lives will be forfeit if it fails. The silt runner psionist (who does possess a crystal, but not one stolen from Gib Aklem) has so far thwarted the attempts of the far more powerful elf, but the tribe is growing weaker from Gib Aklem's relentlessly hunting them, and he may soon succeed in his quest.
- A particularly violent and powerful tribe of giants from the mountainous island of Lybdos - located at the mouth of the Estuary of the Forked Tongue - have destroyed a House Wavir silt skimmer and stolen its entire cargo, including an item of immense value. Silt farers have always attempted to avoid this tribe, but this means they have little insight into the layout of the giant's settlement and little idea of how to recover the cargo from the violent giants. However, silt runners also inhabit the island, and they have no love for the giants - who treat them as vermin. Can the island's silt runners be persuaded to help recover the cargo?



Secrets of the Ssurrans

Design Notes: First introduced in *Terrors Beyond Tyr* (*Dark Sun Monstrous Compendium II*), the ssurran are presented as the most heat-loving of the reptilian peoples, at home in the scorching wastes and volcanic plains. They are perhaps the clearest example in the official materials of why reptiles would be so at home on Athas, perhaps even the natural masters of such a world. Though originally presented as tribal savages, the *Expanded and Revised Dark Sun Campaign Setting* (2nd boxed set) established that they also maintain a significant village – Trade Nest – one of the largest non-human settlements.

Ssurrans have unclear links to lizardmen, but a strikingly similar appearance, and thus the potential for parallels are obvious. We leave the question of their origins unresolved: are they an offshoot of the lizardmen? Were they pursued in the *Cleansing Wars* as lizardmen but survived and

developed their own identity? Are they a different race entirely? The ultimate answers are left to the DM.

We decided to play into why these creatures would congregate around volcanoes, and why they would travel so far away from them. The result became a rather interesting take on a society revolving around a particular kind of pilgrimage.

Inspiration for their physical appearance was drawn from gila monsters, monitor lizards, horned lizards, and komodo dragons. The three subspecies of ssurrans were inspired by artwork of the species in different editions of *Dark Sun*: the ssurran art in *Second Edition* books inspired the scorched-scale ssurran, while the sandscale ssurrans resemble the ssurrans in *Fourth Edition* and the obsidian-claw ssurran have the distinctive black claws of ssurrans in *Fifth Edition* art.

History

Like so many things on Athas, the origins of the ssurrans are a mystery, with some ssurran legends suggesting an underground origin and holding that their progenitors were hatched from the World Egg, which they equate with Athas herself. According to the legends, the ssurrans slept for eons untold within the warm darkness until they were ready to hatch. The Egg then cracked and as the first ssurrans came forth, they found a world perfectly suited for their needs waiting for them to claim its scorching surface.

Some scholars in Saragar have theorized that the ssurrans are a possible offshoot of the ancient lizardfolk. Perhaps, just as some lizardfolk hid from their would-be executioner in Marnita, others altered themselves, exchanging their amphibious natures for a

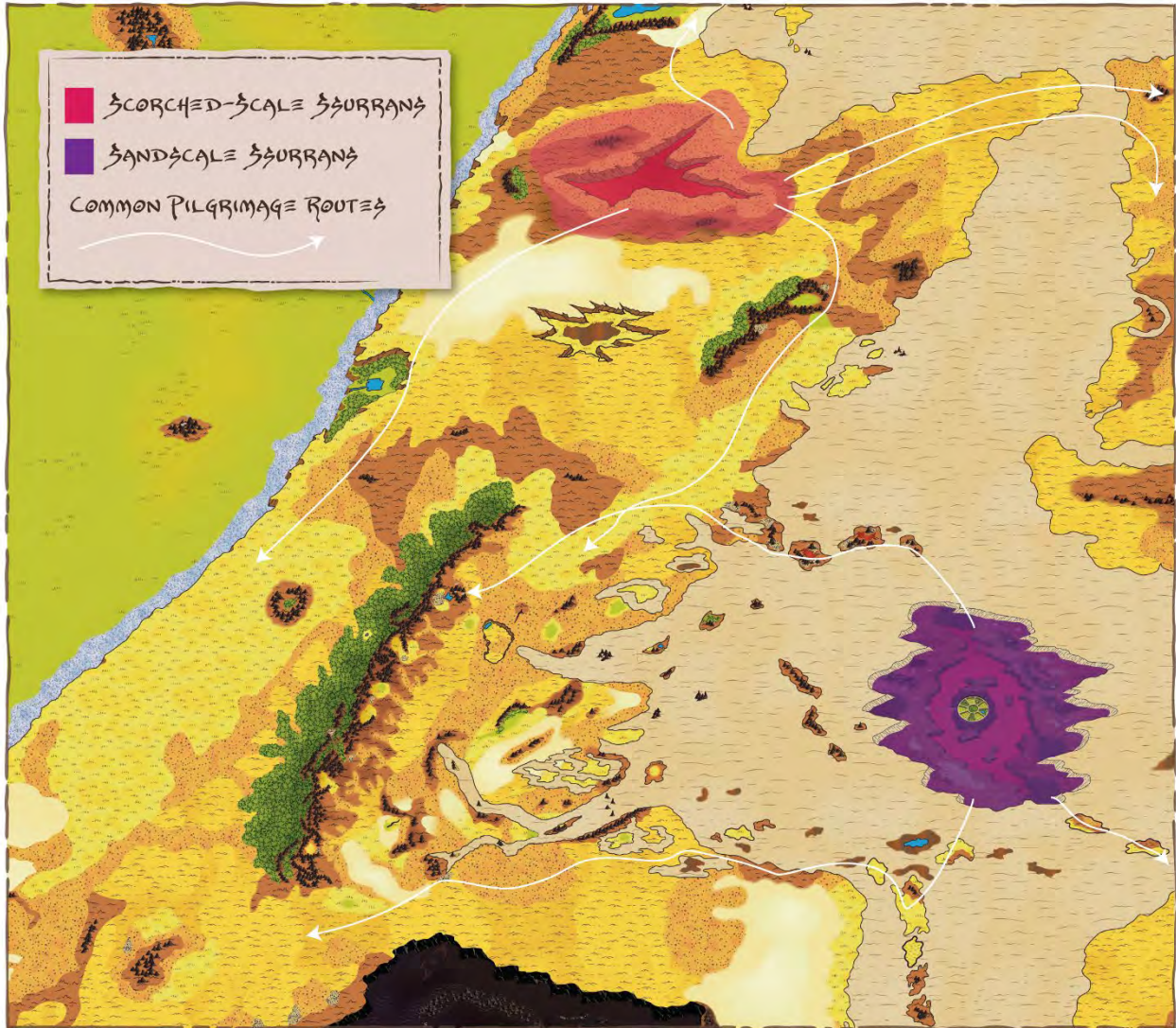
measure of protection from excessive heat - through whatever means - in order to flee into the world's growing deserts. There, hardly touched by the heat of the crimson sun, they were unrecognizable to their enemies.

Scholars to the south in the Tablelands would likely disagree, as they seem to think there is some distant connection between the ssurrans and silt runners, pointing to the Pristine Tower as the possible origin of the two races.

Whatever the truth may be, what is believed by all is that the ssurrans are a newer race, only having emerged near the end of – or long after – the *Cleansing Wars*.

Their Lands

SSURRAN TRIBAL HOMELANDS AND PILGRIMAGE ROUTES



Scorched-scale (2e ssurrans)

The scorched-scale ssurrans are centered around the Lava Gorge and Trade Nest, meaning that this is where they primarily return to lay eggs and where they tend to return after periods of wandering. They are the ssurrans most commonly encountered in the Tyr region.

SandScale (4e ssurrans)

These ssurrans can mostly be found in the volcanic lands of the Sea of Silt, such as the islands of the Road of Fire and the Valley of Dust and Fire, although some have established a small presence in the Smoking Crown mountains near Urik. When not wandering, they spend much of their time in underground burrows located in high elevations and rough terrain - such as treacherous mountains and rugged hills -

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which is much of the reason why the Tyr Region is largely unaware of them.

It is unknown if any ssurrans survived the creation of the Cerulean Storm or still inhabit the Valley of Dust and Fire, but some ssurran elders insist they do – *“Wherever there is fire from the earth, the Surrans will thrive.”*

Obsidian-claw (5e ssurran)

The obsidian-claw ssurrans are said to have their homeland in one of the most remote and inhospitable

places on all Athas - the Cauldron, a gigantic open volcanic sea that is surrounded by endless plains of basalt. This savage volcanic region is rumored to lie in the far eastern reaches of the lands far beyond the Sea of Silt. The obsidian-claws are the most common type of ssurran across the Sea of Silt, but are uncommon near the Tablelands. As they wander increasingly far and wide, however, some obsidian-claw tribes have found their way to the Tablelands. Most humans are oblivious to the significance of such tribes, but scorched-scale and sandscale ssurran are keenly interested in the emergence of this intriguing far eastern subspecies.

Ssurran NPCs

Ssuss'ess

Male 11th level Trader

Notable items: Map of the north

Ssuss'ess is the overchief of the village of Trade Nest, and as such is the primary political leader of the Trade Nest ssurran people. Ssuss'ess is well over 100 years old, and ascended to his position through years of fair-mindedness between different tribes of ssurran and by being a passionate defender of ssurran civilization. Ssuss'ess is prone to giving bombastic speeches about the sophistication of his people, which appeals to those ssurrans who sometimes resent how other species treat them all as savages. Ssurran are not natural cartographers, but Ssuss'ess has in his possession one of the most detailed “maps” of the north. It is, however, inscrutable to others - it is not drawn to any sort of scale but rather is a diagram of features and landmarks that one must pass to reach certain locations. Ssurran have no written language and thus Ssuss'ess has used a series of symbols and markings of his own invention to indicate distances and directions that ssurrans have traveled to reach different places. He guards the map quite closely, but has shown it to ssurran elders to explain unfamiliar routes (even on this, his personal map, he has provided no information about the path to Saragar).

Ithissa Sandwalker

Female 14th level Trader

Notable items: Green Age steel sword

Ithissa Sandwalker is one of Ssuss'ess's many children and is the child who has been entrusted to carry out the most important mission of Trade Nest – to lead a secretive expedition to the so-called “Last Sea”. She is thus one of the few people on Athas who know of Saragar's existence, and one of an even smaller number who know the location of the ssurrans' trading post. Though Ithissa would never reveal the secret of Saragar, she has ambitions of her own and believes that even greater trade relations (and thus greater wealth, prosperity, and respect for her people) are possible. This is Ssuss'ess's one concern with his daughter's leadership of the mission – might she push the counterparties from Saragar too far? Ithissa has an unusual pattern of red and sandy-brown scales, one that male ssurrans find alluring. She uses the name Sandwalker among non-ssurran, a reference to both the pattern of her scales and to the fact that she is a skilled navigator through sandy wastes. Ithissa possesses an immaculately crafted steel sword from the Green Age, which she keeps in an ornate sheath. Ssuss'ess is somewhat concerned about conspicuously displaying an item from Saragar, but Ithissa contends that she keeps the sword sheathed and that she could have obtained such an ornate sword from any number of places, so its existence exposes no secrets.

Thuuuss

Male 9th level paraelemental Magma cleric

Notable item: Fire vermilion amulet

All ssurrans love heat, but then there is Thuuuss, whose passion for warmth is remarked upon even among other ssurrans. Thuuuss is both unusually solitary and gregarious for a ssurran, and some say he was the lone survivor of a tribe that died in a far-away volcanic eruption. He travels alone to volcanic

wastelands, in the company of no tribe, just for the thrill of the heat. Periodically, he travels to Trade Nest and attracts an audience by dancing in fountains of lava, as his training as a magma cleric allows him to endure temperatures that many ssurrans can only imagine. Thuuuss loves to regale fellow ssurrans with tales of extreme heat, and his somewhat-deranged passion for heat and gregarious nature means that he can easily be persuaded to accompany expeditions to the hottest corners of Athas; of course, once there, it is not easy to persuade him to leave.

Significant locations

Trade Nest

Only about 10 miles from the northeastern extent of the Lava Gorge – close enough to the gorge that the temperature is nearly always as hot as a kiln – sits the village of Trade Nest.

With a population of at least 1,500 ssurrans, Trade Nest is the largest known settlement of the primarily nomadic ssurran people. The village functions as a large trading post and meeting place for the ssurran tribes that live north of the Tyr Region. The greatest gatherings of ssurrans occur around the times of the Highest and Lowest Sun - in the weeks around the solstices, the population in and around Trade Nest swells by thousands, and tribes hold great feasts. Throughout the gatherings, there are also great fires set, burning the discarded remnants of the feasts. The ssurran festivals are both celebratory and practical – the great gathering means a remarkable amount of goods enter the city.

The outskirts of the village are ringed by camp sites that are constantly turning over. Ssurran tribes both large and small frequently travel for months or years at a time, gathering items of interest and returning to Trade Nest to trade; many stay for only a week or two before venturing back off. A deep trench, nearly 20 feet deep and 50 feet across, separates these campsites from the inner village, with a number of causeways crossing the trench. It is said that in moments of attack, Magma clerics among the ssurrans have been known to flood the trench with molten lava. The trench is also used as a refuse pit for animal carcasses, creating a smell the ssurrans love but most others find distasteful, which are periodically burned en masse during large celebrations.

In the village, a number of larger ssurran tribes maintain permanent structures or compounds, where they periodically gather for rituals, rest, or celebrations, and some of these compounds are very well-guarded even when most of the tribe departs for their journeys. A number of distinct clusters – neighborhoods of tribes devoted to a common purpose – have developed over the years.

While the normally itinerant ssurrans are not widely known for their architecture, it certainly seems that in Trade Nest they have made an effort. Most of the buildings in Trade Nest are well-constructed but unusually short. Although ssurrans can be nearly 6 feet tall, they rarely construct buildings any higher than 6 feet. The ssurrans view this as being practical with their construction materials – why gather all the stone for an 8-foot or 10-foot ceiling when 6-feet will do? – but the effect is unsettling for visitors from the Tablelands where buildings are almost always taller. Though half-giants are used to squatting, elves, taller muls, and humans are not and often find the experience irritating. This lack of multiple-floor buildings also means that the village sprawls considerably. Most of the structures are shops, stalls, depots, workshops, or food vendors, all humming with activity nearly any time of the day or night.

1. **Ancient Medina** - The center of the village is an ancient medina - a walled neighborhood of weather-beaten but well-maintained sandstone buildings. The center of the medina stands beneath a vaulted ceiling, and all the structures - including the large open square - function as a

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2. bustling bazaar. Near the center of the medina is a most unusual fountain – maintained by elemental magic – constantly flowing with churning magma. The fountain keeps the air inside the entire medina uncomfortably warm for nearly anyone but the ssurrans.

3. **Outskirts** – The outskirts of the village are ringed by campsites that are constantly turning over as groups come and go. Ssurran tribes both large and small frequently travel for months or years at a time, gathering items of interest and returning to Trade Nest to trade; many stay for only a week or two before venturing back off.

To the east of the village can also be found the **Stockyards**, which host large pens for animals from the nearby scrub plains. The animals are brought in to satisfy the carnivorous ssurrans' nearly insatiable appetite for meat.

4. **Butcher Cluster** – This cluster is devoted to processing meat (the ssurran at Trade Nest are adept at salting, sun-drying, and fermenting meats for preservation). Though they are carnivores, ssurrans of Trade Nest consider their palates to be sophisticated, and so will prepare their meats with seasonings, oils, or other foodstuffs - all of which are also available here, making the sector more than just butcher shops.

5. **Armory Cluster** – Across the main thoroughfare from the Butcher Cluster and just inside the gate from the stockyards is the Armory Cluster. Many animal byproducts from the butchering process are sent to the armory cluster, where the ssurran repurpose carapaces, shells, and carcasses into armor. The craftsmen here are known for being able to work with the hides and leathers from nearly any creature on Athas, including other ssurrans.

6. **Weaponsmithing Cluster** – The Weaponsmithing Cluster lies to the north of the Butcher's Cluster. Bones that remain after butchering are sent to the weaponsmiths here, most of whom specialize in the production of bone weapons. There is a single smithy here – fueled by animal waste – where the ssurrans can do metal working when they are able to procure scraps of iron or bronze.

7. **Shanty Town** – To the southwest of Trade Nest, the path towards the Lava Gorge is lined with a number of encampments that have become a semi-permanent shanty town. Visiting ssurrans who have no property within the trenches of Trade Nest typically set up temporary accommodations here.

8. **Traveler's Cluster** – Non-ssurrans are welcome to visit Trade Nest and may find lodging in the Travelers' Cluster, where there is a small complex of inns and taverns that cater to outsiders. A small community of expatriates, a mix of very eccentric humans, half-elves, muls, nikaal, pterrans, turtles, and even a few thri-kreen live here more or less permanently, serving a steady stream of visitors who cycle through the village. This is the only place in the Trade Nest to find a meal composed of anything other than meat.

9. **The Deep Well** - Despite their staggering ability to endure high temperatures, ssurrans do need to drink water, and several wells are present throughout the village. The water is both unpleasantly warm and has a sulfuric aftertaste (it is drawn from a series of geothermal springs that form along the periphery of the Lava Gorge's volcanic activity), but it is perfectly potable. The water is free for ssurrans; other visitors to the village can draw water for a small fee.

The Deep Well in the middle of town is the deepest reaching and the most bountiful, serving as the primary well and one of the major gathering places outside the medina.

10. **Vermillion Plaza** – Throughout the town are also a number of small plazas with large orbs of fire vermilion mounted atop pillars. Fire vermilion is a type of stone mined from the area around Lava Gorge that continues to radiate heat for years after being mined; the ssurrans love this heat and will gather around it at night to converse.

Near the Vermillion Plaza is the **Antiquities Cluster**. The most unusual and ancient items for sale in Trade Nest ultimately find their way to market here. Wondrous items, sometimes thousands of years old, are kept under heavy guard here and sold for eye-watering prices.

Myths and Legends

The Surviving Sea

Vague legends circulate widely among the ssurrans about a great sea that has somehow survived on Athas, one that is home to a great city inhabited by a line of strange and ancient humans that are disconnected from and unaware of the humans of the Tablelands. Some ssurrans even say that this ancient sea is full of "lizardfolk" - ssurrans-like creatures that live beneath the waters of this sea. Though many who hear this tale - including many ssurrans themselves - dismiss this as just a strange legend, some of the ssurrans who visit Trade Nest around the High and Low Sun festivals have noted that, for some reason, toward the end of the festival, unusual items begin to circulate - often strange antiques and metal weapons. This has led to some speculation that there may be something to these tales.

The true source of these legends is one of the most closely held secrets of the ssurrans: around the beginning of the festivals, a largely secret expedition departs Trade Nest for an unmarked meeting spot, more than 50 miles across the sandy wastes, to which a group of traders from Saragar venture forth from their valley twice a year. This is the only known interaction between Saragar and the rest of the world; overchief Ssuss'ess recognizes the value of this relationship and the specifics of it are a very closely guarded secret. He knows not only that the wares available from Saragar are unlike those anywhere else in the world, but also that the traders from the so-called Last Sea are skittish, and that if they are exposed, they may never emerge to trade again. Ssuss'ess entrusts no one but his daughter Ithissa with this mission.

Though the precise details of the trade mission are a closely held secret, ssurrans are somewhat loose-lipped, and so some of the information gleaned from these visits has filtered into the ssurrans community over time.

Legends of the Lava

Naturally resilient when it comes to extremes of heat, the ssurrans are one of the few peoples of Athas with knowledge of the world's most scorching locations, and are capable of serving as guides in these regions. If anyone shows an interest, ssurrans will regale listeners with tales of the Lava Gorge and its environs: the ruins of Magehome, the forgotten outposts of the dwarven kingdom of Hogalay, or the gnomish settlements of Udreegas.

They also proudly report that a number of families of ssurrans live in the Valley of Dust and Fire, isolated as it is, and know its geography better than any of the human tribes of the Valley. The ssurrans there have a great deal of experience with the lava, knowing how to predict when black crust will form over it and whether this crust is safe to walk upon. The conditions are not always right for finding pathways onto the lava sea, but when they are, the ssurrans know how to follow them. Ssurrans can also be found near the volcanoes of the Road of Fire. Despite these ssurrans being isolated in nearly impossible to reach areas, many far away ssurrans have heard tales of great volcanoes and an entire sea of lava in the middle of the sea of silt. One proposed route to these remote locations is via long hollow tubes that run deep beneath the silt that most species would consider far too hot and dangerous to explore.

In recent years, many ssurrans have grown excited by tales they've heard from ssurrans of the lands far to the east of the Sea of Silt. To hear these eastern ssurrans tell it, they have explored the changing geography of one of the most extreme environments of all Athas for many King's Ages - a region known as the Cauldron. Beyond endless miles of basalt plains, enormous and active shield volcanoes - with names like Shallowfire, Firedeep, Blackshore, and Firewake - continuously emit rivers of ever-shifting lava that flow into a giant basin of fused glass (all that remains of the melted sands), before eventually joining together in an enormous cauldron of with a lake of roiling lava at its center; or so the ssurrans say.

Ssurrans & the Stars

"This isn't going well" reflected Faran as he fought to keep the ship from breaking up in the atmosphere. The huge payment of gold to act as the helmsman for this nameless bloatfly-ship had seemed an easy assignment at the time: fly the incubator ship to a sphere at the arse end of nowhere, spend a few months orbiting the local sun, and deliver a ship with newly hatched lizardfolk back to civilization. Piece of cake.

Only the sphere he'd flown to had gone to hell in a handbasket. First the sun had abruptly changed, growing from an ordinary sized, yellow fire body, to a huge temperamental blood-red orb that had already begun to sear the innermost world of the sphere. Despite being a skilled helmsman, Faran had barely managed to maneuver the bloatfly incubator ship into a safe orbit away from the newly engorged star.

In his initial contacts with natives of this sphere, he'd learned that the locals from the major inhabited world had decided to slaughter each other in the name of someone called the Warbringer. Not content with devastating their own world, they'd sent out a fleet to carry the war to wildspace.

A war which seemed likely to end Faran and his commission prematurely - a massive ship, a variation on the pyramid-ship from the looks of it, had chased the Bloatfly all the way from the sun to the fourth world, the one that had sent up the marauding vessels in the first place.

CRUNCH Another direct hit tore the remaining maneuvering vane from the hull, sending the ship into a

dizzying spin. Most of his lizardfolk employers were already dead, and the few remaining were desperately trying to jettison egg tubes in such a way as to ensure a soft landing for their precious cargo.

Another impact shook the ship and this time the spin became a death spiral. Faran had barely any control over the ship anymore. Using all his skill, he managed to settle the ship into a parabolic arc, scalyfolk and egg tubes spilling from the hull as he did so.

Aiming for a stretch of barren ground on the main continent, the ship tumbled north across the equator, a fiery trail burning the sky behind it. The ground yawned hungrily in Faran's helm-vision before the impact came. The forward sections of the ship buckled and pancaked as they impacted the ground.

And then, abruptly the ship lurched forward again as it punched through a thin shell of rock into a sinkhole cavern. The shape of the red hot hull merged into the lambent glow of magma vents along the cave floor.

Faran knew the ship's second collision wouldn't be as easy as the first. He had just enough time to think "At least the eggs will probably survive" before the ship hit. Faran, the Helm, and the entire bridge ceased to exist in an instant.

Amid the wreckage littering the cave floor lay thousands of eggs. Cushioned by their watery tanks, many had miraculously survived even when all others on the incubator ship had perished. Over the course of several days, first one egg, then many more started to hatch.

Adventure Hooks

- House Shom has come into possession of an unusual psionic artifact. Agents of the Shadow King have learned of the item and the Shadow King himself has taken an interest because the item appears to have been created recently, but with technology and materials that were thought lost to the Green Age. House Shom does not itself know the true origin of the item, and hires the PCs to investigate, while a rival party of Nibenese templars is attempting to track the item to its source as well. Investigation will reveal that Shom acquired the item from House Azeth, who acquired the item from an elf tribe, who acquired it from one of the Bandit States, who acquired the item from some ssurrans, who purchased it in Trade Nest. Can the PCs uncover that the ssurrans acquired the item from Saragar? Can they (and should they?) stop the Shadow King (or House Shom for that matter) from learning that natives of Saragar secretly trade with the ssurrans of the north?
- A party knowledgeable about the Cleansing Wars, and that has become allies of Oronis, might be quite intrigued to hear a loose-lipped ssurran let slip that he has encountered a tribe of "lizardfolk" who live underwater at a remote oasis. Could this be the legendary lizardfolk that were long presumed extinct, murdered at the hands of Keltis (which they may already know, or may learn for the first time, is known now as Oronis), who has

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spent centuries seeking redemption for his crimes? The ssurran is willing to guide the PCs to the oasis only to find the entire oasis has been occupied by an enormous gith army that is encamped there, surrounding the oasis (and presumably any “lizardfolk” present) on all sides. Their only ally in the region powerful enough to rescue these lizardfolk would be Oronis himself, but if the lizardfolk discover who he is, he will be the last person on Athas from whom they’d accept help.

- An ancient ruin has been recently discovered by a tribe of obsidian-claw ssurrans and is threatened

by the shifting lava flows of the great Cauldron. The ruin has been rendered almost totally inaccessible and the rapidly shifting flows threaten to destroy it in a matter of weeks. In their excavations of the ruin, the ssurrans have uncovered a sizable library – one that is far too large to retrieve in its entirety – and are in need of assistance from sages who can determine if any of the works are worth saving, since none of the ssurrans know how to read the ancient texts. If they can be read, it turns out some of them are indeed quite invaluable.



Secrets of the Lizardfolk

Design Notes: *The aquatic lizardman was introduced in 1975's Greyhawk supplement and also included in the original 1977 Monster Manual. It is thus a classic D&D monster that was also made a player character race in 1993's Complete Book of Humanoids. By the time the Dark Sun setting was created, it was a natural candidate for a race that must have existed in the past, only to have been eliminated in the Cleansing Wars. The Expanded and Revised Dark Sun Campaign Setting (2nd boxed set) took this idea and ran with it – establishing that lizardmen were once one of Athas's major races and were thought to have been exterminated by Keltis, the Lizardman Executioner (who has since become the avangion Oronis, sorcerer king of Kurn). In fact, however, a small colony of lizardmen survived as further detailed in Mind Lords of the Last Sea – quite a story!*

So the lizardmen (now referred to as lizardfolk) survived, but how would you make one a PC if the only surviving population lives in the bottom of a forgotten sea? One option is suggested in the book Mind Lords of the Last Sea but never fleshed out. The psionic defenses that protected the Last Sea

over the millennia have begun to fail, and some people have begun to slip in, so it's possible some lizardfolk have slipped out. It's also possible that other isolated pockets of lizardfolk somehow survived the Cleansing Wars.

The version of the lizardfolk detailed in this book is an idea for how lizardfolk might exist outside of Marnita, the Last Sea. Those outside the safety of the sea are a people pushed to the brink of extinction, keenly aware that they were ruthlessly hunted, and always vigilant against the risk that their people could be pushed beyond that brink. This desperate fear of extinction may lead to a situation when many lizardfolk PCs are taught little of their heritage, for those who have left the Last Sea wouldn't want to expose their relatives' secrets. This would be one reason that outside of Marnita perhaps only elders – and perhaps not even them! – know the secrets of their people's survival.

(Of course, DMs may decide this isn't a suitable PC option for their campaign. Athas is a tough world for an aquatic race.)

History

The lizardfolk (or lizardmen) were a once proud and mighty people that had a mighty aquatic civilization in the Green Age, with cities and entire nations in the great rivers, shining seas, and verdant shores of Athas. Then came the Cleansing Wars, where the lizardfolk were hunted ruthlessly by one of Rajaan's most brutal champions – Keltis, known to this day in the lizardfolk oral traditions only as The Executioner.

Keltis was both merciless and relentless: no treachery was spared in his quest to eradicate the lizardfolk. While some champions became preoccupied and distracted with building their own kingdoms and lost focus on their goals, Keltis never strayed from pursuing his goal. In the 162 King's Age, over 2100 years ago, he believed that he had finally succeeded. He cast powerful scrying *spells* to search the entire planet for surviving lizardfolk.

Some legends even say that it was Keltis who boiled away the seas in order to destroy the habitat of the lizardfolk. Deep beneath the silt today, the ruins of once-great cities like Kotharix, Jaxalkar and Vyralkket have been scoured away by millennia of swirling

pearly dust, ripping across the magnificent edifices of the lizardfolk's architecture like sandpaper.

Keltis and his armies even breached the defenses of Saragar, the domain of the Mind Lords. The Mind Lords welcomed Keltis to their palace – the last time any Champion or sorcerer-king openly visited the Last Sea – on the condition that he not cast magic in their domain. They led Keltis to the ruins of a lizardfolk village and told him the creatures had died out, no longer capable of surviving beneath the hot dying sun. He did not simply take their word for it; Keltis broke his vow and cast a powerful defiling spell, ravaging the land to search for any evidence of living lizardfolk. His spell found nothing, so he departed. The Mind Lords resolved to never again allow a breach of this magnitude.

Keltis' spell was correct. There were no living lizardfolk in Marnita because the Mind Lords had placed them in a state of suspended animation: they were not living, but neither were they dead.

The lizardfolk awakened and learned that they had a way to survive Keltis' scrying magic by placing

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themselves in a state of suspended animation so that they were undetectable to his spells. Some emissaries attempted to escape the valley of the Mind Lords, hoping that they could find members of their people and teach them the trick to survival. It is unknown if any of these emissaries succeeded, but if they did, it raises the possibility of small tribes of lizardfolk who spent the better part of centuries in hiding in suspended animation.

In recent centuries, the borders of Saragar have begun to fail. Just as the guardians now sometimes fail to keep intruders out, they sometimes fail to keep the residents of Marnita inside the valley.

None can say how many lizardfolk live outside the Last Sea, for those that survive form extremely secretive tribes. They have developed a social structure - where isolated families seek each other out to exchange members and strengthen their bloodlines - that may allow small numbers of their people to survive for centuries, but whether there are dozens of tribes, or there are merely dozens of lizardfolk, none know for certain. If one tribe of lizardfolk encounters another, they will exchange mates and then both strike out in new directions, never telling the other where they intend to go. All tribes make sure to never know anything about the whereabouts of other tribes. If they know of the Last Sea, they have often taken precautions so that their knowledge of the Last Sea would be wiped from their minds if they were ever to be captured and interrogated.

The lizardfolk do not know for sure, but most believe they are still being hunted. The forces that pushed them to the brink of extinction still exist in the world. Perhaps, they fear, The Executioner still lives and would inexorably seek to complete his quest if he ever learned he had not finished the job. A force of such incredible evil, lizardfolk believe, can never be completely extinguished.

As for Keltis, believing he had succeeded in his quest, he stopped his pursuit and became the sorcerer king of Kurn. Plagued by nightmares of his own atrocities, he sought out redemption and became Oronis the

Avangion, working in secret to undo the evil he has wrought. Oronis knows nothing, yet, of the surviving lizardfolk. Those few people who know the history - the Mind Lord's themselves (despite their increasing insanity), the king of the lizardfolk, perhaps a few sages here and there - consider it a deeply uncertain question of how Oronis might react if he learned of the lizardfolk. No one on Athas knows both that lizardfolk survive and that Oronis has sought repentance; Oronis himself is wholly unprepared to even consider the possibility that he failed at his mission. Would his failure relieve his guilt? Or would it agitate his primal and relentless nature?

