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ADVENTURE

An Adventure in Maztica for all Levels of Play

9349

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons
2nd Edition

FORGOTTEN REALMS®

Official Game Adventure

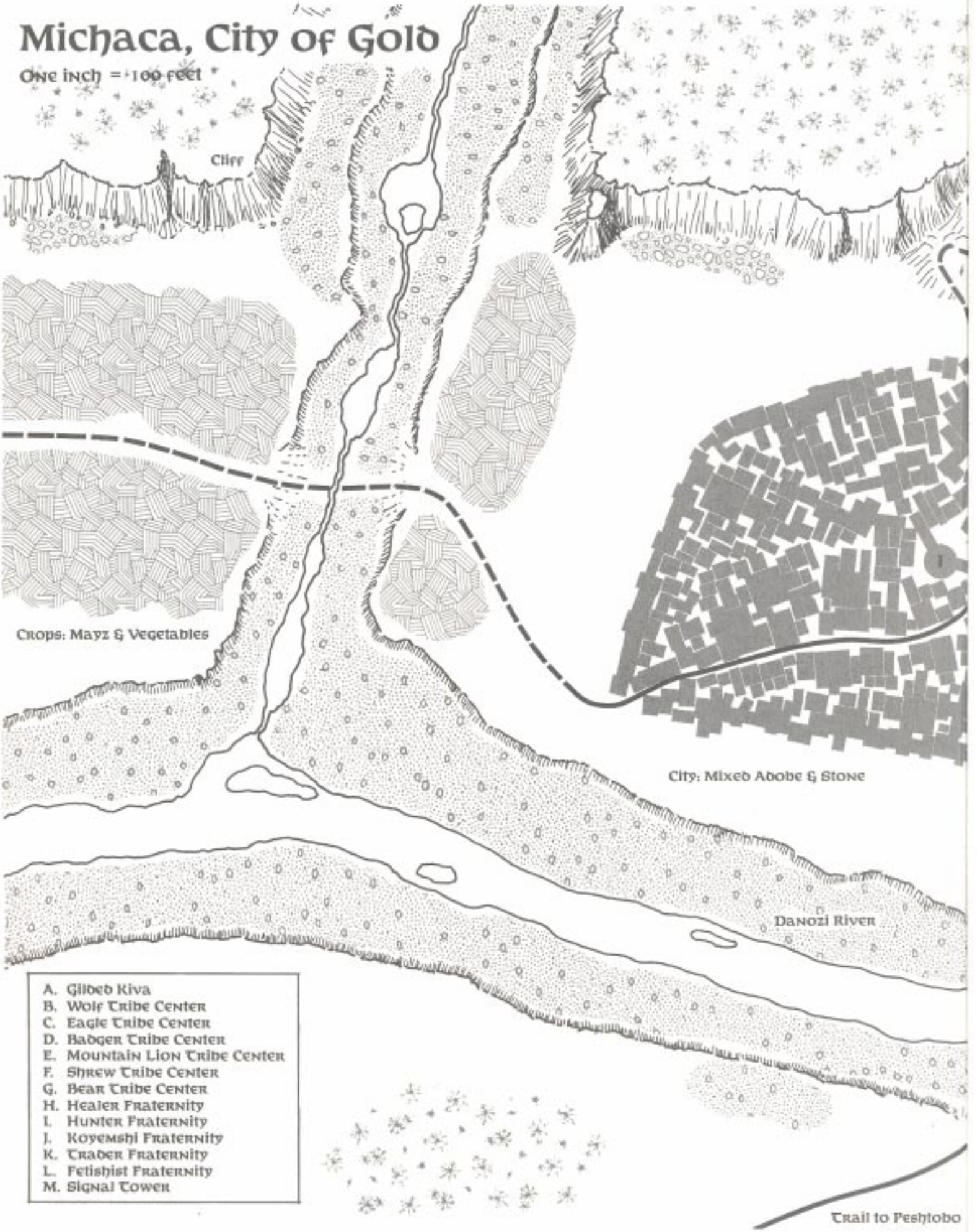
CITY OF GOLD

by John Nephew and Jonathan Tweet

Ken Frank

Michaca, City of Gold

One inch = 100 feet



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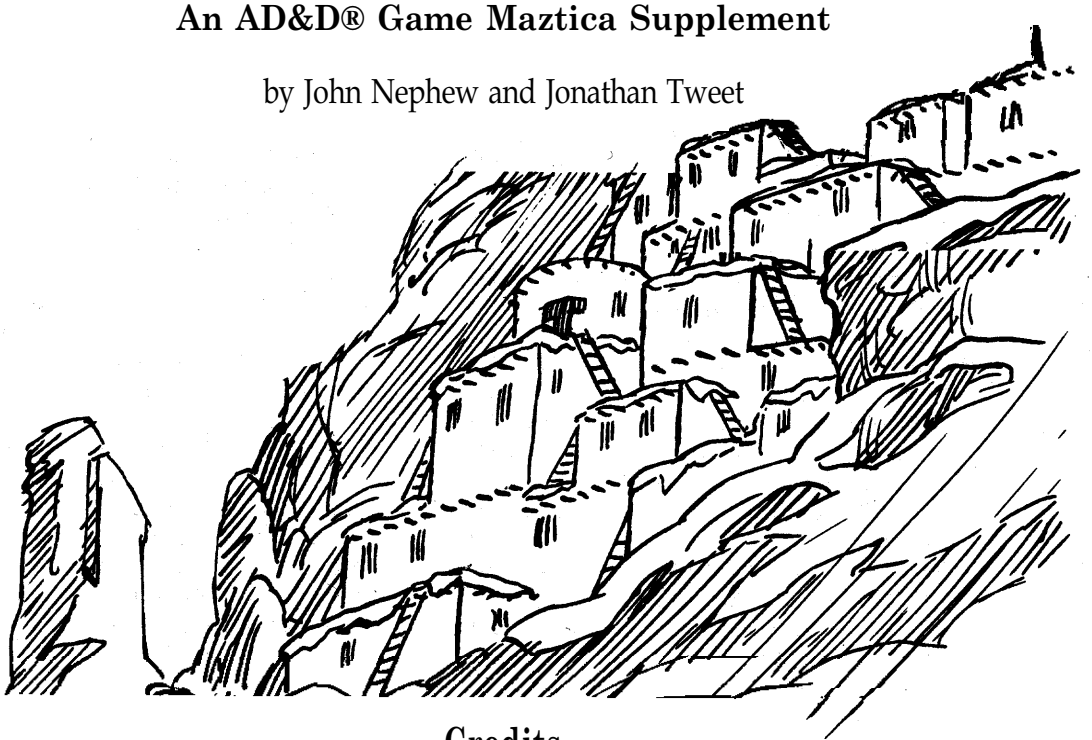
An AD&D® Game Maztica Supplement

by John Nephew and Jonathan Tweet



Credits

Design: John Nephew and Jonathan Tweet
Editing: Doug Stewart
Cover Art: Robh Ruppel
Interior Art: Valerie Valusek

Border Art: Ken Frank
Cartography: Dave Sutherland
Typesetting: Tracey Zamagne
Production: Paul Hanchette

To Zara and Tracy, perle wythouten pere, more precious than gold.

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TSR, Inc.
POB 756
Lake Geneva,
WI 53147 U.S.A.

TSR Ltd.
120 Church End, Cherry Hinton
Cambridge CB1 3LB
United Kingdom

City of Gold

by John Nephew and Jonathan Tweet

Table of Contents

Introduction 3
Part 1: Campaign Resources 7
The Past 7
Creation 7
Emergence of Humankind 7
Peoples of the North 8
The Azupozi 8
Other Peoples 9
Geography 10
Terrain Types 10
Geographical Features 11
Climate 12
Places of Interest 12
DailyLife.. 16
Agriculture 16
Pottery. 16
Architecture 17
The Pueblo 18
Clothing 19
Festivals and Ceremonies 19
Age, Death and Burial 20
Spirits and Priests 21
Azupozi Priests 23
The Spirit Realm 23
Wenimats 24
The Mighty Spirits 24
Animal Spirits 28
Other Spirits 28
Part 2: Quest for the City of Gold . . 29
Introduction 29
The Mysteries of Sun Canyon 29
Prehistory 30
Michaca's Plight 32
Micha in Game Terms 32
Sozarro 33
Sidelights and Embellishments . . . 36
The Lure of Gold 35
Common Knowledge 35
Meeting Sozarro 36
Sozarro's Plan 39
Preparations 40
Investigating Sozarro 40
Across the Savage Wastes 41
The First Steps 41
The Lands of the Dog People 41
In the Heat of the Sun 44
In the Pasocada Basin 47
Travel Across Azuposi Lands 47
First Contact 48
The Welcoming Party. 49
At the Azuposi Tower. 61
Yenisha's Plea 54
Michaca and the Gilded Priest 56
Sun Canyon 58
At Michaca 58
Going It Alone 61
Key to the Map of Michaca 62
Key to the Map of the Gilded Kiva . 62
Before the Face of a God 64
Koyisqatapi's Story 64
Dunobo Springs 66
Skeleton House 67
Homeward 68
Part 3: Further Adventures 71
Kin Elbhaz's Little Helpers 71
Esh Alakar 74
Other Adventure Ideas 77
Trouble In the Mines 77
A Conquest Thwarted 77
Vengeance of Ikitipsa 77
To the Land of the Insect Men 78
Monsters 78
Pasocada Ghost 80

Appendix Section: Azupozi Character Generation A1
Character Kits A1
Rogue Kits A2
The Clown A2
Fetishist A4
Trader A4
Warrior Kits A5
Hunter A5
Priest Kits A5
Azupozi Healer. A6
Bent Priest A7
Pueblo Priest A8
Sunwatcher A9
Nonweapon Proficiencies A10
Fetishist Magic A14
Talismanic Magic A14
Economy and Equipment A15

Introduction

The Legend of the City of Gold

Maztican storytellers say that when the gods decided to makes mankind, they first fashioned him out of clay. But the clay man was washed away by the river. Again they fashioned man, now of wood, but fire consumed the wood. Again they tried, this time with gold, precious and eternal. Surely the man of gold would last, and serve them as they desired. But no heart, no breath was in the gold and so it could not live. Though beautiful, strong, alluring, the man of gold was a false hope. He could not please the gods.

To create man, the gods had to give of themselves. Only from their own flesh and blood could human beings come to life and flourish. And so it is that the truest value is purchased only at the greatest cost—one's self.

This wisdom is reserved to the gods, for clearly men are foolish. When the men of the north found the gods' man of gold, they bowed low in worship before the thing, believing it to be a god. The gods became angered and destroyed the blasphemers.

Again men found the failed man of gold. The sight of so much wealth filled their hearts with greed and they toppled him and melted him down, making jewelry and precious objects. "Now," they said, "we are rich, and shall never need to work."

But when everyone had gold, its value was lost. No one would work, for they were rich, and rich people need not work. And no one tilled the fields. Hunger came, and strifes Evil men stole and killed, not only to survive, but to steal as much gold as they could.

Years passed, and a third tribe of men came. They found much gold among the bones of the evil men. "This gold is dangerous," warned Chief Tapeyzin. "It is a gift of the gods, but see how the love of it has destroyed these men. Therefore we will not take it for ourselves, but follow wisdom and use it to delight the gods. "We shall build, a magnificent city, under a cliff. A shining, golden jewel, that the gods, looking down from the heavens, will be gladdened with the beauty we have wrought from their gift. We will make golden vessels for gifts and we will trade gold to men of distant lands, and buy gifts for the gods. By returning the gold to the gods, we will please them. Then will their blessings fall upon us." In this way was Michaca, the City of Gold, built. The wisdom of its people made it strong. The gold was a treasure for them because it not their treasure, they did not cache gold from greed. They gave of themselves, to honor the gods and give back to the earth what is hers. For this the gods rewarded them with peace and prosperity.

The City of Gold still flourishes, and children play, laughing in radiant streets. They are raised with the wisdom to know that it is the golden glow within their breasts, not the gold in the walls of the city, that is the real treasure.

City of Gold is a supplement for the Maztica setting within the FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign. In order to make full use of this product, you need to have the core AD&D® rules and a copy of the Maztica boxed set. Though City of Gold deals with the unexplored territory to the north, it is necessary to have a copy of Maztica. Other materials, *The Complete Handbook* series and the Maztica novels, are also valuable for developing a rich campaign world.

Using This Book

City of Gold is a rich campaign resource. It contains background materials and adventures and is divided into four sections.

Part One is the resource section. It provides the setting for the adventures—all the information the Dungeon Master needs to run a campaign.

North of the deserts of the Dog People is the Pasocada Basin, a harsh territory where resilient peoples have not only survived, but have flourished. At the pinnacle of these groups are the Azuposi, a pueblo-dwelling nation who enjoy a sophisticated culture, built on refined agricultural techniques that coax nourishment from the parched northern soil. At the pinnacle of Azuposi achievements is Michaca, the City of Gold.

The Azuposi are the main focus of this sourcebook, but you will find reference to others, including neighboring human tribes, wild plains-hunting elves, and the shy halflings of the eastern mountain slopes.

Part Two is the center of the adventure, the quest for the legendary City of Gold. This adventure is inspired by real world history and legend—the Spanish explorers' search for El Dorado. Adventurers are invited to join Sozarro, a rogue legionnaire with dreams of epic conquest, in his foray into the unknown lands to the north and west.

Alternatively, characters might have their own motivations to seek out Michaca. We've tried to suggest background variations and other plotting alternatives to make it easy for you to design a quest for your campaign's player characters.

Speaking of characters, the 16-page Pull-Out Section in the middle of the book provides all you need to know about creating Azuposi characters. This information will assist the Dungeon Master in designing his own scenarios or fleshing out our suggestions.

You also have the option of opening up the Azuposi for player characters. However, players should not read the sourcebook and adventure information—secret stuff for the Dungeon Master's eyes only! That's why we've placed the character generation section in the center, and screened it with a secondary color. It makes it easy for you to detach these pages and lend them to your players. Lift the staples and remove the colored pages. Then press the staples back down to keep the book tightly bound.

The core adventure is best suited to adventurers' levels 6 to 9. City of Gold is for characters of all levels, however! First, modifying the quest for Michaca should be relatively painless. Second, there's **Part Three:** Further Adventures. These pages are filled with encounters and adventure ideas for all sorts of

character parties and jump start your City of Gold campaign.

Michaca and Maztica

Since this book is a supplement to the Maztica boxed set, a note on combining the two works is in order.

In brief: Do as you will. You have incredible flexibility here. The approximate location of Michaca is depicted on one of the maps in the boxed set, and the Dog People, some tribes of which inhabit the Pasocada Basin, are also described. Beyond this, there aren't many necessary connections.

The simple reason is that there has been little contact between the Mazticans and the "barbarians" to the north. In Kultakan or Nexalan eyes, an Azuposi sunwatcher would be just another barbarian, indistinguishable from the Dog People. To the Azuposi, the cities and gods of the south would appear strange and perhaps somewhat corrupt—at least suspect. Direct contact between the peoples has been virtually nil. Even their deities have few interconnections. Apart from those gods honored by the Dog People, the mighty Immortals of the south are all but unknown in the Pasocada basin.

Indirect contact is plentiful, mostly in the form of myths and stories—99% of which are grossly distorted or exaggerated. In the course of this book we'll share a few of them. The tales travel in both directions and the Azuposi have their tales of the Mazticans, as well.

The absence of firm connections gives the DM wide discretion. The time frame is left to the DM. A century before Cordell's arrival on the shores of the True World, or a century after, his choice. These considerations may affect the adventure in Part Two, but you can work around it. Sozarro is not essential, he could be replaced with a Maztican for example. In fact, the PCs could all be Mazticans. A setting could be in the past, in which Player Characters consist mostly of desert dwarves, freshly arrived from the Forgotten Realms and stranded by a subterranean cataclysm. What turns dwarves' eyes in this new land, but legends of gold? The questing party could be rounded out with a few "natives."

The easiest time frame would be roughly the same as that suggested by Maztica, but don't be afraid to toy with things if you think it would be more interesting for you and your players.

Further Explorations

If you've digested all of City of Gold and hunger for more food for adventure, it's time to strike out on your own. Explore your local library or bookstore. If you know a place with a hefty collection of National Geographic magazines, that's another great resource; some particularly important archaeological digs early this century were sponsored by the National Geographic Society.

The background for this book is based very loosely on the historical cultures of the American southwest—the Pueblo tribes of today, and their Anasazi ancestors. A lot of the material we found in the local university library was scholarly; detailed archaeological surveys, for example, such as *Broken K Pueblo: Prehistoric Social Organization in the American Southwest,* by James N. Hill. While it

provided vital details, (where and how the ‚Azuposi live), it is perhaps not a clear source of adventure ideas. A better approach is to look for books of folklore and mythology. We found *Pueblo Gods and Myths,* by Hamilton Tyler, to be a valuable resource.

A note of caution: There's danger in taking one's sources and research too seriously. Our bottom line is: This is a fantasy game. We're not scholars of Anasazi prehistory or Pueblo anthropology, nor do we intend to be. City of Gold has no pretensions of accurately representing Pueblo culture, we're just gamers who want to have fun.

When you're translating from reality to game, use discretion. Don't sweat the details; wing it as necessary. Make it fun. Even if you find the details of potsherds fascinating, don't lecture your players on the topic—unless they find a hook whereby the information becomes a key in an adventure. Motivate your players to want to know.

The following is a bibliography of books that were consulted in the researching of City of Gold. This is not necessarily a list of recommendations—as suggested above, some of these are pretty academic—just an acknowledgement of a debt to these writers and all the other diligent scholars and patient storytellers who have passed on what we know today.

Dozier, Edward P. *The Pueblo Indians of North America.* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1970.

Frazier, Kendrick. *People of Chaco.* New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1986.

Hill, James N. *Broken K Pueblo.* Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 1970.

Tyler, Hamilton A. *Pueblo Gods and Myths Noman,* OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964.

PART ONE: CAMPAIGN RESOURCES

The Past

There is no written history among the Azuposi, for these people were non-literate. What is known of the past has been passed down for generations, from mouth to ear all the way back to the eyewitnesses of the events related.

This mode of transmission lends itself to mutation—the stories change along the way. Speakers have a tendency to alter purposes for aesthetic reasons, as well. To make a hero's biography more dangerous and exciting through judicious exaggeration, or to change details or names to suit poetic needs such as rhyme and meter (which are important in memorization), stories become altered.

Azuposi history is a mutable, colorful tale, and where to draw the lines between legend, myth, and "fact" is uncertain.

Creation

In the beginning were two great spirits: the Spider Woman, Sus'sistinako, and the Sun. The Azuposi believe that each of these beings was somehow the parent of the other. There was also Sho'tokunungwa, who rules the distant and unchanging stars. Out of the primeval ocean the Spider Woman and the Sun called forth the land.

Then Spider Woman sang and brought forth the spirits of creation: Iyatiku and Alosaka, the Corn Mother and the Germinator. Iyatiku and Alosaka then, in their turn, made the flowers and plants, birds, and animals, and finally humans to populate the earth.

The Emergence of Humankind

Humans were created underground, where they lived in chaos and darkness. Creatures there were unfinished and misshapen; many humans even had tails. Society too was chaotic, and lies, disloyalty, theft and fighting were common occurrences.

The people were unhappy, and sought escape from their appalling existence. After failing in their own attempts, they asked a bird named Motsni to fly out and seek a better place in which to live.

The bird flew up from the underworld through a point called Shipapu, into the material world of sunlight. And Motsni found a handsome man seated by a fire. The man was in fact the Spirit Masauwu, called Skeleton Man.

Motsni inquired of Masauwu how life was lived on the surface. "It is difficult," explained Masauwu, "but it is possible to survive if one does not mind being poor. If you do not mind living this way, you are welcome to join me here."

The bird flew back through Shipapu, and delivered this message to the Azuposi. The people talked among themselves, and decided that it would be better to go to this new place, even if life would be harsh.

Thus the Azuposi emerged from the underworld, through Shipapu, and into the True World. There Skeleton Man taught them how to coax life from the desert. He gave them the seeds of beans, and squash, and mayz and taught them how to live in peace and order, forsaking discord among themselves. Masauwu remains the most faithful patron of the Azuposi

people. When one of them dies, Masauwu comes to guide their spirit back through Shipapu to the place from whence they came.

Myth and History: Creation or Migration?

According to their myth of creation, the Azuposi believe they came from the ground; that they were called forth by Skeleton Man, who showed them plants to grow and fire for light and warmth. It may be that the Azuposi actually did come from the ground—perhaps, like the desert dwarves, they came through the Underdark of the world's crust. Given their physical appearance and language, however, the Azuposi ancestors probably did not come from the continent of the Forgotten Realms, but from the oriental lands of Kara-Tur. Indeed, future scholars may discover remarkable commonalities between the languages of the Azuposi and the Wu-haltai and other races of Kara-Tur's Northern Wastes.

Peoples of the North

The Azuposi

The people on whom this book is focused are the Azuposi, the main civilization of the Pasocada Basin. The Azuposi enjoy a sedentary, agrarian society with permanent communities (pueblos). Their main source of livelihood is agriculture.

The Azuposi nation is divided into six tribes—one for each point of the direction of the extreme points of the sun, the sunrise and sunset of the summer and winter solstices—Northwest, Southwest, Northeast, Southeast, Up, Down—and each tribe is named for the animal sacred to that direction:

Mountain Lion (Northwest)
Bear (Southwest)
Badger (Northeast)
Wolf (Southeast)
Eagle (Up)
Shrew (Down)

Azuposi society is matrilineal and property and ancestry are traced through female descent. In a technical sense, men do not own property, they are caretakers of the property of the women in the family. They may work the land, and possess the fruit of it, but the land itself belongs to the woman, or to the woman's family. One myth of Yapoza extols this system as the decree of one of the War Twins, in recognition of the wisdom of woman. Others see the system as an extension of the domain of Spider Woman, the great female spirit who provides the raw material of existence. Women, therefore provide and "own" the raw material of the fields, while the men work it to produce sustenance.

Other Peoples

Marked on the map are regions dominated by groups other than the Azuposi, including humans—the Dog People, the Metahel, and the Nahopaca—and demi-humans—the Elf-Clans of Poscadar, Desert Dwarves and the Short Ones (halflings) of the eastern foothills.

Desert Dwarves

These migrants from the Forgotten Realms are mentioned in the *Maztica Boxed Set*. Two

clans—the Sandbeards and the Rockjaws—live in the Pasocada Basin, to the east and south, respectively.

Dog People

These loose clans were introduced in the *Maztica Boxed Set. (SeeA Journey to the True Work,* p. 52, for information on character generation.) The PCs will likely interact with them along their quest for the City of Gold. More details are provided in Part Two.

Metahel

These tribes live along the lower reaches of the Pasocada River and the shores of the Western Ocean. They are extraordinary fishermen and, on the ocean coast, whalers. They emigrated to this region from the northwest several centuries ago. Their language is, quite different from the other local tribes'. When they first arrived, the Metahel fought with the Azuposi. Peaceful coexistence has since been established. The Azuposi remain above Raven Falls, the Metahel below.

Trade and cultural exchange between the nations is brisk. In their distant ancestral homeland, the Metahel built long lodges out of trees. Here mud and stone are more plentiful building materials. The Metahel have learned much about Azuposi architecture; in fact, the community of Lomaraj resembles an Azuposi pueblo. In exchange for Azuposi wisdom, turquoise, and grain, the Metabel provide the bounty of the sea, including shells, mussels, dried fish, and whale oil for lamps.

Nahopaca

Distant relatives of the Dog People, the Nahopaca are nomadic clans that prefer the semi-arid clime of the plateaus to the deep deserts of the south where the Dog People live. The Nahopaca are hunters and gatherers, traveling from the mountains of the east to nearly as far west as the Pasocada River, searching for the most agreeable climate and the most plentiful supplies of food. They happily raid the huts and pueblos of halflings and Azuposi alike, when given opportunity. They avoid the ruins of Esh Alakar, for their mythology warns that ancient and evil forces are imprisoned there, waiting for foolish mortals to set them loose.

Poscadar Elves

The plateau north of the Pasocada River and Long Canyon is home to the Poscadar Elves—a tall, bronze skinned tribe of demi-humans who lead a nomadic existence hunting bison and other great game across the grassy plains. Poscadar lore says the elves came from the north, generations ago, where they were first created by the gods in a land of perpetual ice and snow. A wise shaman led them south, where the sun shone warm in the summer, and the great wild herds assured health and plenty year round. Here they met humans—ancestors of the Azuposi—who befriended them and traded grains for hides and meat from the elves. For all remembered generations, even to the present day, the Poscadari and the Azuposi have been at peace.

Short Ones

In the mountain foothills, lightly forested with conifers, live several clans of halflings. Isolated from other halflings of the True World, they call themselves "Short Ones," in

contrast to the elves and humans who surround them. The Short Ones build small, conical homes out of branches and bark, and seal the walls with mud. They stealthily hunt the small game of the forest with shortbows and slings, and gather wild nuts, berries, and nutritious roots. They also nourish themselves with vegetables cultivated in small gardens.

The Short Ones are distrustful of humans, and—most contact has been with the rapacious war bands of Nahopaca. They have had minimal trade with the Poscadari (elves) to the northwest, and Sandbeard dwarves to the south.

These halflings are especially fond of turquoise beads, usually of Azuposi manufacture, although they are acquired indirectly.

Geography

The Pasocada Basin is the geographical region drained by the Pasocada River and its tributaries, emptying into the Western Sea. It is home to the Azuposi people, among others.

In general, the Pasocada basin is a harsher environment. Latitude and altitude combine to bring colder nights and even winter snows. The mountain ranges that surround the basin deprive it of rainfall, conditions which have made desert of much of the Pasocada basin.

Terrain Types

Brush

The most common terrain in the Pasocada Basin is brush. Those from more verdant climes would probably describe it as desert, but this would be misleading. Although parched, the terrain is filled with hardy plants and animals. Plants which thrive here include cacti, yucca, grasses, junipers, and pinyons. Among the animals to be found are mice, prairie dogs, coyotes, bison, pronghorn antelope and small deer, insects, lizards, birds, and snakes.

Picturesque buttes and mesas rise above the landscape, and gulches, gullies, and canyons have been carved out by the flow of water, past and present. Much of the water that passes through the basin is seasonal and floods come with the spring thaw in the highlands. These floods create washes, sandy riverbeds that usually have no water. Near the rivers, the diligent efforts of Azuposi farmers have transformed scattered plots of dry brushlands into flourishing fields. The virgin brush is home to other tribes, such as the Nahopaca, who survive as hunters and gatherers.

Brush has a movement cost of 2.

Deep Desert

Some stretches of terrain receive so little moisture that virtually no plants, save the hardiest cactus species, survive. Sand, dust, and gravel, interrupted only by boulders or the occasional spire of naked, wind-blasted rock, are all that is to be seen.

Unpleasant monsters are rumored to lurk in the deepest, most unknown, reaches of the desert.

Deep desert has a movement cost of 2.

Mountains

The notes in *Maztica Alive!,* pages 3 & 7, regarding travel in mountain terrain apply to the mountains of the Pasocada basin, as well.

The Azuposi describe their afterlife paradise as a place of

mountains, because mountains are a relatively flourishing region. Mountain slopes push clouds up high, bringing precious rainfall to nourish broad forests of pine, fir, spruce, and aspen. Wildlife, such as deer, bear, fox, and antelope, is plentiful.

The forested mountain slopes have a movement cost of 6.

Above the "timber line", the point beyond which even the hardiest of conifers cannot survive, the peaks of the mountains are barren, cold, and snow covered all year. Yeti may live here, along with the occasional eyrie of aarakocra.

As in Maztica, the movement cost across mountain summits is 15.

Geographical Features

These topographical features can be found throughout the Pasocada Basin.

Buttes

A butte is a hill, rising sharply from the landscape, possibly with sheer sides, like cliffs. Buttes, like the other features here described, are important landmarks for travel across the vast open country. They may also be claimed as territory by humans or monsters—25% chance, DM's choice for claimant—such as a Nahopaca, hunting group, or a solitary ogre, who may have set up a temporary or permanent encampment in the shadow of the butte.

Canyons

There may be little water in the Pasocada Basin, but even what there is makes quite a mark on the landscape through eons of erosion. Canyons can be found here and there along the various river courses—Long Canyon being the most dramatic instance—where the soft rock, especially sandstone, has yielded to the water's patience. The floor of a canyon, where the river runs, is a paradise in the arid Basin. Plants grow in dense abundance, and birds and small animals frolic or rest in the cool shade. Rarely is a green canyon found without one or more Azuposi dwellings enjoying its bounty.

Mesas

Like a miniature plateau, a mesa rises high above the surrounding terrain, often as much as several hundred feet and usually having a flat top. Outside of deep desert, any mesa is likely (50% chance) to have one or more Azuposi dwellings atop it or built into its sides. Large mesas are especially popular for settlement, because they function like reservoirs. Rain and melting snow seep into the mesa's rock, and clear, cool water trickles out from springs at the base.

Atop some of the highest mesas, nests of aarakocra will be found.

Salt Flats

Even more barren than the deep desert itself are the salt flats. These great, bowl shaped depressions in the deep desert are the remains of saltwater bodies that evaporated millennia ago. All that remains are acres of crystalline salt deposits coating the ground.

Nothing normally lives in the salt flats; they are completely barren of plant life and are of no interest to animals. Perhaps an unusual creature that has entered from the Elemental Plane of Earth might explore the flats, seeking tasty crystalline nourishment.

The edges of salt flats are a

different matter. Salt is essential for animals' metabolism, for life itself. A deer might, for example, be found licking the salty ground at the edge of the flats.

Humans and demi-humans of every tribe also need salt. It flavors and preserves food, and replaces the salts lost through sweat in the dry, hot weather of the Pasocada Basin.

Washes

The sandy beds of seasonal rivers retain moisture throughout the year Many settlements spring up near washes, as the damp sand is well suited to agriculture and doesn't require elaborate irrigation methods. Unfortunately, anything too close to the wash is directly in the path of any flash flood that might occur. Building sites must be planned accordingly!

Climate

A dry, temperate clime prevails in the Basin, although in the lower regions of the Metahel, it is somewhat warmer. Total precipitation in the Pasocada Basin averages about 15 inches per year Summers are hot, with virtually no rainfall. Winters are cold and snowfall is usual. Springtime brings flash floods coursing down the canyons and gullies, carrying sediment downstream and renewing the dampness of the washes.

Places of Interest

This section is a key to significant locations marked on the fold out map of the Pasocada Basin, land of the Azuposi.

The heart of Azuposi country is Sun Canyon, in which lies Michaca, the "City of Gold." Smaller settlements fan out all around Michaca, filling the broad basin of the Pasocada River.

Roadways, sturdy works of stone comparable to many highways of the Realms, have been built by the Azuposi to connect the larger communities with each other and with Michaca. From those centers radiate paths to the smallest villages and single dwellings. Dotting the roads are signal towers, built so that a clear line of sight connects one to the next. Smoke signals on these towers can communicate an important message from the turquoise mines, on the northwestern side of the Pasocada Basin, to the distant southeastern communities of Nozoma and Mitzlato, in as short a time as one hour.

Smaller communities are connected by trails and footpaths. Along these, as well as along the main roads, are frequent shrines to the Skeleton Man, the spirit whose protection travelers invoke. The shrines are cairns of stones. Votive offerings of grasses or beautiful stones are left to curry the spirit's favor,

Black Mesa

This great mesa south of Opallinoc is so named because of the plentiful, wide striations of soft, black rock, coal, that can be seen all along its eroded sides. The Opallinoc Mesa (across the Opallin River) also has a great deal of coal, but only visible along its southwestern face.

The Azuposi have discovered that the rock can be burned, and this fact impresses them. Priests sometimes use the coal for special rituals, when powerful magic is

required.

Dunobo Springs

Most of the year the springs are just small pools, feeding a couple of streams that nourish the small surrounding woodland. In springtime, however, when the snow melts on the high plateau to the east and north, water wells up and out, creating the Danozi Wash—a seasonal flood river that, over the millennia, carved out Sun Canyon, miles to the southwest. The wash still flows through the canyon, and on to the Pasocada River.

There are fewer trees around the Dunobo Springs than it might support. This is because the trees have been cut to supply material for the building of many Azuposi pueblos to the south and west during decades of growth and prosperity

Elfmeet

An Azuposi community (population 400) on the south rim of Long Canyon. As the name suggests, it is the favored contact point of the nomadic elves of Poscadar. Elfmeet is built on the edge of the canyon. A flowing spring is at the center of the village. Several trails lead down the canyon. At the floor is a ford across the Pasocada. The elves come up to the village to offer their goods and barter for Azuposi wares.

Esh Alakar

These massive, ancient ruins at the floor of the Long Canyon are of unknown origin—perhaps ancestors of the Poscadar Elves built them, for the stonemasonry is unlike anything human found in the True World. The elves are silent on the matter, and they are not known to frequent the silent ruins and monuments.

Some travelers dare to take shelter in the ruins, but tales of ghosts and strange dreams are rife throughout the Basin. In particular, the Nahopaca tribes have a strong taboo against visiting the ruins, which they claim bind ancient forces of evil.

Near to Esh Alakar is the "Bridge of the Ancients," engineered of stone and mortar and sharing the ruins' unique architectural style. All agree that while ancient Esh Alakar is a disturbing landmark, the sturdy bridge across the Pasocada River is quite valuable, especially on a tempestuous stretch of river, with no safe ford for miles.

Great Raven Pueblo

Extraordinarily beautiful, and well protected, the Great Raven Pueblo is built between the magnificent, 350 foot Raven Falls and the sheer walls of Mesa Bovara, on the north bank of the Pasocada River. Stairs carved in the cliff side travel down beside the falls, leading out of Azuposi lands into the territory of the Metahel people. Just a few miles down river is the Metahel town of Lomaraj.

Approximately 900 people inhabit the Great Raven Pueblo.

Growling Falls

The roaring bellow of the 200 foot waterfall, is said by local storytellers to be the growling of an evil bear fiend that once threatened the land. Because the monstrous bear was sired by a god who took animal form, it could not be killed. It was, however, defeated and imprisoned by an ancient hero. The Azuposi call this hero Hinchapa, and he is known to the Dog People as Incholcpa. Each people claim the hero as one of their own.

Keshtin Pueblo

Built next to the 220 foot Keshtin Falls, this community is renowned for distinctive woven designs of cotton blankets. It is home to about 750 people.