On Lizardfolk Surviving the Cleansing Wars

If any lizardfolk have survived through the centuries entirely outside Marnita they may have witnessed the destruction of the oceans, the rise of the Sea of Silt, the Cleansing Wars, or even the Obsidian Flow in Ulyan, the events that caused the destruction of all their historic population centers. And yet, contrary to established lore, they may not have been fully exterminated.

Just as the lizardfolk of Marnita escaped Keltis' detection spells, others could have escaped him by having been somehow temporarily sent to a different plane, perhaps by a powerful elemental cleric who sheltered the tribe on the plane of Rain or Water. Perhaps some lizardfolk tribes had been taken to a githyanki prison but then escaped, or have been kidnapped by slavers from wildspace only to still survive on another world of Athas' sphere. Or a tribe could have used time travel to jump forward to an era when the Cleansing Wars had ended. Any of these options would mean that these tribes were not on Athas when Keltis attempted to determine that his enemies were extinct.

Creative DMs could come up with a number of explanations for how isolated lizardfolk might have survived the Cleansing Wars, if they wish!

Lizardfolk NPCs

Har'bir

Usually female Water cleric or druid, level varies (see below)

Har'bir, a descendant of Har'bir the Mother and named in honor of her, is a Water cleric. Har'bir ministers to the lizardfolk in her village, healing their ills and nurturing their hearts.

Har'bir is one of many to carry the name over the millennia, all descendants of the original Har'bir. Even today, many lizardfolk bear the name Har'bir, and all revered as mothers and protectors of their community. Most serve as Water clerics or druids, but all proudly wear the name Har'bir.

Charangun

Currently male Trader 12

Charangun is one of the rare lizardfolk who regularly interacts with the surface dwellers. He does business with the various villages surrounding Marnita, including Saragar itself on occasion. Charangun offers pearls, seaweed, and other undersea goods in exchange for tools, rope, and other materials from the surface.

Uqiriss

Female Fire Krag Magma cleric 5

One of the last lizardfolk to be accepted as a shaman by the Water spirits before the coming of the Lizardfolk Executioner to her beloved Sagramog swamp, Uqiriss was slain by the defilers and Fire priests of Keltis. She returned soon after as a spiteful fire krag to haunt the now cruel and hateful waters as they putrefied into the Pallid Mere in the wake of the Cleaning Wars. When the Obsidian Tide came, Uqiriss was, like her fellows, entombed beneath the resulting obsidian. Today, Uqiriss still attempts to lead and counsel her tribemates as best she can, leading them in hunts and appeasement rituals to the lords of Magma. Like many of her fellow undead lizardfolk, Uqiriss frequently wrestles with understanding why the lords of Water abandoned her and her people, but will gladly vent her (and her tribe's) rage on any outsiders who dare to traverse the obsidian that covers the remains of their swamp. She might, however, provide aid to reptilian visitors, confusing them for strange lizardfolk or perhaps members of a kindred people.

Significant Locations

Many lizardfolk create settlements that are transitory by design, but their permanent settlements are some of the most unusual on Athas. Despite living under water, and even sometimes referring to other races as air breathers, lizardfolk cannot breathe water, as they are reptilian, not amphibian, in nature. Instead, lizardfolk can hold their breath for an incredibly long time, and their cities and settlements are built with carefully trapped air pockets, often augmented with elaborate algal gardens to refresh the air and keep it breathable. The lizardfolk's need for air is so low that they can get an adequate supply from eating certain varieties of kelp and other plants that trap air in little sacs to maintain buoyancy. Lizardfolk also sometimes use magic or psionics to ensure their air supply (in Marnita, a few ancient psionic airlocks still function between the lizardfolk cities and tunnels that run

beneath the sea), but they primarily rely on natural methods to remain underwater for extended periods.

Marnita

Far to the north of the Tablelands and the Scorched Plateau, Marnita (also known as the Last Sea) glimmers like a hidden and well-protected jewel. Few have been to this land, not only because of how difficult travel through the surrounding regions can be, but also because the oppressive protection measures utilized by the Mind Lords who rule the region make the approach nearly impossible for anyone but the most powerful of travelers.

Within these waters lies the largest known population of lizardfolk left on Athas. Given how difficult it is to enter and leave these lands, the lizardfolk of Marnita are completely unaware of the fate of their species elsewhere on Athas.

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For a full history of Marnita and its surrounding surface villages, consult *Mind Lords of the Last Sea*.

Haj-itas

Under the waves of Marnita, there are several small settlements scattered throughout the sea. From painful lessons learned from their race's history, none of the existing lizardfolk settlements are permanent. Each can, in theory, be quickly abandoned by their inhabitants as they flee to hide from intruders or invading armies. Even the locations of these settlements tend to change over time, as they move

with the schools of sea life or out of paranoia. All, that is, except for Haj-itas.

Haj-itas is the location of a Blue Age holy site, the origin and purpose of which is long lost to time. Allegedly, even the Mind Lords do not know the original purpose of this site, but lizardfolk elders and druids have long known that the spirit of the land is strong in this place. Though its position around Haj-itas shifts from time to time, there is always a settlement not far from the site to support the druids and elders researching and maintaining it; the village is only abandoned under the direst of threats.

Myths and Legends

The Eight-Pointed Star

All lizardfolk know there were once many of their kind scattered widely across the world, but due to the thousands of years of isolation caused by the Cleansing Wars, there is no way to know if any other lizardfolk survived. All there are to go on are suggestions from their ancient history and legends - in particular, the myth of the Eight-Pointed Star, a motif that appears in some stone-carved maps still possessed by the lizardfolk.

It is said that if an uneven eight-pointed star were laid out with Marnita in its center, then one would know the placement of the major lizardfolk settlements in each direction. The ancient lizardfolk, it is believed, carved this knowledge into cryptic stone maps before they became isolated from the world. If one had a detailed map of the Tablelands and regions beyond, one might find two points far to the north and northwest corresponding to the ancient city of Dunswich and a forgotten Great Northern Sea. Two points to the east are now surely lost within the Sea of Silt or perhaps lie beyond the sea itself. Two points lie to the west (with one falling in the Crimson Savannah's Kano Swamp), and two to the south (one near the Starlight Sea in what is now the Trembling Plains, and one in eastern Ulyan - now known as the Dead Lands). No one has ever confirmed whether this legend was true, but it still gives the lizardfolk hope.



Ulyanese Lizardfolk (extinct?)

The Salvation of the Lizardfolk

The lizardfolk speak of the efforts of the Mind Lords long ago to protect Saragar and Marnita from destruction, and of how these powerful immortals risked everything to save the lizardfolk from the Executioner, Keltis. These stories, told over and over again, tell of the bravery and guile of the Mind Lords, and of how they have continued to hide and protect the lizardfolk for thousands of years. This, the stories say, is why the lizardfolk must be appreciative of Saragar's rulers and mindful of their laws, for the Mind Lords saved the lizardfolk when they did not have to, thereby becoming themselves just and rightful rulers.

Har'bir the Mother

Legend has it that many millennia ago, when the Cleansing Army of Keltis was marching upon the Last Sea, the mother Har'bir saw the existential threat to her family and community, and traveled far and wide throughout Marnita and helped gather and calm her people as they prepared to hide themselves in stasis under the sea. Har'bir soothed the fears and rage of her people, convincing every one of them to the last to undergo stasis, leaving none for Keltis to find. Har'bir's protective and nurturing actions helped to spare the lizardfolk from destruction - for this, Har'bir is seen as the "mother" of the lizardfolk of Marnita.

Lizardfolk From Elsewhere

Any lizardfolk who might have survived beyond the Last Sea are likely to be extremely isolated and have retained little knowledge of what they had lost over

the centuries. However, despite the genocide of the Cleansing Wars, these surviving lizardfolk would likely still retain some knowledge of the past:

- An understanding that they are few in number because of a great tragedy are sure to have been preserved. While the full extent of horrors of the Cleansing Wars and their history of being hunted may not have survived the centuries, the lizardfolk are sure to remember that once there were far more of them and a great sorrow befell their brethren. Such tales might even take on an accusatory tone, suggesting that those lost somehow deserved their fate due to some deficiency or misdeed.
- Similar to their understanding of their small population size, while surviving lizardfolk may not recall that their people once swam the oceans of the world unfettered, they would surely understand on some level that their world was once much bigger than whatever body of water they are currently consigned to. Tribal stories might even go beyond simply suggesting that their current home is a haven or refuge, going so far as to claim it to be some type of reward for a particular behavior or devotion, making the surviving lizardfolk out to be a kind of "chosen people".
- While some lizardfolk legends might speak of the genocide of the Cleansing Wars or remember the name of the lizardfolk's doom - Keltis, any surviving groups are sure to recall in some way Keltis's roll - the Lizardfolk Executioner. Such knowledge might be highly specific, recalling his nature as a human defiler and general, or be incredibly vague, speaking only of his relentless pursuit and destruction of their people, transforming him into a kind of "boogeyman" for the lizardfolk.

Adventure Hooks

- A number of patrols from Kurn have fallen prey to unusually savage guerilla attacks by an unknown enemy. All attempts to determine the nature of the attacks - including those by Oronis himself - have somehow been thwarted. Investigation will reveal that great war parties of ssurran-like beings from far to the northwest are behind attacks. Eventually the PCs may discover the attackers are in fact lizardfolk from the Last

Sea. The lizardfolk somehow learned that their ancient tormentor Keltis was still alive and living in Kurn. Enraged by the news, many lizardfolk warriors escaped Marnita and traveled to Kurn for vengeance. How could the lizardfolk have learned that Keltis (Oronis) was alive in Kurn? Did someone tip off the lizardfolk, and if so, what was their motivation for revealing the knowledge to the lizardfolk? What could make the lizardfolk

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think that revealing their existence by attacking Keltis and Kurn was worth the danger? And, most disturbingly, who could be powerful enough to protect the lizardfolk raiders from the detection efforts of Oronis and the assorted preservers, priests, and mindbenders of Kurn?

- A key oasis deep in the wastes has been slowly drying out, and as the water level drops, merchant caravans stopping to refill their water supplies have found themselves attacked from the water. If the PCs are hired to investigate, they discover an extremely isolated tribe of lizardfolk fighting for their very lives, for if the water dries out, they will have nowhere else to go and will likely not survive.
- Rumors speak of hulking reptilian humanoids that sometimes prowl the shores of the Sea of Silt. These rumors claim that these creatures have no faces and are covered in stoney growths, often rising up out of the silt itself to attack their prey. The strangest tales, however, claim that the relentless but solitary hunters will sometimes bypass multiple possible victims to attack a particular individual, seeming to prefer Kurnans, members of House Azeth, and - strangely enough - those riding or herding wasps.
- Mercenaries employed by Kurn's Great Library have recently returned from an expedition, claiming that the ruined Green Age city of Thorlo

- long thought lost to the shifting tides of the Sea of Silt - have been exposed by a recent Tyr storm. The team claimed to have barely made it into the ruins before they were run off by a horde of reptilian undead, losing two of their number in the process, and are apparently already preparing for a return trip. The explorers are actively recruiting new members to prepare for their next excursion, and any wishing to assist with the investigation of the ruins or confirmation of these undead "lizard people" (which have some of the sages strangely excited) should apply at the Great Library, located in Kurn's Tade District.

- It is common knowledge among the people of Saragar that the merchants that trade in rare and exotic goods at the midsummer and midwinter festivals procure them from some outside source, though much thought is rarely given to this source. However, restless whispers among the lizardfolk (mostly amongst brash and headstrong youths) speak of finding this source and following it to leave the Last Sea region completely. Some claim this route is west through the mountains, while others say it is to the south, but none have ever seemed to have found this supposed path to the outside world. Some even claim the route is only open at certain times, or that it is controlled by elemental magic.



Secrets of the Nikaal

Design Notes: *The nikaal received a brief entry in Terrors Beyond Tyr (Dark Sun Monstrous Compendium II), but they were in fact first introduced in Troy Denning's Prism Pentad books, an indication that they were perhaps one of the unique races that the Dark Sun creators originally envisioned for their world, but had to abandon in favor of the familiar humans, elves and dwarves.*

Nikaal make sense as a quintessentially Dark Sun serpentine race – bizarre purple coloring, uniquely adapted to the heat of the desert, nomadic, savage. There were also throwaway lines in the Prism Pentad referencing their ties to music and

dance which we felt had been underexplored, like so many other details of the race itself. As a result, the nikaal seemed like one of those races which so many mentions in canon and yet so little actual identity of their own beyond physical appearance.

Though not in the official books, a fan tradition has long held that the nikaal are among the most ancient of all the peoples of Athas – possible holdovers from the Blue Age (their ancient status perhaps the reason they were spared from the Cleansing Wars). We decided to give the DM the option to use this or not by presenting it as a legend.

History

Nikaal history is a secret they keep to themselves. They are an intensely reticent and mysterious people; happy to trade goods, swap information about routes or gossip about the world, but when it comes to their own tribes, where they have been, where they came from, or where they are going, Nikaal reveal nearly nothing to outsiders. Even within their tribes, information about such matters is closely held by the elders. Those who meet a nikaal caravan will often come away from a night of music, conversation, and revelry realizing they talked constantly to the nikaal and learned almost nothing in return.

Some say they are a New Race, birthed in the last thousand years or so from the Pristine Tower, while others say they are an ancient race, nearly as ancient as

the halflings. Their appearances are a source of some superstition, with some claiming they portend hope and others claiming they portend doom, although none seem to believe the nikaal carry out either of these missions directly or deliberately. The nikaal themselves believe they are an ancient race. Their own legends speak of ancients who have brumated for centuries or millennia, although the nikaal who tell such tales, if forced to tell the truth, admit they only know this second hand - those who discuss the ancient nikaal don't actually know them, and those who know them don't discuss them. Some outsiders are skeptical of these claims, as those who claim to be knowledgeable about brumation don't believe it can extend a nikaal's lifespan by nearly so long.

Their Lands

Most nikaal are permanent wanderers, having traveled so far and so widely that no one - not even their own elders - knows where their homeland might have been. Like so much of their history, the lands of the nikaal are shrouded behind the dust of a caravan. Some say they have an ancient homeland far beyond the Ringing Mountains, others say they come from across the Sea of Silt, but most nikaal don't seem to know themselves; experienced dune traders, however, are never surprised to see a nikaal caravan anywhere. Some nikaal travel the same routes repeatedly and are even possessive of particular paths, but others are true itinerants, always wandering somewhere new.

The nikaal do have preferred resting grounds - places where their great caravans can occasionally linger for a season or two before moving on. Some of these areas are associated with elemental shrines or are otherwise sacred to the nikaal, while others are simply well-hidden, sheltered, or convenient to sources of water. These places are well-known among nikaal elders, and often host several caravans at once, which will camp for a time and mingle before heading off again. It is forbidden, however, for any one caravan to stay overlong at these grounds, for fear of overburdening the location's resources. When referencing them, the nikaal often give descriptive names such as

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'Brumhaven Among the Peaks' or 'Brumhollow Beneath the Shade'. Some of these locales have great structures that seem to have been built by the nikaal themselves. After departing the company of nikaal, visitors often find themselves wondering how a nomadic people developed the construction skills to build such structures – and also wondering why the question didn't occur to them until after the nikaal were gone.

Nikaal Caravans and Groups

Gwutch & Gatchers: Formerly a single larger group, these two caravans are more primitive and tribal in nature than most nikaal - being deeply superstitious and believing in crude nature spirits - and only recently split due to size limitations. They still share the same migratory routes, traveling along the northern shore of the Siren's Song Inlet (the southern fork of the Estuary of the Forked Tongue), wandering the length of the inlet and all the way west to Lost Oasis and Kalidnay, though they traverse the route at opposite times. They consider the passage between the mountains and the road that runs along them their ancestral territory, attacking or treating with caravans and groups passing through as appropriate.

Miklaas Caravan: This caravan is well known in the Tyr region, traveling back and forth between the city-states as the elements guide them. Once within a city, the Miklaas trade goods and information to all buyers. Somewhat unusually for nikaal, individual Miklaas will occasionally linger overlong in a city, staying with friends of the caravan for months or even years before their caravan returns - though a nikaal may grow restless and strike out in search of the caravan before it can return. Several of the merchant houses have tried to pressure the caravan to adopt some version of the Merchant's Code so as to level the playing field, but thus far the Miklaas have avoided the situation.

Crisiss Caravan: These nikaal are a rare caravan that actively captures and enslaves people for later sale, transporting individuals captured in the Trembling Plains in the north to the Tablelands.

Ringhal Caravan: One of the largest caravans (numbering nearly 200) is considered a sedentary caravan. They've taken over a valuable oasis located at the edge of the scrub plains north of Yaramuke, one of the closest sources of clean water north of the ruins,

and send smaller caravans out to trade with nearby towns, herding tribes, and other nikaal caravans.

Pitted Rock Nikaal: A caravan located in the far south. The nikaal range far and wide, often subdivided into smaller caravan bands, but they always return to the rock their caravan is named after, which they hold as a holy place. The Pitted Rock, unbeknownst to the nikaal, holds a bound demon. The demon has possessed their war-leader Tsarres, and once enough blood is spilled on the rock, the demon will be freed.

The Aerie of the Scaled Sages

At an elevation of nearly 16,000 feet, high atop a south-facing slope in the Ringing Mountains, is an ancient and mysterious monastery. The monastery frequently appears empty, but is in fact the hiding place of nikaal sages who enter brumation for decades at a time, sometimes with only a single monk awake to watch over the others. Periodically, nikaal will visit the monastery to briefly awaken the elders, check on their health and safety, and inform them of goings on in the world before the elders return to their sleep.

It is even said that one of the sages brumates for a hundred years at a time, and lived through ancient wars that once ravaged the face of Athas..

1. **Part of the Aerie** – A single, narrow trail leads to the monastery.
2. **Camping Grounds** – When nikaal tribes visit the monastery, they rest at the camping ground rather than in the monastery itself. If visitors stumble across a visiting tribe, they are often hypnotized by the tribe's music before reaching the top of the trail.
3. **The Sacred Staircase** – A steep staircase ascends several hundred feet to reach the monastery itself.
4. **Monastery Gatehouse** – The gatehouse is an empty and eerily silent structure. A central empty chamber leads to a strange garden. Well-hidden secret passages lead to the monk's chambers, the great observatory, and the top of the walls - from which the brumation chambers can be reached.
5. **The Observatory** – A great half-domed structure, open to the southern sky, dominates the monastery. Wind-dulled runes depicting the stars, constellations, and planets are carved into the ancient observatory's curved interior surface.

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6. During solstices, the light aligns to mystical symbols carved along the floor of the chamber.
7. **The Garden of Time** – Though the monastery may appear abandoned to visitors, this beautifully maintained garden reveals that someone or something must still reside in the monastery. The plants can prove extremely deadly to anyone not in the company of the nikaal. A mix of poisonous, carnivorous, and psionically-active -though all undeniably beautiful - plants fill the garden.
8. **Monk's Chambers** – The monks of the monastery reside next to the observatory. Often only a single monk will be awake to guard the ancient ones.
9. **Brumation Towers** – Five towers in the monastery each house a brumation chamber. These rooms consist of great stone sarcophagi that are warded with powerful psionics, each containing an ancient nikaal sage. The chambers possess strange astronomical markings. Each chamber, in fact, has a sort of astronomical trigger: when a specific constellation reaches its apex in the sky, the day's light shines into the chamber in such a way as to heat the sarcophagus just enough to awaken the nikaal brumating inside.

Nikaal NPCs

Sazak

Male 9th level Ranger

Notable Items: Amulet of the Jozhal, Belt of Giant Strength(23)

Sazak is a skilled tracker and hunter, able to navigate the harsh desert terrain with ease. He is fiercely independent and values his freedom above all else. Sazak wears an amulet that allows him to blend into his surroundings like a jozhal, and a belt that enhances his physical strength.

Zaraela

Female 10th level Preserver

Notable Items: Wand of Web, Ring of Mind Shielding

Zara is a confident and ambitious nikaal, determined to rise through the ranks of her caravan and prove her worth as a powerful preserver. Zara wields a wand that can unleash threads of sticky web and wears a ring that allows her to have a protected mind.

Zaynaen

Non-binary 10th level Fire Cleric

Notable Items: Wand of Fireball, Flametongue

Zayna is a charismatic and confident nikaal, with a bold and fiery spirit that is reflected in their powerful magic. They are quick to anger, but also fiercely loyal to their friends and allies. Zayna is a natural leader, and they inspire those around them with their unyielding confidence and unwavering conviction.

Despite their sometimes-reckless nature, Zayna is a skilled strategist and tactician, using their mastery of fire to control the battlefield and turn the tide of battle in their favor.

Zung-Uzeng (the Yellow Nikaal)

Male Level 16 Bard

Notable Items: Cloak of Charisma +3, Vest of Legends

Born to a green nikaal mother, a rare mutation left Zung an albino and vulnerable to the sun. His mother abandoned him, not knowing how to care for such a vulnerable infant.

The caravan's music master took the infant into his care and named him - it was in his care that Zung discovered his natural gift for spoken word poetry and music, and in time he proved to be the most skilled bard that his caravan had ever produced. Some nikaal bards believe he was the first to use completely improvised lyrics over an accompanying rhythm, both as a storytelling medium and as a way to focus psionic powers. This technique spread and quickly became the custom for many nikaal music speakers.

Zung plies his trade at night, using the hypnotic power of the tribe's music and his endlessly improvised lyrics to protect his people. Creatures not held in thrall to the music are either instinctively driven away by the music or drawn into the music circle, captured, and domesticated by the caravan.

Myths and Legends

Origins and Connectedness of World

Though it is difficult to get specifics from them, some generalities about their beliefs can be obtained from patient conversation and questioning. The nikaal believe that the world of Athas was once covered in lush forests and oceans, but the elemental lords destroyed it in a fit of anger brought on by the other races. Only the hardiest creatures and races survived - including the nikaal, who adapted to the harsh conditions of the desert.

It is the nikaal's fervent belief that the Elements are continually in flux and that they must be constantly consulted making important decisions. The nikaal hold that by divining the will of the elements through auguries and signs, they can avoid danger and find the path to prosperity. Some nikaal claim that there have been periods, and even entire ages, of danger and destruction where elemental omens told their people to brumate until the world was safer for them.

Legend holds that the nikaal's ancestors once lived in or beyond some great mountain range, where they learned the secrets of brumation from an ancient being. Over time, they began to wander the desert, taking these secrets with them, but eventually forgetting which mountains they originated from; now they search for the ancient one and for their lost homeland.

The Eternal Brumation

There is a belief among some nikaal that their race is one of the oldest on Athas. The legend suggests that there is a small group of nikaal who, upon first learning to brumate, chose to test this ability to its utmost and began the longest brumation ever attempted by any of their race. While the exact length

of the slumber is debated, some insist they had started their brumation somewhere between sixteen and nineteen thousand years ago, and are still asleep today. If only their hiding place could be found...

The War of the Stolen Beards

One of the stranger tales travelers tell of is a long-standing feud between two isolated tribes in the Ringing Mountains. As the tales relate, a tribe of dwarves has been locked in a dispute with a tribe of nikaal for untold centuries.

The nikaal there are said to have hair-like bristles that grow long on their scalps and cheeks, with the latter resembling beards. The dwarves of the valley apparently insist that their ancient ancestors had beards, but that the nikaal stole these beards, explaining why dwarves today are hairless, and generations of dwarves have dedicated their lives to avenging this slight upon their honor.

The nikaal for their part are said to view the dwarves' obsession with bemusement, but always return from their wanderings to the valley, for they hold the valley to be sacred. Their bemusement, however, doesn't stop them from retaliating with deadly force when the dwarves push things too far and bloodshed ensues.

It is said that for as long as anyone can remember, the two sides have fought, raided, pranked, and tormented the other, and if outsiders happen across the valley, they will likely be caught in the crossfire, as each side will think they are allied with the opposing faction. The only exception, of course, is if the travelers have dwarves among them, in which case the nikaal will attack on sight, while the dwarves attempt to recruit their kin (and their kin's allies) to their side.

Adventure Hooks

- The nikaal are known for their ability to barter and negotiate with other races, and they may be the key to unlocking a lasting peace agreement between Gulg and Nibenay. As rumors of tentative truce between the two neighboring city-states - brokered by a well-respected nikaal merchant - circulate, the PCs discover information indicating that the nikaal negotiator has been kidnapped. With the chief negotiator missing, the talks have stalled and the threat of a renewed war between Gulg and Nibenay loom on the horizon. If the peace agreement is to be salvaged, the PCs must uncover which of the factions that oppose the treaty are the kidnappers and rescue the nikaal peacemaker before it's too late.
- As Kalak's ziggurat nears completion, a nikaal messenger arrives in Tyr seeking to make contact with those factions opposed to the obsessed king. The messenger is, however, soon assassinated. Investigation will reveal that the nikaal had a message of grave importance from his elders regarding Kalak's ziggurat. To retrieve this message, the characters must travel high into the Ringing Mountains and find their way to the Aerie of the Scaled Sages, where an ancient nikaal tells them a horrible tale from the past. The ziggurat of Kalak closely resembles one built generations ago in the ruined city of Kalidnay. The ancient ruler of Kalidnay - Kalid-Ma - attempted a wild bid for power, stealing the life forces of all of Kalidnay's residents to fuel his ascent to power. Kalid-ma slaughtered thousands and briefly succeeded in amassing terrible power, but his actions sparked a great conflict as the other sorcerer-kings sought to contain the threat that he then posed. The nikaal's message is simple and clear: Kalak is now attempting what Kalid-Ma once did, and if he is not stopped, Tyr and its citizens will share Kalidnay's fate.
- Lord Xenia, the leader of one of Urik's noble houses, is in need of operatives for a personal mission. His daughter, Iltani Xenia, has been kidnapped by a tribe of nikaal and he is seeking her return in exchange for a hefty reward. If they investigate, witnesses can tell the PCs that two nikaal caravans stopped on the outskirts of Urik recently, nearby one of House Xenia's compounds in Urik's verdant belt, and many locals were drawn into a night of revelry and bizarre music. The PCs must piece together which caravan Iltani left with from the addled memories of the attendees, and then track down the tribe - where they might just find themselves sucked into the music as well. The nikaal will try to protect Iltani from the PCs' advances, but if they manage to reach her, the PCs learn that she has fled from her father on purpose, as he is a cruel and sadistic man engaged in a scheme against the house of her lover. At this point, the PCs have a number of choices they must make: they may owe the nikaal an apology or have made enemies of them, they also risk making an enemy of House Xenia if they allow the daughter to escape, and they must decide whether or not to return to Urik and confront Lord Xenia directly.
- It is known that when the rain comes, the nikaal come to an isolated town in the remote foothills of the Ringing Mountains. The townsfolk believe that nikaal just travel as many nikaal tribes do, but this tribe spends much of its time in brumation in the nearby mountains, only coming out of their dormancy when the rains come and the desert blooms, living off the bounty of the land for a time before invariably resuming their brumation. Now the town desperately needs the wisdom of the nikaal to stave off a debilitating plague, as the sole cure seems to be an herb that can only be obtained from these nikaal. The villagers besiege the PCs to find the nikaal and obtain enough of the herb to cure the plague before it's too late.



Secrets of the Dray

Design Notes

The first two generations of dray are very well detailed in the City by the Silt Sea boxed set. Which raises the question: "Why would anyone need a third generation?"

One reason a DM might consider using 3rd generation dray is simply to avoid spoiling the fun. If you allow PCs to play the existing versions of dray, then all the secrets of Giustenal and Dregoth would likely be known to these PCs from the moment of character creation, thereby spoiling the surprise if you're hoping to use Dregoth as a major discovery in the course of your campaign.

First and second generation dray are also stated to live in just two extremely isolated areas: Kragmorta for the first generation and New Giustenal for the second. These are hardly logical places for most PCs to begin their adventures.

Therefore, third generation dray are exiles, who might reasonably be found nearly anywhere, and who do not know their people's exact origins, and thus are a suitable way to allow PCs to play dray characters without needing to reveal everything they could discover in Giustenal. A third-generation dray may of course be interested in uncovering their origins and lead their adventuring companions in a search that leads to the discovery of Dregoth, but this becomes a potential adventure, not a piece of knowledge that the exiled 3rd generation of dray begins with.

Of course, if DMs feel the third generation dray ought to know their history in Giustenal or that they are creations of Dregoth, that is of course their prerogative – just keep in mind the revelation "oh horror of horrors – Dregoth is still alive!" is now off the table unless handled carefully! Also, consider that if this is common knowledge to player characters, does it make sense that it's still a secret from the Sorcerer Kings?

Third generation dray might also be used as a way to reconcile the existence of dragonborn on Athas. The Fourth Edition Dark Sun books introduced dragonborn as stand-ins for the dray, and 3rd generation dray can be used to reconcile the abilities and appearances of dragonborn with those of dray from earlier editions of Dark Sun by DMs and players who wish to do so, while still keeping the 1st and 2nd generations of dray distinct from these 3rd generation dray (or "dragonborn") and unchanged from the way they were depicted in earlier editions.

Note that because the 1st and 2nd generation dray are very well detailed already in other published material, this book does not focus on describing or redeveloping them in any way.

History

The Beginning of the Third Generation

Dregoth's first generation of dray were failures that were exiled from New Giustenal and ultimately found their way to the underground cavern of Kragmorta. Years later, Dregoth engineered the second generation of dray, which were more to his liking, and transformed all the remaining humans of New Giustenal into these dray. But even once the superior second-generation dray had been born, Dregoth's high templar Absalom still felt pity for the first-generation dray, continued to visit them, and continued to preach Dregoth's doctrine to them. The first and second generation of dray are known to each other primarily through occasional subterranean battles; they hate

each other, and Absalom is the only figure who moved between the two societies.

Absalom dreamed up an experiment that he hoped could reunite the two generations of dray - first generation dray did not immediately develop mutations, and so Absalom theorized that the union of a not-yet-mutated first-generation dray with a second-generation dray might yield children that were acceptable to Dregoth. Absalom hoped that, over the course of several generations, the descendants of the 1st generation dray might be able to reintegrate into New Giustenal. Absalom secretly arranged a number of unions to test his theory.