Kin Elbhaz

Kin Elbhaz (population 500) is widely known as a place of good fortune. Harvests here are always above average, for example, and rarely does any disease more serious than a mild cold strike the pueblo's residents. A few jealous visitors have speculated whether the villagers or their ancestors made a pact with unwholesome spirits, and wondered what the price of such unnatural fortune must be, and who must pay it. In truth there is a group of brownies who dwell near the pueblo, and it is their goodwill (watering crops, driving away pests, and such) that has brought Kin Elbhaz extraordinary prosperity. The brownies are not selfless, however, they benefit by having access (through a secret tunnel) to the pueblo's grain storage.

Kinopal

Kinopal suffers a dark, and possibly undeserved, reputation. Tales long spread throughout the tribes warn that generations ago the leaders of each fraternity in Kinopa gathered together and made a pact with evil spirits. They benefitted as individuals, but an unspecified (but unquestionably horrific) price would have to be paid by their descendants.

Eight hundred souls populate Kinopal.

Lomaraj

A Metahel settlement of about 1,000 persons, it flourishes as the

contact point with Great Raven pueblo and the Azuposi. Virtually all trade between the two nations passes through Lomaraj.

Long Canyon

Long Canyon is one of the most startling natural landmarks of the True World. It varies between a mile and ten in width, and follows a length of almost ninety miles of the Pasocada River.

The center of the canyon is home to a tribe of hill giants.

Michaca

The legendary "City of Gold," detailed in the adventure text.

Mitzlato

This Azuposi pueblo high on the Opallin River (population 700) trades frequently with the Rockjaw clan of desert dwarves.

Opallinoc

One of the largest Azuposi settlements, built at the confluence of the Pasocada and Opallin rivers (population 4,050). Opallinoc has become established as a center for the exchange of goods. Turquoise is also processed here by skilled artisans.

Peshtobo

A large Azuposi community of 3,100 people.

Sun Canyon

The spiritual center of the Azuposi nation, and home to the City of Gold. See the text for complete information on Sun Canyon as well as the City.

Ukolo

Although small (population 300), Ukolo is extraordinarily well protected, for it is the center of Azuposi turquoise mining. Miners' travel from the village to temporary camps through the mines themselves. Raw turquoise is returned to Ukolo, and then transported elsewhere (such as Michaca or Opallinoc) for processing into jewelry and practical and ritual objects.

Yapoza

An Azuposi community of some 1,200 persons, Yapoza's founding is the subject of myth. According to the ancient tale, Matsailema, one of the War Twins, was on a rampage through the world, bringing annihilation and desert wherever he went. Even the gods may tire, however, and so when this one came to the banks of the Pasocada, he stopped to rest, and fell asleep.

A man and woman from across the river discovered him and recognized him as the destructive immortal. The man said they must kill him lest he lay waste to their lands too; but the woman warned that whatever his actions, he was a god, and thus deserving of mortals' respect and hospitality.

When Matsailema awoke, the woman gave him food and drink, and welcomed him into their home. The War Twin accepted her hospitality, and stayed seven nights. In place of destruction, he promised prosperity for the Azuposi. But, to ensure wisdom and patience, and that the gods receive the respect they deserve, he instituted the matriarchy—the tradition of ownership and descent being passed through the mother's line. Thus Azuposi society is matrilineal even to this day.

Daily Life

An Azuposi Menu

The Azuposi enjoy a rich diet, despite the apparent barrenness of their native land. As in many cultures, bread is a staple, Prepared in the form of tortillas or piki bread, both are made of corn flour. Corn flour is ground by hand with stone mano and metates. Piki bread is made out of paper thin layers of watery corn dough, baked on hot rocks, then folded and cooked further.

Vegetables enjoyed by the azuposi include pigweed, goosefoot, squash, prickly pear, juniper, mayz, beeweed, pinyon pine, beans, melons, fruit, and calabashes.

The meat in the Azuposi diet comes mainly from hunting and includes prairie dog, gopher, mountain sheep, and deer. (There are also wild and domesticated turkeys.

The Azuposi firmly believe this life has almost nothing to do with an afterlife, although they do believe that the soul lives on after death, in some novel place or form. They do not focus their lives on that which might bring them happiness in some future existence. Rather, they are concerned with working to better this life in this world, today.

This fundamental attitude pervades Azuposi culture. It can be seen in the willingness to share material goods—why selfishly hoard possessions for the future when they can be used to ease people's needs now? It can also be seen in Azuposi attitudes toward deities and spirits. These beings are not so much to be served as to be bargained with. One pays them respect, of course, as one would pay respect to anyone older, wiser, and more powerful than oneself, but the Azuposi relationship to their gods is one of meeting the needs of daily life.

Agriculture

Cultivated vegetables are the center of the Azuposi diet,

Table # The Azuposi Calendar

Azuposi Month	Meaning	Equivalent
I'kopu	Turning Back Moon	December
Taiyamchu	Limbs of Trees Broken By Snow Moon	January
O'nanulakiakwame	No Snow in the Road Moon	February
Isu-muya	Cactus Blossom Moon	March
Kwia-muya	Greasewood Fence Moon	April
Showatsotes	Ground Soft Like Ashes	May
Achin	Corn Tassel	June
Hishin	First Appearance of Corn Ear	July
Pa-muya	Play Moon	August
Powa-muya	Big Feast Moon	September
Angok-muya	Harvest Moon	October
Hai-a-tassi	Fall of the Year	November

supplemented by gathered roots, nuts, and berries. Wild rabbits and birds, and the occasional deer, pronghorn antelope, or other large game (even bison), add to their diet as well—although the Azuposi are not accomplished hunters, as are the Nahopaca and the Poscadar elves. Domesticated turkeys are also raised for meat and eggs.

Farming in the dry north is not easy; it requires diligence, patience, and centuries of accumulated wisdom and experimentation. Farming tools are digging sticks and rude hoes and shovels, made of wood, bone, and stone.

Several different plots are planted at once, in the knowledge that, while some may be destroyed by the unpredictabilities of drought and flash flood, others will flourish. To ease the lean years, every pueblo maintains stores of extra food.

Food crops include mayz, squash, beans, and melons. Tobacco and cotton are also grown, for ceremonial pipe smoking and the weaving of cloth, respectively.

Pottery

Pottery-making is a vital art among the Azuposi, and has practical as well aesthetic value. Passed from mother to daughter over the generations, subtlety of design and technique vary between families. Within a single community the differences may be minute, although perceptive locals can tell one households pottery from those of a distant relative's. The variations become major in the pottery of different communities, whose female ancestors diverged many generations back. This makes it possible to trace the descent of a community. For example, it can be seen from pottery that Kin Elbhaz is a variant of the older pueblo, Kinopal, because of the relationships of similar patterns and peculiar techniques used in crafting their earthenware. Many generations ago a Kinopali matriarch moved south with her family and began the Kin Elbhaz community.

For Azuposi characters to identify the origin of a piece of pottery, they must make a pottery nonweapon proficiency check. Success will tell the character at least which clan the pottery is from, if not the particular pueblo. If the character is intimately familiar with the locale from which the ceramic comes, he may even be able to determine the creator's matriline (at the DM's option).

Architecture

Two styles of architecture predominate: adobe and stone. Adobe is less "expensive" in most places and is easier to make, since it consists of mud, straw, and water. In important structures, such as the ceremonial buildings of Michaca, or where defensive strength is important, stone replaces adobe. The importance of site makes it worthwhile to arrange transportation. In places near quarries, stone is also used as the basic building material.

Stone houses are sometimes sealed with mortar. The style of construction currently popular consists of large plates of stone, behind which rubble and mortar are mixed to form the core and bulk of the wall. The facings are covered with plaster and a grayish whitewash made from stone crumbled in water. For roofs and upper floors, wooden beams cross

from one wall to the next, where they are set and sealed into the stone. Michaca and the other settlements of Sun Canyon have thousands of these ponderosa logs built into them, hauled from the forest at Dunobo Springs, many miles away. Over the great logs a lattice work of smaller beams and branches is woven. Finally, plaster and whitewash cover the net of wood, making a smooth, solid, and sturdy surface.

Pueblos

Sometimes Azuposi build single dwellings, suitable for small families. Their preferred organization is the pueblo, a building complex of many rooms. Archaeologists once described pueblos as resembling rudimentary tenements, for they connected many families in one structure. A more suitable comparison might be the walled cities of medieval Earth or the Forgotten Realms. One simple difference is that the Azuposi put their doors in their ceilings, accessible via ladders, making the space between buildings unnecessary, and in fact less efficient than sharing walls. The pueblo is defensively formidable, too. Raiders, such as the Nahopaca, on foot with bows and arrows, pose relatively little threat to a well-fortified pueblo. The defenders can hide safely behind their walls—outside walls never have ground-level windows—and shoot arrows at or drop rocks on any attackers who approach too closely.

The rooms of a pueblo can be divided into three categories: habitation, storage, and ceremonial rooms or kivas.

Habitation Rooms are where most daily activities take place. Food is prepared, cooked, and usually eaten here. Corn and other grains are ground into flour with manos and metates (grinding stones), and baked into tortillas and bread by the fire pit. Animals, caught by Azuposi hunters and trappers, are butchered with saws and flint knives, then roasted over the flames of the fire pit. Most Azuposi eat at home, although sometimes adult men take food into the Kivas. People sleep in these rooms as well; the fire is particularly welcome in the cold winter months.

Storage Rooms tend to be smaller, less accessible, and are usually found on the lower levels of the pueblo. Food surplus, as well as seeds for future crops, are stored in pottery containers. Corn is dried (still on the cob) and stacked. Squash is cut and dried and stored, hanging from the beams of the ceiling. Beans are kept in ceramic pots. Meat that has been dried and cured may be found in storage rooms as well. Although primarily intended for food, other items, from hunting and farming implements to ceremonial paraphernalia, may be found in the storage rooms as well.

Kivas are ceremonial rooms. They are usually round, with floors dug a yard or more into the ground. A fire pit is in the center, and the walls have seats built into them. Niches for fetishes and other ceremonial objects are built into the walls. Each pueblo will usually have several kivas. Besides being the locus for many ritual functions, the kiva serves as a sort of clubhouse and crafts center for the men of the community. Men do their weaving and weapon making in them, and sometimes eat together there—although they have a fire pit for warmth and for ritual purposes,

they do not cook in the kiva. It is a place of relaxation, and a forum for the discussion of community issues.

A room is usually built with a particular purpose in mind. Sometimes a room will be converted from one purpose to another, if this is easier than building a new addition to the pueblo.

Where to build a pueblo? Mesa-tops are more easily defended, but precious springs are found at the base of a mesa (which acts like a reservoir).

Clothing

Brightly dyed cotton and animal skins are well worked by Azuposi tailors and decorated with fine beadwork and exquisite embroidery.

Men favor cotton loincloths in the summer months, when temperatures are high. A cotton blanket or buffalo hide is carried. and draped over the shoulders at night or when the weather is cooler. In winter the blanket is a constant companion. Pants of leather or cotton may cover the legs. Leather coverings may be fringed and worked in beads and embroidery.

Women wear blankets as well, over colorful cotton shirts and skirts. The blankets reach down to the waist and an embroidered belt holds them in place. Skirts are full and loose. Women take care to adorn their hair as well, combing and arranging it in braids or buns.

Both men and women wear leather shoes or boots, according to the season. The footwear is of soft deerskin with tough buffalo hide soles.

Festivals and Ceremonies

Each day includes an abundance of small personal ceremonies, performed to appease the spirits whose wills affect daily projects. The hunter appeals for success in the hunt, the farmer for good weather and crops, and there are larger ceremonies shared by entire Azuposi communities.

Important rituals are held on the dates of the summer and winter solstices. The winter solstice (Soyal) is the more important, and the more extravagant, of the ritual celebrations. The gods of war and the sun are especially prominent in them. The people rejoice in their protection from enemies in the lean times, and they venerate the sun, the giver of life, as the days are about to become long again.

As is common in all Azuposi ceremonies, there are many features to the solstice festivals. The ceremonies begin at dawn. There are the esoteric rituals, the secret rites held in their respective kivas by each fraternity—hunters, healers, priests, and leaders. As the sky lightens, each fraternity comes together, lights a pipe, and passes it around. Each has its own traditions and private ceremonies to raise solidarity as a community, as people united by shared purpose, and to build spiritual strength. Exercises in concentration and meditation are key parts of the rituals, as is the passing of the pipe.

After the private rituals, the community gathers together as a whole to make offerings to the spirits. Small offerings of mayz and food are placed around the community, for the spirits to taste and be nourished. The whole people join in prayer and song, building to a great, colorful

procession through the village. At last, as night falls, great fires are lit. The musicians play drums and flutes, and all villagers join in hours of dancing long into the night.

Herbs and Ceremonies

A wide selection of desert plants are used by the Azuposi in their ceremonies. A sampling follows, listing several plants and their common ceremonial value.

Plant/Herb	Use
Black Cohosh	known as 'bugbane'; used to drive away insects
Cedar	carved for prayer sticks; burned for protection, healing, and purification
Cornmeal	sacred; used in all ceremonies
Gourd	filled with beads or pebbles to make a rattle
Horsetail	medicine for treating asthma, hay fever, and colds
Mallow	used in "protective tea" at evening ceremonies
Mesquite	fuel; healing incense
Ragweed	root is chewed to allay fear
Sagebrush	burned to drive away malevolent forces
Wild Jalap	Protection against rattlesnake bites

Role-Playing Tip: The above selection can be put to good use by the DM. A little information goes a long way when you're describing things to your players. You could say, "the Azuposi sunwatcher does some stuff with some plants", but it would enhance the mood you are trying to create if you said, "As the sun dips beneath the horizon, the sunwatcher passes around a pottery vessel filled with mallow tea, inviting you to partake. Then he turns toward the fire, where mesquite and sagebrush burn, and chants over prayer sticks carved from cedar..." Descriptive details, made up as you go along, will make the role-playing experience much richer for everyone.

Age, Death and Burial

The Azuposi possess an ancient culture, and it is built on deep respect for the past—from the artifacts left by distant ancestors, from which knowledge and wisdom may be gained, to the tales and legends passed down from generation to generation.

Perhaps the Azuposi respect for the past is best illustrated in the way the True World natives treat their elderly. Old people are not regarded as tedious burdens or unproductive persons draining the resources of the community. On the contrary, they are the soul, the essence of the tribe, its spiritual and intellectual heart. In some sense, the elders constitute the truth of the tribe itself. The goal and ideal of every young Azuposi, even the most hot-headed warrior, is to reach the dignity of age.

Elderly Azuposi are leaders in ceremonies, keepers of esoteric and ritual secrets, counsellors for all leaders, and simple bearers of common sense. They reside with their children and grandchildren—or even the children of others if, perhaps, they grew old

without producing young or their children died. They are the symbolic heads of household. The younger husband and wife take care of day-to-day affairs, and in practice handle almost every decision; but anything of grave importance is expected to have the approval of the eldest household member.

Of course, no amount of care and respect can hold back death forever. The Azuposi accept this, and maintain a healthy understanding of their mortality. From an early age they witness the ravages of age and sickness on their loved ones. They learn not to be embittered, but to accept the cycle of birth and death as a whole, a unity, the beautiful circle of existence of which they too are a part. Death is a natural thing, to be welcomed, not feared, when its proper time has come.

The Azuposi have diverse ideas of what happens to a human spirit after death. Their beliefs are neither standardized nor codified on the subject. Some believe in an afterlife, others in reincarnation, but most believe in both. There are some who say that evil people, for instance, must pass through a place where they undergo suffering to balance their evil acts, before they can be reborn. Death is in the eyes of many a welcome passage to a new stage of existence.

Undeath, existence as animated dead, from skeletons to liches, is a particularly unspeakable abomination to the Azuposi mind. The undead are pitiable creatures, best destroyed, so that the spirits which were once bound to those bodies may continue their journeys in peace.

Custom dictates that the dead must be laid to rest by sundown, so that the Sun can keep accurate count of the births and deaths of each day. (This practice may, in part, be an ancient precaution against arising undead.) The corpse is prepared for burial by being washed and painted with ceremonial markings that will tell the spirits of the individual's station and the accomplishments of his life. Cornmeal is placed in the hands along with prayer feathers. Prayer feathers are placed as well on the forehead, breast, and feet. Some Azuposi finally place a white cotton mask, with eyeholes and a hole for the mouth, over the face. The mask represents rain-giving clouds, for those who believe the dead return as shiwannas, benign spirits that bathe the parched desert with rain.

For burial, the Azuposi usually dig a hole in the ground, out in the desert. In it the corpse, wrapped in a cotton sheet, is placed atop a sleeping mat woven of carrizo or bulrushes. A few precious mementoes—an earring or a necklace of turquoise beads—may be placed with the body. Then it is covered with dirt and finally a cairn of stones, to keep wild animals from digging up the remains.

Spirits and Priests

The Azuposi have a flourishing ceremonial life. They have festivals to mark the seasons, and small, special rituals to appease the spirits for every goal—bountiful harvests, successful hunting expedition, relief from illness, deliverance from invaders, and peace within the community itself. But what are the powers the Azuposi call in their times of need? And how exactly do they relate to the realms of gods and spirits?

The spiritual beliefs of the Azuposi may be described as animism. Animism comes from the word *anima,* "spirit" or "soul". Animism holds that the natural world and events therein are expressions of spiritual forces. A roaring waterfall is not merely a beautiful, natural sculpture, a potential resource, or something that might be someday dammed and chained as an electrical power source. The animist sees instead the presence of a great and beautiful spirit. The spirit is perhaps local, peculiar to the waterfall, as the evil spirit bear of Growling Falls. The spirit may be an emanation of a more powerful being, as the winter winds are the icy breath of Shakak, ruler of the North Mountain.

Azuposi Priests

Shaped by animism, priesthood among the Azuposi differs from priesthoods in other cultures. Most priests in the AD&D® game are devoted to a single supernatural entity. In exchange, the priest is granted clerical spells to cast.

The Azuposi regard their relationship to the supernatural differently. They accord all spirits great respect, the same respect they accord honorable and powerful humans, or the marvelous spectacles and horrible disasters of nature. Such spectacles and disasters are usually connected with spirits, in any event. Like the natural environment, the spirits are not to be naively idolized, nor ruthlessly subjugated to human will. Instead, Azuposi priests are like mediators. Diplomats, representing their human communities to the supernatural beings who may ensure or imperil the humans' survival.

Because the natural phenomena that confront humans, and the spirits behind those phenomena, are legion, Azuposi priests do not choose a single entity to "serve". Rather, each seeks to become comfortable with and familiar to as many spirits as possible, just as a diplomat would seek to have friendly relations with as many courtiers as possible in a foreign capital.

The priests who follow this pantheistic path resemble druids as described in the *Players' Handbbook.* The theory behind Azuposi magic is different than that of clerical magic, although in practice they are identical. A priest's higher character levels mark an increasing familiarity with the spirits; learning their names, dwelling places, and desires. This increase in knowledge leads to an increase in power, in the number of spirits willing to shape nature to the priest's will. Therefore the higher level priest has more spells and more powerful spells at his control.

There is one exception to the pantheistic/druidic approach toward priesthood in Azuposi culture: the sunwatchers, the priests of the Sun. Every Azuposi community has a sunwatcher who devotedly tracks the movement of the greatest heavenly body across the Great Kiva of the sky. The sunwatcher's priestly duties include the keeping of the calendar and the proper dates for all ceremonial events.

Sunwatchers have a special relationship with their patron spirit, who grants them spells in return for their faithful veneration and constant offerings of appeasement.

Priests of the Azuposi culture may

be neutral or neutral good in alignment; sunwatchers may be neutral, lawful neutral, neutral good, or lawful good. They tend to be lawful, reflecting the lawful regularity of the seasons.

The Spirit Realm

In the Prime Material Plane, spirits tend to be silent and invisible, but in their own realm they have bodies and voices much like ours. Translated into common AD&D® universe terms: The spirit realms are the Outer Planes—including the Astral Plane and various demi-planes (see Wenimats, below).

In times of dire need, an Azuposi priest may wish to petition the spirit powers directly, by journeying to their realm. This involves entering and traversing the Astral Plane, finding the appropriate plane or demi-plane where the spirit dwells, and then locating the spirit. The more powerful spirits are found in more than one place at a time, through the use of avatars.

Sometimes spirits summon humans to their realm without asking the humans' consent. Usually this occurs in the form of a dream.

There are various ways to reach the Spirit Realm. The usual gates apply—spells, devices, or psionics that result in astral projection. Scattered through the Pasocada basin are gateways to various other planes. A few of these are permanent; most appear and shift irregularly. In the delirium of sickness, the psyche may leave the body and enter the Astral Plane.

Wenimats

A demi-plane connected to the second layer of the Happy Hunting Grounds is the abode of the Azuposi divinities, and the interim, or final, resting-place of Azuposi souls. It is also adjacent to the Astral Plane, and has some direct connections to the Prime Material Plane. Wenimats, as this locale is called, is reached by following the Sun Trail, a pathway strewn with eternally fragrant pollen and cornmeal. The Sun Trail extends permanently to the Happy Hunting Grounds, and weaves its way in an irregular and changing fashion through the Astral Plane to the Prime Material.

The Azuposi describe Wenimats as being like the most beautiful mountains. To the Azuposi, mountains are a rich, flourishing terrain (they tend to receive more rain than the desert lowlands). Wenimats sports cool lakes, bubbling brooks, forests of every sort of tree, sunny meadows, and an abundance of game.

In the center of Wenimats are the kivas where the shiwannas, the benevolent spirits of the Azuposi dead, gather. In the center of the kivas is a gigantic bowl, which is ever full of water. The shiwannas take the water from the bowl and distribute it to the Azuposi lands as rain.

Other locations in Wenimats include Maski—Skeleton House, where Masauwu lives. Some sacred graveyards may have gateways to Maski, for Masauwu leads the spirits of the Azuposi departed to Wenimats through his house.

The Mighty Spirits

Among the numberless entities of the spirit realms, a few are renowned for possessing exceptional age and power. They are the spirits most deeply revered

and most commonly invoked by the Azuposi people.

Alosaka (Germinator, Muingwu, "Virgin of the Earth")
Symbol(s): Seed
Alignment: Neutral
Physical Appearance: Alosaka is a man with two horns growing from his head. He wears a white robe or kilt. In his left hand is a netted gourd containing water or honey, four corn ears, and a wooden digging stick. In his right hand is the Staff of Life, to which are attached packets of cornmeal and a corn ear
Role: Alosaka is one of the most ancient of spirits. With Corn Mother, he is purported to be direct creator the creatures of the world, including humankind. Although he receives much homage from the Azuposi, who desire fertile bounty of nature, Alosaka's involvement is distant and impersonal. His concerns are beyond mortal ken and are the most basic issues of life and creation, on scales of time and space that humans cannot comprehend. The Germinator exists to bring forth endless possibilities from the fertility of the universe; the subsequent preservation of the offspring of such efforts is not his concern. Only in times of serious threats to Life itself will Alosaka constrict his perceptions to the time frame and petty material details of mortal existence.

Corn Mother (Iyatiku)
Symbol(s): Ear of corn
Alignment: Lawful good
Physical Appearance: She has a human shape, but is also known to appear as a bird-woman, with a human head and the wings, tail, and claws of a great bird.
Role: Like Alosaka, Iyatiku is little involved with the day-to-day affairs of the world, as she resides beneath the ground. Instead, her daughters Uretsete and Naotsete, and her handmaidens, the Corn Maidens, busy themselves planting trees, releasing animals from their magical baskets, and otherwise carrying out Iyatiku's general will. Iyatiku is present twice in people's lives: at birth, when by virtue of her power life is brought forth; and after death, when Masauwu has guided a soul to Wenimats and Iyatiku receives the Azuposi back into her realm.
Although remote, as the principle of life Iyatiku receives extravagant homage from all the Azuposi.

Moon Mother (Yellow Woman, Tih'kuyi)
Symbol(s): Horned moon, hunter's bow
Alignment: Lawful neutral
Physical Appearance: A beautiful, pale woman in a white dress.
Role: Yellow Woman, spirit of the moon, is both a huntress and the protector of game. Azuposi hunters offer her a portion of their quarry as thanks and appeasement. She is married to both of the War Twins.
The priests known as Sunwatchers observe the moon to help them keep track of the seasonal calendar, but accord it no more honor than they give to any other. (Unlike the sun, the moon has no clearly visible effects on things such as temperatures and crop yields.)

Sho'tokunungwa
Symbol(s): Curved horn, cloud, rain, lightning.
Alignment: Neutral

Physical Appearance: A handsome man with a single, curved horn rising from the middle of his head. He holds a bolt of lightning in his right hand and a netted gourd in his left.

Role: Sho'tokunungwa is the spirit of the sky and distant stars. He has considerable power in the material plane over the spheres of rain, lightning and war, as well. His ability to produce rain and grant success in battle makes him a very important figure. He is also, along with Spider Woman and the Sun, one of the most ancient spirits. Before going to war, Azuposi fighters offer prayer sticks to Sho'tokunungwa.

Sho'tokunungwa is served by two lesser spirits (who are still very powerful nonetheless): the War Twins, Ahaiyuta and Matsailema.

Skeleton Man (Masauwu)

Symbol(s): Bloody skull

Alignment: Lawful neutral (good tendencies)

Physical Appearance: Masauwu has two guises: the one human, the other horrific. As a human, Masauwu is handsome, adorned with turquoise and with two black lines drawn across his nose and upper cheeks. As the mask of death, Masauwu is terrifying: his head is large and hairless, like a great squash, and his face is covered with blood.

Role: Masauwu, or Skeleton Man, is the special patron of the Azuposi people. It was he who led them out into the True World, and he who gave them the gift of fire. He is the spirit of Death, and of fertility-the spirit of the underworld, to which the dead pass and from which life returns. As the master of the gate between Life and Death, Skeleton Man is extremely powerful among mortals and spirits.

Spider Woman (Sus'sistinako, Sus'sistanako)

Symbol(s): Beads, shells, spider.

Alignment: Neutral good

Physical Appearance: Two human shapes are taken by Spider Woman. The first is a beautiful young maiden, with exquisite beads of red and white shells and turquoise wound around her arms. The second is a wrinkled old hag. She is also capable of appearing as any sort of spider.

Role: She is the oldest of spirits, along with the sun, and perhaps the most powerful—the Sun is perhaps her equal. Sus'sistinako is said by the Azuposi to have created the world, and all that dwells therein, by the force of her own powerful will, as a spider weaves a web from the stuff of its own body. Certainly she is the force that created the demi-plane of Wenimats. She dwells in Wenimats, in a kiva in the western ocean. Every evening the Sun, her lover, goes to visit her there, before returning his light to the world the next morning.

Although an earth goddess, Sus'sistinako is not linked to fertility. Rather, she is associated with the raw, solid substance of the material world. She does not give birth, but rather shapes things and breathes life into them. By naming the essence of any thing, living or inanimate, she can create it by willful thought alone.

Rarely do the Azuposi appeal to Spider Woman for aid. As with the other first spirits, (except for the Sun), her attentions are focused in such a way that human affairs are virtually unnoticeable. Iyatiku, the Corn Mother, is the spirit to which the Azuposi turn for their earthly needs.

Summer (Miochin)

Symbol(s): Lightning, eagle, bat, flame

Alignment: Neutral good

Physical Appearance: A well-tanned man attired in summer leaves and grasses.

Role: Miochin is the ruler of the South Mountain of Wenimats, and the spirit of Summer. He is served by summer animals, including the bat and the eagle. He wields summer lightning in battle, and creates all sorts of fire at will. Summer battles with Winter and Winter's minions for possession of the Corn Maidens.

Sun Father

Symbol(s): Shining disk

Alignment: Neutral

Physical Appearance: A handsome young man, painted beautifully and dressed in shining and elegantly embroidered clothes.

Role: With Sus'sistinako and Sho'tokunungwa, the Sun is one of the primary forces of spirit. Unlike most of the oldest gods, the Sun is often appealed to by the Azuposi, since he so directly affects their welfare.

The Sun marks the passage of time. Besides creating day and night, he also keeps track of the living and dead, counting each night the number of people who have been born or have died.

Priestly Practices: The Sun is unique among Azuposi spirits in that he has a cadre of priests devoted exclusively to him. These are the Sunwatchers—priests who specialize in observing the motion of the sun and, to a lesser extent, the moon. With their generations of accumulated knowledge the Sunwatchers pass their wisdom to the Azuposi communities

concerning the timing of seasonal activities: planting, harvesting, and the like.

Trickster (Sun Youth, Paiyatemu)
Symbol(s): Clown's garb, butterfly
Alignment: Chaotic neutral
Physical Appearance: A handsome Azuposi clown, bearing the shield of the Sun, carrying a flute. Countless butterflies come from the flute when it is played, and flutter around the spirit.
Role: Paiyetmu is the child of the Sun and a mortal woman, who conceived him when a beam of sunlight touched her in her sleep. Many tales surround Paiyetemu as both a "hero" and a mighty spirit. Many of these stories are coarse, but most are humorous. As a child he was troublesome; as a youth, a problem; and as an adult, he turned into a positively outrageous rascal. He is the patron and archetype of Azuposi rogues, clowns, and practical jokers.

Since status as a spirit has been recognized, Paiyatemu has had an official function as the shieldbearer of the sun.

Winter (Shakak)
Symbol(s): Icicle, magpie
Alignment: Neutral evil
Physical Appearance: A blue-skinned, white-haired man who wears a shirt of icicles and is covered with frost from head to foot.
Role: The spirit of winter rules the North Mountain of Wenimats. He is served by animals of winter, and can cast sleet and hail. His vanguard is the magpie. Shakak battles eternally with the summer spirit, Miochin, for possession of the Corn Maidens.

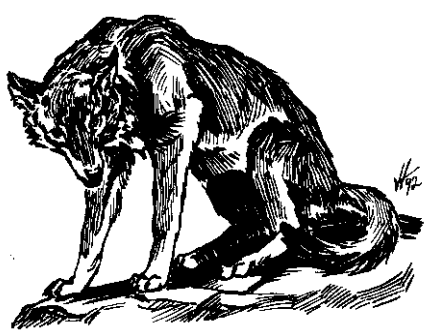
Animal Spirits

Azuposi's animistic perceptions see a spirit for each sort of animal. These are weaker than the great spirits, such as Masauwu, but they may be potent nonetheless, especially when one has a specialized need that an animal spirit can fill. The most powerful animal spirits are Snake, Cougar, and Bear

Other Spirits

We have provided an extensive catalog of the individual spirits to be found in the Pasocada Basin, but even it does not contain all the types of spirits. Here are listed a few of the less powerful, less important spirits, should you have need of them.

Arrow Youth: Brother of Yellow Woman.
Corn Maidens: Eight spirits, who are linked to the crops grown by the Azuposi.
Hli'akwa: Turquoise Man
Ma'we: Salt Woman
Morityema: Spring spirit
Pautiwa: Presides over the gods' council; the ideal go-between for priests.
Shrui'sthia: Autumn spirit



PART TWO: QUEST FOR THE CITY OF GOLD

Introduction

Part Two of City of Gold, is a ready-to-play adventure in the Pasocada Basin. The player characters will take on the roles of explorers, braving the dangers of uncharted territory as they search for a place of wealth and legend. In the course of their journey, they will find themselves enmeshed in a tangle of matters beyond their design. While they were perhaps simply seeking gold and glory at the start, by the end of their quest they are called upon to return prosperity to the Azuposi nation.

"Quest for the City of Gold" is appropriate for a party of 4-7 characters of levels 5-8. It is structured flexibly, however, and relies much more on role-playing and intelligent problem solving, than on brawn and magical power. Characters of higher or lower levels may find it a rewarding challenge as well. Look over the obstacles and monsters listed, and modify them, if you wish to use player characters of higher or lower levels.

The adventure is relatively linear, with the adventurers joining a non-player character's attempt to find Michaca, the City of Gold. If you want a more open-ended adventure, you can invent new ways to involve your player characters while using the same material.

The Mysteries of Sun Canyon

The city of Michaca, and indeed all of Sun Canyon, is a most extraordinary locale, full of magic and power. Sun Canyon is dusted with a golden, grainy, magical substance called micha. Some explorers of Sun Canyon have in fact mistaken it for gold dust, and the fact that some actual gold is found in the canyon, just compounds the misunderstandings.

Although no one has yet figured out micha's origins, we can say that it comes from Dunobo Springs. The springs are themselves magical, having a connection with the Sun Trail—a shortcut through the Astral Plane to Wenimats. The dripping sap and pollen from the trees around the springs mixes with the water and small amounts of fragrant, magical pollen and corn meal, washed up from the Sun Trail by the tides of the Astral/Material border. The precipitate of this mixture is micha, an extremely potent substance, which is precious nectar for the spirits and invaluable to Azuposi spellcasters. The micha is washed downstream with the floods each spring, and blankets the sandy floor of Sun Canyon.

Prehistory

There were people in Sun Canyon, and throughout the Pasocada Basin, before the Azuposi, but almost nothing is known of them. Veiled legends and tales are all that is left to pass on cryptic hints of the Ancients' culture and fate. Some clues to their nature may be found in the ruins of Esh Alakar.

The tale of the City of Gold as told in Maztica, for instance, contains frequent references to the Ancient Ones. The story, of course, has been altered and overlaid with Maztican mythic imagery. The Golden Man is part of the Maztican creation story, and their storytellers have found it natural to blend that tale with the legends of the Ancient Ones and the City of Gold.

When men in the north found the gods' man of gold, they bowed down in worship before him, believing the man of gold to be a god. The true gods became angered and destroyed the blasphemers.

Once again men found the man of gold, but the sight of so much precious metal filled them with greed. They brought down the man of gold and melted him down to make jewelry and precious objects with which to adorn themselves. "Now," they said to themselves, "we are wealthy, never again shall we need to work."

But when everyone had gold, its value was small and no one would work, for they believed themselves wealthy, and rich people need not work. Hunger thus came, and strife. Evil men stole and killed, not just to survive, but to hoard as much precious gold as possible.

This passage of the Maztican tale describes the Ancient Ones. It is, of course, cryptic and metaphorical and would seem to describe two different peoples, though in reality they are the same. The passage condenses a millennium of time into a few short lines. The point is simple: people found a place of plenty, but it made them complacent and selfish. The result was the destruction of an entire culture and people.

The Ancient Ones had discovered micha and learned how to use its power over the spirits. Their culture

and their magics attained such astonishing heights that even the secrets of spelljamming were tapped by a remarkable few.