The offspring of these unions were the first examples of what would be referred to as the 3rd generation

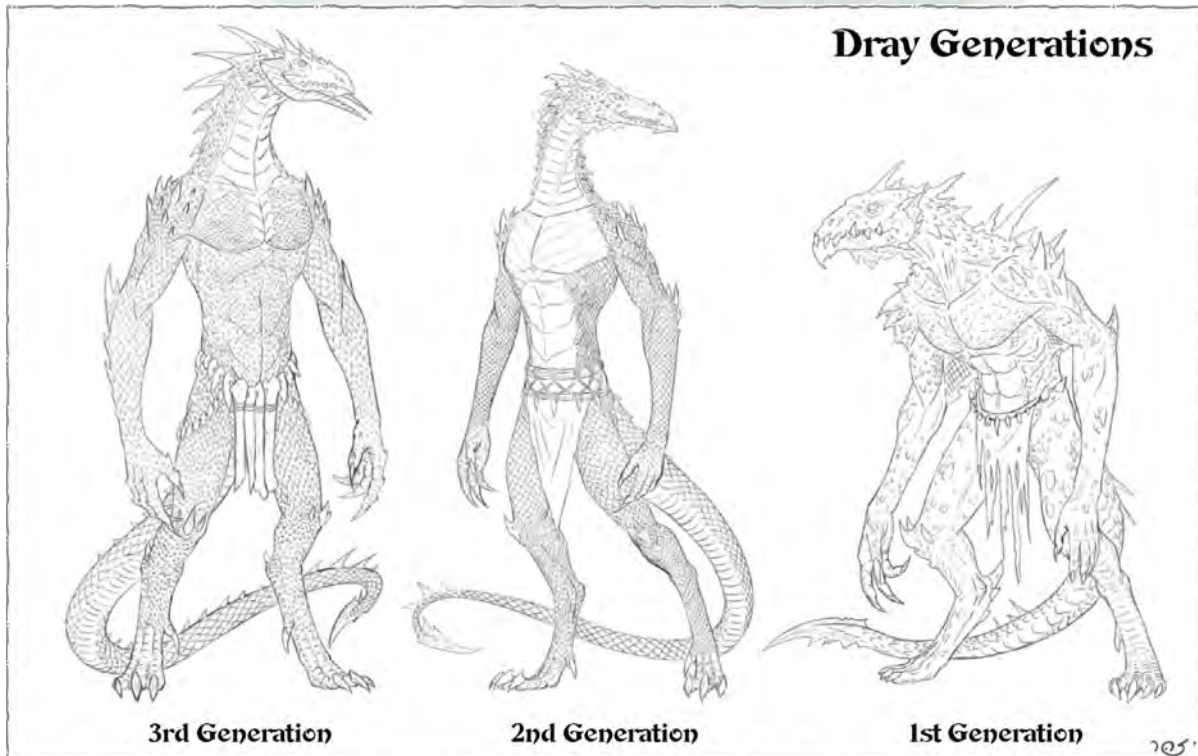
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dray. The union of the unstable essence of the first generation and the refined nature of the second give rise to a being that was, in some ways, greater than the sum of its parts: they were not deformed and crooked like the first generation, but they were also not the uniform specimens of the 2nd generation. These "3rd generation" dray had far more physical variation than their 2nd generation predecessors, with some even possessing new and novel features such as dazzling scales, majestic spikes, or ornate neck frills. It was clear to Absalom that this 3rd generation, though improved in many ways, would not meet his standards of uniformity.

The 3rd generation dray had believed they would be reunited with their creator, but when Absalom decided against this, they could not understand any reason that they would be unwelcome. Unlike their 1st generation predecessors, they refused to simply sulk in Kragmorta. As Absalom debated what to do with the small population of dray he had created, these new dray took matters into their own hands and escaped. Absalom saw their unexpected disappearance as an opportunity to cover up what he'd done, and assumed they were too few to last long in a world which they were unprepared for, so he did not pursue them or tell anyone that they had disappeared. After all, if they even survived the dangers of the caves around New Giustenal and found their way to the surface, the creatures of the desert certainly would finish them off.

In spite of all odds, these dray found their way to safety, and established several small protected settlements scattered throughout the eastern Tablelands and nearby islands. Absalom never revealed his experiment to Dregoth, and has continued to assist the 1st generation dray in secret. In recent years, as Dregoth's interest has returned to the surface, he has learned there are dray among the Tablelanders, though he believes they must be particularly hardy 1st generation dray. He has concluded that New Giustenal may not remain secret for long if anyone investigates the origin of these dray, and this has increased the urgency of his plans to return.

Since they had no desire to return to whatever homeland their forefathers saw fit to abandon, the 3rd generation dray of the surface have simply allowed their culture to forget the names of Giustenal and Dregoth. Over the hundreds of years since their departure, the dray have built an oral tradition which speaks of their origins in broadly romanticized strokes. They have taken the ancient Giustenal dialect Absalom taught them and made it their own. They tell stories of an ancient homeland, but in their legends no specific details can be found of where they originated. The sorcerer-monarchs have begun to notice their persistent but relatively benign presence, but they assume the race is simply another recent mutation from the Pristine Tower that has proved resilient.



Dray NPCs

Uncle Falrom

Male 13 level psion

Notable item: Staff of pain

Falrom (or “Uncle Falrom” as he is referred to by most of the residents of Dragonhead Village) is the eldest sage and teacher of young among the dray of Vakura Island. He is a psion specializing in clairvoyance and is anomalously old even by dray standards, with some claiming that he was alive when the dray first came to the Vakura Island. This rumor has never been confirmed or denied, but his bent back, jagged teeth, and mottled uneven scales may not be signs of his age alone. Curiously enough, he lacks a unique characteristic like a crest or frills like the other dray in his village, and despite the fact that his left arm is always kept heavily bandaged for some reason, it is clear it is smaller than his other arm and that it has no claws.

When asked about the matter itself, Falrom will tell the legend of how the dray came to the island, but will not provide any detail of his own involvement (making this one of the few questions to which Falrom does not have a ready answer).

Falrom walks with the aid of a staff, which is in fact a *staff of pain* that channels psionic energy directly into causing pain when used to strike someone. Falrom has rarely needed to use the staff for any purpose other than walking, but will do so if threatened.

Mafoun (2nd generation dray)

Male 6th level templar

Notable Item: Magical templar’s sigil

Mafoun is a badly scarred dray who camps perpetually outside the fortress of Grak’s Pool. He offers prophecies and readings for the cost of a drink in the fortress. While Mafoun’s supposed divinations are all but an act, he uses this seemingly innocent facade to gather information for his mysterious masters, with whom he can communicate through the use of a small bronze medallion bearing a strange sigil of a dragon’s claw holding the sun that he keeps hidden in the folds of his cloak.

A second-generation dray, who was once one of dregoth templars, Mafoun was sent to this remote location as punishment for some past transgression, with orders to report on the comings and goings of travelers along the trade route. He has particular interest in the ruins under the oasis and any expeditions that venture within, perhaps hoping that if he can get his hand on some valuable artifacts he may gain his superiors’ favor once again.

Arnabah the Lost

Female Dray Thief/Psion (kineticist)

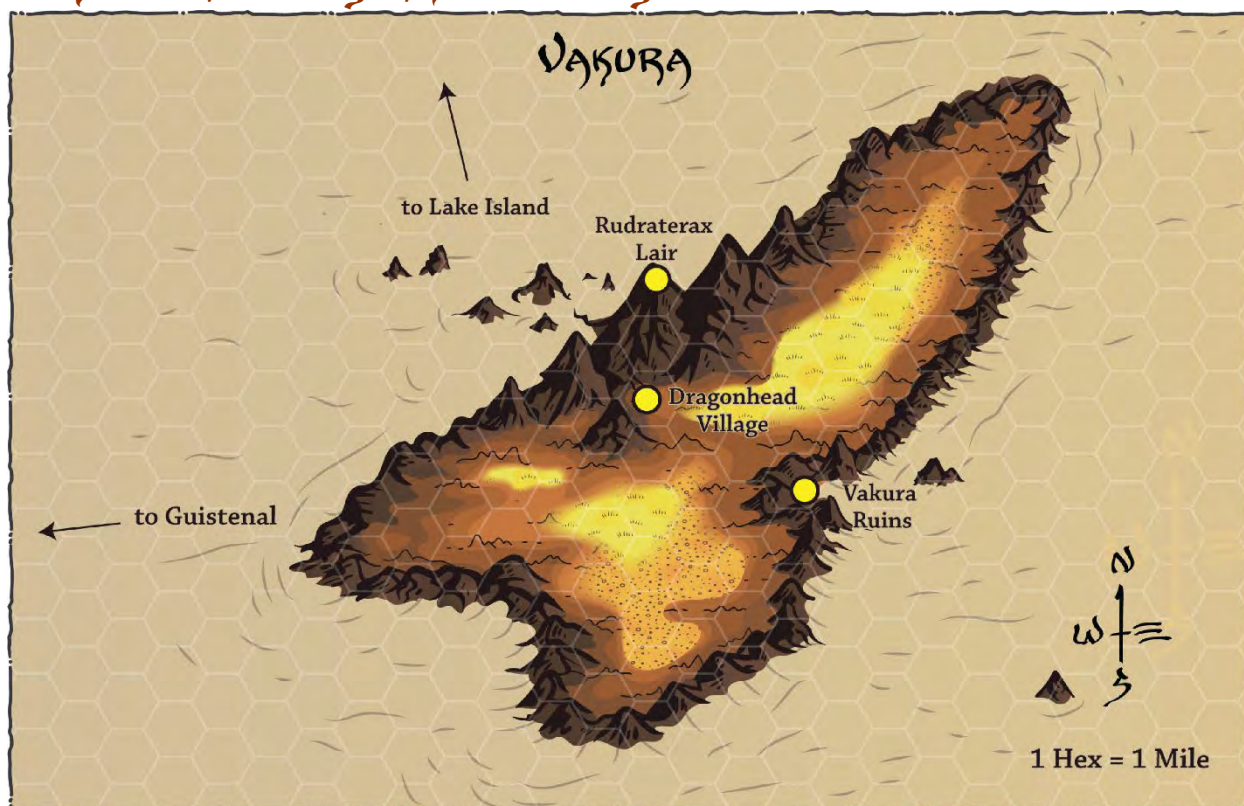
Notable item: Astrolabe

Arnabah appears to be a particularly tall and strong elven woman who keeps her features wrapped under a headscarf, veil, and full burqa. Only upon closer inspection does her clearly reptilian profile become more apparent. On occasion, a few dray have left the safety of their settlements in search of either a greater understanding of the world, or adventure. Arnabah was certainly in the latter camp, running away from home to explore the world before she even fully came of age.

Nothing could have prepared her for the way the world would respond to her, and she had many tragic encounters with other humanoid races - even losing her tail to a particularly vicious mob - before falling in with a pirate crew. Because headscarves are common among silt skimmer crews (to protect their lungs), Arnabah felt comfortable on the deck of a vessel, where everyone was similarly attired. It was there she learned how to fight with weapons, her wits, and the Way.

That was many decades ago. Since then, she has risen to become captain of her own ship, riding the silt and contending with its myriad dangers. Ironically, losing her tail has made it easier for her to disguise herself, but nonetheless she is slow to trust strangers given her past experiences. A ferocious combatant who is quick to strike, she and her ship, the *Gray Death*, have made a name for themselves from Broken Shore to Smuggler’s Rest. Despite her fearsome reputation, she does deeply care for her crew (possibly the only non-dray who have ever accepted her). Her prized possession is an expertly crafted astrolabe, a gift from her first captain.

Vakura and Dragonhead Village



Rising from the choking Sea of Silt halfway between Lake Island and the Isle of Bones, are the impassable cliffs and crags of a foreboding island. The sheer walls of dark basalt prevent most climbers from scaling them, leaving the island nearly unreachable to those who cannot fly or use magical or psionic means to bypass the cliffs, save for in one place.

A narrow cleft on the island's eastern shore punctures the otherwise unbroken facade and leads inland. The sides of the narrow ravine are carved with magnificent but worn buildings. Dark and empty, they peer like hollow faces out from the shadows of the passage. Long ago, this place was known as Vakura, a resplendent city which shared its name with the island on which it resides. In those days, Vakura was a prosperous principality under the dominion of Giustenal, for though the small island-nation lacked any natural resources or military might worthy of note, its people's mastery of the Way and the crafting of psionic items ensured the island's coffers were full and its citizens happy. Despite their advanced society, the people of Vakura were very protective of their island

whose interior boasted a unique ecology and natural beauty unlike any other. In their effort to limit their impact on it and to preserve it in as pristine a state as possible, the people of the island restricted themselves to living in the city alone, and carved their homes around the ravine and underground.

Today the city is populated only by the restless spirits of its citizens, who will attack any who would try and pass through the ravine, swarming trespassers like kes'trekels to a dying mekillot. Those who manage to ward off the undead could claim great treasure, as many of the works and psionic wonders of Vakura still lie within, forgotten yet still functional.

Further inland are plains of purple grass, flowering cacti, mekillot's foot palms, and drakeblood trees oozing amber-yellow resin. Mekillot's foot palms are trees whose bloated, spherical base has a similar appearance to the foot of a mekillot. A single top stem produces tufts of long, sharp leaves, and clusters of hard-shelled nut-like fruits. The fruits have thick, dark shells and soft liver-colored flesh that tastes like roasted chestnuts. Drakeblood trees have a single

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smooth and limbless trunk, and a densely-packed crown of branches and bladed leaves that fan out at the top in an umbrella-like shape. The tree's name comes from the bright yellow resin that they leak when damaged.

Stranger still are the huge flocks of giant flightless sitaks, and grazing athasian unicorns. Flightless sitaks are brightly colored flightless birds that grow to sizes comparable to young erdlu, and move about foraging in large flocks. Athasian unicorns are heavy-set creatures with short, stubby legs, and thick folds of hard skin that cover their pearly-white bodies like plates of armor. Flowing manes of silvery hair run down the length of their powerful necks to the middle of their spines, and similar tufts of hair adorn their heels, ears, and the tips of their long tails; male unicorns have another tuft of hair below their chin that resembles a beard. A thick and long pearlescent spiral-horn extends from each unicorn's forehead and tapers to a deadly point. The island is also home to a small population of behirs as well as wyverns.

The highest peak of the island's central mountain range is home to the island's true master - an ancient air drake called Rudraterax. This extremely aggressive drake has proven even more effective in keeping away any would-be visitors than the undead of Vakura. While it usually ignores the native wyverns unless hungry or in a particularly foul mood, the massive air drake suffers no one to approach the island by sea or by air, attacking vessels and giants who pass too close. Rudraterax's hostility is so great, that silt drakes fleeing hunting packs of aarakocra often head straight for Vakura, where the vulture folk dare not approach - so great is their fear of the beast. As a result, the silt around the island is unusually rife with drakes, further contributing to the island's isolation - though the silt drakes themselves are not in any less danger from the jaws of the hungry monster than the aarakocra. The great skeletons of many a silt drake litter the plains and mountain sides of Vakura, all having been plucked from the silt and devoured by the air drake.

The only other inhabitants of the island are those of Dragonhead village. Long ago, groups of renegade dray (mostly those of the third generation) wandered through the ancient tunnels from Giustenal to the island, managing to resist the undead of Vakura on their way. But having survived the undead, the newcomers found themselves beset by a raging Rudraterax.

In the ensuing conflict, the dray proved themselves as tenacious and cunning as the drake, and eventually

managed to reach an agreement with it: so long as they respect Rudraterax's authority over the island, and refrain from defiling or despoiling it, they and their kind are welcome to stay, but that must help defend the island against intruders. In return, Rudraterax extends his protection of the island over them as well, against any enemy save the Dragon.

In the years since their arrival, the dray have established the village of Dragon's Head in a secluded hollow at the foot of the island's central mountain range, and have enjoyed relative peace, disturbed only by the occasional behir attack. The hollow in which the village resides is blanketed by knee-high purple grass and dotted by a widespread grove of drake's blood trees.

The village itself is situated at the back of the hollow and around the circular pool of a small spring. The buildings resemble clusters of giant eggs made of alabaster, decorated with abstract reliefs made with the bright yellow resin of the drake's blood trees.

As highly independent beings, the dray residents are relatively free to pursue their own ends (so long as they are not disruptive or endanger the village or the island), but must aid in various communal tasks like hunting, building, and guarding. Most important decisions are made democratically by the Gathering, a decision-making assemblage to which every adult member of the village belongs, as it is the only way for the prideful and opinionated dray to work together. The day to day management - such as the distribution of duties - is left to the village head, usually the strongest and most charismatic dray. The village has only one iron-clad rule that all the residents abide by: no dray may take the life of another unless by the will of the Gathering. Individual conflicts are solved by non-lethal duels on the sandy floor of the village hall, in the presence of the Gathering and village head; should a match result in the death of one of the participants, the other must spend the next 7 years in complete servitude to the dead dray's family. For the proud dray, such punishment, even if only for a limited time, serves as an effective deterrent from slaying their opponents to settle petty grudges.

The village also boasts an excellent school, which provides the young dray with both a basic education and rudimentary weapons training. All dray also receive introductory training in the Way, and those who show an aptitude for magic are also trained as preservers. Initially, the dray mages who arrived at the island were all defilers, but the agreement with Rudraterax forced them to find a more ecologically

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sound way to practice their art. It was by no means an easy task, and those mages who couldn't or wouldn't adapt to the new circumstances were sentenced by the Gathering and swiftly executed. Eventually, the remaining wizards figured out how to cast spells as preservers and passed down their knowledge to subsequent generations. Some rare dray have even communed with the Elements or developed an innate connection to the land, and so became elemental priests and druids. The villagers also regularly send raiding parties into the city of Vakura, returning with wealth of knowledge and psionic relics that were well worth the loss of dray lives necessary to obtain them.

Despite the relatively free society the dray have established - which could be considered a near-utopia by Athasian standards - it does not lack its share of troubles: as the village has grown considerably,

tensions within have risen. With so many voices striving to be heard, the Gathering has become increasingly less effective as a ruling body. Some talk of changing the system, while others say now is the time to expand and build a new village - though that may be viewed by Rudraterax as a breach in their agreement. In the meantime, individuals and small groups have already departed the village to parts unknown without leave or notice.

Recently, there have been some mysterious stirring in the ruins of Vakura, and something has seemingly emerged from the depths, decimating the wildlife and fouling several water sources. Some of the dray suspect that their incursions into Vakura are the cause of this, and fear not only this unknown threat but also being blamed by the drake for it, potentially resulting in the annulment of the agreement.

Myths and Legends

Besides the story of their origin, there are a few other legends the dray share with each other:

Sunseeker

Amongst many of the dray clans a tale is told of Sunseeker, the first dray to renounce the sorcerer king who created them and free herself from the shackles of blind faith and thralldom. The tale is told to many young dray in the broodhouses and on days of celebration.

As the legend goes, after they were deemed failures by their creator, the third children were banished into a deep and dark place, full of fire and monsters. They found the first children already there, weeping and praying for the creator to take them back amidst huts made of filth and old bones. They told the third children that the only way out is to beg forgiveness for their sins and imperfections, and hope the creator would show mercy.

The third children looked at them confounded, for it seemed to them that they had committed no crimes and had no imperfections, and at any rate, said Dragondaugther, the eldest amongst them and their leader, the flaws of the first children were of the creator's own doing, and not at all their fault! But the first children were so insistent that the third children relented and joined them in prayer.

And so they prayed.

Over and over they prayed, in the grim darkness that was only lit by rivers of liquid flames.

Over and over they prayed, even when horrible monsters arrived to torment and devour them.

Over and over they prayed, but no answer ever came, and the hearts of the third children were uneasy, but whenever Dragondaugther tried to talk with the first children about finding other means of escape, they became distraught and angry, for they feared that the creator might hear and be offended, and all hope for redemption would be lost.

They made Dragondaugther and the rest of the third children promise they would do nothing that might jeopardize their return to the fold, and so they did, but only out of respect for the first children - their elders - and not because they shared their faith.

A long time passed, and still nothing changed. The third children grew restless, but they kept their word. Then, a new monster appeared, and many dray were killed, including Dragondaugther's mate and newly born wyrmling.

Filled with grief and fury, Dragondaugther had finally had enough; she cursed the creator to the dismay of the first children and declared she would find a way out of the dark place. Casting off her old name, she dubbed herself Sunseeker, for she sought the fabled sun above that no living dray among them had ever seen. Then she left, and with her left all those who were tired of

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living in squalor and desperation through no fault of their own, waiting for some mercy that may never come.

Choosing to be masters of their fate whatever the cost may be, Sunseeker and her followers embarked on their perilous quest, and faced many terrible foes and suffered many losses, but they found a path leading upwards, until they came out at last under the open sky, in the dark hours before the dawn. But their troubles had not yet ended, for at that moment, as they emerged from the depths, the way was blocked by none other than the second children, who pointed their weapons towards them and bade them to turn back by order of the creator. Sunseeker attempted to plead with the second children to forsake the creator and join her quest for freedom, but the second children refused, claiming that the creator promised to adopt them as his chosen people if they could stop them. Seeing no other choice, Sunseeker and her followers fought with the second children, and many were slain on both sides, for while the second children were well-fed and clad in the finest arms, the third children were stronger still and battle-hardened by their woes, and when dawn came they managed to break through the ranks of their enemies and escape.

In the growing light, the survivors turned to Sunseeker, asking her what they should do now that they have found the sun, but Sunseeker only answered: *"Would you replace one master for another? You are free! Do as you wish, follow your heart desires!"* And she turned and ran into the wastes while laughing

mirthfully; none of her followers was able to keep up with her and she vanished, her final fate unknown. Of one thing only are the third children sure: alive or dead, Sunseeker is free.

Sbaaga

The 3rd generation dray tell stories of place: not a mythical place of origin, but of a destination. They tell stories to their children of a paradise where only the most accomplished and exemplary dray may enter, a place believed to lie far to the north which they call Sbaaga, where those select dray dwell in peaceful bliss, having achieved perfect mastery over their chosen crafts and fulfilled their life's goals.

Descriptions of Sbaaga vary greatly from tale to tale, sometime said to be a beautiful city of alabaster spires and obsidian columns, other times a verdant oasis full of fragrant flowers, lush and serene, despite its impossible location in the middle of a hellish and lifeless waste. However Sbaaga is described, there is always plentiful water, bountiful food which grows on the trees, and no conflict.

Some claim the story has been part of their culture since before they left their original homeland. Some go so far as to link this tale to that of Sunseeker, and say she was the first dray to have entered Sbaaga or even that she was the one who created it. Of course, no adult dray truly takes this story seriously, but most do secretly harbor a belief that such a place exists.

Adventure Hooks

- A strange illness has broken out in the siltside village of Break Shore. Investigation will reveal that the illness appeared soon after a mysterious ship sailed into port with a cargo of strange creatures, including a flock of large flightless birds that appear to be some strange relative of the sitak. The disease would seem to come from these birds, and has proven resistant to conventional medicine and healing magic. The birds themselves seem to be dying of starvation, despite being offered plenty to eat. The village's leaders recruit the PCs to halt the illness and preserve the lives of the flock at least long enough for them to turn a profit, but to do so, the PCs must track down the source of this ailment and the strange plant life that the birds typically eat, as only in the birds' home range might a cure be found.
- The PCs are on board a silt skimmer when it founders on the shores of a remote island after an encounter with a silt drake. Whether or not the crew survives, the silt-going vessel must be repaired if it is ever to sail again. Finding themselves stranded, the PCs have no choice but to scale steep mountainous cliffs to reach the island's interior. Within, they come face to face with the island's unique beasts, but also with its intelligent inhabitants - draconic-looking reptilian humanoids who call themselves the dray. The PCs must tread carefully if they are to get aid from this prideful people, rather than the ends of their spears!

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- While in the vicinity of Raam, the PCs come upon two groups of relatively similar but clearly different-looking reptilian humanoids. Both are tall and lean draconic beings with scaly skin, hairless body, and clawed limbs, but where one group is nearly uniform in appearance, the second group varies wildly in appearance, with neck frills, spiked tails, and crowns of horns appearing among them. The two groups appear to be locked in an intense battle, being nearly evenly matched, and seem to be oblivious to the presence of the PCs, but if the party attempts to interfere - either by attacking or moving to end the fighting - both groups will respond with violence. If they question the survivors after the battle, the PCs can learn that the members of the more varied group do not know anything about their attackers, but the others are nothing but condescending and arrogant, referring to the other group as “mutant freaks” and “half-breed infidels” - at this, an individual with spiky growths along their arms refers to the other group as “storied ancestors”

with a sense of awe and fear. Neither group is willing to discuss their goals, background, or origins, though the more wildly varied individuals do refer to themselves as “dray” - to which their foes spit and proclaim them “unworthy of the name” and “degenerate scum”. Should the PCs search the fallen, an unusual amulet bearing a sigil of a dragon’s claw grasping the sun, and a strange map can be found on one of the more similar-looking individuals. The map clearly shows the location of Raam, but has no route or place of origin drawn on it. The map is, however, surprisingly well detailed along the Bay of Maray (the silt body southeast of Raam), such as around the village of Cromlin on the southern coast of the bay and near the Dragon’s Bowl. The PCs might wonder who these strange “dray” are and where they come from, but no answers seem forthcoming. They might also wonder who their strangely similar attackers are and where they come from, but their only clue is the curiously undetailed map.



Secrets of the Pterrans

Design Notes: *The pterrans were included in Terrors of the Desert (Dark Sun Monstrous Compendium I) and expanded into an official PC race in the Expanded and Revised Dark Sun Campaign Setting (Second Boxed Set). Yet despite their inclusion in the Boxed Set, relatively little information was provided about them regarding culture or just about any defining characteristics of their racial identity. Unlike the dray that were deeply detailed in City by the Silt Sea, the pterrans received only a few paragraphs of lore.*

We decided to present them as possibly the most socially advanced of all the living reptilian races, capable of building

large cities, organizing themselves as a civilization rather than just a collection of tribes, and adhering dogmatically to a strange and primarily monotheistic (rare in D&D) religion.

Long crested pterrann are the species commonly depicted in Second Edition art, although a hump-crested pterrann appears in the Expanded and Revised Dark Sun Campaign Setting. The spine-crested pterrann was depicted in fan art. Three more exotic crests were created for this book, which also proposes several additional large settlements of pterranns far beyond the Tablelands and Hinterlands.

History

The pterrann are an ancient people, who were common in the Green Age. They were a proud, powerful, and wealthy people – the key testament to their power being that they were able to survive the sustained centuries-long assault of Sielba, the Champion of Rajaat who came to be known as the dreaded Destroyer of Pterranns.

Over the centuries of conflict, many pterrann cities and settlements fell, but the only pterranns that Sielba was never able to eliminate were a group of religious radicals, considered eccentric or even a cult by many pterranns of the Green Age. These religious pterranns belonged to an unusual monotheistic religion with teachings that centered around strictly-defined paths for one's life and veneration of a being known as the "Earth Mother". Perhaps it was their religious zeal that made them ferocious fighters, or perhaps it was their willingness to abandon everything except for their beliefs and start over again somewhere new, but whatever the reason, where there were once many groups of pterranns with many different beliefs, by the end of the Cleansing Wars, the only pterranns that

remained were these so-called "Children of the Earth Mother".

To the surviving pterranns, the fact that the deeply religious survived when all others perished, only served to vindicate and deepen the fervor of their beliefs. As their brethren fell, the pterranns who worshiped the Earth Mother became ever more convinced that their faith was the one correct and true faith, and that all other belief systems were false, and they became even more dogmatic. All living pterrann are descendants of these Green Age religious zealots.

The pterrann faith has evolved in relatively minor ways over the centuries. There have been schisms among the pterrann – the twin villages of Lost Scale and Pterrann Vale were formed out of the results of one such schism (long since resolved) but pterrann usually work to reestablish full communion between any groups or tribes that develop differences in theology. Even though some of the surviving tribes of pterrann have spread far across Athas, they still share a religious bond that they feel is profound.

Their Lands

Each pterrann tribe has a different homeland.

Dhecatl

The long-crested dhecatls are the most common kind of pterrann in the Tablelands, and are the dominant tribe in the Hinterlands as well. Found in the great pterrann settlements of Pterrann Vale and Lost Scale (which are further detailed in the Significant locations section). These are well-known spiritual hunter gatherers who are renowned for their skill at riding pterrann.

Erix

The hump-crested erix pterrann are the second most common type of pterrann to be encountered in and around the Tablelands. They dwell on the high cliffs, mountains, and high plains that lie near the Jagged Cliffs. Most erix pterrann settlements are small, as necessitated by the nature of cliffside living. Of these settlements, Clawed Perch is the largest and most well-known. A well-known breeding and training ground for pterrann and their riders, they do not work exclusively with pterrann, also providing their services to visitors from afar and the local Rhul-thaun (when relations are cordial between their two peoples).

Yrrak

The axeridge-crested yrrak pterrann are a very secretive and mysterious tribe, rarely leaving their territory in mountain ranges east of the Sea of Silt, where the yrrak prefer to live along medium-altitude mountain shoulders and the surrounding foothills and plains. While the other pterrann tribes and some of the other nearby reptilian races are aware of their existence, no yrrak have been seen in the Tablelands for centuries.

The yrrak pterrann do not keep permanent settlements. Instead, they follow a specific pattern of movement as they hunt available game, so as to not over-stress the resources of any particular area, only deviating when under grave threat. The majority of yrrak's transitory encampments fall within a circular swath of land, which the yrrak call the Loop of the Seasons. They travel their loop with stoic determination, and most natural geographical barriers don't stop the pterrann for long. Indeed, the only threat to their progression along the loop has come more recently as the

northwestern corner of their path passes near the turtle spawning grounds.

Queltz

These spine-crested pterrann are native to a vast maze of canyons far to the southwest of Pterrann Vale. In addition to the distinctive spines across their crown, they tend to be taller than other subspecies of pterrann. The queltz are perhaps the most architecturally-sophisticated tribe of pterrann, building elaborate nest-towns in canyons and gorges.

Their largest settlement is Anemoa Farang ("the Windy Gorge" in the queltz pterrann dialect) which is located in a wide canyon. On account of the angle and weather patterns for that area, the canyon is often surprisingly cool for the region, making it the choice for a large permanent settlement. The buildings of Anemoa Farang were painstakingly hand-chiseled from the canyon's limestone walls, making the structures of the city nearly impervious to most attacks, though they are quite vulnerable to seismic activity. The entire settlement is constructed to accommodate pterrann, with nearly every structure supporting nests and landing spaces for pterrann. A nearly constant wind whips through the chasm between the canyon walls, with a steady stream of pterrann nearly always flying from one side to the other.

Hazeo

All pterrann tribes cherish and tell the tales of their rare interactions with the mighty hazeo. Sporting sun-ridge crests and often topping feet tall and 200 pounds, the hazeo are among the strongest of pterrann tribes. Their homeland is far to the east of the Tablelands, beyond the Sea of Silt and so far to the east that the land gives way to silt once more - the hazeo boast that they live on the eastern edge of the world. Tales of the hazeo have filled the imaginations of generations of Tablelands pterrann with exciting and terrible images of the world's end, where the elements give way once and for all to the paraelements, where endless seas of magma and silt swallow the land, and where searing sun and storms replace the air. The hazeo are large and powerful, and travel far and wide from their homeland, spreading their legend as they go. Despite living even further to the east than the yrrak pterrann, the hazeo are far more likely to journey to the Tablelands.

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The tenacious hazeo are particularly proud of a major settlement they have built, they say, on the edge of both the largest active volcano on Athas and an endless sea of silt. When they travel, the hazeo eagerly invite other pterrans to visit (though few can make such a journey). Their village, known as Lava View, occupies hillside coastal caves at the northern edge of a volcano. These caves have proven just cool enough to provide protection from most of the heat, and are high enough to avoid even the most tenacious of silt predators. From here, the hazeo hunt both within and beyond the cave networks; any surplus is traded to the local obsidian-claw ssurrans for food and tools.

Phylos

The phylos pterrans live on a remote peninsula far to the southwest of the Tablelands - further south than even the Dead Lands - known as the Drake's Tail Peninsula to those who have ventured that far. Other pterrann tribes consider the sight of a phylos pterrann outside of their homeland to be an ill omen, as they tend to only make the long journey to the north during times of trouble. Phylos look distinctly different from their northern cousins, with a small series of serrated spikes running along their forearms, and spiky protrusions rising from the backs of their shoulders where most pterrans have rounded bulges that many assume to be wing-stumps. They are quite well-adapted to life near the cold mountain lakes and the

silt shallows below. Rather than forming bonds with pterrann like their more northern cousins, the phylos seem to share a special connection with razorwings. As the pterrann of this region are bonded to razorwings, their relationship with pterrann is much different - they do not treat the pterrann as sky brothers the way other pterrann do. In fact, the pterrann of the region are sometimes even used by enemies of the pterrann.