But, as will happen when there is a great concentration of power, the power was abused. Men exploited the treasure of micha, enslaving many spirits and angering many more. Evil begets evil, and then turns to feed upon itself. The ancient sorcerers sought mastery over each other, and fought for control of the precious micha and the spirits. The conclusion of their raging battles was the obliteration of the Ancient's culture and waste was laid to the entire Pasocada Basin. The basin had once been lush territory, as fertile as any of the valleys to the south. The good spirits, such as those who bring rain and fertility, were now loath to visit the basin.

When the men were gone the spirits they had enslaved were once again free to roam the desolation. Many still harbor great hatred for humankind to this day, out of resentment for their ancient bondage. These are the desert spirits who assault travelers with thirst and hot winds.

When the ancestors of the Azuposi came to the Pasocada Basin they possessed a more humble and reverential attitude toward the spirit world. Consequently, they made friends among the spirits—Masauwu, chief among them. These powerful beings helped the Azuposi survive the environmental destruction left by the Ancients' folly, and helped them to build a new culture.

The Azuposi have a story that explains how, after establishing themselves by the Pasocada River, Masauwu gave them the great gift of micha. The micha would protect them from raiding nomads and hostile spirits.

The Legend of the City of Gold

This is the story of Michaca, as told by Azuposi storytellers.

The spirit Masauwu is guide and guardian of the Azuposi people. It was he who first welcomed them out of the ground where they had been wandering in darkness. It was he who introduced them to the mighty Sun Father, the source of light and life. It was he who shared with them the Pasocada Basin and he gave them its modest bounty. He taught them to survive by cultivating mayz and beans, and showed them how to build their homes and kivas out of stone, mortar and adobe.

Masauwu, though, had duties in Wenimats, the home of the spirits, and he could not always be with them. When he was away, raiders would attack their pueblos and evil spirits would spread strife and disease, famine and fear

Tipeyo, chief among the Azuposi elders, pleaded with Masauwu when next he visited them. "When you are away, our enemies fall upon us, and they take that which he have worked so hard to produce. We cry out for you, but you are far away, busy doing the work a great and powerful spirit must do. Please help us, Masauwu, lend us your ear always. Even if you cannot always be present and give us your personal comfort, our enemies will be cautious if they know that your ears are never deaf to us, and that you are never unable to hear our pleas for succor."

Masauwu thought long about the elder's words, for he saw truth in them, and, in truth, he cared deeply

for the Azuposi people.

Some time later, when Tipeyo sat meditating, in the kiva of his pueblo, the spirit Masauwu came to speak with him.

"You will go in the direction of the Mountain Lion," instructed Masauwu, "to where the sun sets at the summer solstice. There you will find the canyon which is sacred to the summer sun, a canyon with radiant rainbow walls. In the wash which fills the canyon floor, you will find a golden dust called micha. This is my gift to you, for it is beyond value and filled with potent magic and sacred energies. The spirits treasure micha, to them it is as rich a food as cornmeal is to you. With this micha, you will be able to win many favors from the spirit world.

"When you need me, Tipeyo, this is what you must do. You will bathe yourself in the wet sands of the wash, so that the sand covers all of your body. Then, you will sprinkle micha all over your body. And when you have covered yourself thus, go north to the spring from which the waters come to flood the wash every year. Call out to me as I instruct you, and enter the pool of water. As the micha floats away into the water, follow the golden path it marks. The path will bring you to the Sun Trail, which will lead you to Wenimats. And there you will find me, and I will always hear you, when you speak in this place."

Thus was the golden treasure of micha bestowed upon the Azuposi people. In Sun Canyon the sunwatchers and the priests built a glittering city to honor and supplicate the spirits, and they called it Michaca, after the gift which had been given them.

Michaca's Plight

The power of Michaca now seems to have been waning. Times have been bountiful in the past, but this is the third consecutive year of drought in the Pasocada Basin. The elders claim that the city's golden walls (the adobe and the mortar of the walls are filled with the rich micha silt) no longer sparkle as once they did. Upon the death of the last Gilded Priest—the chief priest of Michaca, the most important and powerful priest among all the Azuposi—the power seemed to wane. The new Gilded Priest, who is supposed to be translated to Wenimats for acceptance and installation by the great spirits, was unable to do so. He successfully traveled to the Astral Plane, but a fierce farastu, one of the Gehreleths, was blocking his path. Overcome with fear, he returned to the Prime Material plane saying that Masauwu would not allow him entrance to Wenimats. He has tried several times since then, but always with the same result.

The people are restless; the priests are puzzled. Why is Masauwu displeased? Why is he deaf to their cries? Why would he allow a monster to block their path to him? Have the Azuposi failed to accord him and the other spirits their appropriate honors?

In fact, Masauwu is displeased because the Azuposi have become complacent in their rituals, taking his favor for granted. But in addition to this, a bent priestess named Ikitipsa has placed a farastu on the trail in an attempt to weaken the Azuposi. Masauwu is too disappointed with the Azuposi to get rid of it himself. In any event, years of prosperity have made the Azuposi so weak that now the new

Gilded Priest does not have the strength of heart to face the fierce farastu. The Azuposi have not the daring to find out what is happening, nor does Masauwu feel inclined to aid the weak-hearted Gilded Priest.

Micha in Game Terms

Micha increases the potency of spells for which it is used as a material component. For summoning spells or spells that deal with spirits and such, micha increases the effective level of the spellcaster by 3 levels and reduces any saving throws against the spell by 3. For spells not related to summoning or the spirit world, micha increases the effective level by 1, and reduces saving throws by 1.

For example, an 11th level cleric casting *dispel evil* would normally benefit from the spell for 11 rounds, but if he uses micha when casting the spell, the duration is an additional three rounds—as if the cleric were 14th level. In addition, the creatures affected by the spell would suffer -3 on their saving throws. A wizard casting *fireball* while using micha, on the other hand, would only function at one level higher than normal (increasing damage and range), and the targets' saving throws would only be penalized 1 point.

About half an ounce of micha is all that needs to be used to gain this bonus. If less micha is used, no bonus is gained. If more than a half an ounce is used, there is no additional bonus. In any case, the micha vanishes (it is taken by the spirits) when the spell is cast.

Micha has some additional special uses that we've described, such as transportation to the Sun Wail via Dunobo Springs. As Dungeon Master, you should feel free to make up other uses for micha, as you require them.

Because of its general value in spell-casting, wizards and clerics may be willing to pay anywhere from 5 gp to 50 gp per dose (half-ounce), depending on their needs, their wealth, and the supply of micha available. When in doubt, use 10 gp per half-ounce. Maztican priests will be less interested in micha than Realmsians, as Maztican priests have no access to the Summoning Sphere of Influence.

Sozarro

Sozarro came to the True World as a simple legionnaire on the ships of Cordell's first expedition. He has slowly, inconspicuously, elevated himself among the men from the Sword Coast, developing skills beyond his lowly rank as a common soldier,

Sozarro grew tired of taking orders, of serving other men and doing the labor that won them wealth. He came to resent particularly his "superiors", whom he considered (and often with good cause) as inferior in martial skill and intellectual prowess.

A few skeletons lie in this bold adventurer's closet. In Payit he was involved with a beautiful native woman. His commander coveted the same woman's affection and when Sozarro learned of his superior's designs and importunate advances to his beloved, he angrily challenged the rival to a duel. The officer just laughed at the young man's fierce posturing and drew his sword. Sozarro killed him.

Obviously this meant the time had come to move on. Taking the

officer's hoard of Maztican jewelry, Sozarro ran west with but one companion: Malco, his faithful personal servant. He dared not even tell his beloved of his leaving.

As he traveled, Sozarro heard legends of the City of Gold. At first he thought them fanciful, empty tales. As he heard more, he suspected there might be some truth to them and the thought of finding this magnificent city shaped into a quest before his eyes. It became a golden grail to give direction and meaning to his wanderings in the True World.

Sozarro is a practical man. He has already located a guide who knows, more or less, the way to Michaca and he has acquired two magical items that should make his quest viable. Now he wants to gather a group of seasoned adventurers and explorers to accompany him—resolute men and women, unafraid to face the unknown, flexible enough to deal with the unexpected, and strong and clever enough to make off with a good bit of the legendary wealth of Michaca. Since he is less rapacious than Cordell, and unable to raise a large army, he intends to trade steel items, and other inexpensive goods from the Sword Coast, for Michacan gold. He reasons that gold should be of less value to the Michacans, since they are said to have so much of it.

Though he hardly realizes it at a conscious level, greed is Sozarro's least motivation. He is a man in flight, running from his crime, his love, and his past. He is running toward a fanciful goal that might well be a mirage of the northern desert. What he really craves is not untold wealth, but a renewed sense of himself as a noble, valiant, and courageous man. Perhaps discovering the City of Gold will reassure him of his own human value, and ensure a place for his name when the chronicles of the history of the True World are written.

Sidelights and Embellishment

Ultimately *City of Gold* is about exploring, charting new lands, and encountering strange wonders. If it suits your group, let this affect the pace of play. Allow, even encourage, your players to wander around and smell the flowers. The City of Gold has waited for centuries; it will wait a bit longer. If you have the patience, and can sustain the interest of your players, it could well take months, even years of game time for your player characters to discover their grail: the truth of the legend of the City of Gold.

To sustain player interest you'll have to go beyond the words in these pages, of course. You can start by complicating the background and preparations. Invent an alternate background to make the quest player-motivated. Let their own interest, not an employer's promise of gold, drive the characters. Don't make things easy. Without a guide, for example, the party could explore all sorts of fascinating places that are nowhere near their destination. And what is their destination anyhow? Remember, that which they seek is different from that which they think they seek—the true nature of the City of Gold is other than the legends portray.

Part Three of this book contains a host of scenario ideas for the Azuposi lands. If you want to use the "epic option" in the "Quest for

the City of Gold," then put your characters through several of these encounters and adventures before they reach Michaca. In addition, encounters with the Dog People and the other natives who live between Kultaka and Michaca offer possibilities for detours and delays. Perhaps a war is raging among the Dog People, making travel dangerous. The player characters may have to take sides in the war in order to bring the war to an end and get on with their quest. If you use the "epic option" and make the finding of Michaca much more difficult, double or triple the amount of micha the characters gain.

The Lure of Gold

This section introduces the player characters to Sozarro and his plans to find Michaca.

Common Knowledge

The following should be read aloud to your players:

> A popular tale among the Mazticans is the legend of Michaca, the City of Gold. Stories tell of a wealthy people who have so much gold that even their streets are paved with it. In various versions it describes a selfish, greedy people who find great wealth and are destroyed by it. It is a myth used to pass on a moral about the foolish love of wealth, but many Mazticans believe it to be a place that actually exists. Some storytellers even have second-hand tales of travelers who have seen Michaca as a still thriving city.
>
> The newcomers from the Sword Coast have heard these tales as well. Some dismiss them as completely fanciful, or at least exaggerated, stories. Even for those who are inclined to believe those tales, the riches of Payit, Kultaka, and Nexal are closer and far more tangible.

Meeting Sozarro

Somewhere in the True World, Sozarro finds the player characters. (It is unlikely that he would be in Payit.) Once he has located them he brings them together to present his plan. He then gives them this "sales pitch":

> "No doubt you've heard talk of the City of Gold—a wondrous metropolis where the buildings, even the roads underfoot, are made of pure gold. It is so wealthy that every day the king of this city covers himself with gold dust, head to toe, before bathing. This may sound fantastic to you, but the Mazticans believe the tales—and haven't we already found strange wonders aplenty in this new world? Besides, if the gold is just a tiny fraction of what the legends claim, it would be a priceless find!
>
> "I'm planning an exploration party. Unlike Cordell, I'd rather set up trading relations than conquer and loot. For one thing, I don't have the resources to launch an armed invasion, for another, I've seen enough blood. But imagine the profit we could make trading steel knives for gold. Gold which, to them, would be no more valuable than, say,

obsidian is in these parts. And whoever finds this City of Gold will be famous. A little glory never hurt anyone, has it?

"I'm coming to you because I can't do this alone. Good, sturdy partners, that's what I'm looking for.

"You think I'm crazy? I have good reason to think I have some unique advantages in the attempt to find Michaca—that's the city's name. I have a sponsor, a rich merchant house of Amn. They are impressed enough to back me, and I can offer you cash down, immediately, to demonstrate the serious character of my offer.

"This is uncharted territory we'll be seeing, the lands north of the Dog People's deserts, where hardly anyone in these parts has ever even walked. The risks are unknown. The danger might be immense. We can reasonably expect corresponding rewards: Fame and fortune to make the conquest of Payit a paltry handful of coppers by comparison.

"Have I caught your interest?"

Neutral or selfish characters should be interested in the prospect of gold, lots of it. What's more, unless good hearted people find the City of Gold first, it will no doubt fall to more ruthless explorers, after the style of Cordell. Good characters thus have a double motivation to help Sozarro: the wealth of trade and the protection of a people that has not yet met the Realmsians nor experienced their martial abilities.

Players will of course want to know, in detail, what's in it for them. First of all, Sozarro can offer each person an advance—a piece of jewelry worth 1,000 gold pieces. He claims it is from the Amnian merchant house that is, on condition of anonymity for political reasons, providing financial backing for his expedition.

In fact, there is no such merchant house. Sozarro is running the whole show himself, using treasure stolen from his former commander, whom he killed. Presenting himself truthfully as a lowly soldier and a murderous deserter, he would probably not attract suitable traveling companions. He has invented the story of the merchant house of Amn to lend his offer credibility.

His "unique advantages" are a guide whose brother has been to Michaca, a *portable hole* (for carrying supplies and gold through the desert), and a *skin of pouring* (so they won't need to worry about running low on water). Sozarro, however, will not reveal these advantages until the player characters have signed on with him.

As for the spoils of the expedition, Sozarro proposes to divide whatever treasure is brought back into a number of equal shares. Two shares go to the expedition's sponsors; two to Sozarro himself; and one to each of the player characters. If the players negotiate firmly, Sozarro will permit his share to be reduced to one and a half or even just one share. The "sponsors'" shares will go to Sozarro as well, secretly. He will say that, regrettably, those shares are not negotiable.

For his part, Sozarro is looking for certain things in the people he wishes to hire.

Horses. Do they have horses? Especially those with short legs will need to ride in order to keep them from slowing down the rest of the

party. He prefers light horses because they travel fastest.

Magic. Can any of the characters produce food, or water, or both, through magic? Can anyone cure poisoning? There are lots of scorpions in the desert. Does anyone have a magical form of conveyance? Can anyone keep people cool through magic? What about spells to understand languages? Or conveyance spells such as *deeppockets?* Can anyone paralyze, hold, or immobilize people without killing them? (Sozarro is anticipating the need to defend himself without angering the Michacans, in case some of them prove hostile.) Sozarro has heard that plumaweavers have some useful spells for travel in the desert. Is there a plumaweaver in the group?

Alignment. Sozarro must trust the player characters with his life in the unknown wilds, far from any court or law. If the adventurers seem evil, he will not even approach them to hire them. If they give him any reason to doubt their trustworthiness, he may find a priest of Qotal or Tezca and try to have the priest secretly cast know *alignment* on the adventurer who appears to be the leader of the group. If he is unsatisfied with the result, he abandons the group. Note that evil characters may have a tough time of it among the Azuposi and may even endanger the entire party—such as during the peace pipe ceremony that the Azuposi will use to welcome and test the adventurers.

Power. Sozarro asks the player characters what deeds they have accomplished to get some idea of their strength and resourcefulness. If they say, "We bravely ganged up on a skeleton and smashed it to bone meal," he may tell them that their services will not be required.

Skills. Sozarro would like people who can speak the languages of the Dog People and Desert Dwarves, who are familiar with desert travel, and who can find their way through the uncharted wastelands. (The ability to speak to the Dog People and the Desert Dwarves will aid role-playing in the Pasocada Basin.)

Sozarro
Level 7 Fighter

Armor Class: 0
Move: 12
Hit Points: 41
No. of Attacks: 2/1 with long sword
THAC0: 14
Damage/Attack: 1-8/1-12 (sword), 1-6/1-8 (light lance)

Special Attacks: + 1 Str damage bonus, +2 specialist damage bonus with long sword
Special Defenses: None
Magic Resistance: Nil
Size: M (5' 9")
Alignment: CG
Psionic Ability: Nil

STR 16	DEX 10	CON 14
INT 15	WIS 9	CHA 11

Weapon Proficiencies: long sword (specialist), lance, dagger, light crossbow, battle axe
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Riding Horse, Seamanship, Blind-Fighting, Modern Language (Maztican), Etiquette (Maztican), Survival (jungle), Swimming.
Magical Items: *skin of pouring, portable hole*

Malco, Sozarro's Manservant

INT Very; AL N; AC 9; MV 12; HD 3; hp 17; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Damage 1-6/1-6 (spears); *SZ* M; ML 15

Description: Malco is a native of Payit. He stands 5' 7" tall and has hair whitened with age, having witnessed a full 60 cycles of the seasons. He walks with a slight limp in his left leg.

An aging soldier, Malco was so dazzled by the magic and might of the Golden Legion that he gave up the True World for conquered and threw in his lot with the conquerors. It was easy to find employment as a servant to the soldiers, since all of them were intent on living like kings, or at least looking the part, after they tasted the fruits of victory. After serving several employers for brief periods of time, Malco settled on Sozarro a year ago and both men have found themselves quite satisfied with the arrangement.