Most of the settlements of the phylos are hidden in sheltered coves along the coastal mountains on the southern edge of the Drake's Tail Peninsula. The village of Oreinoas is one of several phylos villages which raise and train packs of razorwings to act as an aerial defense against wyvern - and even pterrann-mounted - raiding parties. The village itself is a cluster of conical huts made of woven palm fronds. The huts sit atop raised stilts and are linked by wooden walkways. Villagers leave their homes each day at dawn for the shallow silt beyond the cove, walking on bamboo stilts and carrying large baskets on their backs. The villagers are accompanied by packs of trained razorwings which they use to hunt and defend against the predators of the silt. Those who stay watch the sky closely, ready to defend their homes. The phylos have good relationships with other settlements of the region, engaging in trade and occasionally sending packmasters and their razorwings to aid their neighbors in defending against invaders.

Pterrann NPCs

Hrakk Greenscale

Male 7th level Fighter

Notable Items: Iron spear

Hrakk is a burly, muscular dhecattl pterrann with brown skin and piercing yellow-green eyes. Shortly after his life purpose had been set, he lost most of his family in a gith raid. Afterwards, he was adopted by his uncle Chensal, who was highly placed in Lost Scale's militia.

Hrakk has grown up to be a stern, no-nonsense warrior who values strength and courage above all else, and has little patience for those who cannot hold their own in combat. His skill with weapons and pterrann riding has earned him the respect of his peers in the militia, but he can be brusque and dismissive of those who he

perceives as weak or unworthy, and this has held him back from promotion.

Ptellalia Seedbearer

Female 7th level Druid

Notable Items: guava fruit of extra healing

Like many members of the Path of the Druid, Ptellalia - a member of the queltz tribe of pterrann - dreams of restoring Athas to verdant splendor. She traveled from her homeland to the southwest to Pterrann Vale, where she studied under the local pterrann druids who focus their efforts on restoring the land through responsible agriculture, reasoning that careful farming practices have a role to play in healing Athas by rebuilding the

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fertile topsoil, helping the land retain water, and reversing the desertification of the world.

After studying with the druids, Ptellalia traveled to the foothills of the Ringing Mountains to help a pterrann tribe there establish restorative farming practices. The tribe was terrorized by a coven of defilers for years before they were eventually defeated, and in her time with them, Ptellalia has developed a very unusual specialty – restoring farmland that has been destroyed by defiling. Though defiled ash is worthless for farming, it is still suitable for shoveling into the ridges that can help trap water. Over the course of several seasons, the plant life will even begin to reclaim the ridge of ash. Through the use of her techniques, defiled soil can be reclaimed in a matter of years instead of centuries. Ptellalia has been very pleased with the results, and is eager to teach her method to anyone – pterrann and non-pterrann alike – who is seeking to restore defiled land.

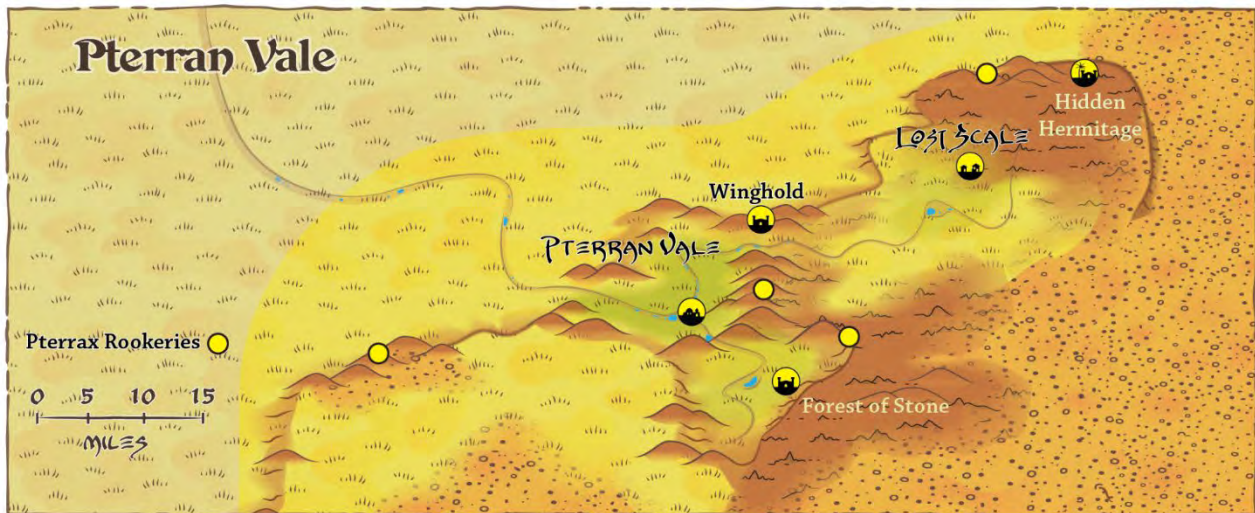
Ristar of the House of Rainkeeper

Male 14th level Trader

Elderly by pterrann standards, this erix pterrann is the last descendant of a family of traders who have been instrumental in building the connections between Pterrann Vale and the dynastic merchant houses of the Tablelands. Ristar has spent a lifetime cultivating relationships with several merchant houses, brokering agreements for the unique services of the twin villages' formidable pterrax riders, among other goods and services. Ristar is among the most prominent erix pterranns in the Vale, as most residents here are dhecatl; though erix pterranns are perfectly welcome in the Vale, it was perhaps his family's outsider status that made a life of travel and trade so appealing. It is very likely that anyone coming to Pterrann Vale in the service of a merchant house will be dealing with either Ristar or one of his subordinates.

Significant locations

Pterrann Vale and Lost Scale (Dhecatl)



The two settlements of Pterrann Vale and Lost Scale form the core of the dhecatl pterrann homeland, and are situated within a series of low hills and valleys where the Hinterlands transitions between stony barrens and a vast scrub plain. The valleys of the region were carved eons ago by a small river network. Today, all

that remains is a wadi - a dried out river bed. After a strong rain, however, a small stream will sometimes form and the river will briefly return. Through years of carefully tending the land, putting special emphasis on cultivating plants to hold the soil together and retain moisture, the pterranns have partially restored the

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health of the land and created a network of oases along the wadi.

As its name suggests, **Pterrann Vale** lies in the deepest part of the largest valley. While the valley is not quite as verdant as the belts surrounding the great city-states, it is more verdant than is typical for a scrub plain, supporting not only extensive herding but permanent agriculture. The valley is wide but not particularly deep - its ridges form a natural defensive barrier against ravaging beasts, but only a slight one. Most beasts can easily scramble into the valley, but the geography allows for such intruders to be easily spotted, especially by the patrols of pterrax riders that are always in the area. The contour of the valley also helps the pterrann keep their flocks and herds from escaping into the broader Hinterlands.

Lost Scale is located a few days' journey upstream along one of the wadi's dried out tributaries. Pterrann Vale and Lost Scale were once divided along religious lines - Lost Scale was formed as a breakaway settlement - but the two towns have long-since resolved their differences. Today the settlements anchor a region that is home to 10,000 pterranns - about 4,000 in Pterrann Vale, 2,000 in Lost Scale, and another 4,000 spread throughout the region in smaller settlements, farmsteads, the oases, or in one of the three specialized settlements devoted to the three life paths of the pterrann. Pterrann Vale and Lost Scale are primarily inhabited by dhecatl pterrann, but the queltz and erix tribes do not live far away and maintain close ties to the dhecatl. Members of these tribes are always welcome visitors to the vale, and more than a few yrrak and erix tribes have established permanent residence among the dhecatl. Taken all together, this is one of the most populous non-human or kreen regions on Athas.

Located atop the northern cliffs separating the valley from the Hinterlands lies **Winghold**, a fortress maintained by members of the Path of the Warrior. Winghold serves as a training ground for young fighters, its towers provide roosts for trained pterrax, and the pinnacles serve as a lookout providing visibility across miles of the Hinterlands to the north. The most dangerous threats to the pterranns often come from the north and are thus often spotted early by Winghold, which can then muster defensive forces.

The **Hidden Hermitage** is located on the northeastern edge of the region's cliffs. It is a network of cliffside caves, which hosts the primary psionic academy used by the Path of the Mind. Young psionicists and psionic masters from both Pterrann Vale and Lost Scale come here to train and meditate. The series of caverns

contains salt springs that serve as natural isolation tanks, allowing the psions to better hear the voice of the Earth Mother. As with Winghold, the Hermitage's location is also strategic, and serves as a way to watch the northeastern frontier. Travelers from the Tablelands who survive the mountains and jungles are often monitored after they emerge from the nearby Forest Ridge by young pterrann clairvoyants from the Hidden Hermitage.

In the large southernmost valley of the region lies the **Forest of Stone**, the name given to an ancient petrified forest that the pterrann druids have been working to restore for generations. The event that killed the forest here is lost to time, but it left behind a maze of tree trunks as hard as stone. Though the ancient trees themselves remain completely ossified, the pterranns have cultivated amongst them a canopy of vines and foliage, dense undergrowth, and acres upon acres of all types of plants, creating a thriving botanical laboratory amid the stony trees. The forest is a masterpiece of ecological restoration, and in addition to the druids is home to dozens of species of docile birds and wildlife. Many pterranns see the forest as a template which could be replicated widely. Though few travelers come to the valley from the south, those that do must cross near or through the forest, and they will quickly learn that the seeming tranquility of the forest will not last for any hostile entity.

Though the pterranns take the defense of their valleys seriously, small parties of travelers are welcomed, especially if they bring goods to trade. Nikaal caravans, some ssurran tribes, and jozhal families are common visitors to the vale. Jozhal families are especially welcome, and a handful have even been allowed to establish permanent residence in the region; jozhal druids have even been welcomed to study in the Forest of Stone. Even a number of the Tyr Region's dynastic merchant houses run sporadic, well-defended trading expeditions to the. Any visitors, no matter who they might be, are watched closely by the pterranns while in the vale. Because they are so remote from the cities of the Tablelands, travelers will often find that bartered goods are of far more interest to the pterranns than coins. Although the pterranns sometimes trade with caravans from their east (and thus know coins aren't entirely worthless), trading in coin can be a cumbersome process for them, and if a visitor is trying to pay for items in coin, the pterranns will often demand an excessive premium. Among the pterrann themselves, their familial, tribal, and religious bonds, as well as their shared philosophies lead to a high degree of trust,

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and a great deal of communal sharing of food and resources. This generosity typically extends to visiting pterrans (of any subspecies) but not as much to other visitors: the pterrans won't allow a hungry visitor to

starve to death while in Pterrann Vale, but they also won't provide free provisions indefinitely; at some point, one's keep must be somehow earned.

Myths and Legends

The Legend of Cloudcutter

Legend has it Cloudcutter Skystrong was the mightiest hazee pterrann – with the largest sun crest – to ever walk Athas. The stories of his journeys from his homeland far to the east take him across all of Athas and speak of his great interactions and heroic feats performed for every known pterrann tribe. Cloudcutter is the reason why those pterrans who know their people's legends are aware of the existence of the six pterrann tribes. There are those, however - especially among younger pterrans - who wonder if he ever existed at all.

Cloudcutter's final legend says that he traveled far to the northwest beyond the Jagged Cliffs, deep into the lands of the Kreen Empire and the jungles beyond, with no further tales speaking of his return or any subsequent adventures.

Living Clay

An origin story sometimes told by the dhecatl pterrans speaks of how the "Father of the Pterrann" (a creature whose description is not unlike that of a Rhulisti halfling) fashioned the first pterrans out of the clay of the river and moss of the mountains, breathed life into them, and gave them their purpose with the first Life Paths. Once they had fulfilled their purpose, it was said, their clay would return to the earth, feeding life back into the land and waters. Some pterrans consider this story somewhat offensive, or at least subversive, as their faith only recognizes the Earth Mother as their creator.

The Pterrann Bond to the Pterrax

Many who deal with pterrans and pterrax cannot help but wonder about the nature of the relationship between the two species: their head shapes, coloring, and physiques look remarkably similar. Although

ptterrans can't fly, they do have vestigial stubs protruding from their backs at precisely the same place as pterrax wings, but the pterrans are sophisticated and civilized while the pterrax are mindless beasts. Though their theology venerates the pterrax as sky-brothers and sky-sisters, pterrann religious traditions make no claim about how exactly the pterrax came about, leaving even the pterrans to speculate and theorize.

Many outside observers believe that the pterrans must have somehow developed or evolved from the pterrax, but a number of pterrann traditions imply the opposite:

- Many tribes of pterrann believe that the first pterrax were actually born from a pterrann mother. It is said that in the past, for reasons unknown, pterrann mothers would give birth to twins, one of whom was a pterrann and the other their life-bonded pterrax. In these tales, it is the sacred and embryonic bond of twins that gives such strength to the pterrann-ptterrax relationship.
- Certain tribes claim that the pterrax were born of a wicked conspiracy meant to twist the nature of pterrans into mindless beasts. Some say this was a plot by halflings, while others blame the thri-kreen. Though pterrans do not use the terms "life-bending" or "life shaping" to describe this conspiracy, what this legend describes is indeed halflings or thri-kreen altering the pterrann against their will to transform them into flying beasts of burden. In these stories, it is the act of liberating their cursed and twisted brethren from would-be oppressors that strengthens the pterrann-ptterrax bond.
- A rare few pterrann believe that it was their people who once knew how to reshape life, suggesting they shaped the pterrax in their own image. Other pterrans believe that the pterrax have always existed, and that the pterrans reshaped themselves to be closer to the noble pterrax. Regardless, in these tales, the bond is one of admiration.

The Fourth Life Path

If one ever encounters a disaffected pterrann, down on his luck, drunk and dejected, they may hear tales that there is (or once was) perhaps a fourth Life Path, the “Path of the Wind”, often taken by those that cannot conform to the rigid pterrann society.

Such tales claim that older pterranns sometimes lose sentience and transform into pterrax on their own over a certain period of time, but for the most part, pterranns who rebel against the confines of their society (or simply don’t fit in any of the usual Life Paths) are transformed via a secret ritual, performed by the elder druid and psion of the tribe to call into the fore ancient biological links and force the transformation to occur all at once.

This isn’t viewed as punishment by pterrann society (though the transformed individual may feel differently), but as a way to allow those members the

freedom they seek and still be able to serve their tribe in a meaningful way. To a melancholy pterrann, such a life might be a wistful release.

The newly transformed pterrax are said to be free to roam and breed with others of their kind, until captured and bonded to a warrior.

In pterrann religion, the pterrax aren’t regarded as beasts, but as servants of the Sky Father, just as the pterranns view themselves as children of the Earth Mother. Pterrann warriors refer to their mounts as “sky-brothers”, and treat them as such, with any mistreatment leading to quick and severe discipline. Most pterrann won’t discuss such fantasies while sober; though their religion instructs them to respect the pterrax, it also tells the pterranns to pursue one of the three Life Paths.

Adventure Hooks

- A consortium of Raamite independent traders and merchants contacts the PCs. One of their members - named Nanda - has disappeared somewhere in the Hinterlands while on a trade mission to obtain rare funerary ingredients from the inhabitants of Pterrann Vale, and they fear the worst. Especially trustworthy or well-connected PCs may learn that the consortium members actually belong to Raam’s Veiled Alliance and their mission is one of great importance, as Nanda is in fact Nanda Shatri, aspiring avangion and the leader of Raam’s Veiled Alliance; Nanda had been traveling in the Hinterlands, when she and her companions reported being ambushed by a tribe of strange kreen, and then subsequently disappeared (alternately, the PCs could be accompanying this mission when they are ambushed by kreen, and Nanda is kidnapped from their midst). Nanda had traveled to the Hinterlands to study the Chak’sa - a great stone head of kreen - and retrieve a number of thri-kreen artifacts, believing they might unlock secrets related to her metamorphosis, but Nanda’s inquiries and excavations drew the attention of tohr-kreen scouts who kidnapped her (to understand her agenda). Witness to her kidnapping was a tribe of erix pterranns, who were monitoring both the tohr-kreen and Nanda’s group, and have their own growing concerns about the activities of the Kreen Empire. The pterranns know that the tohr-kreen spirited her away towards the cliffs, likely moving her into down the Crimson Savannah and toward one of their cities. Can the PCs persuade the pterranns (and their pterrax) to help them navigate the cliffs and stage a rescue mission before Nanda is lost to the kreen of the Kreen Empire?
- Near the Carnivore Coast, tensions are growing between the pterranns who travel this region and the turtles who lay their eggs there. Confrontations have repeatedly boiled over into violence, and the situation is becoming so extreme that the human shepherds and villagers of the region are being pulled onto one side or the other of the conflict. A third faction is taking advantage of the growing conflict – an enclave of yuan-ti that has been gaining power by convincing the humans that only they offer a path to safety from the conflict. Should they learn of the situation and attempt to resolve it, the PCs will need to broker a peace between the pterranns and turtles if they are

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to have any hope of uniting against their hidden enemy.

- A massive and insatiable aerial predator (perhaps a cloud ray, perhaps an air drake - information is scarce and reports vary) has recently begun hunting near Pterrann Vale and has already decimated the pterrann's pterrax riders. Now, only the small corps of slimahacc riders remain to patrol the Vale, and the pterrann lands stand nearly

defenseless. The PCs are approached (possibly through a series of concerned contacts) by the pterrann to locate and drive off or eliminate the winged predator. Even if they do so, however, the pterrann will still need to acquire vast numbers of new pterrax eggs and train a great many new pterrax riders if they are to rebuild their losses, and they will surely turn to the PCs for assistance with this as well.



Secrets of the Yuan-Ti

Design Notes: *The yuan-ti are mentioned as a presence on Athas in the Original Dark Sun Boxed Set. Yet despite this mention, they received almost no development in all of the Dark Sun second edition materials. The yuan-ti were mentioned as rumored occupants of UnderTyr in the book City State of Tyr and the yuan-ti did feature in the computer game Dark Sun: Wake of the Ravager from the 1990s.*

In the 4E campaign setting, they were discussed in somewhat more detail, with the book mentioning a number of yuan-ti locations: a Shrine of the Sky Serpent in the Forest

Ridge, a Forbidden City in the Jagged Cliffs, and a repeat of the reference to them in UnderTyr.

The evil snake cults commonly associated with the yuan-ti could be an excellent and unusual source of villainy and danger on Athas, however, we felt that nearly every treatment of yuan-ti from almost the very beginning (from 1e onwards) seemed like a poor fit for Athas itself. So we decided to take a very different approach to presenting the yuan-ti—a psychometabolic ascetic cult.

History

While the exact origins of the yuan-ti are lost to time, ancient treatises, psionic memory stones, and scattered ruins suggest that they first appeared in the early Green Age, when races of the Rebirth first began forming religions and cults dedicated to patron beings both real and imagined. In many of those cults, religious practices and rituals were often mixed with the art of the Way.

In those early days, there were many cults dedicated to the natural world or particular animals, though some were more successful than others. One particular cult, the snake-worshipping cult named the **Su-Shenwan-Ti**, had developed a very different approach to their philosophy - to them, snakes were the ultimate agents of change and embracing the transformative nature of change was the secret to self-perfection. They began to take this philosophy to extremes, tapping into psychometabolic psionics, lifeshaping, and forbidden practices to transform parts of themselves or even their entire bodies into sentient enlightened serpents.

The Su-Shenwan-Ti believed through the perfection of their form, they could achieve spiritual transcendence, becoming one with the pure psionic plane they referred to as the Realms Unseen and spending eternity reveling in a state of all-knowing bliss. As time passed, they established a series of recognized transformational stages, which slowly developed into a religious hierarchy. While the transformation process was always painful (and sometimes even potentially lethal), the Su-Shenwan-Ti found each successive transformation had made them more powerful and extended their lifespan, further reinforcing their beliefs and attracting new followers. At the highest levels of

transformation, the cultists found their need for food and water was greatly reduced, allowing them to meditate for months on end.

The Sevenfold Serpent

After many centuries, an individual known today only as the Sevenfold Serpent emerged from amongst the Su-Shenwan-Ti. According to yuan-ti religious doctrine, the Sevenfold Serpent was the first to achieve true perfection, leaving behind their perfect physical form and transcending into the Realms Unseen. Legend has it their perfected body turned to stone.

Separating truth from the legends surrounding the Sevenfold Serpent is difficult even for the faithful among the yuan-ti. Their murals usually depict the Serpent as a humanoid of great size with seven hooded snake heads, each head having a human face emerging from within their fanged mouths. Some yuan-ti have postulated that perhaps the Serpent was a unique monstrosity born in the wake of the Rebirth, a mutated beasthead giant, or perhaps something else entirely. Ultimately though, such talk is heretical, as no faithful yuan-ti could entertain the possibility of the Serpent being a false deity, even if so many other Green Age gods proved to be. Most simply assume the giant stature of the Sevenfold Serpent in their murals is symbolic of their spiritual greatness.

Regardless of the truth or details of the ascension of the Sevenfold Serpent, the Su-Shenwan-Ti religion changed profoundly afterwards. Now everything in the religion revolved around the Serpent and the path to perfection they had discovered. Instead of an ascetic

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faith focused on the individual's spiritual growth, the Su-Shenwan-Ti began to worship the Serpent as a living god, and guard its meditating body while its spirit wandered the Realms Unseen became the faith's holy duty.

The original Su-Shenwan-Ti doctrine of personal enlightenment and self-perfection became twisted. These goals were still pursued after a fashion, but the cultists insisted that the only path towards perfection was to follow slavishly in the footsteps of the Sevenfold Serpent. They also believed the Serpent would one day return to reveal all the secrets of the universe, thus releasing them from their earthly pains and limitations.

The Destruction of the Su-Shenwan-Ti Temple

Rajaat and his Champions had different plans, however. With their mentality of human supremacy and purity, the champions despised the Su-Shenwan-Ti not only for their corruption of the human form, but also for their acceptance of all races into their ranks, and the Champions made sure to eradicate any and all Su-Shenwan-Ti they could find.

Dregoth was the one to deal the most devastating blow to the snake worshipers, when he and his armies laid to waste the temple where the Serpent's body was housed. By destroying the body, the Ravager of Giants destroyed the Serpent's only anchor to Athas and the Material Plane, thus dashing the hopes of the Su-Shenwan-Ti that their god might come to their aid in their time of need.

In that desperate hour, it was Lithrak the Envenomer that prevented the complete dissolution of the faith. Though a firm believer in the exalted Sevenfold Serpent, Lithrak nonetheless pursued his own enlightenment in an effort to join his god in the Realms Unseen. A formidable master of the Way, Lithrak gathered the surviving cultists to him and led them to a hidden shrine protected by the most powerful psionic wards Lithrak could create. Once there, he went about the business of reorganizing the survivors, most of them humans. It quickly became clear to Lithrak that time was of the essence, as the numbers of his fellow faithful diminished daily due to hunger and disease, for many of them were only novices who had not yet begun to climb the arduous path to enlightenment and rise above the failings of the flesh. Ironically, it was this fact that helped spare them from

cleansing by the Champions, as they were still human-looking enough to avoid drawing attention.

Restoring the Sevenfold Serpent would have to wait, for Lithrak knew he could not accomplish such a demanding task alone. Reluctantly, he turned his back on his own enlightenment and became consumed by more worldly pursuits. He began communing with the spirits of the land and studying the arcane arts, as well as the strange science of the ancient halflings to find a solution to the ailments of his flock. His dwindling followers aided him as they could, even offering themselves as test subjects for his seemingly ever more deranged and bizarre experiments. Eventually, however, their collective efforts bore fruit.

The Seven Idols

After gaining the favor of a spirit of the land near their haven, Lithrak and six of his lieutenants committed the ultimate betrayal. Using vile magics and a strange life-shaped artifact found in a cavern somewhere along the Jagged Cliffs, they captured and consumed the spirit of the land, absorbing its essence; they were transformed into the first Idols, reborn in the likeness of the Sevenfold Serpent and bloated with golden-green light.

Immediately, the Idols began biting all other cultists present, continuing until they were no longer filled with the strange energy and all their followers lay writhing in helpless agony as they underwent transformations of their own. Some became hideous and mindless, while others became serpentine to various degrees. Most seemed to change only little, but it quickly became clear that not only did the process heal any malady they may have had, it also made them more resilient and even restored a measure of their youth if they were past their prime. With that, Lithrak laid out the new tenets of the faith, dubbing his followers the yuan-ti.

Enlightenment again became the center of the faith, but now its goal was not to achieve personal release from the pains and sorrows of the mortal shell, but to find and call the Sevenfold Serpent back to Athas so they could remake reality in the yuan-ti image. In the meantime, they retreated to deep and hidden places where they could safely pursue their ultimate goal.

Survival and enlightenment are all that matter to the present-day yuan-ti, and they care little for earthly pleasures or hedonistic pursuits. Their scaly forms made them better adapted to survive the harsh conditions of the Brown Age, and removed the flaw of

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aging, but the transformation also rendered them sterile, meaning that the yuan-ti are always in need of new converts, which they either seduce, kidnap, or buy from unsuspecting slavers. The miserable lives most Athasians lead makes them easy prey for yuan-ti missionaries, who promise them eternal youth and a grand purpose.

The yuan-ti try to keep any of their activities in secret as much as possible, knowing full well that even with the Cleansing wars ending long ago, the sorcerer kings have little love or patience for religions other than their own personality cults.

The seven coils have the following names.

1. Saola-xxa (Sow-la-ssha) – located outside Nibenay
2. Lith-ra (leethhh-rah)
3. Jiutoxe (joo-toe-shay)
4. Tssao (sshaoww)
5. Yexxin (Ye-sshin)-- located in UnderTyr
6. Xxe (sshay)
7. Ssraa (Sis-rah)

Rituals of Initiation and Ascension

The ritual that sets one on the path to enlightenment involves the imbibing of an Idol's venom, and always results in the creation of a proselyte (tainted one). Some particularly crafty yuan-ti coils have figured out how to turn a diluted version of this venom into a powerful narcotic, distributing it among the slums of the city-states and indoctrinating addicts slowly over time. The venom affects the mind, slowly clouding the subject's free will and preparing their mind and body to tolerate the extreme trauma of the psychometabolic transformation.

Once a proselyte has been brought into the coil, their ascension to the next level of development requires the receipt of the Kiss of Enlightenment from a yuan-ti of a higher caste. This "kiss" is nothing more than the yuan-ti's normal venomous bite, administered when the aspiring lower caste yuan-ti is in the proper trance. Once administered, it triggers a violent transformation. Without the proper trance, the aspirant loses their mind from the pain and is reduced to a miserable type of creature known as a histachii (Proselytes are far more likely to successfully transform into heralds when they truly want to advance in the cult, because the transformation is psychometabolic in nature and benefits considerably from mental discipline. Those that are ambivalent or being forced against their will are more likely to lose focus and become histachii). Those with sufficient psionic skill, however, can maintain control during the process and thus become members of the next highest caste (for example, proselytes become heralds, heralds become zealots, etc.). It is up to the individual to increase their psionic capabilities, training whenever their other duties allow, so that when the time comes and they are found worthy to receive the Kiss, they will not fail, and loss of any chance of further ascension.

The Structure of the Coils

Coils rarely cooperate or even maintain contact with each other. They know from hard earned experience that compartmentalization increases their chances of survival should their enemies discover one of the collectives. The fact that multiple coils might be working on crafting bodies for the Sevenfold Serpent doesn't bother them in the least, as they believe that when their god returns it will have enough power to animate all of them and more.

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The number of zealots and apostles under an idol can vary from a few dozen to well over a hundred for the largest and most powerful coils. The number of heralds and proselytes (and failed ones) varies even more - a coil laying low may only have a few dozen heralds and even fewer proselytes, while a coil that is actively expanding may have hundreds of potential recruits. Coils that become too large tend to draw attention from powerful forces, including the sorcerer-monarchs or the Order, or of collapsing amid internal power struggles. Coils often go through a cycle of rapid growth, growing brazenness, conflict, and collapse, followed by quiet rebuilding. The true size of a coil is a closely held secret typically known only to the idol and apostles, and even apostles are sometimes in the dark about the full extent of a coil's activities and membership.

At the top of yuan-ti hierarchy stand the seven **Idols** (anathema) themselves. To the rest of their coil, these individuals are as close as any yuan-ti has come to reaching perfection and enlightenment. The Idols spend most of their time in meditation, seeking and calling for the Sevenfold Serpent in the Realms Unseen, waking only on the rare occasions when urgent matters required their immediate attention and prowess in the Way. As such, they are isolated and far removed from the rest of yuan-ti society, and it falls upon the **apostles** (abominations) to govern the day to day lives of the yuan-ti.

If it is the duty of the Idols to find and bring back the Sevenfold Serpent, it is the mission of the apostles to create a new body for the returned Serpent to reside in and serve as their tether to the material world. Naturally, such a body would need to be perfect and nigh indestructible, not only to house the unfathomable power of their living god, but also so that what happened to the Serpent's previous body can never happen again. To that end, they research various fields of study, and many dabble in divine and arcane magic to increase the power of the body they are crafting, or to somehow aid the Idols in their search.

The **zealots** (halfbloods) are in charge of the protection of yuan-ti community and lead the heralds and failed ones (**histachii**) in its defense. It is also their honored duty to extract the venom of the Idols while they meditate, as it is required to transform the uninitiated into proselytes.

Beneath the zealots are the **heralds** (purebloods), who serve as their coil's representatives with the outside world, bringing in new converts, acquiring the artifacts, tomes, and other materials the apostles might



require, and managing their proselyte spy and contact networks.

Proselytes (tainted ones) do not usually live within the yuan-ti community, instead acting as spies and cat's-paws for their masters. Only by becoming fully-fledged heralds can a proselyte earn the right to enter the sanctity of a yuan-ti coil.

The worst punishment a yuan-ti can experience (perhaps even more so than death itself) is total banishment from their coil and the loss of any chance of ascension. These outcasts are called the **l'sstan-ti**, and can be banished for any number of reasons. The types of offenses for which a l'sstan-ti can be banished depends upon which of the Seven Idols they follow, and the judgements of their supervising apostles. Such crimes can vary from endangering the coil, to some kind of personal offense against an apostle or Idol, or even blasphemy.

The most notable blasphemy is the heretical view that the Sevenfold Serpent allowed their body to be destroyed in order to complete their ascension to the Realm Unseen and that the yuan-ti should strive to join the Sevenfold Serpent rather than try to pull their god

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back from enlightenment into the Material Plane. Though yuan-ti who subscribe to this belief are relatively few, those who do so often discover and adopt the ancient name of su-shenwan-ti, eventually abandoning their coil and the tenets of Lithrak to pursue their own enlightenment. These su-shenwan-ti

also do their best to convert other yuan-ti to their cause or sabotage any efforts to bring back the Serpent. Understandably, the Idols and the apostles actively hunt down these heretics with the intent of destroying them.

Their Lands

The yuan-ti have almost no presence at all on the surface of Athas. Below the surface, however, they are spread throughout the underworld and dark places underneath the city-states.

Significant Locations

Athasian yuan-ti have highly organized communities near or under some of the cities of the Tablelands and interspersed on both sides the Ringing Mountains, including the jungles of the Forest Ridge. Farther east towards the Silt Sea, yuan-ti are less prevalent, and dwell in communities located in or near the various small mountain ranges. The exceptions to this are the cities of Nibenay and Raam, where several hundred yuan-ti are present. Most settlements number from a few dozen to nearly one hundred yuan-ti or more in the central temple or headquarters of a coil. These collectives usually occupy a series of interconnected underground caverns that contain large communal areas as well as private chambers.