Malco does not know the whole truth about Sozarro. He admires him immensely, and believes he has a potential for true greatness. He also looks the other way whenever Sozarro's actions might be ethically questionable.

Sozarro's Plan

First of all, Sozarro has hired a guide whose brother has actually been to Michaca, or at least makes that claim. The guide is of the Dog People, so he should also be of value in getting the party through the lands of the Dog People without too much difficulty.

Secondly, Sozarro knows that the deserts separating him from Michaca are formidable and he has acquired two magical items to help him: a *skin of pouring* to provide all the water the characters will need, and a *portable hole* to carry food and trade goods through the desert and to carry gold back from Michaca. Sozarro also has acquired four horses. Three for himself, Malco, and the guide, and a fourth to serve as a "spare," since he knows that long desert journeys are hard on the animals.

In preparation for the journey, Sozarro has collected a variety of trade goods consisting of one hundred steel knives (worth 5 sp each in the Realms), ten battle axe heads (3 gp each), five gallons of ale (2 sp per gallon), twenty flint & steel sets (5 sp each), ten iron pots (5 sp each), fifty small metal mirrors (10 gp each), two hundred iron arrowheads (3 sp/20), fifty steel spearpoints (5 sp each), and twenty cut banded agates (10 gp each). He anticipates vigorous trade. Sozarro

assumes the Michacans will not have iron, steel, mirrors, nor should they have cut stones. The assembled trade goods, therefore, should be very valuable. Total cost for this set of trade goods is only 314 gp. Total weight is 280 pounds.

Sozarro's plan is to go to Kultaka (if the characters aren't already there), buy final supplies, and head to Zopal. Then he will march along the scrublands east of the Axaptzlan Mountains. On the way to the desert the party will stop by the fertile banks of a river that is said to flow there. There they can rest in comparative ease before their first encounter with the desert: crossing about one hundred miles to reach still more scrubland and perhaps a small river. From there, the guide will direct them through sixty miles of desiccated scrub and a further hundred miles of parched desert. The City of Gold is not in the desert itself, but lies in scrublands beyond them.

If the player characters have any better ideas about getting through the trackless desert of the Dog People than skirting along its eastern border, Sozarro may well be interested. He will veto any suggestion to skirt the desert on the west, because the Huacli are known to be hostile to Realmsians. In any case, getting to Michaca will require traveling through harsh scrublands and desert, as described below.

This is the journey as Sozarro plans it:

Kultaka to Zopal: 70 to 80 miles along footroads. Two days travel time on light horses. Movement Cost 1/2.

Zopal to northern river: 100 miles through scrublands. Eight to ten days. Movement Cost 2.

River to Sands of Itzcala: 60 miles through scrublands. Five days. Movement Cost 2.

Through the desert to more scrublands: 100 miles of desert. Eight to ten days. Movement Cost 2.

Across scrublands: 60 miles. Five days. Movement Cost 2.

Through desert to Michaca: 100 miles. Eight to ten days. Movement Cost 2.

Total time from Kultaka to Michaca: One and a half months.

Preparations

Sozarro has not finalized preparations when he contracts with the player characters to join his adventure. The player characters, as partners in the expedition, have the chance to review the preparations he's made and to make further arrangements of their own, if they so desire.

He has amassed a large store of salt for travel through the desert. In addition, the dried fruits and meats he has purchased are very salty.

The Guide

Sozarro has procured a Dog Person guide named Iguertin. This man claims that his brother has seen the City of Gold and describes it as wealthy beyond even the legends' description.

Iguertin: AL CN; AC 9; MV 12; HD 4; HP 15; THAC0 19; #AT 2 or 1; Damage 1d6/1d6 (arrows) or 1d6/1d6 (spear); ML 9
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Alertness, Direction Sense, Tracking, Fire-building, Rope Use, Set Snares, Survival (Deserts), Weather Sense, Jumping, Modern Languages (Dog People, Desert Dwarf, Realmsian Common).

Investigating Sozarro

The player characters may use magic such as *ESP* or *detect lie* to test the validity of Sozarro's statements. Most of the information holds true (at least to Sozarro's knowledge), just as the man says. They will be able to tell that there isn't really an Amnian merchant house backing the expedition. Sozarro, however, will weasel his way out of the question by saying that, to protect his sponsors' true identities, he is disseminating misinformation—and this, of course, is a true statement. He asks that the adventurers please not use any mind-magics against him, as he would rather not jeopardize the financing of the expedition by allowing them to gain confidential information that is, as far as everyone in this present company is concerned, none of their business.

Pressing the issue only tries Sozarro's patience. He'll look for other hirelings if the adventurers are too nosy. Don't be afraid to inform your players that their would-be employer has taken offense and retracted his offer. If the player characters want to discover the City of Gold, they'll have to do it by themselves, and they will have an able rival—Sozarro—striving to beat them to it. Sozarro has an edge with his map, but Rogue player characters may plan to relieve him of that particular burden.

Wise freelance adventurers always check the veracity of their employers' stories and investigate their reputations.

The characters might ask legionnaires or natives about Sozarro's reputation, or about the legends concerning the City of Gold. Naturally, information is never free, and the characters will be expected to provide a gift or favor in return.

Each day of rumormongering allows a player character a 20% chance to roll on the chart below to see what information has turned up. If he is trying to gain information from natives, the character must spend 5 gp per day for drinks and bribes. If the character is talking to Realmsians, he must spend 10 gp, but he receives a +1 on the roll.

Roll (d10)	Information
1-3	He has been using Payit jewelry to purchase horses and dried meat.
4	He has many more magical items than he lets people know about.
5-6	He recently traded his magic sword for a skin of pouring.
7	He is an evil, underhanded fellow who has often betrayed associates in the past.
8-9	He came over with Cordell as a legionnaire, but has left Cordell's army.
10	He is wanted for murder in Pay it.
11	In Payit, he killed an officer in a fight over a woman and has deserted the Legion.

Across the Savage Wastes

In this section, the party travels north and west across scrublands and deserts. They need courage and skill to face the beasts that roam the land, as well as tact, to assure good relations with the natives they will meet.

The First Steps

If the characters are in Kultaka, that is where Sozarro contacts them. If not, they will have to trek overland to arrive at Kultaka. Sozarro sees to it that any short-legged folk are mounted. He would prefer that all the characters have horses. Horses might have a tough time of it in the desert, but the extra speed and load capacity they provide is invaluable.

If the characters have to journey across the True World to arrive in Kultaka, you can insert whatever encounters you generate randomly or deem appropriate.

The characters have a few days to spend on their own in Kultaka while Sozarro makes all the arrangements, so if they want to tour this fortress city, they may. Realmsians, seen as those who have defeated the Kultakans' traditional enemies, are always welcome.

Once Sozarro has made his arrangements, the party marches to Zopal, a two day journey through fertile lands along fair roads. In Zopal the party replenishes its supplies.

The Lands of the Dog People

After leaving Kultaka, the player characters ride to Zopal without incident. From there, however, they must ride north across the lands of the nomadic Dog People; lands which are not under the rule of Governor Cordell.

It is about one hundred miles to the northern river, through land that is mostly scrub. At the river the characters may want to rest, bathe, recover from their wounds, and hunt the game animals which frequent the area.

North of the river lie sixty more miles of scrubland. After that, the ground rapidly becomes dry and sandy, and they enter the desert.

Encounters in the Scrublands
Use this encounter system whenever the player characters are in scrublands, whether in the Pasocada Basin, on the way there, or on the way back. Roll each day at 7-10 am, 3-6 pm, 7-10 pm, and 3-6 am; chance for encounter is 1 in 10. If you wish, you can roll for all the day's encounters ahead of time and then decide at what time each arrives. Many of these creatures are more likely to be encountered during the daylight hours, while others are only active in the dark of night.

Note: Sozarro avoids combat if possible, though he may join a melee if things are going badly for the player characters. There is a chance, if you wish, that a wild blow in combat could destroy his skin of pouring or portable hole. The loss of either would be tragic, so he keeps them bundled in his saddlebags. Accidents can always happen.

Dice Roll (d8 + d12)	Result
2	Dragonne
3	1-10 Aarakocra
4	1-3 Rhaumbusun
5	1-6 Ankhegs

6	1-6 Axe Beaks (Pleistocene Animals)
7	1-6 Giant Poisonous Snakes
8	Natives
9	1-4 Huge Scorpions
10	1-6 Normal Poisonous Snakes
11	2-12 Deer (Antelope under Animal, Herd)
12	3-18 Buffalo (Animal, Herd)
13	1-12 Giant Toads
14	Native Village
15	1-4 Coyotes (Jackals)
16	1-6 Large Scorpions
17	Loner
18	1-4 Giant Scorpions
19	1-6 Fire Toads
20	1-2 Coyotlweres (as Jackalwere)

Notes on Random Encounters

Coyotlweres: Treat as jackalweres. They may command a pack of coyotes (treat as jackals).

Loner: A human wandering on his own. In the area of the Dog People, he may be a Maztican priest, a hermit, a hishnashaper, a plumaweaver, a lunatic, a lost explorer, or an outcast exiled for crimes. For convenience, use either the hishnashaper or Maztican priest described under "Natives," unless you have a more creative idea.

Natives: In Dog People country, these are 1-6 Dog People hunters. (For other territories, see those encounters.)

Hunters: Int Average; AL N; AC 10; MV 12; HD 2; HP 12; THAC0 19; #AT 2 or 1; Damage: 1-6/1-6 (short bow) or 1-3/1-2 (knife); SA Specialist with short bow (+2 to hit within 30 feet); SZ M; ML 11

If six hunters are encountered, the sixth is a 2nd level Hishnashaper.

Hishnashaper: Int High; AL N; AC 10; MV 12; HD 2; hp 7; #AT 2 or 1; Damage: 1-6/1-6 (short bow) or 1-3/1-2 (knife); SA *Huntsman's Call;* SZ M; ML 12

Native Village: In the territory of the Dog People, a village of 30-300 people (one-third are combatants). They live in caves in a rocky hill or cliff, or in rude, temporary huts. In areas inhabited by other peoples, treat this as a standard Native encounter and only allow the finding of a village when the characters actually come across one on the map.

Each village has one chief (5th level fighter), 1-4 sub chiefs (4th level), and 3rd level warriors in number equal to one-thirtieth of the total villagers. The percent chance that a village has a shaman (3rd level priest of Maztica) equals the total number villagers divided by 5. The percent chance to have a hishnashaper equals the number of total villagers divided by 3.

For each exceptional character in the village (those listed above, excluding regular Combatants), the village has trade goods (polished gems, seashells, a few copper blades, etc.) worth 1-6 gp.

Chief: Int Very; AL LN; AC 7; MV 12; HD 5; hp 30; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Damage 1-8/1-8 (axe); SZ M; ML 15

Sub-Chiefs (1-4): Int Very; AL LN; AC-7; MV 12; HD 4; hp 24; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Damage 1-S/1-S (axe); SZ M; ML 14

Warriors: Int Average; AL N; AC 8; MV 12; HD 3; hp 18; THAC0 18; #AT 1 or 2; Damage 1-S/1-S (axe) or 1-6/1-6 (short bow); SZ M; ML 13

Shaman: Int High; AL N; AC 10; MV 12; HD 3; hp 14; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Damage 1-6/1-8 (spear, doubled with spear-caster at ranges up to 40 yards); SA & SD Spells as a 3rd level

priest of Maztica; SZ M; ML 14; Spells: (1) *detect evil, create water cure light wounds, (2) charm person or mammal*

Hishnashaper: Int High; AL N; AC 10; MV 12; HD 3; hp 11; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Damage 1-6/1-8 (spear); SA & SD Spells as 3rd level hishnashaper; *SZ* M; ML 12; Spells: (1) *Huntsman's Call, Protection*

Regular Combatants: Int Average; AL N; AC 10; MV 12; HD 1; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 2 or 1; Damage 1-6/1-6 (short bow) or 1-3/1-2 (knife); *SZ* M; ML 11

RANDOM TREASURES

Material wealth is not as common, nor easy to stumble upon, in this area of the True World as it is in the Realms. For treasures, unintelligent creatures have one-tenth the normal amount because their victims tend to have much less material, portable wealth, than is usual in the Realms. Intelligent creatures will have amassed about half the amount common in the Realms. Instead of coins, creatures in this area will have trade goods, such as polished turquoise stones, petty jewelry, pottery, and so forth. Any gem or piece of jewelry rolled on the treasure chart has a lower value because it is not as intricately worked. (Gems, for instance, are uncut.) For unintelligent creatures, the chance to have magic is one-tenth normal. For intelligent creatures, it is one-half.

Meeting the Dog People

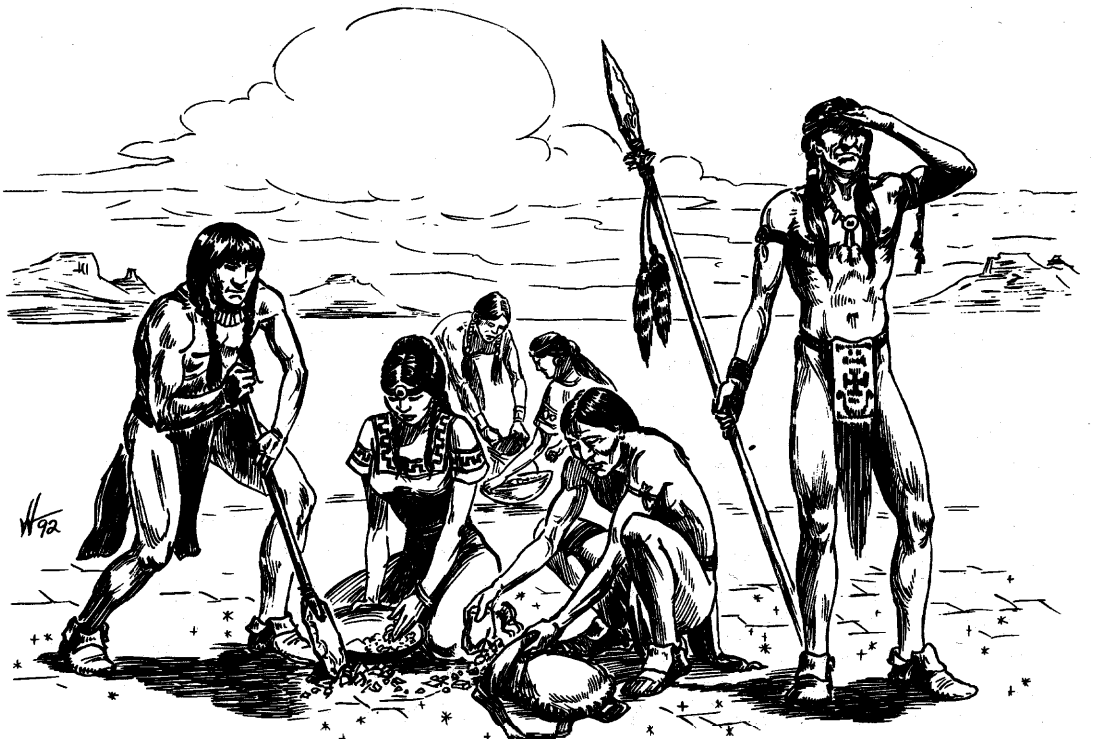
The first encounter with the Dog People is an opportunity for role-playing. Once the explorers have established good relations with one group of Dog People, getting fair treatment from other groups will be easier, and need not be role-played in minute detail.

The first contact is likely to be with hunters. They are not prepared for battle, so they are unlikely to attack the party, especially since the party is obviously so large and well-equipped. If approached in a friendly manner, the hunters may speak with the characters and fetch their leaders to speak with them.

When meeting the explorers, the Dog People are filled with mixed emotions. On one hand, the party includes Mazticans, who are the traditional enemies of the Dog People. On the other, the party includes Realmsians, who are rumored to have valuables of almost mythic proportions to trade. Finally, the sight of horses may be enough to terrify them, though they have probably heard of these creatures before. The explorers have to encourage good will and prevent the fear of strangers and hate for Mazticans to overcome the Dog People.

If the explorers impress the Dog People by showing their power, trading a few trade items, sharing any meals they are offered, and so forth, then the chief of a band may give them a special decorative pendant made of shells, feathers, and talons. While the pendant itself has no magical properties, when other tribes of Dog People see it, they will know that the explorers have had friendly relations with others of their tribe and will be less suspicious of them.

A meeting with Dog People is a chance for explorers to rest, eat fresh food, and purchase additional supplies.



Each time the party meets Dog People, there is a 10% chance that they are of Iguertin's tribe, or of a tribe friendly to his.

In the Heat of the Sun

After days of riding through scrub the party finds that the land becomes more and more arid the farther north they travel. Here Iguertin says they must brave the desert to reach the more fertile land farther north. To arrive at the scrublands, they must cross 100 miles of desert. After that, they will be in the brushland for another 60 more miles, during which time they will rest for a day at a small river. (Use the scrublands encounters for that period of time.) Then another 120 mile stretch of hot and dry desert awaits them before they reach the area surrounding Michaca.

DESERT SURVIVAL

This is a summary of the most important aspects of desert travel. Since Sozarro has wisely decided to make the journey during winter, the temperature rises only into the nineties during the day, and it is very cool at night.

Food: Except for the need to replace salt lost to sweat, desert travel requires no more food than does normal travel.

Water: Each character requires a minimum of 8 pints of water per day if they are mounted, 16 if they are walking. (Adjust as you will for smaller or tougher characters.) Each horse or mule requires 72 pints (9 gallons) of water per day.