The Temple of Siao-hua Yexxin, Idol of the Fifth Coil

The headquarters of the fifth coil, and its idol Siao-hua Yexxin, is located deep in UnderTyr. Here the yuan-ti have reclaimed an ancient temple to some long forgotten religion that was built in the Green Age and which lay buried until the yuan-ti excavated it. They have since refurbished the temple in their own image, covering the ancient walls with elaborate murals and erecting ophidian statues throughout. To the yuan-ti, this art depicts their profound spiritual quests to achieve perfection, but to outsiders this art would only appear to be a macabre series of increasingly elaborate serpentine monstrosities feasting on the other Athasian peoples.

The primary way the yuan-ti access their temple is through the winding and foreboding tunnels of the Tembo's Teeth region of UnderTyr. Most who venture too close to the temple will find themselves ambushed by a patrol of yuan-ti zealots or snared by traps long before they get anywhere near the temple. Even many lower-ranking yuan-ti heralds do not know exactly how to reach the temple. If they must return to the temple, they are frequently given a rendezvous point somewhere in the Tembo's Teeth, and from there, zealot or apostle psionicists will allow them to complete their journey via teleportation (usually *dimensional door*).

In addition to reclaiming the temple, the yuan-ti have also excavated a number of the small houses and shops that surrounded the temple, and the yuan-ti have dug a network of tunnels and chambers to interconnect these reclaimed buildings with the temple itself. In some places, these passageways shrink down so much that one must crawl or slither on their belly to pass from one chamber to the next - something that the yuan-ti revel in but that most people find extremely uncomfortable to do, especially deep underground. In places, their chambers are lit with unnatural green light but in other areas their maze of tunnels is completely dark. To the southeast, a natural cavern system leads far away from the rest of UnderTyr, winding dozens of miles away to exits in the rocky badlands far south of Tyr's verdant belt.

1. **Cloister** - This 250-foot by 350-foot space was formerly the temple's great hall, but now serves as living space for the majority of the Coil. Small walled alcoves and cubicles fill much of the chamber - barely enough for a modicum of privacy - but when the alcoves are full, the remaining floor space becomes home to spartan bedrolls and pallets. Up to 150 heralds may stay here (most heralds are usually busy infiltrating Tyrian society, but may stay here during special rituals, when hiding out to avoid detection, or when summoned to receive instructions), along

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2. with another 20 zealots; the zealots, of course, have the best accommodations in the Cloister.
3. **Central Temple** - This space is one of the few parts of the temple complex used for its original purpose – religious services. It is here that the yuan-ti hold their ascension rituals. Debris once fill this chamber - left here by runoff from the Cave (#14) as it flowed through a cleft in the rock and deeper beneath the surface - but the yuan-ti removed it when they renovated the temple and sealed in the cleft.
4. **Idol's Quarters** - Sia-hua Yexxin has his private quarters here.
5. **Apostle's Quarters** - The day to day leadership of the Coil makes their residences here. The large room has been subdivided to allow privacy between the various Apostles.
6. **Treasure Room** - A hidden room used to store valuables and relics.
7. **Vestibule** - The former entrance to the temple now serves as a guard room and staging area.
8. **Zealot Barracks** - The zealots of the Coil typically make their residences close to their guard posts, near the entrances to the complex. Each barracks can hold up to 10 zealots.
9. **Guard Station** - These rooms have been equipped and fortified so that the zealots can provide security from this location. On a typical day, the guard station will have anywhere between 4-8 zealots.
10. **Prison** - This is where unwelcome guests and individuals deemed too dangerous to be left roaming free are kept until they can be dealt with.
11. **Failed One Warrens** - The failed ones who can still be used by the Coil for menial tasks are given lodging in the lowest quality areas of the complex. Each warren can house up to 10 failed ones. Failed one warrens require additional monitoring and control, and so each has corresponding guard stations.
12. **Proselyte Quarters** - For those who are just joining the Coil, there is temporary housing maintained for them when they are brought in to witness their first religious services. These tunnels and chambers are more poorly than most other areas of the temple complex and are generally not well maintained. Each chamber is filled with scavenged building materials and debris that the residents can use to construct shanties or other temporary residences, and no matter how squalid the accommodations, they are still usually a step up from many proselytes' former living conditions. Each can hold up to 20 proselytes.
13. **Library** - The majority of texts and records for the Coil are kept here. The yuan-ti are avid collectors of books, pilfering spell books and tomes from noble or templar libraries whenever they can. A number of books here, however, have been written in their own language by the yuan-ti.
14. **Laboratory** - This is where the Idol and Apostles conduct their psionic or magical experiments.
15. **Cave to the Surface** - There are several ways in and out of any Coil, often leading to hidden locations within the city, but there is nearly always one additional exit which leads outside the city. This cave serves as that exit, being part of a natural cave system that is unconnected to the rest of UnderTyr and which ultimately leads miles away to the rocky badlands south of Tyr. The cavern itself is rather spacious - being larger than the Cloister and Central Temple combined - and is used to store wagons, draft animals, and other livestock. The wagons and draft animals are used for the Coil's occasional caravan runs (usually to trade for slaves) and the other livestock serve as a ready food source.

Yuan-Ti NPCs

Ssing-ri Saola-xxa

Female Yuan-Ti Idol 18th level psionicist/psion

The Idol of the First Coil, located outside of Nibenay. She is a ruthless authoritarian, perhaps because she has had to weather many attempts by the Shadow King to infiltrate her collective. Ssing-ri has been one of Nibenay's most persistent sources of frustration for several King's Ages. He has never been able to

discover her lair, or figure out how to mount any sort of attack on her directly. On a number of occasions, Nibenay has conducted devastating campaigns against her coil, capturing or killing many of her zealots and apostles, and reducing the coil to a fraction of its size. But each time Ssing-ri Saola-xxa has evaded his grasp and gradually reconstituted the coil. In this way, she has proven to be extraordinarily persistent and ruthless, even by the standards of yuan-ti.

Jorani-xxa

Female Yuan-Ti Apostle 8th level psionicist/psion

Jorani-xxa was once an unfavored daughter of a minor family of Nibenese nobles, House Chansok. She had devoted her youth to studying the Way, but when her younger sister was selected to be one of Nibenay's templar-wives and she was overlooked, Jorani began a spiral into madness. Her jealousy and rage were the openings one of her psionic tutors needed to begin whispering in her ear about a path to power and vengeance. This tutor was a yuan-ti herald, and successfully recruited her to the coil. Jorani quickly rose to become an apostle in her coil and orchestrated the murder of her family, and eventually even that of her sister - an act so brazen that it drew Nibenay's wrath down on her coil. Ironically, Nibenay's attempt to stamp out the coil only succeeded in killing most of Jorani's rivals, leaving her the coil's most powerful and influential apostle. Although the coil's Idol - Ssing-ri Saola-xxa - was angry at Jorani for bringing Nibenay's wrath upon the coil, she was also dependent upon the few apostles that survived the purge and has had to accept Jorani's leadership.

Siao-hua Yexxin

Male Idol Yuan-Ti 17th level psionicist/psion

The Idol of the Fifth Coil, located in UnderTyr. Siao knows that since the death of Kalak, more than a few of his heralds have fled to the surface and attempted to disappear into the city. Concerned about drawing the

attention of the new Tyrian government, he has been forced to quietly redouble his efforts to locate these wayward heralds. He is not the one responsible for the departure of the heralds - he took no steps to exile them and is unsure why so many heralds left at once. A herald losing faith or falling prey to heresy is not unusual, but so many doing so en masse suggests something concerning has happened; Siao-hua has directed his minions to try to bring the heralds back to the coil by any means necessary.

“Cirillo” (AKA Siao-hua Xio)

Male Herald Yuan-Ti 6th level Rogue

Notable Items: Bone club, Blowgun +1, poison darts.

Cirillo is a recruiter for the Fifth Coil, working in the slums of Free Tyr to collect those who feel they haven't seen any benefit to their lives from this new "freedom". He met his partner, a former thief named Tlanoa, when they both tried to accost the same merchant. They became partners in crime and joined the coil together; Tlanoa is now a herald as well. They revel in the petty power they have gained over their former stomping grounds. Both have proven eager new converts, but Cirillo is more keen than his partner. This zeal has not gone unnoticed by their apostle, and the prospect of Cirillo getting promoted above his partner is starting to cause tension...

Myths and Legends

The Promises of Proselytizing

When individuals are first recruited to serve a coil and eventually become proselytes, all manner of promises are by their recruiters. These often include offers or threats such as:

- Through the ascension you can transcend the weaknesses and flaws of your current self. All the ills of mind and body can be fixed, should you serve us well and stay the course.
- I am sorry you lost your family to raiders. What if I told you the coil is a loyal brotherhood that protects our own, and can help you find justice?

- Coil members are forever loyal to each other. In us you will find family and support you never had.
- Your tribe and friends cannot protect you and your family from the threats you face, but the coil can.
- Who told you that Athas has no gods? The Sevenfold Serpent has shown us the way in which we can ascend to godhood through perfection of the mind and body.
- You really have fallen into such a debt - how will you pay the templars when they come around again? It sounds like your only choices are working for us or being sold into slavery...

The Seven Coils

Yuan-ti coils are incredibly secretive and even the lower-ranking members of coils know nothing about the other yuan-ti coils - not their names, not their locations, not their agendas, nothing.

However, since King Kalak's death, a team of scholars has been searching his library and palace. In one of the library's deep basement corridors, they discovered a secret cavity, behind a false wall, with a corpse inside of it. The corpse wore a leather tunic that had decayed enough to reveal a secret pouch sewn into the leather, and inside the pouch was a fragment of paper, scrawled with handwriting that said:

The Seven Coils

- Bogo snake
- Kartang snake
- Kluzd - Draj?
- Silt serpent - Strait of A-
- Red slimahacc
- Wyrm - Tyr. The idol is missing and two factions have formed: spinewyrm and silkwyrm.
- Flying wrab - halfings

The paper said nothing else. The age of the corpse could not be determined but close examination revealed that the man had fangs. The man's hips were broken and a series of small holes perforated his hips and femurs, as if rows of cruel spikes had been driven into him, holding him in place while his pelvis was compressed (injuries common among those constricted to death by a spinewyrm). If the note was in fact detailing the snake totems worshiped by different yuan-ti coils, and if the information was ever even true when the note was written, there is no way of knowing if the information still holds true today.

The Ssethraks

Beyond the story of the Sevenfold Serpent, most of the ancient history of the yuan-ti has been largely lost or forgotten over the millenia. Occasionally, however, a psionic memory stone or clay-tablet treatise is found among ancient Green Age ruins and tells of forgotten stories of the yuan-ti. These stories often provide more questions than answers, but they always indicate the yuan-ti and their predecessors were more active than had been previously believed in Athasian history.

One piece of evidence indicates the existence of ancient yuan-ti assassins of great psychic might hunting any user of the arcane arts throughout all of Athas. These fanatic warriors, called Ssethraks, decimated many powerful wizards and their allies, at times destroying the enemies of the Warbringer, or undermining the armies of Rajaat's Champions in later accounts. The nature of their relationship with the Cleansing Armies, and the reason for their later betrayal, are both currently unknown.



Adventure Hooks

- Gold prices are beginning to spike across the Tablelands, as there seems to be a shortage of the precious commodity. The flow of gold from the mine in Walis seems to be running dry, though there have been no reports of the town being under attack. A journey to Walis will reveal the town to be in an unusual crisis; at the guard posts nothing seems to be amiss, but once PCs make it into the town, they find activity has largely ground to a halt recently as a growing number of the guards, miners, and merchants have joined a strange cult of youth, and the ever-dwindling number of the unaffiliated villagers are under intense pressure to join. Further investigation will reveal this “religious movement” is in fact a coil of yuan-ti attempting to take advantage of Walis’s isolation to take over the entire town for use as a new base of operations. The yuan-ti are still trying to complete their overthrow of the town, hoping to resume the gold trade before anyone notices, but they are becoming desperate - the holdouts are too numerous to be overwhelmed in a single coup and the PCs’ unwelcome presence adds a complication the yuan-ti did not anticipate.
- A cave has recently been discovered containing rare artifacts from the Green Age. The cave, it seems, housed a small temple complex dedicated to a long-since vanished cult. Rumor has it that the scattered household goods, arms, armor, and other relics - including strange cult paraphernalia and manuscripts - found there are even now being crated up and shipped for auction. The PCs are contacted by anonymous patrons to travel to the cave and recover the goods before they can go to auction, even being ordered to seize the goods en route if necessary. Unbeknownst to the PCs, the

temple complex and cult goods belonged to the ancestral yuan-ti religion (the Su-Shenwan-Ti), and a great many yuan-ti want these possessions back. To the ‘heretical’ rebel yuan-ti who attempt to follow their faith’s old ways, these documents are extremely precious. To the leaders of the yuan-ti coils, the items are stolen goods at best and dangerous heresy at worst. To scattered preservers and Veiled Alliances of the Tablelands, these items are priceless treasures and windows into what Athas was like in the near-mythical Green Age. To the sorcerer-monarchs and their templar and defiler agents, the cult’s goods are a disturbing reminder for the masses of another time, before the sorcerer-monarchs and their ‘immortal’ rule of the city-states, and must be destroyed. The PCs, however, have no way of knowing which of these groups (if any) have hired them to recover the cave’s goods and likely do not even know of their interest - at least, not until agents of the other groups begin to appear, attempting to recover the cave’s treasures for their own masters.

- The PCs are approached by one of the sorcerer-king’s elite defilers (guarded by a retinue of templar knights). It seems this individual has learned of the yuan-ti and the transformations they undergo, and believes this knowledge could be used to improve the dragon transformation process (the information might also prove useful to any aspiring avangions as well). She charges the PCs with infiltrating a yuan-ti ascension ceremony, and then stealing some of the equipment or materials used in the transformation process. But does this royal defiler want this for the glory of her sorcerer-king, or for herself?





Stats Appendix

Characteristics of Each Species

Size

Height and Weight of Athasian Reptilian Races

Base	Height in inches		Weight in pounds	
	Modifier	Base	Modifier	Base
Jozhal	48/46	1d6	60/55	2d10
Turtle	56	3d6	400	5d20
Silt Runner	36	2d8	30	4d6
Ssurran	48/50	4d6	200/220	6d8
Lizardfolk	72	1d12	200	5d10
Nikaal	60/56	2d6	130/100	6d8
Dray	74	2d12	180	3d10
Pterran	60/59	2d8	180/170	4d10
Yuan-ti	60/56	2d8	140/100	6d10

Age of Athasian Reptilian Races

	Starting age		Middle	Old	Venerable	Maximum age	
	Base	variable	Age	Age	Age	Base	Variable
Jozhal	15	2d6	40	60	80	100	2d10
Turtle	8	2d4	-	40	45	45	1d10
Silt Runner	12	1d6	30	40	60	60	2d10
Ssurran	25	1d8	40	60	80	100	2d10
Lizardfolk	10	1d4	55	73	110	110	2d10
Nikaal*	10	1d4	40	60	80	80	4d10
Dray	15	1d10	60	80	120	120	2d12
Pterran	12	1d8	-	-	40	40	1d10

Yuan-ti** As humans

*For nikaal, this is their biological age, not their chronological age. A nikaal in a state of brumation ages at an extremely slow rate - about one day for every month of brumation. This means a nikaal who brumates for 30 years would have grown just one year older (biologically speaking) upon awakening.

** Yuan-ti proselytes are typically young and vulnerable humans, (age 15+1d8). Heralds should be 1d4 years older, reflecting the time they spent as proselytes before ascension. Both age as humans.

Family Structure

	Birth	Immediate family	Primary Social Structure
Jozhal	single egg	2 parents, 2-5 young	Immediate families
Turtle	clutch of 4-8 eggs, buried in sand and abandoned, often near unrelated eggs	4-8 broodmates, sometimes with dozens of other unrelated broods	Abandoned at birth, eventually adopted into matriarchal septs, led by adult female
Silt Runner	clutch of 10-20 eggs in nests	Broodmates, raised in tribe but with unclear parentage	Tribes of up to 200
Ssurran	5-8 eggs, buried near heat sources	2 parents, 5-8 sibling broodmates	Tribes of around 30-50
Dray	live birth	2 parents, small number of siblings	Clans of 20-30; sometimes small villages
Pterran	ovoviviparous live birth, always to twins	2 parents, 1-3 sets of twins	Civilization; large cities up to 4,000
Lizardfolk	1-3 eggs	3 parents, 2-6 siblings	Extended families of 20-30
Nikaal	live birth	1 extremely close mother, siblings	Extended family caravans of up to 100
Yuan-ti	exposed to poison as proselytes and turned into yuan-ti heralds via an ascension ritual	Estranged birth family, the Coil	The Coil or Collective (their cult)

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Ability Scores and Level Limits

Table A1.1: Racial Ability Requirements

Ability	Jozhal	Tortle	Silt Runner	Ssurran	Lizardfolk	Nikaal	Dray (3rd gen)	Pterran	Yuan-ti
STR	5/20	8/20	5/20	8/20	8/20	5/20	8/20	8/20	5/20
DEX	10/20	5/20	10/20	7/20	5/20	7/20	5/20	5/18	8/20
CON	5/20	5/20	8/20	7/20	8/20	7/20	10/20	8/20	5/20
INT	8/20	5/20	5/18	5/20	5/17	10/20	5/20	5/20	5/20
WIS	8/20	5/20	5/20	7/20	5/18	10/20	5/20	7/20	5/20
CHA	7/20	5/20	5/16	5/20	5/16	7/20	5/20	5/17	8/20

Table A1.2: Racial Ability Adjustments

Race	Adjustment
Jozhal	-2 STR, +2 DEX, -2 CON, +1 INT, +1 WIS
Tortle	+1 STR, +2 CON, -2 WIS, -1 CHA
Silt Runner	-2 STR, +3 DEX, +1 CON, -2 INT
Ssurran	+1 STR, +2 CON, -1 INT, -1 WIS, -1 CHA
Lizardfolk	+1 DEX, -3 CON, +2 WIS
Nikaal	-2 STR, +1 INT, +1 WIS
Dray (3rd gen)	+1 STR, +2 CON, -2 WIS, -1 CHA
Pterran	+1 STR, -1 DEX, +1 WIS, -1 CHA
Yuan-ti (herald)	-1 STR, +1 DEX, -1 WIS, +1 CHA
Yuan-ti (proselyte)	-1 WIS, +1 CHA

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Table A1.3: Class and level limits

Class	Jozhal	Turtle	Silt Runner	Ssurran	Lizardfolk	Nikaal	Dray (3rd gen)	Pterran	Yuan-ti (herald)
Warrior									
Fighter	10	16	14	16	12	12	16	16	16
Gladiator	†	16	10	12	12	†	16	14	16
Ranger	14	12	14	14	16	12	12	12	12
Wizard									
Defiler	†	†	†	14	†	14	10	†	16
Preserver	16	†	†	14	†	14	10	†	16
Priest									
Cleric	12	12*	12*	16	12	14	14	†	10
Druid	16	16	†	14	16	†	†	U	†
Rogue									
Bard	12	†	†	†	†	U	†	†	18
Thief	16	10	16	12	12	12	16	10	18
Trader	14	10	10	16	12	14	14	14	18
Psionicist	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U

* Silt Runners and Turtles may advance to level 18 as paraelemental Silt clerics



Racial Abilities

Jozhal Abilities

Natural AC 8

Claws and Bite: A jozhal can use its talons to attack twice per round for 1d4 damage and bite once per round for 1d6 damage.

Camouflage: A jozhal can change the color of its hide by concentrating for one round. If used to hide, a Wisdom check is required to spot the jozhal.

Magic Resistance: Jozhals have 10% magic resistance.

Surprise Attack: When attacking from camouflage, jozhals impose a -2 penalty on surprise rolls.

Scale, Tail, and Claw

Turtle Abilities

Natural AC 7: Turtles can't wear standard armor but can wield shields as normal.

Claws and Bite: A turtle can use its claws to attack twice per round for 1d4 damage and bite once per round for 1d6 damage.

Hold Breath: Turtles can hold their breath for up to 30 minutes normally and up to an hour when withdrawn into their shells.

Shell Defense: A turtle can withdraw into its shell for an additional +4 armor class bonus. While in the shell, the turtle is prone, and their speed is 0.

Silt Sense: Turtles have the uncanny ability to sense their surroundings when submerged in silt. They can detect nearby objects, creatures, and their surroundings, when submerged in silt out to a range of 25 feet.

Silt Runner Abilities

Natural AC 7

Claws and Bite: A silt runner can attack with their claws twice per round for 1d3 damage and teeth once per round for 1d6 damage.

Gray Death: The shape of a silt runner's snout prevents any silt in the atmosphere from entering any of their

airways. Silt runners are immune to the effects of the Gray Death and other breathing-related issues related to silt. (They cannot, however, breathe under the silt.)

Silt Running: See the optional Proficiency below.

Optional Proficiency: Silt Running (Dex - 1 point/quarter mile)

An optional way to approach silt running is via the silt running proficiency. Silt runner PCs must use a proficiency slot to have this ability. Silt runners who grow up outside the tribe, or in a tribe that lives away from the silt, would have the same natural speed, but not the skill set involved in running extended distances across the silt. When using the silt running proficiency, a silt runner must study the route they intend to take for a full round, watching the swells of the silt to see if a suitable chain of features like shallows, outcroppings, and sand bars can be found across the silt. The proficiency check is based on the silt runner's dexterity with a -1 penalty for every quarter of mile in distance that they are attempting to cross. That is, a quarter-mile stretch would have a -1 penalty to the check, while a 2-mile stretch of silt would carry a -8 penalty. If the check is failed, the silt runner cannot see a suitable path.

Ssurran Abilities

Natural AC 6

Claws and Bite: A ssurran can use their talons to attack twice per round for 1d8 damage and bite once per round for 1d4 damage.

Heat Resistance: Ssurrans take no damage from extremes of temperature during the day and suffer

only half damage from all fire-based attacks. Ssurrans do not require extra water in hot weather.

Survival Expert: Ssurrans gain survival as a bonus non-weapon proficiency in a terrain of their choice.

Dray (3rd gen) Abilities

Natural AC 7

Claws and Bite: Dray can use their clawed hands to attack twice per round for 1d6 damage and bite once per round with their fanged maw for 1d4 damage.

Infravision 60'

Fire resistance: Dray make saving throws against heat and fire-based attacks for half or no damage.

Scale, Tail, and Claw

Draconic Manifestation: Dray have a limited ability to fly and utilize a breath weapon. The dray can fly at a movement rate of 12. Flight is not possible if wearing medium or heavy armor. It can fly only once per day, for a duration of one round per level. When using the dray's breath weapon, the dray can exhale a 15-foot cone of super-heated sand. Anyone in the cone must

save vs. breath weapon or suffer 2d6 damage. The dray can use this attack once per day. A full night's rest is required before either power can be utilized again.

Water Requirement: An active dray needs ½ gallon of water per day, while an inactive one needs only ¼ gallon of water per day.

Pterrann Abilities

All Pterranns

Natural AC 8

Claws and Bite: Pterrann can use their talons to attack twice per round for 1d4 damage.

Subspecies bonus: Each pterrann subspecies receives a bonus ability:

Dhecatl (long crested)

Dhecatl pterranns are so attuned to the Earth Mother that once per day they can touch a natural stone object or surface and know what types of creatures have been within 10 feet of that stone in the past 24 hours. They can determine the number of creatures and their type, but not their identity. They can also tell if defiling magic was used within that range, though they do not know any other details about it.

Erix (hump crested)

Erix pterranns are skilled climbers who naturally climb as if they have the Mountaineering proficiency, even without equipment. They can also ignore up to 30 feet of damage from a fall.

Hazeo (sunridged crested)

Hazeo pterranns calculate their encumbrance and max lift scores as if their Strength score were two points higher than it is (for example, a hazeo with a Strength of 15 would have the max press and weight allowance associated with a Strength score of 17). To hit and damage adjustments are unchanged.

Phylos (drake's tail crested)

Phylos pterranns can automatically befriend razorwings as if they have cast the *Animal Friendship* spell, and also gain the *Animal Handling* proficiency for free.

Queltz (spine crested)

Queltz pterranns are skilled artisans who receive two bonus proficiency slots that may only be used for crafting proficiencies.

Yrrak (axeridge crested)

Yrrak pterranns can detect the presence of others so long as both are in direct contact with the ground, as if using the *Blind Fighting* proficiency.

Lizardfolk Abilities

Natural AC 6

Claws and Bite: A lizardfolk can use its talons to attack twice per round for 1d2 damage and bite once per round for 1d6 damage.

Camouflage: A lizardfolk can change the color of its hide by concentrating for one round. If used to hide, a Wisdom check is required to spot the lizardfolk.

Scale, Tail, and Claw

Optional Rule: Dehydration

When not regularly immersed in water, the scales of a lizardfolk dry out and become brittle, losing their protectiveness. The lizardfolk's AC increases by one point per day that they are not able to either submerge their body in water or pour a gallon of water over their skin. By the fourth day, a dried-out lizardfolk has a AC of 10. On the fifth day, and each following day their scales are not properly hydrated, they take a -1 penalty to Dexterity; if their Dexterity reaches zero, the lizardfolk will die. Lizardfolk can hydrate their skin, eliminating these penalties, by submerging in water for 10 minutes or by slowly pouring 1 gallon of water over their body over the course of 10 minutes. It takes one 10 minute period of hydration to reverse one day of water loss, so a lizardfolk who has not hydrated their skin for 5 days would need to spend 50 minutes soaking their skin by either pouring 5 gallons of water over themselves or completely submerging in water to reverse the effects. Lizardfolk may also alleviate these effects via the spell *Alnobis's Adaptive Skin*, below.

Optional Rule: Holding Breath

As semi-aquatic creatures, Athasian lizardfolk are exceptionally good at holding their breath, and a DM might consider extending their ability to hold their breath. Under normal circumstances (with a good gulp of air and not performing strenuous feats), a standard character can hold their breath up to 1/3 their Constitution score in rounds (rounded up). When immersed in water, an Athasian lizardfolk can hold their breath up to 6x their Constitution score in rounds (rounded up)

The remainder of the Holding Breath rules are unchanged: if the character is exerting themselves, this time is halved (again, rounded up). Characters reduced to 1/3 or less of their normal movement because of encumbrance are always considered to be exerting themselves. If unable to get a good gulp of air, these times are reduced by 1/2. All characters are able to hold their breath for one round, regardless of circumstances.

Optional Proficiency: Survival (underwater) (Intelligence check with modifiers)

This proficiency can be used in two ways. It can be used to search for food that provides adequate nutrition or hydration (in saltwater) for one day. It can also be used to find plants that contain air pockets to sustain one's breathing for a day. Roll once for each, per day. The roll takes the following modifiers based on the size of the body of water, as finding the necessities for survival (especially air) is harder in smaller bodies of water. Additionally, some bodies may be known to lack safe food or air entirely, in which case the proficiency automatically fails.

This proficiency is extensively used by lizardfolk throughout the day when farming or herding, so as to avoid returning to their settlements or the surface to rehydrate or take a breath.

Body of water		
1 sq mile or more	INT	INT -2
2,000 ft x 2000 ft or more	INT - 2	INT -4
1,000 ft x 1,000 ft or more	INT - 4	INT -6
500 ft x 500 ft or more	INT - 6	INT -9
250 ft x 250 ft or more	INT - 8	INT - 12
Under 250 ft x 250 ft	INT - 10	INT - 15

Alnobis's adaptive skin

Enchantment (Water)

Level: Cleric 1, Druid 1

Range: Touch;

Components: V, S, M;

Duration: 24 hours;

Casting Time: 1;

Area of Effect: Person touched (or self)

This spell allows a normally amphibious creature to keep its skin moist and avoid any penalties from dryness for 24 hours per level of caster. The material component is a scale from a lizardfolk who died underwater.

Nikaal Abilities

Natural AC 8

Claws: A nikaal can use its talons to attack twice per round for 1d4 damage each.

Spit Acid: A nikaal can spit a stream of acid once every three rounds, dealing 2d4 points of damage (save vs. breath weapon for half).

Heat Tolerance: Nikaals require half as much water as other Medium creatures (1/2 gallon per day when active) and halve any damage due to heat stroke or cold. This ability is negated if they wear any armor. If a nikaal wears metal armor, it requires 2 gallons per day when active.

Nikaal music

When nikaal play their music, the hypnotic effect is difficult to ignore. With a successful charisma check on the part of the nikaal, anyone who is not deliberately resisting the musical effect will become hypnotized, as described under the Hypnosis proficiency in the *Complete Psionics Handbook*. The nikaal with the highest charisma score is assumed to be leading the musicians, and for each additional nikaal playing an instrument, there is a +1 bonus to the check, up to a maximum bonus of +3 for a quartet. Any non-nikaal attempting to

resist the music must make a charisma check or become hypnotized by the music. This check only needs to be made once per session of music, which typically lasts all through an evening.

As per the Hypnosis proficiency, a hypnotized subject is extremely relaxed and willing to do almost anything that isn't very dangerous or against their alignment. Typically, the nikaal only use this effect to make their subjects dance and revel throughout the night. This poses no harm to the subjects, nor does it go against any alignments. Those who are not dancing will immediately draw the nikaals' attention.

The nikaals' music aids the concentration of nikaal psionics but usually disrupts the concentration of others. Nikaal receive a +2 to power checks while the music plays, but those who resisted hypnosis have a -1 penalty to power checks and those who succumbed to the hypnosis have a -4 penalty.

All nikaal performing the music must have the musical instrument proficiency (which is automatic for bards), and at least one performer must have the Hypnosis proficiency.

Yuan-ti Abilities

Yuan-ti - Proselyte

Poison: Proselytes are immune to poison damage and have a +2 bonus to saving throws against magic. They develop the ability to generate a mild poison in their mouths. They can collect the poison in a receptacle, or deliver it by biting a victim, but they have no special ability to bite someone in combat, so generally their victim must be either restrained, asleep, or otherwise incapable of defending the attack in order to be successfully bitten. The poison is fairly mild and does 10 points of damage after 2d6 minutes. (0 damage if making a successful save against poison.)

Becoming a Proselyte

DMs may choose to allow established PCs to also become proselytes, either voluntarily or involuntarily. Proselytes are transformed by drinking a psionically active distillation of yuan-ti venom mixed with certain herbs and roots.

Anyone who drinks this mixture, whether by choice or by force, must make a saving throw against poison. If the saving throw fails, the victim must make a Constitution check. Success at this check means the character becomes a proselyte in a painful transformation that lasts 1d6 days. At the conclusion of the process, the character loses 1d3 Wisdom points. If the individual desires to become a proselyte, they are more likely to survive and receive a +3 to their Constitution check.

Yuan-ti sometimes expose potential victims to micro-doses of the yuan-ti venom mixture. These micro-doses do 1d4 points of poison damage per dose. Every dose consumed in the past week provides a +1 bonus to the Constitution check.

If the Constitution check fails, the individual becomes a failed one in 1d6+6 days. A failed one is generally not suitable to be used as a PC because they lose all psionic ability, as well as most of their Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma. Nothing short of a wish spell is known to be capable of returning a failed one to their previous state.

If the saving throw is successful, the individual immediately lapses into a coma. A comatose individual can be revived with a *delay poison* or *neutralize poison* spell. Human-headed yuan-ti have the ability to neutralize yuan-ti poison, and they may save a comatose individual themselves. After an hour passes,

a comatose individual can roll a Constitution check with a -3 penalty to awaken. If they fail, they may try again in an hour.

If an individual fails their saving throw after consuming the mixture, a few desperate measures may prevent their transformation into a proselyte. If neutralize poison, dispel magic, remove curse, and heal are cast on the victim, in precisely that order, the transformation process will be reversed. However, the individual will permanently lose 1 point of Intelligence. A wish or limited wish will reverse the transformation with no loss of Intelligence. Once the transformation is complete, only a wish can restore the proselyte to their former self.

Player characters who choose to be yuan-ti proselytes or heralds are presumed to have survived this process.

Yuan-ti - Herald

Infravision 60'

Psionics: Heralds gain some minor occult powers through their transformation. They can charm snakes an unlimited number of times per day as if using the spell *animal friendship*. Beginning at 5th level, they can attempt to charm someone as if casting the spell *suggestion* once per day.

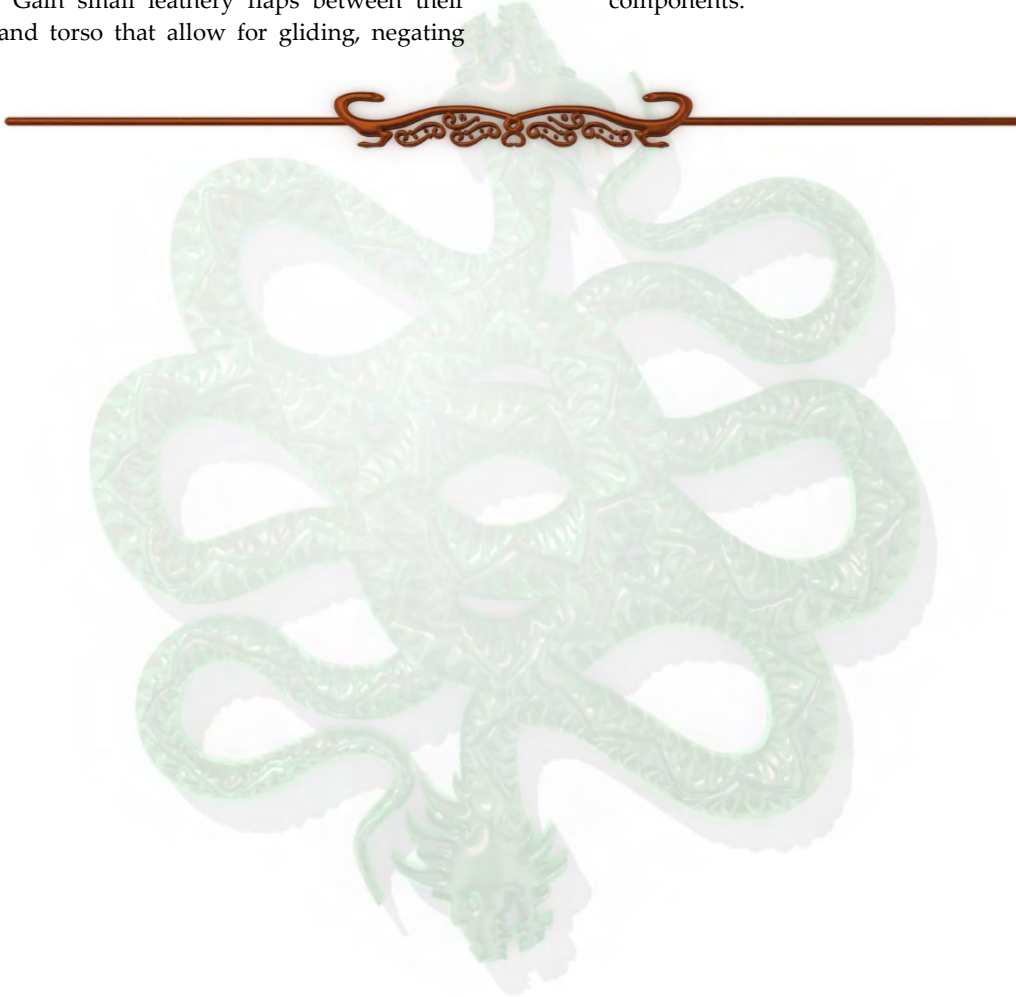
Poison: Heralds create yuan-ti poison that has a minor debilitating effect after 6d6 rounds. Instead of the standard effect of debilitating poisons, the poison of herald causes 15 damage at onset and leads to a 1d3 loss to strength, dexterity and constitution which lingers for 1d3 days. Yuan-ti heralds are capable of neutralizing yuan-ti poison by sucking it out of wounds.

Totem Power: In addition, each herald gains an ability that reflects the particular snake that was the totem of their coil. Each coil has one unique trait or spell-like power. Example powers include:

- **Bogo Snake:** Natural AC of 8. Has a short lashing, spiny tail, which deals 1d8 piercing damage. The tail can be hidden by normal clothing, though obviously if unveiled for an attack, the snake-like nature will be apparent.
- **Kartang:** Hardness of skin creates a natural AC of 9 and 50% resistance to cold and lightning-based attacks.
- **Kluzd:** Can intimidate other creatures as an attack. When they do so, opponents are forced to make a morale check with a -3 penalty.

Scale, Tail, and Claw

- **Silt serpent:** Can swim in silt, via unnatural magics, at a speed of 12 and can safely breathe silt-filled air, ignoring the effects of the Gray Death and similar effects (dust storms, etc.) for their Constitution score in rounds before they must return to fresh air (though they may begin to hold their breath as normal, if necessary). This does not, however, confer the ability to breath when submerged in silt.
- **Slimahacc:** Can burrow at a movement rate of 6 in any sort of sandy soil.
- **Wrab:** Gain small leathery flaps between their arms and torso that allow for gliding, negating damage from a fall of any height and allowing 20 feet of forward travel for every 5 feet of descent. Glide speed is equal to your normal movement rate (Class E aerial maneuverability). A yuan-ti can't glide while carrying (encumbered with?) a medium or heavy load. The flaps can be hidden by any normal shirt, tunic, or robe and even if uncovered most people will not recognize that the skin flap is a serpentine feature.
- **Silk Wym:** Can levitate once per day, as if with the *levitate* spell, requiring no material components.



Monster Entries

Athasian Turtle

	Tortle	Tortle Hatchlings	Zerlekh
Climate/Terrain:	Sea of Silt	Sea of Silt	Sea of Silt
Frequency:	Rare	Rare	Rare
Organization:	Tribal	Bale	Solitary
Activity Cycle	Day	Day	Any
Diet:	Omnivore	Omnivore	Omnivore
Intelligence:	Average (8-10)	Semi-intelligent (2-4)	Low-Average (5-10)
Treasure:	K (H)	Nil	
Alignment:	Chaotic Neutral	Neutral	Chaotic Neutral
No. Appearing:	5-10 (1d6+4)	1d8 broods of 1d8 hatchlings each	1
Armor Class:	7	9	7
Movement:	9 (Swim in silt 9)	9 (Swim in silt 9)	9 (Swim in silt 9)
Hit Dice:	2	1	6
THAC0:	19	20	15
No. Of Attacks:	3 (claw/claw/bite)	1 (bite)	3 (claw/claw/bite)
Damage/Attacks:	1d4/1d4/1d6 (or by weapon + bite)	1d3	1d4+2/1d4+2/1d6 (or by weapon +2 and bite)
Special Attacks:	Nil		
Special Defenses:	Hide in Shell	Nil	Hide in shell
Magic Resistance:	Nil	Nil	Nil
Size:	M (4-6' tall)	S (2-3' tall)	M (5-6' tall)
Morale:	Elite (13-14)	Fearless (19-20)	Elite (13-14)
Level/XP Value:	120	60	500
Psionics Summary:	25% are Wild Talents	Nil	10% are Wild Talents
MAC:	8	Nil	8
MTHAC0:	Varies	Nil	Varies

Scale, Tail, and Claw

Dray, 3rd Generation

Climate/Terrain: Any
Frequency: Rare
Organization: Clans

Activity Cycle: Day
Diet: Omnivore
Intelligence: Average (8-10)

Treasure: K (H)
Alignment: chaotic neutral

No. Appearing: 12-30 (2d10+10)
Armor Class: 7 or by armor
Movement: 12 (12 Flight)

Hit Dice: 3
THAC0: 18
No. Of Attacks: 3 (claw/claw/bite) or by weapon

Damage/Attacks: 1d6/1d6/1d4 (or by weapon)
Special Attacks: Dray can exhale a 15-foot cone of super heated sand once per day. Anyone in the cone must save vs. breath weapon or suffer 2d6 damage.

Special Defenses: Dray make saving throws against heat and fire-based attacks for half or no damage. Dray can sprout wings and fly once per day, for one minute per HD.

Magic Resistance: Nil
Size: L (7-8' Tall)
Morale: Elite (13-14)
Level/XP Value: Varies

Psionics 25% are Wild Talents, 5% are psionicists
Summary:

Scale, Tail, and Claw

Yuan-ti, Athasian

	Proselyte	Herald
Climate/Terrain:	Any	Any
Frequency:	Rare	Very Rare
Organization:	Solitary or Slither	Solitary or Slither
Activity Cycle	Any	Any
Diet:	Omnivore	Carnivore
Intelligence:	Average (8-10)	Very (11-12)
Treasure:	O	R
Alignment:	Lawful Evil	Lawful Evil
No. Appearing:	1 or 2-8	1 or 2-8
Armor Class:	As before transformation	As before transformation or 9
Movement:	As before transformation	As before transformation
Hit Dice:	As before transformation	As before transformation
THAC0:	As before transformation	As before transformation
No. Of Attacks:	As before transformation, usually 1	As before transformation or 1
Damage/Attacks:	by weapon type	by weapon type or 1d4
Special Attacks:	Poisonous Saliva	Poison
Special Defenses:	Poison Immunity	Poison Immunity, Psionics, Totem Power
Magic Resistance:	Nil	5%
Size:	M (5-6' Tall)	M (5-6' Tall)
Morale:	Average (8-10)	Elite (13-14)
Level/XP Value:	Varies	Varies
Psionics Summary:	25% are Wild Talents, 5% are psionics.	25% are Wild Talents, 5% are psionics.

Scale, Tail, and Claw

	Failed One	Zealot
Climate/Terrain:	Subterranean	Any/Subterranean
Frequency:	Very Rare	Very Rare
Organization:	Slither	Slither
Activity Cycle	Any	Any
Diet:	Omnivore	Omnivore
Intelligence:	Low (5-7)	Very (11-12)
Treasure:	Nil	U (B)
Alignment:	Chaotic Evil	Lawful Evil
No. Appearing:	1d12	1d6+6
Armor Class:	8	6
Movement:	12	9
Hit Dice:	4+2	8
THAC0:	18	13
No. Of Attacks:	3 (claw/claw/bite)	4 (claw, claw, bite, constrict)
Damage/Attacks:	1d2/1d2/1d3	1d6, 1d6, 1d10 + poison (bite), 1d4 constriction
Special Attacks:	Poison	Poison, Constriction: After a successful constriction attack, an opponent cannot use their arms (including for attacks or any spells with somatic and material components) unless they break free from the constriction with a Bend Bars/Lift Gates check. The yuan-ti has a +4 bonus for to hit rolls against a constricted opponent the next round.
Special Defenses:	Poison Immunity, Psionic resistance (See below)	Poison Immunity
Magic Resistance:	Nil	20%
Size:	M (5-6' Tall)	L (7-8' Tall)
Morale:	Unsteady (5-7)	Champion (15-16)
Level/XP Value:	250	3,000
Psionics Summary:	Because their minds have been pulverized in their transformation, they are impervious to most psionics. When any form of psionics is used against them, they are allowed to save vs. spells to negate it. (They are also unable to use any psionics they previously had.)	Power score = INT. PSPs: 120 Psychometabolism: Adrenaline control, animal affinity (S), accelerate, body equilibrium, cell adjustment, chameleon power, ectoplasmic form, energy containment, metamorphosis (S), poison simulation (S), reduction Telepathy: Contact, ego whip, ESP, mind bar, mindlink (S), phobia amplification

Scale, Tail, and Claw

	Apostle	Idol
Climate/Terrain:	Subterranean	Subterranean
Frequency:	Very Rare	Very Rare (7 in the world)
Organization:	Slither or coil	Coil
Activity Cycle	Any	Any
Diet:	Carnivore	Carnivore
Intelligence:	Genius (17-18)	Supragenius (19-20)
Treasure:	W (A)	E
Alignment:	Lawful Evil	Lawful Evil
No. Appearing:	1-2 apostles and 6+3d6 zealots	1d4 apostles and 6+6d6 zealots
Armor Class:	2	-2
Movement:	9	6
Hit Dice:	12	16
THAC0:	9	5
No. Of Attacks:	4 (claw, claw, bite, constrict)	Varies, (claw, claw, 2-6 bites based on number of heads, constrict)
Damage/Attacks:	1d6, 1d6, 1d12 + poison (bite), 1d6 constriction	1d6, 1d6, 2d6 + poison (bite), 2d8 constriction
Special Attacks:	Poison, Constriction: After a successful constriction attack, an opponent cannot use their arms (including for attacks or any spells with somatic and material components) unless they break free from the constriction with a Bend Bars/Lift Gates check. The yuan-ti has a +4 bonus for to hit rolls against a constricted opponent the next round.	Poison, Constriction: After a successful constriction attack, an opponent cannot use their arms (including for attacks or any spells with somatic and material components) unless they break free from the constriction with a Bend Bars/Lift Gates check with a -5 penalty to their strength score. Yuan-ti idol has a +8 to hit roll bonus against a constricted target.
Special Defenses:	Poison Immunity, Totem Power	Poison Immunity, Totem Power
Magic Resistance:	40%	60%
Size:	L (9-10' Tall)	H (15' Tall)
Morale:	Fanatic (17-18)	Fanatic (17-18)
Level/XP Value:	8,000	28,000

Scale, Tail, and Claw

Psionics Summary:	Power score: = INT. PSPs: 175 Psychometabolism: Adrenaline control, animal affinity (S), accelerate, body equilibrium, cause decay, cell adjustment, chameleon power, ectoplasmic form, energy containment, life draining (S), metamorphosis (S), poison simulation (S), reduction, spider touch Telepathy: Contact, domination (S) ego whip, ESP, id insinuation, mind bar, mindlink (S), phobia amplification Psychoportation: Dimensional door Metapsionics: Gird	Power score: = INT PSPs: 260 Psychometabolism: Adrenaline control, animal affinity (S), accelerate, body equilibrium, cause decay, cell adjustment, chameleon power, ectoplasmic form, energy containment, life draining (S), metamorphosis (S), mind over body, poison simulation (S), reduction, regenerate (S), spider touch Telepathy: Contact, domination (S) ego whip, ESP, id insinuation, mind bar, mindlink (S), phobia amplification, post-hypnotic suggestion Psychoportation: Dimensional door, teleport (S) Metapsionics: Gird Clairsentience: Danger sense, know location
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Reference Tables

Table A1.4: Rogue Skill Racial Ability Adjustments

Rogue Skill	Jozhal	Tortle	Silt Runner	Ssurran	Lizard-folk	Nikaal	Dray (3rd gen)	Pterran	Yuan-ti
Bribe	-10%	-5%	-15%	+10%	-5%	+5%	-	-5%	+10%
Climb walls	-	-10%	+5%	+5%	-5%	+5%	+5%	+15%	+5%
Detect magic	+15%	+10%	-	-	-	-	-	-5%	+10%
Detect illusion	+10%	+5%	-	-	+10%	+10%	+5%	+5%	+10%
Detect noise	+10%	+5%	-	+5%	+5%	+5%	-	+5%	-10%
Escape bonds	+5%	+10%	+5%	-	+10%	-	-	-	+10%
Find/remove traps	-	+5%	-	+5%	-	+5%	+5%	-5%	+5%
Forge documents	-10%	-5%	-10%	-10%	-10%	+5%	-5%	-5%	-5%
Hide in shadows	+20%	-15%	+5%	-5%	+10%	-5%	-5%	-	+10%
Move silently	+15%	-10%	+5%	-10%	+10%	-5%	-	-	+10%
Open locks	-	-	-	+5%	-5%	+5%	+5%	-	-
Pick pockets	+15%	-15%	+10%	-10%	-5%	-10%	-10%	-5%	-
Read languages	-10%	-	-10%	-	-5%	-	-5%	-	-10%
Tunneling	-	+10%	+15%	+10%	-	-	+5%	+5%	-10%

Table A1.5: Reptilian Weapons

Weapon	Cost	Weight	Size	Speed	Type	Damage	
						S-M	L
Silt runner							
• Dust bomb	2 bits*	0.5 lb	S	4	(ROF 1/range 1/2/3)	NA**	
• Paralytic dart	1 cp*	¼ lb	S	2	(ROF 2/range 2/4/6)	1d2***	
• Razor spear	5 cp	2 lb	M	3	S	1d8	1d8
• Silt tripper	25 cp	3 lb	M	5	B	1d6	1d6
Lizardfolk							
• Manfisher	NA	8 lbs	L	8	P/S	1d8	1d8
Nikaal							
• Tkaesali	10 gp†	12 lbs	L	8	S	1d6	1d8
Pterran							
• Oslak	5 cp	2 lb	S	2	S	1d3	1d4
• Slodak	40 cp	4 lb	M	5	S	1d8	1d8
• Thanak	100 cp	10 lb	L	10	P/S	2d6	2d6
Thagos (tail weapons)							
• Caudal whip	10 cp	3 lbs	M	5	B	1d4	1d4
• Tail razors	50 cp	4 lbs	M	6	S	1d6	1d6
• Fire sling	60 cp	2 lbs	M	5	(ROF 1/ Range 2/4/6)		
• Bramble ball	5 cp	½ lb	S	5		1d4+fire††	

* Silt Runners typically make these weapons within their tribes, but occasionally will trade them with other tribes. When the darts are unpoisoned, they will sell for one bit.

** Upon striking its target, a dust bomb bursts into a 10-ft diameter cloud of silt. All within the affected area suffer a -2 penalty to attack and damage rolls. The opponent must save vs. breath weapon or they become stunned for one round from coughing and gagging on the silt. (Normal precautions against blowing silt, such as a moistened scarf, prevents the gagging effect.) The silt lingers for 5 rounds in normal conditions, but dissipates after one round in windy conditions. Anyone in the affected area must save each round.

*** When struck by a paralytic dart, a victim must save vs. poison. If they fail the save, they lose one movement point, ie, an individual with a movement rate of 12 will slow to 11 after the first dart, 10 after the second dart, and so on. Silt Runners typically will attempt to hit targets with many darts. If their movement rate reaches zero the victim is paralyzed. The poison naturally fades and victims recover two movement points per hour if active, but only one movement point per hour if resting or paralyzed (being active helps flush the poison out). Cure poison spells immediately remove the poison's effect.

† Nikaal never sell tkaesali and consider the weapons sacred, so tkaesali will almost never be found for sale. When they are sold, it is usually as a curiosity or purchased by those who wish to show disrespect to nikaal. Nikaal will generally attempt to retrieve any tkaesali not owned by their people, using force if necessary.

†† Bramble balls are ignited as they are launched. After a successful hit with a bramble ball, the target must make a save vs. breath weapon or they will catch fire, and suffer an additional 1d4 points of fire damage per round until the fire is extinguished.

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Table A1.6: New Athasian Poisons

Poison	Method	Onset	Strength
Silt runner	Injected	Immediate	Paralytic*
Yuan-ti proselyte saliva	Ingested/injected	2d6 rounds	10 hp
Yuan-ti poison	Ingested/injected	6d6 rounds	15 hp

*Silt runner poison has an immediate but mild effect. When injected, a victim must save vs. poison. If they fail the save, they lose one movement point, ie, an individual with a movement rate of 12 will slow to 11 after the first dart, 10 after the second dart, and so on. If their movement rate reaches zero the victim is paralyzed. The poison naturally fades and victims recover two movement points per hour if active, but only one movement point per hour if resting or paralyzed (being active helps flush the poison out). A cure poison spell immediately removes the poison's effect.

Table A1.7: Water Consumption

Species	Active	Inactive
Jozhal	½ gallon	¼ gallon
Tortle	2 gallons	1 gallon
Silt Runner	½ gallon*	¼ gallon
Ssurran	1 gallon**	½ gallon
Lizardfolk	1 gallon	½ gallon
Nikaal	½ gallon	¼ gallon
Dray (3rd gen)	1 gallon	½ gallon
Pterran	1 gallon	½ gallon
Yuan-ti	1 gallon	½ gallon
For reference		
Humans/demi	1 gallon	½ gallon
Half-giant	4 gallons	2 gallons
Thri-kreen	1 gallon/per week	½ gallon

* On days that they make long silt runs, silt runners require a full gallon of water.

** Ssurrans need one gallon of water a day, but these water needs do not increase because of temperature. Even in inferno temperatures, the ssurran needs the same 1 gallon of water.

Table A1.8: Movement Rates

Species	Movement Rate	Movement Points	Forced March
Jozhal	18	36	45
Tortle	9 (9 in silt)	18	22
Silt Runner*	48	24	30
Ssurran	12	24	30
Lizardfolk	12 (swimming 12)	24	30
Nikaal	10	20	25

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Dray (3rd gen)	12	24	30
Pterran	12	24	30
Yuan-ti	12	24	30
For reference			
Humans	12	24	30
Elves	12	24+con	30+con
Thri-kreen	18	36	45
Dwarves/halflings	6	12	15

* Silt runners are fast in short bursts, but they walk at speed similar to humans when traveling long distances and thus have the same number of movement points for determining overland-travel distances.



3rd Edition Revised

Feats

Darter [General, Racial]

Your saliva produces a mild poison.

Prerequisite: Silt Runner.

Benefit: You are able to produce the equivalent of 3 doses per day of silt runner poison. Each of these doses can be used to coat one weapon, most often, but not limited to, a paralytic dart.

Special: Each time you take this feat, you can produce 2 more doses of silt runner poison per day.

Hypnotic Music [General, Racial]

You can employ your people's music to enthrall and enrapture others.

Prerequisite: Nikaal, manifester level 3rd.

Benefit: When you play your people's special music, you can enthrall those who hear it with a psionic effect otherwise equal to the enthrall spell, with a manifester level equal to your character level. To use this ability, you must make a Perform check while playing your people's special music. The result is the DC to resist the effect, and up to 3 others may accompany you in playing the music, with each accompanist who succeeds at a DC 10 Perform check increasing the DC by a +2. Unlike the enthrall spell, the hypnotic music's duration lasts for as long as the music is played (typically a maximum of 8 hours).

Pterrann Heritage [General, Racial]

You unlock the special ability inherent to your subspecies of pterrann.

Prerequisite: Pterrann.

You gain one special ability, as determined by your pterrann subspecies:

Dhecatl (long crested):

Dhecatl pterranns are so attuned to the Earth Mother that, as a standard action, they can touch a natural stone object or surface three times per day and know what types of creatures have been within 10

feet of that stone in the past 24 hours. They can determine the number of creatures and their type, but not their identity. They can also tell if defiling magic was used within that range, though they do not know any other details about it. This ability otherwise functions as the *stone tell* spell.

Erix (hump crested):

Erix pterranns are skilled climbers and gain a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks. They can also ignore up to 20 feet of damage from a fall, as Monk's the Slow Fall ability.

Hazeo (sunridged crested):

Hazeo pterranns calculate their encumbrance and carrying capacity as if their Strength score were two points higher than it is (for example, a hazeo with a Strength of 15 would have the encumbrance and carrying capacity associated with a Strength score of 17). To hit and damage adjustments are unchanged.

Phylos (drake's tail crested):

Phylos pterranns gain the Wild Empathy ability when dealing with razorwings, the check is based on their class level and has a +4 bonus. If the pterrann already has Wild Empathy, they gain an additional +4 bonus to checks when dealing with razorwings. Phylos pterranns may also treat Handle Animal as a class skill.

Queltz (spine crested):

Queltz pterranns are skilled artisans who receive two bonus feats, but both must be used to take Skill Focus in a crafting skill.

Yrrak (axeridge crested):

Yrrak pterranns can detect the presence of others through their connection to the Earth Mother. Yrrak pterranns are treated as having the Blind-Fight and Blindsight, 5-foot Radius feats as long as both the

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pterran and their target(s) are in direct contact with the ground (the Blindsight, 5-foot Radius feat is reproduced and updated below).

Blindsight [General]

Prerequisite: Blind-Fight, Base attack bonus +4, Wisdom 19+.

Benefit: Using senses such as acute hearing and sensitivity to vibrations, you detect the location of individuals who are no more than 5 feet away from you. Invisibility and darkness are irrelevant, though you cannot discern noncorporeal beings. Except for the decreased range, this feat is identical with the Blindsight exceptional ability defined in the *Monster Manual*.

Weapons

These unique weapons are designed to be constructed from non-metal materials. As such, they do not suffer from the inferior materials penalties described in Chapter 5 of in the *Dark Sun 3 Core Rules*.

Tail Weapons

These are known as thagos among the ssurrans and as thogos among the lizardfolk, who use nearly identical caudal whips and tail razors (lizardfolk do not use fire slings). These weapons are attached to the tail via customized straps that are specially fitted to the protrusions of an individual lizards' tail to hold it tightly in place. These weapons are usable only by creatures possessing a tail.

It takes a full-round action to strap on or remove a tail weapon. The wearer can loosely attach the tail weapon (without strapping it securely in place) as a move action, but using a loosely attached tail weapon gives the wielder a –4 penalty on all attack rolls made with the weapon, and other creatures get a +4 bonus on their opposed attack roll to disarm the tail weapon.

Weapons Descriptions

The types of weapons found on Table A1–1: New Athasian Weapons are described below, along with any special options the wielder has for their use.

Table A2.1: New Athasian Weapons

Simple Weapons	Cost	Dmg (S)	Dmg (M)	Critical	Range Increment	Weight	Type
One-Handed Melee Weapons							
Oslak	5 Cp	1d3	1d4	x3	--	2 lb.	Slashing
Razor Spear	2 Cp	1d4	1d6	x3	--	3 lb.	Slashing
One-Handed Ranged Weapons							
Paralytic Dart, Blowgun	1 Cp	1+ poison	1+ poison	x2	10 ft.	--	Piercing

Martial Weapons	Cost	Dmg (S)	Dmg (M)	Critical	Range Increment	Weight	Type
Light Melee Weapons							
Slodak	18 Cp	1d4	1d6	19-20/x2	--	4 lb.	Slashing

Exotic Weapons	Cost	Dmg (S)	Dmg (M)	Critical	Range Increment	Weight	Type
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Scale, Tail, and Claw

One-Handed Melee Weapons							
Caudal Whip	6 Cp	1d3	1d4	x3	--	4 lb.	Bludgeoning
Tail Razors	8 Cp	1d4	1d6	x2	--	7 lb.	Slashing
Two-Handed Melee Weapons							
Manfisher	9 Cp	1d6	2d4	x3	10 ft.	4 lb.	Piercing or Slashing
Thanak	20 Cp	1d10	2d6	x3	--	10 lb.	Slashing
Tkaesali	8 Cp	1d8	1d10	x3	--	15 lb.	Slashing
Silt Tripper	25 Cp	1d2 ¹	1d31	x2	--	4 lb.	Bludgeoning
One-Handed Ranged Weapons							
Fire Sling	14 Cp	1 + fire	1d2 + fire	x2	20 ft.	3 lb.	Bludgeoning
Bramble Ball	2 Cp	--	--	--	--	--	--
¹ The weapon deals nonlethal damage rather than lethal damage.							

Descriptions

Caudal Whip: This tail weapon consists of an up-to-8-foot long lash with a small jagged constellation of barbed spikes, often made from teeth, at its end.

Unlike normal whips, a caudal whip deals normal (lethal) damage, only has a 10-foot range, doesn't grant a bonus on opposed attack rolls to disarm, and you may apply your Strength modifier to damage dealt. In all other respects, it is treated as a normal whip.

While most thagos (tail weapons) are designed to be difficult to disarm, the caudal whip is designed to release from the tail if it is grabbed from the other end. A creature attempting to disarm your caudal whip has no penalty on their opposed attack roll.

Dart, Paralytic: A paralytic dart is a standard blowgun dart coated with one dose of poison, and must be fired by a blowgun (Chapter 5 of the *Dark Sun 3 Core Rules*). Upon hitting a target, the dart deals its normal damage plus the victim must save against the poison. Silt runners usually coat their darts with silt runner poison (see Equipment below).

Unpoisoned darts are the same price as normal blowgun darts (1 Cp/20)

Fire Sling: A fire sling consists of an L-shaped basket (a xistera) that is woven from heat-resistant yarrow grasses that can sometimes be found clinging to patches of soil in volcanic regions; the end of the basket

is ringed in flint. Fire slings are worn strapped to a reptilian individual's tail - most often by ssurrans.

For projectiles, the ssurrans drop extremely dry brambleweeds dipped in alcohol into the basket.

Such bramble balls are extremely combustible. Once flung, there is a 90% chance of the ball igniting successfully. A direct hit deals 1d4 points of fire damage in addition to the damage from the ball itself. On the round following a direct hit, the target takes an additional 1d4 points of damage. If desired, the target can use a full-round action to attempt to extinguish the flames before taking this additional damage. Extinguishing the flames requires a DC 15 Reflex save. Rolling on the ground provides the target a +2 bonus on the save. Leaping into water or magically or psionically extinguishing the flames automatically smothers the fire.

An unignited bramble ball does not deal the fire damage.

Your Strength modifier does not apply to damage rolls when you use a fire sling.

Loading a fire sling is a move action that requires two hands and provokes attacks of opportunity.

Manfisher: This weapon resembles a trident, with two long prongs (often made of carved bone) on both sides and a shorter one (made of flint or obsidian) in the middle. The space between the two long prongs is

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perfectly suited to trapping the neck or limb of a human sized creature. The two outer prongs and the shaft directly below them are studded with razor-sharp back curving teeth (usually shark teeth), to prevent enemies from gripping them.

This weapon can be thrown. You can also use it to make trip attacks. If you are tripped during your own trip attempt, you can drop the manfisher to avoid being tripped. If you use a ready action to set a manfisher against a charge, you deal double damage on a successful hit against a charging character.

Oslak: Commonly known as a pterranean overclaw, this specially crafted claw covering is worn over a pterranean's four-fingered hand. It is made from the same material as the slodak: young hardwood tree pieces treated with a special mixture of tree sap and id fiend blood.

A pterranean wearing an oslak gets a rake attack for 1d4 damage and may wear two at a time, one on each hand.

Your opponent cannot use a disarm action to disarm you of pterranean overclaws. The cost and weight given are for a single overclaw. An attack with a pterranean overclaw is considered an armed attack.

Razor Spear: This spear has an extremely sharp edge at the end of a very light-weight piece of sun-hardened silt bamboo (which often grows at the edge of mudflats).

Silt Tripper: Fashioned from the tentacle of a silt horror, the silt tripper consists of a long bamboo rod with the tentacle attached at its end. A silt tripper deals nonlethal damage, and deals no damage to any creature with an armor bonus of +1 or higher or a natural armor bonus of +3 or higher.

You can make trip attacks with a silt tripper. If you are tripped during your own trip attempt, you can drop the silt tripper to avoid being tripped.

You can use the Weapon Finesse feat to apply your Dexterity modifier instead of your Strength modifier to attack rolls with a silt tripper sized for you, even though it isn't a light weapon.