Heat: During the day, the heat of the desert is likely to cause fatigue, with the most important variable being the amount of armor a character is wearing.

Armor Worn	Penalty
None	- 1
Light	- 2
Heavy	- 3

Heavy Armor is padded armor or plate mail.

Light Armor is anything else.

The penalty applies to Str, Dex, Con, and To Hit rolls. (Note that a decrease in Str, for example, may further reduce To Hit rolls.) The penalty decreases by one for each hour of cool rest, as at night.

Nasty Critters: Each night there is a 5% chance for each character that some poisonous creature, such as a scorpion or serpent, has snuggled up to him in his sleep, crawled into a boot, or otherwise situated itself so that it stings or bites the character. Generally they are not terribly dangerous—make a saving throw vs poison (at +3) or take 2-7 points of damage, but 10% have more vicious poison. For these, use the poison chart for normal poisonous snakes.

Desert Encounters

In the desert, check for encounters between 7-10 am, 7-10 pm, and 3-6 am. An encounter occurs if you roll a 1 on 1d10. Use the chart below to determine the nature of the encounter. Since some encounters are more likely to be during the day, while others are more common at night, roll either 2d6 (day) or d12 (night) on this chart. Do not have the player characters encounter random Azuposi before first contact, as described below.

Roll 2d6 or d12	Result
1	Dragonne
2	1-2 Coyotlweres (Jackalweres)
3	1-6 Fire Toads
4	1-6 Snakes
5	1-4 Scorpions
6	1-10 Aarakocra
7	Natives
8	Salt Gatherers
9	1-12 Giant Toads
10	Loner
11	1-6 Coyotes (Jackals)
12	2-12 Nahopaca Raiders

Notes on Random Encounters

Loner: These might be wandering sunwatchers, bent priests cast out of the Azuposi nation, shamans seeking visions, evil hishnashapers, lost Mazticans crazy from the sun, or other unusual types. If you don't want to invent you own loner, use a Dog People Hishnashaper seeking scorpions and serpents for his magics.

Hishnashaper: Int High; AL N; AC 10; MV 12; HD 3; hp 11; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Damage 1-6/1-8 (spear); SA & SD Spells as 3rd level hishnashaper; SZ M; ML 12; Spells: (1) *huntsman's call, protection*

Nahopaca Raiders: Fierce raiders intent on preying on the other people in the area. They may be foolish enough to test their mettle against the explorers, even if they are outnumbered. There is a 20% chance they have trade goods worth 20-120 gp and a 20% chance they have large amounts of meat, mayz, vegetables, and other foods.

Nahopaca Raiders: Int Average; AL NE; AC 7; MV 12; HD 3; hp 16; THAC0 18; #AT 2 or 1; Damage 1-6/1-6 (short bow) or 1-8/1-8 (axe); SZ M; ML 13

Natives: These are hunters (75%)

or traders (25%) from nearby tribes. They may be Nahopaca, Desert Dwarves, or Dog People. Hunters have a 25% chance to have recently caught game; they speak only their native language. Traders have trade goods (mayz, turquoise, copper or gold jewelry, seashells) worth 20-120 gp; they speak several local languages and are willing to trade (if not terrified by horses and steel).

Human Hunters (1-6): Int Average;ALN;AC10;MV12;HD1; hp5; THAC0 20; #AT 2or1; Damage 1-6/1-6 (short bow) or 1-3/1-2 (knife); SZ M;ML12

Dwarven Hunters (1-6): Int Very; AL LG; AC 10; MV 6; HD 1; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 2 or 1; Damage 1-6/1-6 (short bow) or 1-3/1-2 (knife); SA + 1 damage with stone weapons; SZ S; ML 14

Human Traders (2-5): Int Very; AL N; AC 10; MV 12; HD 1; hp 3; THAC0 20; #AT 2 or 1; Damage 1-6/1-6 (short bow) or 1-6/1-8 (spear); SZ M;ML 9

Dwarven Traders (2-5): Int Very; AL LG; AC 10; MV 6; HD 1; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 2 or 1; Damage 1-6/1-6 (short bow) or 1-6/1-8 (spear); SA + 1 damage with stone weapons; SZ S; ML 11

Salt Gatherers: 1-10 0-level people gathering salt from the salt flats, in the eastern desert, shown on the map. Roll 1d6 to determine their origin. 1 = Nahopaca, 2 = Sandbeard Dwarves, 3 = Rockjaw Dwarves, 4-6 = Dog People. In the other deserts, salt gatherers are either Azuposi or Dog People, depending on which group is closer to that area.

Human Salt Gatherers: Int Average;ALN;AC10;MV12;HD1; hp 3; #AT 1; Damage 1-3/1-2; SZ M; ML9

Dwarven Salt Gatherers: Int Very; AL LG; AC 10; MV 6; HD 1; hp 4; #AT 1; Damage 1-6/1-4 (hatchet); SA + 1 damage with stone weapons; SZ S; ML 11

Scorpions: Roll 1d10. 1-2 = Large, 3-8 = Huge, 9-10 = Giant Scorpions.

Snakes: 50% chance for normal poisonous snakes, 50% for giant poisonous snakes.

Coyotlweres: As jackalweres; may command coyotes (treat as jackals).

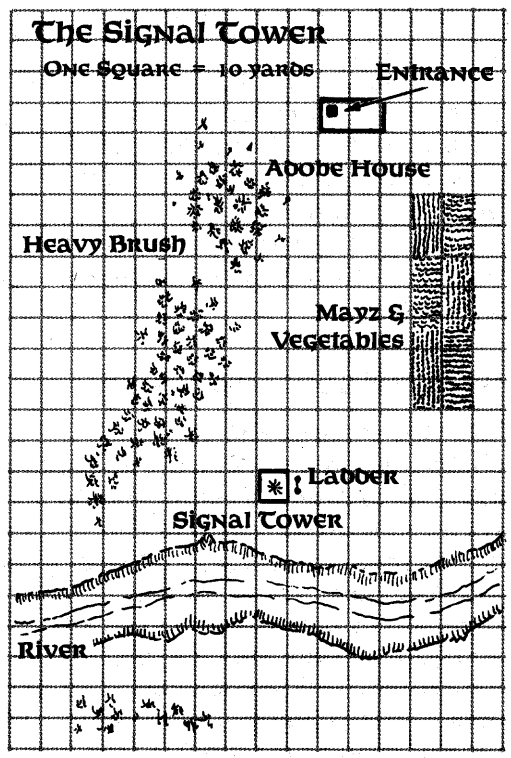
In the Pasocada Basin

In this section, the player characters meet the Azuposi and attempt to establish good relations with the natives, but find the authorities unwilling to let strangers into Michaca. The Azuposi themselves may prove to be as big an obstacle between the player characters and Michaca as the deep desert was. They are suspicious and fearful of the newcomers. Granting strangers entrance to the sacred city of Michaca, especially during such trying times, is completely out of the question. The adventurers will find themselves in a strange situation, as the unwelcome guests of a people desperately needing their help, but too proud and narrow minded to admit it, even to themselves.

By the end of this section, the player characters should be frustrated by the Azuposi and eager to get on toward Michaca.

Travel Across Azuposi Lands

The characters leave the desert due east of the river between Kinopal and Mitzlato. Iguertin advises heading due west to where he believes there is a river valley. He is sure that Michaca is on a river, so finding a river would be the first



step to locating Michaca.

Luckily for the adventurers, it has been hot and dry in the Pasocada Basin for three years, and the cold and snow of a Pasocada winter will not slow them.

Use the scrublands encounter chart for encounters in most of the Basin. Natives may be Azuposi, Desert Dwarves, Short Ones, or Nahopaca, depending on which area of the Basin the characters are moving through. Statistics for the Azuposi, Desert Dwarves, and Nahopaca are given in the desert encounter notes. The statistics for Short Ones are given below. Do not, however, let the explorers randomly encounter wandering Azuposi. Allow the dramatic first contact to occur at the signal tower, as described in detail, below.

Short Ones: When encountered, there is a 75% chance they are hunters and a 25% chance they are traders. Hunters are 25% likely to have freshly captured game. Traders are 90% likely to have trade goods worth 20-120 gp.

Hunters (1-6): Int Very; AL LG; AC 10;MV6; HD1; hp4;THAC0;#AT 1; Damage 1-4/1-4 (sling) or 1-3/1-3 (knife); SA + 3 to hit with sling; SD invisible when hiding in vegetation, save vs. poison and magic at +4 levels, -5 on opponents' surprise roll; SZ S; ML 12

Traders (2-5): Int Very; AL LG; AC 10; MV 6; HD 1; hp 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Damage 1-4/1-4 (sling) or 1-3/1-3 (knife); SA + 3 to hit with sling; SD invisible when hiding in vegetation, save vs. poison and magic at +4 levels, -5 on opponents' surprise roll; SZ S; ML 12

First Contact

As the characters are moving west through the scrubland, they see distant black smoke rising into the sky. Not only does the smoke suggest human habitation, but the column of smoke is regularly interrupted, as if some giant were taking occasional puffs from a tremendous pipe. This unusual smoke should warrant closer attention from the player characters. They may wish to send scouts to investigate the source.

The smoke, of course, comes from a signal tower eighteen feet high that stands twenty yards from the river. It is a squat, solid structure, with a flat top and a crude wooden ladder leaning up against one side. About a hundred yards farther from the river there is a small adobe house. This is the signal tower nearest Mitzlato on the map.

Two signallers man the tower. Each morning at dawn they come

out of the adobe house where they are living temporarily, carrying tools, firewood, a bow and arrows, and gourds up to the tower. They fill the gourds at the river before climbing the ladder. Then they are ready to relay messages to and from Mitzlato. When not relaying messages, they weave baskets and make flint tools. Every evening at dusk they climb back down the ladder and return to their temporary home.

Approaching the Signal Tower

When Sozarro learns the nature of the tower, he suggests they contact these people to see if they are Michacans, or if they know something about Michaca. He depends on the player characters to help formulate a workable plan, but forbids the use of violence.

If, for whatever reason, the player characters try heading straight for Michaca instead of meeting the signallers, they are likely to encounter Azuposi on the way. If they encounter random Azuposi and do not establish friendly contact, the Gilded Priest will order hunters to search for them, and the characters will have a 25% chance per day of encountering 2-7 hunters, in addition to normal encounters. (Use statistics given in Flight to Michaca, below.) In addition, Yenisha, guided by dreams, eventually finds the party and tells her story, as described below. Sozarro, however, insists on meeting the signallers so as to have some idea of the natives' culture and strength before going any deeper into their territory. Unless Sozarro is not with the group, or the players can override his commands, the party will approach the signallers.

Only those who speak Desert Dwarf or Dog People can communicate with the signallers. Iguertin, of course, speaks both languages.

If Realmsians or Mazticans approach the signallers, they are duly cautious. If in their tower, the signallers haul the ladder up just out of reach, and send an "SOS" message with their smoke signals. If the adventurers approach at night, the signallers are even more worried. At least one tries to run away and warn Mitzlato. The other tries to be amiable but insists on being allowed to send his signals at dawn.

If a desert dwarf or a Dog Person approaches the signallers without any "exotic" armor or characters, the signallers will assume the player character is a trader, perhaps one who has lost his way. One signaller can speak Dog Person and the other Desert Dwarf, so they try to find out what the player character is doing there. They are cautious, but not particularly frightened.

When the signallers eventually see horses and steel and the pale faces of the Realmsians, they will try to send word to Mitzlato and Michaca through smoke signals. If prevented, one of them will try to run away and warn Mitzlato.

If the Mitzlatans hear about the strangers from a signaller who has run away, they assume the adventurers are enemies. They dispatch runners to bring word to the signal tower west of them, and amass a fighting party of Yingdipata, Koopenti, and ten warriors, to investigate, as described in the Welcoming Party below.

If the Mitzlatans hear about the newcomers via smoke signals, they await word from Michaca. The

Gilded Priest tells them to form a welcoming party and escort the newcomers to Mitzlato. In this case, the signallers at the tower tell the player characters to wait for the welcoming party.

Since Sozarro intends this exploration to be peaceful, player characters lose experience points for killing Azuposi. The group loses a number of points equal to the number they would normally earn for killing them.

Azuposi Signallers (2): Int Very; AL LN; AC 10; MV 12; HD 1; hp 3; THAC0 20; #AT 2; Damage 1-6/1-6 (bow); SZ M; ML 12

The Welcoming Party

If the signallers alert the Gilded Priest to the strangers' presence, he orders Koopenti of Mitzlato to organize a welcoming party to greet them and escort them to Mitzlato. The welcoming party is ready for either peaceful contact or for battle.

Once a signaller sends a message toward Michaca, it takes the Gilded Priest two hours to get his order to Koopenti. It will take Koopenti an hour to assemble the welcoming party, and it will take the welcoming party four hours to reach the signal tower.

Remember that, with the signal towers, the Azuposi have nearly instant communication, something very rare in the Realms. By the time the characters meet the welcoming party, the entire Azuposi nation will know of them. The Gilded Priest will have consulted his trusted advisors about how to deal with the situation. The hunters will have returned from the plains in preparation for a possible battle and flintknappers will have produced extra arrows. The towns will have begun storing water in preparation for a possible siege, and rumors will be rampant about the nature of these newcomers. Wherever they go, they will be surprised to learn that they are expected and that the Azuposi already know much about them.

When they finally meet the strangers, they perform a small ceremony, during which time the pueblo priest casts *detect evil* and *magical stone.* The ceremony is elaborate, confusing, and seemingly primitive, but it does put the priest in the proper frame of mind. If one of the characters is so evil and powerful enough to emanate evil, the priest instructs the signallers to send a message that the newcomers are enemies. The welcoming party will attack, in that case, and only incredible diplomacy will allow the player characters—minus the evil party member—to gain access to Michaca through peaceful means.

After the ritual, the welcoming party will discuss the intent of the characters, look over the trade goods Sozarro has brought, and decide to escort the party to Mitzlato. Under orders from the Gilded Priest, they will not discuss Michaca nor its treasure, though they may assure the strangers that they do have much to trade for what Sozarro has brought.

Koopenti is a well-weathered man of about fifty years. As the highest ranking pueblo priest of Mitzlato, he leads the welcoming party. His garments are completely covered with pendants, bands, and brooches, all made from painted woods, clay, feathers, seashells, and so on. (His talismans and material components are included among this paraphernalia.)

Translating and speaking for him

is Oolitikana, a younger man, stout and of regal bearing, dressed in a loincloth and wrapped in a blanket. He speaks the languages of the Dog People, Desert Dwarves, Poscadar Elves, Metahel, Nahopaca, and the Short Ones.

Yingdipata has nominally come to welcome the visitors, wearing ceremonial feathers and beads denoting his status in the hunters' fraternity. The feathers and beads, however, decorate a very serviceable suit of stiff leather armor, a wooden shield, and his weapons—in case he must fulfill his role as protector of his people and vanquisher of their enemies. Yingdipata has chosen to direct his skills more toward the martial area of expertise than do most Azuposi.

Yingdipata leads three young warriors. These are not the best warriors the Azuposi can muster but, on short notice, they have to suffice. Like their leader they are decked out in fancy, ceremonial attire but are ready to fight to defend Koopenti and the Azuposi people.

The welcoming party greets the strangers, and once a few compliments have been exchanged, Koopenti performs a ritual to greet them and to bless the meeting. As part of the ceremony, Koopenti pulls micha mixed with various crumbled dry herbs from a bag and sprinkles it on the ground. Unable to examine the micha closely, the player characters probably mistake it for gold dust. Sozarro certainly does.

Koopenti slips one casting of *magical stone* and another of *detect evil* into the ritual. At this point the micha disappears, but only the sharpest eyed adventurers have a chance of noticing it do so. If any of the characters emanate evil, Koopenti will order the signallers to send a message of danger, and he will order the welcoming party to attack the adventurers.

If Koopenti detects no evil, he completes the ritual and asks the strangers what they want. He is cautious because the Azuposi have had hard times for three years now, and he thinks these strangers may be harbingers of worse. On the other hand, if the player characters show what they have to trade, Koopenti knows that a mutually beneficial trade agreement may help the Azuposi regain an edge over their enemies, the Nahopaca, as well as more wealth from their trading partners.

Assuming the player characters handle themselves well, the welcoming party invites them to Mitzlato and escorts them there.

Koopenti: Int High; AL LG; AC 10; MV 12; HD 4; hp 18; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Damage 1-6/1-3 (club) or 1-4/1-4 (sling); SA & SD Spells as 4th level priest; SZ M; ML 14 Spells: 1st Level: *detect evil, magical stone, flame blade, protection from evil, sanctuary* 2nd Level: *charm person or mammal (-2), hold person, barkskin*

Note: Koopenti has a talisman tied to *charm person or mammal,* so the target of this spell receives a -2 on the saving throw. He also has talismans for *create water* and *goodberry,* but he has prayed for more martial spells in preparation for meeting the strangers.

Oolitikana: Int High; AL LN; AC 10; MV 12; HD 5; hp 18; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Damage 1-6/1-3 (club); SZ M; ML 10

Yingdipata: Int Very; AL LG; AC 6; MV 12; HD 4; hp 29; THAC0 16; #AT 3/2; Damage 1-8/1-8 (axe); SA +1 Str

bonus and +2 specialization bonus with axe; SZ M; ML 14

Guards (3): Int Average; AL LN; AC 7; MV 12; HD 2; hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 1 or 2; Damage 1-8/1-8 (axe) or 1-6/1-6 (short bow); SZ M; ML 12

At the Azuposi Town

Characters familiar with the history of Cordell's conquest, and particularly with the massacre at Palul, may be very suspicious of this welcome. If so, allow the player characters to *charm,* or otherwise magically question, an Azuposi to allay their fears.