Slodak: The slodak is a wooden short sword, carved from young hardwood trees and treated with a mixture of tree sap and id fiend blood. This treatment renders the blade of the weapon extremely strong, making it a deadly weapon.

Thanak: The thanak is a chopping weapon of pterranean manufacture resembling a jagged sword or sawblade. It consists of a pair of hardwood strips bound together, with a row of pterranean teeth protruding from between them along one edge of the weapon.

Tail Razors: Tail razors are a set of 8 foot-long extremely-sharp blades - typically made of bone - that extend radially out from the lizard's tail. The weapons rely on their extreme sharpness, rather than raw strength, to do damage. Properly fitted, your opponent cannot use a disarm action to disarm you of tail razors.

Tkaesali: This polearm, exclusively used by the nikaal, consists of a long wooden haft topped with a circular, jagged blade. Nikaal never sell tkaesali and consider the weapons sacred, so tkaesali will almost never be found for sale. When they are sold, it is usually as a curiosity or purchased by those who wish to show disrespect to nikaal. Nikaal will generally attempt to retrieve any tkaesali not owned by their people, using force if necessary.

A tkaesali has reach. You can strike opponents 10 feet away with it, but you can't use it against an adjacent foe.

Equipment

Table A2.2: Special Substances and Items

Special Substances and Items	Cost (Cp)
Dust Bomb	10
Silt Runner Poison	25

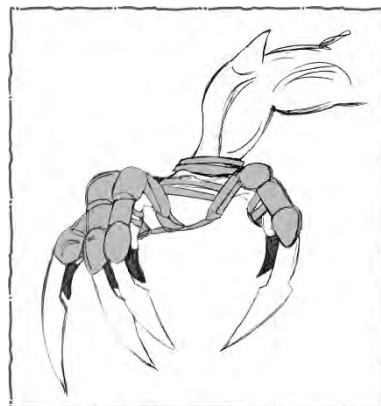


Table A2.3: New Athasian Poisons

Name	Type	Save DC	Initial Damage	Secondary Damage	Price (Cp)	Craft DC
Silt Runner	Injury	DC 10	special	special	25	15
Yuan-ti Proselyte Saliva	Injury	DC 12	1d4 Con	1d4 Con	100	15
Yuan-ti Venom	Injury	DC 12	1d6 Con	1d6 Con	130	15

Descriptions

Dust Bomb: A favorite weapon of silt runners are dust bombs. These grotesque objects are created by taking the lower stomach of a dead erdlu, filling it with silt, and squeezing all the air out. This process can be repeated a number of times until a surprisingly large amount of silt is stored in the organ. These stomachs are then hurled at enemies; they do no damage when they hit, but they rupture into an enormous cloud of dust that chokes the lungs and makes it difficult to see, replicating the effects of exposure to slit - known as the Gray Death.

As a standard action, you can throw a dust bomb up to 20 feet. It requires a successful ranged touch attack to hit the target. Upon impact, the dust bomb ruptures, creating a cloud of choking dust in a 10-foot radius centered on the target. Creatures suffer a -2 penalty to initiative, attack and damage rolls, as well as Spot checks within an area affected. The dust cloud lasts for 1d4 rounds.

The dust cloud created by the dust bomb can be dispersed by a moderate wind (at least 10 mph), dissipating it after 1 round.

Silt Runner Poison: The saliva of certain silt runners contains a mild poison that slowly causes fatigue and muscle weakness, especially in the lower limbs.

Upon failing their initial saving throw, a character's speed is reduced by 5 f; this effect lasts for 2d6 minutes. A failed secondary save results in the character being incapable of running or charging for 2d6 minutes. Multiple doses of this poison have cumulative effects, both in speed reduction and in duration. Each subsequent exposure to silt runner poison while a previous dose is still in effect raises the save DC by +1 and may extend the length of the effect - reroll the poison's duration and compare the remaining previous duration to the newly rolled duration, keeping the longer of the two durations. A character whose speed is reduced to zero may only use a full-round action to move 5 feet (1 square) in any direction, even diagonally; though this may appear to be a 5-foot step, it is not, and provokes attacks of opportunity normally.

Racial Stats and Templates

Jozhal

See Terrors of Athas

Turtle Hatchlings CR 4

True Neutral Large Humanoid (Swarm, Turtle)
Init +2; **Senses** Low-Light Vision; Listen +0, Spot +4
Aura -
Languages: -

AC 18, touch 16, flat-footed 16
(+4 size, +2 Dex, +2 Natural Armor)
hp 49 (9d8+9);
Fort +7, **Ref** +5, **Will** +3

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares), Swim 20 ft.
Melee: Swarm (2d6)
Full Melee: Swarm (2d6)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.
Base Atk +6; Grp -
Combat Actions: Distraction

Abilities Str 1, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 2
SQ Half damage from Slashing and Piercing, Hold Breath, Low-Light Vision, Skills, Silt Swim, Swarm Traits, Tremorsense 30 ft.
Feats Skill Focus (Swim) B.
Skills: Spot +4, Swim +7.

Environment: Coasts bordering silt
Organization: Solitary, bale (4-9), swarm (10-24)
Treasure: -
Alignment: Usually true neutral
Advancement: -
Level Adjustment: -

Hold Breath (Ex): Turtle hatchlings can hold their breath for up to an hour.

Skills (Ex): A turtle hatchling swarm has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

Silt Swim (Ex): Turtle hatchlings have the ability to swim in silt.

Tremorsense (Ex): Turtle hatchlings can automatically sense the location of anything that is in contact with the ground and within range. When swimming in silt, they can also sense the location of creatures moving through silt. If no straight path exists through the ground from the creature to those that it's sensing, then the range defines the maximum distance of the shortest indirect path. It must itself be in contact with the ground, and the creatures must be moving. As long as the other creatures are taking physical actions, including casting spells with somatic components, they're considered moving; they don't have to move from place to place for a creature with tremorsense to detect them.

Turtle CR 1/2

Turtle, 1st-Level Warrior

Chaotic Neutral Medium Humanoid (Turtle)

Init -1; **Senses** Listen -1, Spot -1

Aura -

Languages: Turtle

AC 13, touch 9, flat-footed 13

(12 Dex, +3 Nat, +1 shield)

hp 5 (1d8+1);

Fort +6, **Ref** +0, **Will** -1

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares), Swim 20 ft.

Melee: Longspear +1 (1d8+1; 20/x3) or Claw +1 (1d4+1)

Full Melee: Longspear +1 (1d8+1; 20/x3) or 2x Claw +1 (1d4+1) and Bite -4 (1d6)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft w/ Longspear)

Base Atk +1; Grp +2

Combat Actions: -

Abilities Str 13, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 9, Wis 9, Cha 8

SQ Hold Breath, Shell Defense, Shelled Body, Skills, Silt Swim.

Feats Great Fortitude.

Skills: Handle Animal +0, Intimidate +2, Swim +9.

Environment: Silt

Organization: Solitary, bale (4-9), war-bale (10-24), or tribe (30-300)

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Usually chaotic neutral

Advancement: By character class

Level Adjustment: +1

Turtle Characters

Turtles tend to be barbarians, though rangers are also common. Turtle clerics often worship paraelemental Silt.

Turtle Traits (Ex):

+2 Constitution, -2 Wisdom. Turtles are hearty, but have difficulty controlling their more violent urges.

Medium: As Medium creatures, turtles have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.

Turtle base land speed is 20 feet, and they can swim in silt with a movement rate of 20 feet.

Hold Breath: Turtles can hold their breath for a number of minutes (as opposed to rounds) equal to 3x their Constitution score before they risk drowning, and double (2x) that length of time when they withdraw into their shells.

Natural Armor: Turtles have a +3 natural armor bonus to AC due to their shell.

Natural Weapons: Turtles may make one bite and two claw attacks as a full round action. Their primary claw attack does 1d4 points of damage for both of their claws. Their secondary bite attack deals 1d6 points of damage. A turtle can attack with a weapon at its normal attack bonus, and make either a bite or claw attack as a secondary attack.

Shell Defense: As a free action, a turtle can withdraw into its shell for safety, increasing its Natural Armor bonus by +4 (to a base of +7). While in its shell, a turtle is prone, has a speed of 0, and can't attack. A turtle can pull back out of its shell as a free action.

Shelled Body: Turtles cannot wear standard humanoid armor due to the presence of their shell. Turtle armor must be custom made at double the base cost. Turtles can wield shields as normal.

Silt Sense: When submerged in silt, or in silt storms, turtles have blindsense out to a range of 25 feet.

Scale, Tail, and Claw

Skills: A turtle has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

Silt Swim: Turtles have the ability to swim in silt.

Automatic Languages: Common and Turtle; Bonus Languages: Dwarven, Gith, Jozhal, Pterran, Scrab, Slig, Tari and Thri-Kreen.

Favored Class: Barbarian.

The turtle warrior presented here had the following ability scores before racial adjustments: Str 13, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Silt Runner

See Terrors of Athas

Ssurran

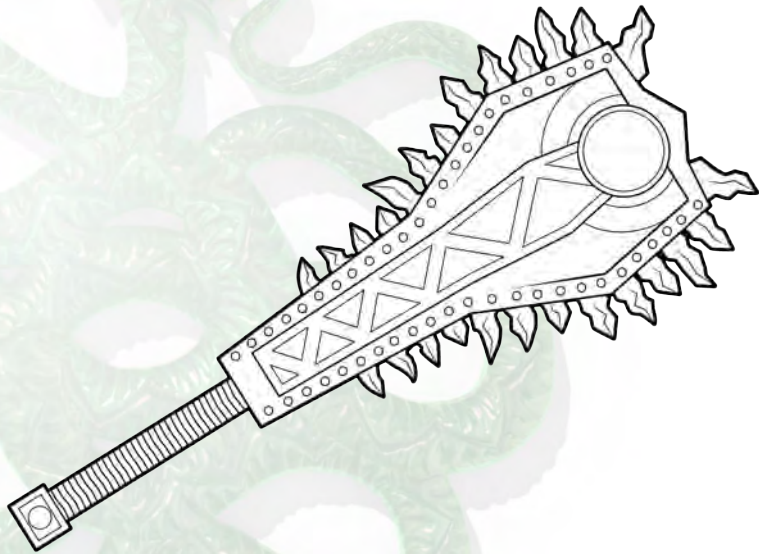
See Terrors of Athas

Lizardfolk, Athasian

See Terrors of Athas

Nikaal

See Terrors of Athas



3rd Generation Dray CRI

3rd Generation Dray, 1st-Level Warrior

Chaotic Neutral Medium Dragon

Init +1; **Senses** Listen +0, Spot +0

Aura -

Languages: Dray

AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13

(+1 Dex, +3 Nat)

hp 4 (1d8+1);

Fort +2, **Ref** +1, **Will** +1

Speed 30 ft.

Melee: Claw +2 (1d4+1) or Bone Longsword +1 (1d8; 19-20/x2)

Full Melee: 2x Claw +2 (1d4+1) and Bite +0 (1d6) or Bone Longsword +1 (1d8; 19-20/x2) and Bite +0 (1d6)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +1; Grp +2

Combat Actions: -

Abilities Str 13, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 11

SQ Draconic Manifestation (3 rounds per day), Darkvision 60 ft., Immunities, Less Water, Low-light Vision, Resistance to Fire 10.

Feats Multiattack

Skills: Craft (any) +5, Listen +0, Spot +0

Environment: Any

Organization: Solitary, patrol (2-12), or clan (4-48)

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Usually chaotic neutral

Advancement: By character class

Level Adjustment: +1

3rd Generation Dray Characters

3rd generation dray tend to be wilders, though fighters and rogues are also common. Dray clerics often worship paraelemental Silt.

3rd Generation Dray Traits (Ex):

+2 Charisma. 3rd generation dray are known for having strong personalities.

Medium: As Medium creatures, 3rd generation dray have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.

A third generation dray's base land speed is 30 feet.

Low-light vision.

Darkvision out to 60 feet.

Natural Armor: Third generation dray have a +3 natural armor bonus.

Natural Weapons: Third generation dray may make one bite and two claw attacks as a full round action. Their primary claw attack does 1d4 points of damage for both of their claws. Their secondary bite attack deals 1d6 points of damage.

A third generation dray can attack with a weapon at its normal attack bonus, and make either a bite or claw attack as a secondary attack.

Draconic Manifestation: Third generation dray have the ability to temporarily manifest draconic abilities. They can only manifest one ability at a time, and the manifestations can be used for only three rounds per level per day, usable in one round intervals. Manifesting an ability or switching which ability is manifested is a swift action. A full night's rest is required to recharge (for example, a 3rd level dray can manifest draconic powers for a total of 9 rounds - it could

Scale, Tail, and Claw

manifest one power for 4 rounds and another power for 5 rounds, exhausting its manifestations until the character has had a full night's rest). The available manifestation powers are:

- **Breath Weapon:** The dray can exhale a 15-foot cone of super heated sand. Damage is half fire damage and half piercing damage due to the abrasion of the super heated sand. Anyone in the cone must save vs. breath weapon or suffer 2d6 damage. Targets may attempt Reflex saves to take half damage (DC 10 + 1/2 HD + the dray's Con modifier). Once a dray uses their breath weapon, they can't use it again until 1d4 rounds later.
- **Draconic Wings:** The dray sprouts wings and can fly at the same rate as their land speed.

Immunities (Ex): Dray are immune to magic sleep effects and paralysis effects.

Less Water (Ex): Dray only need 1/2 as much of the normal water requirement for their size category when active, and only 1/4 the requirement when they are inactive.

Automatic Languages: Common and Dray; Bonus Languages: Dwarven, Gith, Jozhal, Pterran, Scrab, Slig, Tari and Thri-Kreen.

Favored Class: Wilder.

Level adjustment +1.

The dray warrior presented here had the following ability scores before racial adjustments: Str 13, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 11.

Pterran

See Terrors of Athas

Scale, Tail, and Claw

Yuan-ti

	Yuan-ti Proselyte (Tainted One)	Yuan-ti Failed One (Histachii)
Size/Type:	Medium Monstrous Humanoid (psionic)	Medium Monstrous Humanoid (psionic)
Hit Dice:	5d6+5 (22 hp)	5d6+5 (22 hp)
Initiative:	+7	+8
Speed:	30 ft. (6 squares)	30 ft. (6 squares)
Armor Class:	15 (+3 Dex, +2 armor), touch 13, flat-footed 12	14 (+4 Dex), touch 14, flat-footed 10
Base Attack/Grapple:	+3/+4	+3/+4
Attack:	Small Macahuitl +7 melee (1d6+1)	Claw +4 melee (1d4+1)
Full Attack:	Small Macahuitl +7 melee (1d6+1)	2x Claw +4 melee (1d4+1) and Bite -1 melee (1d4)
Space/Reach:	5 ft./5 ft.	5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Poison Bite, Psionics (Poison 1/day, Polymorph 3/day), Sneak Attack (+3d6)	Rage (1/day), Sneak Attack (+3d6)
Special Qualities:	Evasion, Poison Immunity, Power Resistance 14, Uncanny Dodge	Evasion, Mental Resistance, Poison Immunity, Power Resistance 14, Uncanny Dodge
Saves:	Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +1	Fort +2, Ref +8, Will +1
Abilities:	Str 12, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 8	Str 12, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 8
Skills:	Bluff +7, Climb +9, Diplomacy +11, Hide +11, Intimidate +9, Listen +10, Move Silently +11, Search +10, Sense Motive +8, and Spot +10	Bluff +3, Climb +7, Diplomacy +7, Hide +9, Intimidate 5, Listen +8, Move Silently +9, Search +3, Sense Motive +6, and Spot +8
Feats:	Alertness ³ , Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse (short sword), Weapon Focus (short sword)	Alertness ³ , Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse (short sword), Weapon Focus (short sword)
Environment:	Any	Any
Organization:	Solitary	Solitary
Challenge Rating:	6	5
Treasure:	Standard	Standard
Alignment:	Usually lawful evil	Usually lawful evil
Advancement:	By character class; LA +2	By character class; LA +2

Creating a Yuan-Ti - Proselyte or Failed One

"Proselyte" (Tainted One) and "Failed One" (histachii / broodguard) are templates that can be added to any humanoid (referred to hereafter as the "base creature"). The templates use all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

These templates are reproduced from *Monsters of Faerun*, and updated to the 3.5e rules according to the *Player's Guide to Faerun Web Enhancement - Monster Update*.

Size and Type: The creature's type changes to monstrous humanoid. Size is unchanged. Do not recalculate base attack bonus or saves.

Hit Dice: As base creature.

Speed: As base creature.

AC: As base creature. Failed ones do not wear armor.

Attacks and Damage: As base creature. Proselytes gain a poisonous bite, but this is useless in most combat situations (see Special Attacks).

Scale, Tail, and Claw

Failed ones have sharp claws and vicious bites they can use in melee. They use the base attack values they had as humans, but their claws and bite deal 1d4 points of damage.

Special Attacks: Proselytes and failed ones retain all the special attacks of the base creature. Proselytes also gain the following two special attacks:

Psionics (Sp): The transformation activates latent psionic potential in human minds, granting proselytes supernatural abilities similar to those of true yuan-ti. A proselyte can create the following effects through the power of its mind as a sorcerer of its character level: poison 1/day (Fortitude save against a DC of 13 + Con modifier).

Poison Bite (Ex): The saliva of a proselyte is poisonous when ingested or introduced into the blood, though this ability is generally useless in combat. A proselyte can only inject its venom while grappling a foe with exposed skin. The Fortitude save to resist this poison has a DC of 10 + 1/2 HD + Con modifier. Victims who fail this save take 1d4 points of temporary Constitution damage. After 1 minute, they must make another save; failure means another 1d4 points of temporary Constitution damage. A proselyte's kiss is also poisonous, though in this case the save DC is reduced by 2.

Failed ones do not gain these special attacks, but instead gain a rage ability:

Rage (Ex): Once per day, a failed one can enter into a berserk stare similar to a barbarian's rage. In this state, the failed one gains +4 to Strength, +4 to Constitution, and a +2 morale bonus on Will saves, but it suffers a -2 penalty to Armor Class.

Creating Tainted Ones

Yuan-ti create most of their proselytes from desperate humans. Proselytes are transformed by drinking a psionically active distillation of yuan-ti venom mixed with certain herbs and roots.

Anyone who drinks this mixture, whether by choice or by force, must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 16). If the saving throw fails, the victim must make a Constitution check (DC 15). Success at this check means the character becomes a proselyte in a painful transformation that lasts 1d6 days. Failure means the character slowly becomes a failed one in 7-12 (1d6+6) days. If the Fortitude save is successful, the individual immediately lapses into a coma. A comatose individual can be revived with a delay poison or neutralize poison spell, if the spell is cast within 1 hour after the mixture

Special Qualities: All the special qualities of the base creature, plus the following:

- **Darkvision:** Yuan-ti can see in the dark up to 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only, but it is otherwise like normal sight, and Yuan-ti can function just fine with no light at all.
- **Poison Immunity (Ex):** Proselytes and failed ones are immune to all forms of snake venom, including their own poison.
- **Power Resistance (Ex):** Proselytes gain power resistance of 12 +1 per two levels.
- **Mental Resistance (Ex):** Failed ones are immune to hold and charm spells.

Saves: As base creature.

Abilities: Proselytes gain +2 to Dexterity. Failed ones gain +2 to Dexterity and +2 Constitution, but lose -4 Intelligence and -4 Charisma.

Skills: As base creature. Failed ones lose 2 ranks in each skill because of their reduced Intelligence.

Feats: Proselytes and failed ones gain Alertness as a bonus feat due to their heightened senses.

Climate/Terrain: Any

Organization: Proselyte: Solitary; Failed One: Slither (2-8) or Patrol (1 zealot, 5-10 heralds, and 8-15 failed ones), or Coil (9-20)

Challenge Rating: Proselyte: Base creature +1; Failed one: Base creature

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Usually lawful evil

Level Adjustment: Proselyte: +2; Failed one: +3

has been swallowed. Human-headed yuan-ti have the ability to neutralize poison, and they may save a comatose individual themselves.

If an individual fails their saving throw after consuming the mixture, a few desperate measures may prevent their transformation into a proselyte. If neutralize poison, dispel magic, remove curse, and heal are cast on the victim, in precisely that order, the transformation process will be reversed. However, the individual will permanently lose 1 point of Intelligence. A wish, limited wish, or miracle spell will reverse the transformation with no loss of Intelligence. Once the transformation is complete, only a wish or a miracle can restore the proselyte to their former self.

Yuan-ti Herald CR 6

Yuan-ti Herald Rogue 5

Lawful Evil Medium Monstrous Humanoid (Psionic)

Init +4; **Senses** Darkvision; Listen +10, Spot +10

Aura -

Languages: Yuan-ti (?)

AC 16, touch 14, flat-footed 12
(+4 Dex, +1 Natural, +2 Armor)

hp 22 (5d6+5);

Power Resistance: 16

Fort +2, **Ref** +8, **Will** +1

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee: Small Macahuitl +8 (1d6+1)

Full Melee: Small Macahuitl +8 (1d6+1) Bite -1 melee (1d4 plus Poison)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Base Atk +3; Grp +4

Combat Actions: Poison (DC 16), Psionics (3/day - psionic charm), Sneak Attack (+3d6)

Combat Gear: Leather Armor, Small Macahuitl

Abilities Str 12, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 10

SQ Evasion, Poison Immunity, Power Resistance 16, Totem (Silk Wyrms: 3/day - psionic levitate), Uncanny Dodge.

Feats Alertness B, Blind Fight B, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse (short sword), Weapon Focus (short sword)

Skills: Bluff +7, Climb +1, Diplomacy +11, Hide +12, Intimidate +9, Listen +10, Move Silently +12, Search +11, Sense Motive +8, and Spot +10.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC (13 + 1/2 HD + Con modifier), initial and secondary damage 1d6 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based. This replaces a proselyte's poisonous bite.

Psionics (Psi): Heralds gain some minor psionic powers through their transformation. At 1st level, they can use detect poison and psionic charm once per day each; At 5th level, they can use psionic charm three times per day; ML = HD.

Skills: A herald gains a +5 racial bonus on Disguise checks when impersonating a member of their former race.

Totem Power: Each herald gains an ability that reflects the particular snake that is the totem of their coil. Each coil has one unique trait or ability. Examples include:

Silk Wyrms: Gain the psi-like ability to use psionic levitate three times per day, at a manifester level equal to your Hit Dice.

Creating a Yuan-Ti - Herald

"Herald" (Pureblood) is a template that can be added to any human (referred to hereafter as the "base creature"). The template uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Size and Type: The creature's type changes to monstrous humanoid. Size is unchanged. Do not recalculate base attack bonus or saves.

Hit Dice: As base creature.

Speed: As base creature.

AC: A herald's natural armor improves by +1.

Attacks and Damage: A herald gains a bite as a secondary natural attack, which deals 1d4 damage. This replaces a proselyte's poisonous bite. When it has a weapon, a herald usually uses the weapon instead.

Scale, Tail, and Claw

Special Attacks: Heralds retain all the special attacks of the base creature and gain the following special attacks:

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC (13 + 1/2 HD + Con modifier), initial and secondary damage 1d6 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based. This replaces a proselyte's poisonous bite.

Special Qualities: All the special qualities of the base creature, plus the following:

- **Darkvision:** Yuan-ti can see in the dark up to 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only, but it is otherwise like normal sight, and Yuan-ti can function just fine with no light at all.
- **Poison Immunity (Ex):** Heralds are immune to all forms of snake venom, including their own poison.
- **Power Resistance (Ex):** Proselytes gain power resistance of 14 +1 per two levels.
- **Psionics (Psi):** Heralds gain some minor psionic powers through their transformation. At 1st level, they can use detect poison and psionic charm once per day each; At 5th level, they can use psionic charm three times per day; ML = HD.

Totem Power: Each herald gains an ability that reflects the particular snake-like creature that is the totem of their coil. Each coil has one unique trait or ability. Examples include:

- **Bogo Snake:** Natural armor bonus increases to +2. Gains a short lashing, spiny tail as a natural secondary attack, which deals 1d8 piercing damage if used in combat. The tail can be hidden by normal clothing, but if unveiled for an attack, the tail's snake-like nature will be apparent.
- **Kartang:** Natural armor bonus increases by +1. Gains resistance to Cold 10 and Electricity 10.
- **Kluzd:** Natural armor bonus increases by +2. Gains Intimidating Presence as a bonus feat.
- **Silt serpent:** Gain the ability to swim in silt as a supernatural effect at a speed equal to half their

base speed. Also gain the ability to safely breathe silt-filled air, ignoring the effects of the Gray Death and similar effects (dust storms, etc.) for a number of rounds equal to 6 x their Constitution score before they must return to fresh air (though they may begin to hold their breath as normal, if necessary). This does not, however, confer the ability to breath when submerged in silt.

- **Slimahacc:** Gain the ability to burrow at a speed equal to half their base speed through loose soil.
- **Wrab:** Gain small leathery flaps between their arms and torso that allow for gliding, negating damage from a fall of any height and allowing 20 feet of forward travel for every 5 feet of descent. Glide speed is equal to your base speed (average maneuverability). A yuan-ti can't glide while carrying a medium or heavy load. The flaps can be hidden by any normal shirt, tunic, or robe and even if uncovered most people will not recognize that the skin flap is a serpentine feature.
- **Silk Wyrn:** Gain the psi-like ability to use psionic levitate three times per day, at a manifester level equal to your Hit Dice.

Saves: As base creature.

Abilities: Heralds gain +2 to Dexterity and Charisma. If the base creature is a yuan-ti proselyte, then their Dexterity does not increase.

Skills: A herald gains a +5 racial bonus on Disguise checks when impersonating a member of their former race.

Feats: Heralds gain Alertness and Blind Fight as bonus feats due to their heightened senses.

Climate/Terrain: Any

Organization: Solitary, Slither (2-8), Patrol (1 zealot, 5-10 heralds, and 8-15 failed ones), or Coil

Challenge Rating: As base creature +2

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Usually lawful evil

Level Adjustment: +3



A Note About 4th Edition

We are looking for new 4th edition stats people to join our team. If you wish to help us in the conversion of the creatures in this book from other editions to 4th edition, contact the Pristine Tower Dev Group and we will add them to the next release of this book!



5th Edition

Ability Scores

Determine Ability Scores

Determine ability scores in the standard fashion according to the *Players Handbook*.

Powerful Athasian Characters

Classically Dark Sun characters were seen as more powerful than your average D&D characters from other settings due to the hostile nature of Athas. To model this Athasian characters had an ability score range of 5-20 compared to the standard 3-18. To continue this paradigm use these options in 5th edition D&D.

You generate your character's six ability scores randomly. Roll five 4 sided dice(5d4) (12.5, , and record the total on a piece of scratch paper. Do this five more times, so that you have six numbers. If you want to save time or don't like the idea of randomly determining ability scores, you can use the following scores instead: 16, 15, 14, 13, 12, 10 or use the point buy method with 38 points, adding a cost of 11 for a 16 score and a cost of 14 for a 17 score.

Ability Score Increases

When determining your character's ability scores, increase one score by 2 and increase a different score by 1, or increase three different scores by 1 or use the Suggested Ability Score Increases table. Follow this rule regardless of the method you use to determine the scores, such as rolling or point buy. You can follow those suggestions or ignore them, but you can't raise any of your scores above 20 plus the listed ability score adjustment for each ability score (Jozhal maximum dexterity would be 22).

Table A3.1: Optional racial ability adjustments

Racial Bonus	Adjustment
Jozhal	+2 DEX, +1 WIS
Tortle	+1 STR, +2 CON
Silt Runner	+2 DEX, +1 CON
Ssurran	+1 STR, +2 CON
Dray (3rd gen)	+1 STR, +2 CON
Pterran	+1 STR, +1 WIS
Lizardfolk	+1 DEX, +2 WIS
Nikaal	+1 INT, +1 WIS
Yuan-ti	+1 DEX, +2 CHA

Traits by Species

Jozhal Traits

As a jozhal, you have the following racial traits.

Creature Type. You are a Monstrosity.

Size. You are Small.

Speed. Your walking speed is 35 feet.

Arcane Curiosity. You are proficient in the Arcana skill, and can cast *detect magic* with this trait. Once you

cast this spell with this trait, you can't cast it with it again until you finish a long rest. You can also cast these spells using any spell slots you have.

Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma is your spellcasting ability for these spells when you cast them with this trait (choose when you select this race).

Scale, Tail, and Claw

Chameleon Hide. As an action, you can change the color of your skin to match the color and texture of your surroundings, giving you advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in those surroundings.

Desert Dweller. You are proficient in the Survival skill.

Magic Resistance. You have advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Turtle Traits

As a turtle, you have the following racial traits.

Creature Type. You are a Humanoid.

Size. You are Medium.

Speed. Your walking speed is 30 feet.

Tooth and Claw. You have a snapping jaw and clawed hands that you can use to make unarmed strikes. When you hit with them, your bite deals 1d4 + your Strength modifier piercing damage, and your claws deal 1d6 + your Strength modifier slashing damage, instead of the bludgeoning damage normal for an unarmed strike.

Stepchild of the Silt Sea. Through a special psychometabolic power, you are buoyant in silt. Any effect that negates or interferes with psionics also affects this ability. If for some reason this power is canceled, you immediately sink to the bottom.

In addition, you have a swim speed of 25 feet in silt and you can hold your breath for up to 1 hour. While submerged, you have blindsight out to a range of 25 feet.

Natural Armor. Your shell provides you a base AC of 17 (your Dexterity modifier doesn't affect this number).

You can't wear light, medium, or heavy armor, but if you are using a shield, you can apply the shield's bonus as normal.

Shell Defense. You can withdraw into your shell as an action. Until you emerge, you gain a +4 bonus to your AC, and you have advantage on Strength and Constitution saving throws. While in your shell, you are prone, your speed is 0 and can't increase, you have disadvantage on Dexterity saving throws, you can't take reactions, and the only action you can take is a bonus action to emerge from your shell.

Adrenaline Rush. You can take the Dash action as a bonus action. You can use this trait a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest. Whenever you use this trait, you gain a number of temporary hit points equal to your proficiency bonus.

Survival Instinct. Thanks to your connection to nature, you gain proficiency with one of the following skills of your choice: Medicine, Nature, Perception, Stealth, or Survival.

Silt Runner Traits

As a silt runner, you have the following racial traits.

Creature Type. You are a Humanoid.

Size. You are Small.

Speed. Your walking speed is 45 feet.

Desert Sprinter. You can use a bonus action to dash, and you have advantage on initiative rolls.

Natural Armor. You have tough, scaly skin. When you aren't wearing armor, your base AC is 13 + Dexterity modifier. You can use your natural armor to determine your AC if the armor you wear would leave you with a lower AC. A shield's benefits apply as normal while you use your natural armor.

Silt Sprint. No more than once per day, you can sprint across the open silt for up to 12 miles in a sustained spring. After 12 miles of running, however, you must rest, before undertaking another long sprint. You can walk normally after this time, and after an hour of low exertion, can take a sprint of half a mile. But you cannot take another long spring until having slept for the night.

Surprise Attack. If you hit a creature with an attack roll, the creature takes an extra 2d6 damage if it hasn't taken a turn yet in the current combat.

Tooth and Claw. You have a fanged maw and clawed hands that you can use to make unarmed strikes. When you hit with them, your bite deals 1d4 + your Strength

Scale, Tail, and Claw

modifier piercing damage, and your claws deal 1d6 + your Strength modifier slashing damage, instead of the bludgeoning damage normal for an unarmed strike.

Ssurran Traits

As a ssurran, you have the following racial traits.

Creature Type. You are a Humanoid.

Size. You are Medium.

Speed. Your walking speed is 30 feet.

Claws. You are proficient with your unarmed strikes, which deal 1d4 slashing damage on a hit.

Tripping Tail. Whenever you hit a creature with your claw attack, you can use your reaction to swipe at your opponent with your tail. The target must succeed on a strength saving throw or be knocked prone. The DC of this saving throw is 8 + your Strength modifier + your proficiency bonus. The target succeeds automatically if it's two size categories bigger than you.

Raider And Trader. You gain proficiency with two of the following skills of your choice: Animal Handling, persuasion, Nature, Perception, intimidation, or Survival.

Sun-Kissed Hide. You have tough, scaly skin, adapted to the searing heat of the desert. When you aren't wearing armor, your base AC is 13 + Dexterity modifier. You can use your natural armor to determine your AC if the armor you wear would leave you with a lower AC. A shield's benefits apply as normal while you use your natural armor.

You also have resistance to fire damage.

In addition to the above traits, each subspecies has one unique trait as described below:

Scorched-Scale

Molten Heart. Whenever you take fire or radiant damage, you can absorb an amount of damage equal to your constitution modifier + your proficiency bonus, and you gain that same amount of temporary hit points. you can do so a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

Sand-Scale

Sand Swimmer. You gain a burrowing speed of 15 ft and a blindsense for the same range. Both your hands need to be free in order to dig, and you can only burrow through loose soil, sand, or similar surfaces. In addition, The damage die of your claws changes to 1d6.

Obsidian-Claw

Scorched Earth. As a bonus action, you can emit an aura of heat. Each creature within 5 feet of you takes fire damage equal to your proficiency bonus. You can use this trait a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

Lizardfolk Traits

As a lizardfolk, you have the following racial traits.

Creature Type. You are a Humanoid.

Size. You are Medium.

Speed. Your walking speed is 30 feet, and you have a swimming speed equal to your walking speed.

Bite. You have a fanged maw that you can use to make unarmed strikes. When you hit with it, the strike deals 1d6 + your Strength modifier slashing damage, instead of the bludgeoning damage normal for an unarmed strike.

Hold Breath. You can hold your breath for up to 15 minutes at a time.

Hungry Jaws. You can throw yourself into a feeding frenzy. As a bonus action, you can make a special attack with your Bite. If the attack hits, it deals its normal damage, and you gain temporary hit points equal to your proficiency bonus. You can use this trait a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

Scale, Tail, and Claw

Natural Armor. You have tough, scaly skin. When you aren't wearing armor, your base AC is 13 + Dexterity modifier. You can use your natural armor to determine your AC if the armor you wear would leave you with a lower AC. A shield's benefits apply as normal while you use your natural armor.

Nature's Intuition. Thanks to your mystical connection to nature, you gain proficiency with two of the

following skills of your choice: Animal Handling, Medicine, Nature, Perception, Stealth, or Survival.

Nictitating Membrane. Your eyes are covered by a transparent lid that protects them. You can see out to a range of 15 feet while submerged underwater, in mud or silt, or while facing strong winds and sandstorms, and such conditions do not impose disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Nikaal Traits

As a nikaal, you have the following racial traits.

Creature Type. You are a Humanoid.

Size. You are Medium.

Speed. Your walking speed is 30 feet.

Hand Spike. You are proficient with your unarmed strikes, which deal 1d4 piercing damage on a hit.

Acidic Spit . As an action, you can make a ranged attack to spit acid at a creature within 30 feet. The target must make a Dexterity saving throw against a DC equal to 8 + your Constitution modifier + your proficiency bonus. On a failed save, the target takes acid damage equal to 2d4 + your proficiency bonus.

Ancient Recall. You have the ability to recall information about people, places, and objects you have never personally seen, you can roll 1d6 immediately after seeing the d20 roll on an Intelligence check to recall information about a place, object, or creature, a Wisdom, and Charisma checks involving people you have just met. You can do this a number of times per day equal to your proficiency bonus.

Efficient Metabolism. You only need half as much food and water compared to other Medium creatures, even in hot climates.

Nomadic. While traveling you can forage and notice threats at the same time. In addition when traveling fast you do not suffer the -5 to Wisdom (Perception) checks to notice hidden threats.

Dray Traits (all generations)

Creature Type. You are a Humanoid.

Size. You are Medium.

Speed. Your walking speed is 30 feet.

Darkvision. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light and in darkness as if it were dim light. You discern colors in that darkness only as shades of gray.

Draconic Physiology. You have resistance to fire damage, and while you aren't wearing armor, your base AC is 13 + Dexterity modifier. You can use your natural armor to determine your AC if the armor you wear would leave you with a lower AC. A shield's benefits apply as normal while you use your natural armor.

Additionally, you only need half as much food and water compared to other Medium creatures, even in hot climates.

Tooth and Claw. You have a fanged maw and clawed hands that you can use to make unarmed strikes. When you hit with them, your bite deals 1d4 + your Strength modifier piercing damage, and your claws deal 1d6 + your Strength modifier slashing damage, instead of the bludgeoning damage normal for an unarmed strike.

Other traits vary by generation, as detailed below:

First Generation Dray Traits

As a first-generation dray, you have the following racial traits.

Feat. You gain one feat of your choice.

Scale, Tail, and Claw

Dray Mutation. When you create your character, choose or determine randomly one of the mutations from the “First Generation Dray Mutations” table.

Table A3.2: First Generation Dray Mutations

d20 Mutation

1–3 **Bite.** You can use your bite to make unarmed strikes. When you hit with them, the strike deals 1d6 + your Strength modifier piercing damage, instead of the bludgeoning damage normal for an unarmed strike.

4–6 **Natural Armor.** You are covered in hardened scales. When you aren't wearing armor, your AC is 15 + your Dexterity modifier. You can use your natural armor to determine your AC if the armor you wear would leave you with a lower AC. A shield's benefits apply as normal while you use your natural armor.

7–9 **Powerful Build.** You count as one size larger when determining your carrying capacity and the weight you can push, drag, or lift.

10–11 **Long-Limbed.** When you make a melee attack on your turn, your reach for it is 5 feet greater than normal.

12–13 **Draconic Sorcery.** You know one cantrip of your choice from the sorcerer spell list. Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma is your spellcasting for that cantrip (choose when you select this race).

14–15 **Mental Fortitude.** You have advantage on saving throws you make to avoid or end the charmed or frightened condition on yourself.

16–17 **Climbing Speed.** You have a climbing speed equal to your walking speed.

18–19 **Superior Darkvision.** The range of your darkvision increases to 120 feet.

20 Roll twice on this table, ignoring this result on subsequent rolls.

Second Generation Dray Traits

As a second-generation dray, you have the following racial traits.

Dread King's Blessing. You can add a d4 to one attack roll, ability check, or saving throw you make, and you can do so after seeing the d20 roll but before the effects of the roll are resolved. You can use this trait a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

Magic Resistance. You have advantage on saving throws against magic and other magical effects, and magic can't put you to sleep.

Manifested Flight. Starting at 5th level, you can use a bonus action to manifest wings on your body. These wings last for 1 minute. For the duration, you gain a flying speed equal to your walking speed and can hover. Once you use this trait, you can't do so again until you finish a long rest.

Third Generation Dray Traits

As a third-generation dray, you have the following racial traits.

Draconic Manifestation. As a bonus action, you manifest additional draconic powers. Whenever you use this trait, choose one of the options below. you can only manifest one power at a time, which lasts for 1 minute, until you fall unconscious, or until you end the effect as a bonus action:

- **Breath Weapon.** You can use your action to exhale a 15-foot cone of super-heated sand. When you use your breath weapon, each creature in the area of the exhalation must make a Dexterity saving throw. The DC for this saving throw equals 8 + your Constitution modifier + your proficiency bonus. A creature takes 2d6 fire damage on a failed save, and half as much damage on a successful one. The damage increases to 3d6 at 6th level, 4d6 at 11th level, and 5d6 at 16th level.
- **Draconic Wings.** You gain a flying speed equal to your walking speed. You can't use this flying speed if you're wearing medium or heavy armor.

You can manifest your draconic powers a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, and regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

Well-Educated. You can read and write any language that you speak.

Pterrann Traits

Age. Pterrann have shorter lifespans than humans. They reach maturity at about 15 years old and can live to 50.

Alignment. Since Mother Earth faith emphasizes balance, many Pterranns are neutral in alignment. As people who follow the rhythm of nature and see themselves as its caretakers, pterranns typically lean towards good. Evil pterranns are rare and are usually the sworn enemies of the rest of their kind.

Size. Adults grow to be about 6 feet tall. Your weight is around 200-220 pounds. Your size is Medium.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Natural Armor Class. As a pterrann, you have a natural Armor Class of 12 + your Dexterity modifier.

Claws. You are proficient with your unarmed strikes, which deal 1d4 slashing damage on a hit.

Life path. All pterranns who reach maturity must choose one of the three Life Paths—nature, mind or strength, which usually corresponds to their chosen class (nature for druids and clerics, mind for psions or the rare wizard and body for the martial classes). Any deviation from that norm is usually made by outcasts or renegades who abandoned their original Life Path. Choose one of the following:

- **Nature.** You know the *Druidcraft* cantrip. In addition, you have the ability to communicate in a limited manner with beasts and plants. They can understand the meaning of your words, though you have no special ability to understand them in return. You have advantage on all Charisma checks you make to influence them.
- **Mind.** You know the *Message* cantrip and can cast it as a psionic power (I.e. no verbal or somatic components required).
- **Body.** You are proficient with the *slodak* (hardwood long sword) and the *thanak* (sawblade sword). The damage die of your claws changes to 1d6.

Pterrann's Kin. All pterrann have a special bond with the flying reptiles known as pterrax. Whenever you make a Charisma check when interacting with pterrax, your proficiency bonus is doubled if it applies to the check.

Languages. You can speak Common and Pterrann.

In addition, each subspecies has one unique trait as described below:

Dhecatl (long crested)

Earth Mother's Warning. As an action, you can touch a stone object or surface and know what types of creatures have been within 10 feet of that stone in the past 24 hours. You can also determine the number of creatures of each type, but not their identities. Alternatively, you can instead open your awareness to the presence of magic draining the land. You know the location of any spell being cast within 1 mile of you and your approximate distance from it, as well if it was a defiling spell or not. You do not learn any other details.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

Erix (hump crested)

Cliff Climber. You have a climbing speed equal to your walking speed. In addition, you have proficiency in the Athletics and Acrobatics skills, and you ignore fall damage from up to 30 feet as long as you aren't incapacitated.

Hazeo (sunridged crested)

Earth Mother's Strength. You have advantage on Strength-based ability checks and Strength saving throws. In addition, you count as one size larger when determining your carrying capacity and the weight you can push, drag, or lift.

Phylos (drake's tail crested)

Earth Mother's Embrace. You are proficient in the animal handling skill and gain advantage when using this skill with Razorwings. Additionally, you can cast the spell *Animal Friendship* once. You regain use of this ability after finishing a long rest.

Queltz (spine crested)

Earth Mother's Inspiration. You gain proficiency with two kinds of artisan's tools of your choice. Your proficiency bonus is doubled for any ability check you make that uses either of the chosen proficiencies. In

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addition, whenever you make an Intelligence (History) check related to the origin of any architectural construction (including buildings, public works such as canals and aqueducts), you are considered proficient in the History skill and add double your proficiency bonus to the check, instead of your normal proficiency bonus.

Yrrak (axeridge crested)

Earth Mother's Vigilance. You are proficient in the Perception skill, and you can add your proficiency bonus to your initiative rolls. Additionally, you have blindsight out to a range of 10 feet while in direct contact with the ground.

Yuan-ti Traits

As a Yuan-ti, you have the following racial traits.

Creature Type. You are a Monstrosity.

Size. You are Medium.

Speed. Your walking speed is 30 feet.

Ancestral Legacy. If you replace a race with this lineage, you can keep the following elements of that race: any skill proficiencies you gained from it and any climbing, flying, or swimming speed you gained from it.

-If you don't keep any of those elements or you choose this lineage at character creation, you gain proficiency in two skills of your choice.

Darkvision. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light and in darkness as if it were dim light. You discern colors in that darkness only as shades of gray.

Magic Resistance. You have advantage on saving throws against spells.

Poison Resilience. You have advantage on saving throws you make to avoid or end the poisoned condition on yourself. You also have resistance to poison damage.

Snake Charmer. You can cast *Animal Friendship* an unlimited number of times with this trait, but you can target only snakes with it. Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma is your spellcasting ability when you cast it with this trait (choose when you select this race).

Mark of the Coil. Starting at 3rd level, you have received your first Kiss of Enlightenment and survived, ascending from a proselyte to a herald. As a result your body is transformed to resemble the snake species that represents the totem of your coil, which gives you additional abilities. Choose one of the following options:

- **Wyrms.** Choose your specific wyrm species (either spinewyrm or silkwyrm). You can psionically cast the *Levitate* spell once on yourself with this trait, requiring no verbal or somatic components.
 - *-Spinewyrm-* You can expend a use of this trait to cast *Spike Growth* instead of *Levitate*.
 - *-Silkwyrm-* You can expend a use of this trait to cast *Web* instead of *Levitate*.

Once you use this trait, you can't do so again until you finish a long rest. Your spellcasting ability for this trait is the same as the one chosen for the *Snake Charmer* trait.

- **Slimahacc.** You gain a burrowing speed of 15 ft. Both your hands need to be free in order to dig, and you can only burrow through loose soil, sand, or similar surfaces. In addition, you have blindsight with a range of 15 ft.
- **Kartang.** Your scales are hard and iron-like. You gain resistance to one of the following damage types: Fire, Cold or Lightning. You can switch your resistance to one of the other damage types on that list each time you finish a long rest.
- **Kluzd.** You have advantage on all Charisma (Intimidation) checks. Also, whenever you succeed at grappling a creature, it is considered restrained.
- **Bogo snake.** You grow a lashing, spiny tail, which deals 1d8 bludgeoning damage on a hit and has the reach property. In addition you can psionically cast *Barkskin* on yourself, requiring no verbal or somatic components. Once you use this trait, you can't do so again until you finish a long rest. Your spellcasting ability for this trait is the same as the one chosen for the *Snake Charmer* trait.
- **Silt serpent.** You develop a poisonous bite that you can use to make unarmed strikes. On a hit, the target takes 2D10 poison damage instead of the normal damage for an unarmed strike. The

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damage increases to 3D10 at 11th level and 4D10 at 17th level. You can use this up to your Constitution modifier's worth of times per long rest. You are also immune to the effects of the *Gray Death* and any other similar phenomenon.

- **Wrab.** Once per long rest, you can use a bonus action to transform your arms into two large

leathery wings. The transformation lasts for 1 minute or until you end it as a bonus action. During it, you have a flying speed of 30 feet and can hover. While flying you can't use your arms for anything other than flapping your wings to maintain flight, though you can still hold items.



Racial Feats

General

Thick Scales & Hardened Claws

Prerequisite: Natural Armor, Natural Weapons

You manifest scales and claws reminiscent of your draconic ancestors. You gain the following benefits:

- +1 Strength, Constitution, or Charisma, gain natural armor and hardened claws
- Increase your Strength or Constitution score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- Your scales harden. You add 1 to your natural armor class.
- Your natural claws lengthen and harden. Their damage dice increase to d8.

Reptile Regeneration

Prerequisite: Any reptile-based race

The harsh lands of Athas enable the survival features of your ancestors. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Constitution score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You regenerate and can also regrow lost body parts over time. The time required depends on the size of the body part (1d4 days for a finger/toe/ear, 1d6 weeks hand or foot, 1d6 months for an arm, leg, tail).
- Whenever you take the Dodge action in combat, you can spend one Hit Die to heal yourself. Roll the die, add your Constitution modifier, and regain a number of hit points equal to the total (minimum of 1).

Jozhal

Jozhal Elemental Magic

Prerequisite: Jozhal

You learn the magic of the elements by your people. You learn one druid cantrip of your choice. You also learn the healing word and pass without trace spells, each of which you can cast once without expending a spell slot. You regain the ability to cast these two spells in this way when you finish a long rest. Wisdom is your spellcasting ability for all three spells.

The Way of the Jozhal

Prerequisite: Jozhal

Your Psionic power is greater than others of your kind. You gain the following benefits:

You learn more of the psionic disciplines of your people. You learn the cantrips Encode Thoughts and Mind Sliver. You also learn the Misty Step spell, which you can cast once without expending a spell slot. You regain the ability to cast this spell in this way when you finish a short or long rest. Your spellcasting ability modifier for these spells is Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma.

Additionally, none of these spells or your racial abilities require verbal or somatic components, and they require no material components unless they are consumed by the spell.

Turtle

Drik Heritage

Prerequisite: Turtle

Your drik heritage is exemplified in you. Your skull is thicker and larger and your neck can shoot out of your shell with amazing speed and distance. You gain the following benefits:

- **Ram.** You lunge at a creature, moving 5' and pushing them 5'. They must succeed on a strength saving throw against 8 + your proficiency bonus + your strength modifier or they take 1d6 + your Strength modifier bludgeoning damage and are knocked prone. If they succeed they take ½ damage and are not knocked prone and are still pushed.
- **Poisonous Bite.** Your bite does an additional 1d6 poison damage.
- **Telescoping Bite.** Your neck telescopes at blinding speed and distance. You can attack a target up to 10 feet away from you with your bite.

Silt Runner

The Way of the Silt Runner

Prerequisite: Silt Runner

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Your psionic power is greater than others of your kind. You gain the following benefits:

- **Combat Mind.** You have advantage on initiative checks if you are not surprised.
- **Psionic Navigation.** You use your innate psionic power to always know where a point you've chosen and concentrated on previously is in relation to your current location. This grants you advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks to navigate in any direction in relation to that point. You can choose a new point after a long rest. If you choose a new point your previously selected point no longer applies.
- **Body Equilibrium.** While concentrating on this power you balance and lighten your body so that you can walk on surfaces that would not otherwise hold your weight, such as silt, water, acid, mud, snow, quicksand, or lava—as if it were harmless solid ground (crossing molten lava can still damage you from the heat). If you become submerged in a substance, the power carries you to the surface of the liquid/silt at a rate of 60 feet per round. After 10 minutes or if you lose or release concentration on this power you cannot use it again until you take a long rest.

Nikaal The Way of the Nikaal

Prerequisite: Nikaal

You awaken the ability to mentally connect with others, granting you the following benefits:

- Increase your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You can speak telepathically to any creature, capable of speaking a language, you can see within 30 feet of you. The creature can respond back to you until you end the connection.
- You can cast the *detect thoughts* spell, requiring no spell slot or components, and you must finish a long rest before you can cast it this way again. Your spellcasting ability for the spell is the ability increased by this feat. If you have spell slots of 2nd level or higher, you can cast this spell with them.

Nikaal Trader

Prerequisite: Nikaal

You have taken up the profession of trader among your nomadic caravan, granting you the following benefits:

- Increase your charisma by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You gain proficiency in one skill from the following, deception, performance, persuasion.
- Choose one skill in which you have proficiency. You gain expertise with that skill, which means your proficiency bonus is doubled for any ability check you make with it. The skill you choose must be one that isn't already benefiting from a feature, such as Expertise, that doubles your proficiency bonus.

Hypnotic Music

Prerequisite: Nikaal, manifester level 3rd.

You can employ your people's music to enthrall and enrapture others.

When you play your people's special music, you can enthrall those who hear it with a psionic effect, with a manifester level equal to your character level. To use this ability, you must make a Charisma (Performance) check while playing and/or dancing to your people's special music. The result of the check becomes the DC to resist the effect. Up to 3 others may accompany you in playing the music and/or dancing, each who succeeds at a DC 10 Charisma (Performance) check increases the DC by +2. Creatures of your choice that you can see within range and that can hear you to make a Wisdom saving throw. Any creature that can't be charmed succeeds on this saving throw automatically, and if you or your companions are fighting a creature, it has advantage on the save.

On a failed save, the target has disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks made to perceive any creature other than you until the spell ends or until the target can no longer hear you. Once the music ends you gain advantage on any Charisma check against any creatures that failed for a number of hours equal to that played. The effect ends if you are incapacitated or can no longer speak.

The hypnotic music's duration lasts for as long as the music is played (typically a maximum of 8 hours).

Dray Draconic Adept

Prerequisites: 3rd gen dray

You have honed your ability to draw out the power inherent in your blood, granting you the ability to

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unlock new uses of the draconic manifestation racial trait, choose one of the following:

- **Dragonfear.** When you use your Breath Weapon trait to breath heated sand you also roar, forcing each creature of your choice within 30 feet of you to make a Wisdom saving throw (DC 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Charisma modifier). A target automatically succeeds on the save if it can't hear or see you. On a failed save, a target becomes frightened for 1 minute. If the frightened target takes any damage, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success.
- **Dragon's Scales.** You can supernaturally harden your scales to brush off attacks. When you take damage, you can use your reaction to reduce that damage by 1d12 + your constitution modifier.
- **Blindsight.** You have blindsight with a range of 15 feet. Within that range, you can effectively see anything that isn't behind total cover, even if you're blinded or in darkness. Moreover, you can see invisible creatures within that range, unless the creature successfully hides from you.

Special: you can choose this feat multiple times, each time you must choose an option you don't already have

Pterran Pterrax Manifestation

Prerequisite: Pterran

You can temporarily revert your form to that of your Pterrax brethren. You gain the following benefits:

Increase your Strength or Dexterity score by 1, to a maximum of 20.

The height and distance of your jumps are tripled.

You can use your reaction when you fall to reduce any falling damage you take by an amount equal to three times your level.

As a bonus action on your turn you can jump a distance up to your speed using your wings. This movement doesn't provoke opportunity attacks. You can do this a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus. You must take a long rest before you can do it again.

Weapons

These unique weapons are designed to be constructed from non-metal materials. As such, they do not have the inferior weapon property.

Tail Weapons

It takes an action to strap on or remove a tail weapon. The wearer can loosely attach the tail weapon (without strapping it securely in place) in place of their movement and interact with object, but using a loosely attached tail weapon gives the wielder a disadvantage on attack rolls made with the weapon.

Weapons Descriptions

The full weapon descriptions for the weapons below are found in the 2nd edition D&D section above. Use the Medium column for weapon damage. Below are only changes to bring them inline with 5th edition, otherwise consider stats not changed as the same.

Weapon Properties

Concealed. This weapon is easily concealed, you have advantage on sleight of hand checks to conceal it.

Double. You can make a second attack as a bonus action with this weapon as if you were two-weapon fighting.

Inferior. The weapon is made with inferior material and is prone to breaking due to maximum damage on weapon dice or rolling ones. See Inferior Weapons below.

Returning. When thrown the weapon will return to a location within the weapon's range that the wielder chooses.

Savage. The critical damage for this weapon's damage is x3 (only the weapon damage, not all damage).

Worn. This weapon cannot be disarmed.

Table A3.3: 5e Athasian Weapons

Simple Melee	Cost	Damage	Weight	Properties
Simple Melee Weapons				
Oslak	5 Cp	1d4 slashing	2 lb.	Savage
Slodak	18 Cp	1d6 slashing	4 lb.	Light, Savage
Razor Spear	2 Cp	1d6 slashing	3 lb.	Savage
Martial Melee Weapons				
Caudal Whip	6 Cp	1d4 bludgeoning	4 lb.	Savage
Manfisher	9 Cp	2d4 piercing or slashing	4 lb.	Reach, Savage, Two-handed
Tail Razors	8 Cp	1d6 slashing	7 lb.	
Thanak	20 Cp	2d6 slashing	10 lb.	Savage, Two-handed
Tkaesali	8 Cp	1d10 slashing	15 lb.	Savage, Two-handed
Silt Tripper	25 Cp	1d3 bludgeoning	4 lb.	Special, Two-handed
Martial Ranged				
Fire Sling	14 Cp	1d2 bludgeoning + fire	3 lb.	Ranged (20/80)
Bramble Ball	2 Cp	--	--	
Paralytic Dart, Blowgun	1 Cp	1 piercing	--	Ammunition (20/60), loading

Dart, Paralytic: A paralytic dart is a standard blowgun dart coated with one dose of poison, and must be fired by a blowgun (Chapter 5 of the Dark Sun 3 Core Rules). Upon hitting a target, the dart deals its normal damage plus the victim must save against the poison. Silt runners usually coat their darts with silt runner poison (see Equipment below).

Unpoisoned darts are the same price as normal blowgun darts (1 Cp/20)

Fire Sling: A fire sling consists of an L-shaped basket (a xistera) that is woven from heat-resistant yarrow grasses that can sometimes be found clinging to patches of soil in volcanic regions; the end of the basket is ringed in flint. Fire slings are worn strapped to a reptilian individual's tail - most often by ssurrans.

For projectiles, the ssurrans drop extremely dry brambleweeds dipped in alcohol into the basket.

Such bramble balls are extremely combustible. Once flung, there is a 90% chance of the ball igniting successfully. A direct hit deals 1d4 points of fire damage in addition to the damage from the ball itself. On the round following a direct hit, the target takes an additional 1d4 points of damage. If desired, the target can use a full-round action to attempt to extinguish the flames before taking this additional damage. Extinguishing the flames requires a DC 15 Reflex save. Rolling on the ground provides the target a +2 bonus on the save. Leaping into water or magically or psionically extinguishing the flames automatically smothers the fire.

An unignited bramble ball does not deal the fire damage.

Your Strength modifier does not apply to damage rolls when you use a fire sling.

Loading a fire sling is a move action that requires two hands and provokes attacks of opportunity.

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Manfisher: This weapon resembles a trident, with two long prongs (often made of carved bone) on both sides and a shorter one (made of flint or obsidian) in the middle. The space between the two long prongs is perfectly suited to trapping the neck or limb of a human sized creature. The two outer prongs and the shaft directly below them are studded with razor-sharp back curving teeth (usually shark teeth), to prevent enemies from gripping them.

This weapon can be thrown. You can also use it to make trip attacks. If you are tripped during your own trip attempt, you can drop the manfisher to avoid being tripped. If you use a ready action to set a manfisher against a charge, you deal double damage on a successful hit against a charging character.

Oslak: Commonly known as a pterranean overclaw, this specially crafted claw covering is worn over a pterranean's four-fingered hand. It is made from the same material as the slodak: young hardwood tree pieces treated with a special mixture of tree sap and id fiend blood.

A pterranean wearing an oslak gets a rake attack for 1d4 damage and may wear two at a time, one on each hand.

Your opponent cannot use a disarm action to disarm you of pterranean overclaws. The cost and weight given are for a single overclaw. An attack with a pterranean overclaw is considered an armed attack.

Razor Spear: This spear has an extremely sharp edge at the end of a very light-weight piece of sun-hardened silt bamboo (which often grows at the edge of mudflats).

Silt Tripper: Fashioned from the tentacle of a silt horror, the silt tripper consists of a long bamboo rod with the tentacle attached at its end. A slit tripper deals nonlethal damage, and deals no damage to any creature with an armor bonus of +1 or higher or a natural armor bonus of +3 or higher.

You can make trip attacks with a silt tripper. If you are tripped during your own trip attempt, you can drop the silt tripper to avoid being tripped.

You can use the Weapon Finesse feat to apply your Dexterity modifier instead of your Strength modifier to attack rolls with a silt tripper sized for you, even though it isn't a light weapon.

Slodak: The slodak is a wooden short sword, carved from young hardwood trees and treated with a mixture of tree sap and id fiend blood. This treatment renders the blade of the weapon extremely strong, making it a deadly weapon.

Thanak: The thanak is a chopping weapon of pterranean manufacture resembling a jagged sword or sawblade. It consists of a pair of hardwood strips bound together, with a row of pterranean teeth protruding from between them along one edge of the weapon.

Tail Razors: Tail razors are a set of 8 foot-long extremely-sharp blades - typically made of bone - that extend radially out from the lizard's tail. The weapons rely on their extreme sharpness, rather than raw strength, to do damage. Properly fitted, your opponent cannot use a disarm action to disarm you of tail razors.

Tkaesali: This polearm, exclusively used by the nikaal, consists of a long wooden haft topped with a circular, jagged blade. Nikaal never sell tkaesali and consider the weapons sacred, so tkaesali will almost never be found for sale. When they are sold, it is usually as a curiosity or purchased by those who wish to show disrespect to nikaal. Nikaal will generally attempt to retrieve any tkaesali not owned by their people, using force if necessary.

A tkaesali has reach. You can strike opponents 10 feet away with it, but you can't use it against an adjacent foe.

Equipment

Table A3.4: New Athasian Poisons

Name	Type	Save DC	Damage	Save	Price (Cp)	Craft DC
Silt Runner	Injury	Con DC 12	special	special	25	15
Yuan-ti Proselyte Saliva	Injury	Con DC 12	2d6 poison	½ damage	100	15
Yuan-ti Venom	Injury	Con DC 12	4d6 poison Con	½ damage	130	15

Dust Bomb: When you use an action to throw a dust bomb at a space within 30 of you,, each creature that needs to breathe within 20 feet of the dust bomb must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or become unable to breathe. A creature affected in this way is incapacitated and suffocating. As long as it is conscious, a creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on it on a success. The dust cloud lasts for 1d4 rounds. The dust cloud created by the dust bomb can be dispersed by a moderate wind (at least 10 mph), dissipating it after 1 round.

Silt Runner Poison: The saliva of certain silt runners contains a mild poison that slowly causes fatigue and muscle weakness, especially in the lower limbs.

A target who is hit with a poisoned weapon must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or suffer the following, speed is halved, it takes a -2 penalty to AC and Dexterity saving throws, and

it can't use reactions. On its turn, it can use either an action or a bonus action, not both. Regardless of the creature's abilities or magic items, it can't make more than one melee or ranged attack during its turn.

If the creature attempts to cast a spell with a casting time of 1 action, roll a d20. On an 11 or higher, the spell doesn't take effect until the creature's next turn, and the creature must use its action on that turn to complete the spell. If it can't, the spell is wasted.

If a target is subjected to the poison and is further attacked with it and fails the saving throw their speed is further halved, it now has - 2 to AC and Dexterity saving throws for each failed save from a separate attack. A character whose speed is reduced to zero may only use their action to move 5 feet in any direction.

A creature affected by this poison makes another Constitution saving throw at the end of each of its turns. On a successful save, the effect ends for one instance of the poison effects.



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Scale, Tail, and Claw

By the Pristine Tower Development Group

Some have claimed Athas is a world more suited to reptiles and insects than mammals. You've certainly encountered many different sentient reptilian races on the wastes. You've fought them or perhaps even traded with them. But what are the reptilian peoples of Athas really like?

Scale, Tail, and Claw explores the nature and cultures of nine different reptilian races unique to Athas, shedding light on their motivations, personalities, and the societies they have built on the fringes of humanoid civilization.

Come run a mile in the webbed feet of a silt runner, dance to the hypnotic rhythms of the nikaal's psionic music, or feel the loving embrace of a Coil of the Sevenfold Serpent. There are many different ways to thrive on the edges of Athas if you live by the scale, tail, and claw!

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

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Within this book you will find:

- A players' section detailing everything players might need to enable them to create well-developed player characters, including each race's physical attributes, special abilities, backgrounds, and languages.
- A DM's section containing secrets, legends, locations, NPCs, and adventure hooks to help them better weave these races into their campaigns.
- A stats appendix containing rules and stats for multiple editions of AD&D and D&D.



This product utilizes material from Dungeons & Dragons books published by Wizards of the Coast.