When the characters arrive at the town, the Azuposi greet them with a festival that combines a celebration for the coming of traders with rituals for the appeasement of spirits and protection from evil. Azuposi from nearby villages have come to see the strangers, filling the town beyond its capacity for comfortable habitation. The town seems to hold about a thousand people, (though this is deceptive) and about a dozen Rockjaw dwarves are here for trade.

The Azuposi have prepared a feast for the visitors. Koopenti leads them to a large kiva where they meet representatives from the various fraternities in the society.

Koopenti, originally part of the welcoming party, is there to represent the pueblo priests.

Shikeltikowa, a 6th level healer, represents the healers' fraternity. She is an elderly woman who offers to heal any wounded party members. If the player characters accept, she performs an elaborate ceremony in the process and is capable of casting four *cure light wounds* spells and offering five *goodberries* — 1 hit point regained for each. She speaks the language of the Dog People.

Yingdipata, originally part of the welcome party, represents the hunters' fraternity.

Otipolano, a 5th level clown (koyemshi), serves mostly as an observer. He also delights the audience with bizarre acrobatics and crude jokes (told in Azuposi).

Hikinokini, a 3rd level sunwatcher, is also primarily an observer.

Gurden, a desert dwarf and a 6th level trader (much like the Azuposi rogue kit), represents the Rockjaw Clan, and also serves as interpreter. He speaks Azuposi, Dog People, Nahopaca, and a fair bit of Maztican, which he learned from cousins in the south.

The feast is a formal occasion, giving the opportunity for members of the various fraternities to meet the visitors and form some opinion of them. The Azuposi answer questions readily, except for those dealing with Michaca. When Michaca is mentioned, they grow quiet, and Koopenti says that the sacred city is not a proper topic of discussion for the uninitiated. If the player characters ask how they can be initiated, he replies that initiation into the secrets of Michaca is not a proper topic of discussion for the uninitiated. Koopenti stonewalls, not wanting to discuss Michaca at all. Persistence will only raise his suspicions that the visitors have come to loot.

After the feast proper, Koopenti produces a peace pipe to pass among those assembled at the feast. He also has a large leather pouch decorated with turquoise and drawn with a red cord. A *glyph of warding* also protects the bag. Tiyipoonga, head of the healers'

fraternity, placed this warding on the ceremonial bag of "peace herb," just as she has on various similar bags throughout the Azuposi nation. It is warded against evil beings, and trapped with *cause blindness.* As a healer, Tiyipoonga rarely uses *cause blindness,* but since it is tied to a *glyph of warding* set against evil beings, and, since she knows she can cure the blindness, the spirits have allowed her the reversed form of the spell without thinking less of her. Each Azuposi and the desert dwarf, open the tobacco pouch, put a pinch in the pipe and draw a few puffs, close the bag, and pass it on. Once all the natives have smoked from the peace pipe, they hand it to the player characters, and all are expected to do the same. Since this is part of a ritual, the visitors must copy exactly the actions of the natives.

The natives sit in great tension as they watch the visitors. Evil characters get saving throws versus the *glyph;* if successful, nothing happens and the natives assume that the character is good. If any of them is struck blind, it means the person is evil and will not be dealt with. Immediately a messenger runs to the signal tower to alert the Gilded Priest that the newcomers are evil. The visitors will be told that they must leave the land of the Azuposi because the Gilded Priest will not tolerate evil-doers who come pretending to be friends. At this point the adventure could break down into a bloody free-for-all, but Sozarro will be the first to turn against the evil companion. He begs the Azuposi to forgive his poor choice in comrades, offers to tie the character up and leave him behind, or do anything else necessary to prove his good faith. If nothing else, the Azuposi can produce other *glyphs* to test the visitors again; Even those who passed the first time must be tested again. If an evil character winds up out of play, thus putting a player out of the game, let that player use an Azuposi character later on—Yenisha, or one of those described in the welcoming party).

If the peace pipe passes all the visitors without incident, shouts of joy come up from the Azuposi, and they believe it is now time to talk.

They ask where the visitors came from, how their journey was, what trade goods they seek, and what their beasts (horses) eat. They wish to know where their strong metal (steel) comes from, and how they managed to travel across the water.

In turn, they will answer many questions about their lives: the clowns, hunters, healers, and sunwatchers; the Metahel, Nahopaca, Poscadari Elves, desert dwarves, and the Short Ones. But no discussion of Michaca is allowed.

Koopenti orders trade goods to be lowered in baskets, to show what the Azuposi have to trade: flint weapons, herbs and spices, polished turquoise gems, copper and turquoise jewelry, seashells, and pelts and hides. A few tentative questions can ascertain that the Azuposi would be willing to trade some fine jewelry, some of it gold, for relatively cheap steel implements. In a few cases, the party would be able to walk away from a trade with Azuposi items worth twenty times the value of what they traded away. This would be more than a favorable trade balance, but it is not as good as what Sozarro is counting on.

Micha, the gift of Masauwu, is

only for the Azuposi; it is not to be traded with anyone.

After the meal and much discussion, Koopenti announces that the Gilded Priest, ruler of the Azuposi, has invited the visitors to be his guests in Mitzlato for as long as they wish.

Staying in Mitzlato

After a long journey through scrublands and desert, Sozarro is more than happy to take advantage of the Azuposi's hospitality, at least for a while. To encourage your player characters to feel the same way, describe the sweet smells of burning spices (as opposed to the smell of horse sweat that has been so common through the journey to the Basin); the taste of fresh mayz, venison, berries, and tortillas (as opposed to dried meat and hard tack); the visages of brightly decorated, happy, curious Azuposi (as opposed to having to look at the grumpy, dirty faces of their fellow adventurers for several weeks straight); the comfort of feather filled pallets (as opposed to sleeping on the ground); and the luxury of sleeping late, walking at leisure, and taking the weight off of saddle sores (as opposed to riding, riding, and more riding). All find it hard not to accept the hospitality of the Azuposi, even if it means delaying the first sight of Michaca.

While the characters stay in Mitzlato, they have freedom to walk about and explore the city, though always with a guide. These guides may be some of the characters described in the welcoming party or the welcoming feast, or they could be less intimidating Azuposi, perhaps even the stereotypically beautiful native. On their tours, the characters can see the crops, turkey pens, signal tower, and work areas of the Mitzlatans.

The guides are always courteous, though communication may be difficult. Within a few days the visitors pick up a few words and phrases of Azuposi, such as "Hello," "there," "food," "drink," etc.

Wherever the characters go, curious Azuposi follow or watch them, though they often back away if approached.

During one such walk about the city, a young Azuposi man suddenly runs up to the characters. (Arrange this encounter while several player characters are together, so that more players can be involved.) The youth urgently says something long and involved in Azuposi, directing it at whichever visitor seems to be in charge or seems most powerful. He is telling the player characters that the Azuposi leadership have fallen out of favor with Masauwu and are too timid to do anything about it, and that Masauwu has brought the adventurers here to help them. He implores the visitors to go to Michaca, travel to Wenimats, and ask Masauwu what the Azuposi need to do in order to return to his favor. Of course, the characters can't understand any of this long, emotional, dynamic appeal—anything, that is, except the word "Michaca."

The visitors' guide, on hearing what this bold, disorderly youth has to say, blushes, shouts the youth down, and pushes him away from the player characters. The guide then explains that the youth was demanding inappropriate favors from the visitors, a violation of etiquette. He is, however, visibly disturbed by the youths speech.

At night, the player characters have a ceremonial kiva reserved for

their use. If the player characters feel paranoid about sleeping in a "pit" with only one small entrance in the ceiling, they are free to set watches, cast *guardian* spells, and so forth. Shikeltikowa, the healer, lets them know that she will guard them with a *wyvern watch* placed in the room above them. It also keeps the characters in their place. If they insist, she will refrain from using it.

The visitors can stay in Mitzlato, getting to know the people and the language, resting from their arduous journey, and enjoying luxurious hospitality, for as long as they like. Once the players start getting edgy and eager to move on, however, Yenisha the clown arrives and moves the adventure to its next level.

Yenisha's Plea

Yenisha may well prove to be the player characters' ticket to Michaca. She is a clown who has become disenchanted with her people. Having traveled with a trader to see the Metahel, the Dog People, the Short Ones, and the Poscadari Elves, she has come to realize that other people are more energetic and vibrant than her own. Her repeated ridicule of the neglectful leadership has achieved no response. In fact, she has often found it impossible to keep ridicule limited to her ceremonial role, and she has gained the reputation of a troublemaker.

Yenisha is clever enough to recognize the player characters for what they are—active, adventurous people who have traveled from afar When word comes, by smoke signal, to her town that many strange people have come with exotic stories and goods to trade, she packs a very small bag, steals a pendant that grants her the power to speak any language (like *tongues)* and sets off to find them.

If necessary for the plot, assume that Paiyatemu took Yenisha to Wenimats in her sleep and told her about the visitors. Paiyatemu, the patron of clowns, is quite fed up with the conservative and fearful leaders of the Azuposi. He has chosen to help young Yenisha show them up as a bunch of old fools.

Yenisha is young and attractive, with obvious intelligence and energy sparkling in her dark eyes. She wears a blanket over a cotton dress embroidered with red thread. A beaded belt holds the blanket in place and secures her long, full cotton, dress. She keeps her long, black hair in braids. Since it is winter, she wears boots.

In her ceremonial role, Yenisha wears an over-sized, brightly painted, wooden mask, representing some person or spirit sticking out its gigantic tongue. Over her painted body she wears feathered and beaded bracelets, armbands, anklets, and necklaces.

Yenisha: Int High; AL CG; AC 10; MV 12; HD 2; hp 7; THAC0 20; #AT 1 or 2; Damage 1-6 (club) or 1-6/1-6 (short bow); SZ M; ML 14
Weapon Proficiencies: Short Bow, Club.
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Storytelling (+1), Dancing, Juggling, Jumping, Tightrope Walking, Tumbling, Musical Instrument (clay flute), Ventriloquism, Etiquette (Azuposi), Modern Languages (Dog People, Desert Dwarf).

Meeting Yenisha

In their travels about Mitzlato, the characters occasionally catch sight of a young woman watching them from a distance, apparently

following them. This is Yenisha, trying to determine a good way to meet them secretly.

She finds a time when all the characters are present, perhaps when they are asleep together in their kiva. If she has to get past the healer's *wyvern watch* spell, she gains the help of a cousin to enter the area first and suffer the effect of the spell. She then climbs down the ladder, into the visitors' kiva.

Since she is wearing a pendant of *tongues,* she can speak to them. Once she has persuaded the player characters she is a friend, she tells them what she wants. The elders of the Azuposi, she says, have grown weak and complacent. The Gilded Priest himself was frightened from the Sun Trail by an evil spirit, so he has been unable to speak with Masauwu. As a result, he has not told the shiwannas to bring more rain, and the Basin has suffered drought for three years. She promises to take the player characters to Michaca if they promise to speak to the Gilded Priest, learn the ritual to find the Sun Wail, and defeat the evil spirit who guards it. She assures them that this is what the Gilded Priest himself would ask, if only he had the courage to admit his own incompetence. And, she says, the Azuposi will be tremendously grateful if the strangers free them of the drought and return them to their traditional prosperity.

If asked about Michaca, she will assure the visitors that the walls are indeed golden, although what she means is that micha glitters in the sunlight. If questioned more closely, she will say that the treasure of Michaca is not "mere gold," and that they will see it for themselves soon enough.

The player characters need to sneak out of Mitzlato, get their horses, and ride west. Unless the player characters are using *invisibility* or other devious means to sneak, three guards spot them as they head for their horses. The guards first approach cautiously to find out what is happening, and the player characters will need some form of magic or violence to keep the guards from escorting them back to the kiva where they have been staying. Since these are Azuposi, the characters gain experience for getting past them, but lose experience for killing them. Even if these guards sound an alarm, the visitors, on horseback, will be able to outrun pursuers. Yenisha, of course, will have to ride with one of the explorers.

Michaca and the Gilded Priest

In this section, the player characters travel across the Pasocada Basin, find Michaca, and fight their way in to see the Gilded Priest. Their efforts are complicated by Yenisha's and Sozarro's insistence that they kill none of the Azuposi who are trying to stop or kill them.

The path of travel that Yenisha suggests puts almost three hundred miles between the Mitzlato and Michaca. Very familiar with the area from her travels with a trader, she suggests crossing the Growling Falls River south of, and above, Growling Falls and then traveling through the territory of the Dog People, descending a cliff south of a sandy desert. At that point they will need to skirt around the desert's eastern border, traveling north across the Pasocada River in the area of the Bear Tribe, and then north to Sun

Canyon and Michaca. A direct path would bring the party close to four Azuposi towns, so she prefers the longer trail. With the use of signal towers, it would be pointless to hurry in any event. In fact, it might be worthwhile to wait a while and hope that the Azuposi will grow less wary, making entering Michaca that much easier.

Two kinds of terrain pose special obstacles for the explorers: the rivers and the steep cliff-side that leads down from the plateau where Dog People live.

As the Basin has suffered from drought, the rivers are low. (They would be even lower in the summer.) The Pasocada River, in the area of the Bear Tribe, is the biggest because it is fed by tributaries. Even so, it is only 7' deep at its deepest, and not particularly fast. Other rivers may only be three to four feet deep. Crossing the Pasocada River requires swimming or making some sort of makeshift raft. Alternately Yenisha may find a ford, but there is a 90% chance that the party will encounter a group of Azuposi hunters nearby (see below).

Descending the cliff that marks the edge of the Dog People's plateau is difficult if the direct mute is taken, but scouts can easily find an arroyo that cuts through the cliff, forming a much gentler slope. The problem is that such an arroyo is only 3-18 feet wide, with impressive rock walls on either side. Since so many creatures use arroyos as paths, there is a 50% chance that a predator will be waiting there (in addition to the normally required encounter checks). These predators are likely to lie in wait, unseen, until their unwary prey enters the arroyo.

Die Roll (d20)	Result
1-2	1-6 Poisonous Snakes
3-4	1-6 Giant Poisonous Snakes
5-6	1-6 Large Scorpions
7-11	1-4 Huge Scorpions
12	1-4 Giant Scorpions
13-18	1-12 Giant Toads
19	1-6 Fire Toads
20	1-6 Ankhegs

Roll for encounters normally in the Pasocada Basin. If "Native" is rolled in the Azuposi area, the player characters encounter a party of 2-7 Azuposi hunters who are searching for them.

The scrublands offer little cover and the characters, most likely mounted, spy a band of humans off in the distance. Yenisha identifies them as Azuposi hunters, no doubt looking for them. They are sighted at 2d6 x 10 feet. Roll 1d10 for direction. 1 = due left, 2-4 = ahead and left, 5-6 = straight ahead, 7-9 = ahead and right, 10 = due right. Sozarro instructs the characters to turn tail and flee, since their horses will easily outdistance runners.

Still the Azuposi may get a few bow shots off before the characters get out of range. Range for the short bows is short 50 yards/ medium 100 yards/ long 150 yards. For each shot, roll randomly to see which character is targeted. For mounted characters, roll a d6; 1 or 2 means the character is targeted, and a 4 to 6 means the mount is targeted. (If there are two riders, roll a d4; 1 means the first rider, 2 means the second, and 3 or 4 means the horse.) Defensive magic may prove quite useful at this point.

After the encounter with the strangers, the hunters start a large fire to send smoke signals across the Basin, indicating the location of the strangers.

Hunters: Int Average; AL LN; AC 10; MV 12; HD 1; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 2 or 1; Damage 1-6/1-6 (short bow) or 1-3/1-2 (knife); SZ M; ML 13

Sun Canyon

Of all locations in the Pasocada Basin, the place known as Michaca in Sun Canyon has surely commanded the most attention in the myth and legend of the True World, if not actual history. The tales have long migrated past the Azuposi frontiers and permutations of them have been repeated as far away as Far Payit and in the dense, steaming jungles of the Green Folk.

Sun Canyon is a particularly spiritual place because of the deposits of golden silt from Dunobo Springs—a gateway to the spirit realm of Wenimats. This silt is built into the mortar and adobe of Michaca, favoring its walls and streets with a golden sparkle and imbuing them with spiritual energies.

At Michaca

Michaca is the largest city in the Azuposi nation, housing nearly 5,000 people. While most of these are farmers and hunters, nearly one fourth are connected in some way to Michaca's role as the focal point of Azuposi society. Most prominent of these are the priests who rule it, especially Koyisqatapi, the Gilded Priest. Also to be found here are the heads of the various fraternities who are central to the Azuposi spiritual and social life. Finally, a great many artisans work in Michaca, specifically tailoring their crafts to the production of ritual

masks and tools, beads, jewelry, and weapons.

The Azuposi, of course, are waiting for the explorers at Michaca, where they expect an attack. A blind assault would not only endanger the player characters, who are not outclassed but certainly outnumbered, but it would also necessitate death and injury for many Azuposi. Yenisha volunteers to scout the city, determine where the easiest entrance would be made, and then lead the player characters in to see the Gilded Priest. In her ceremonial koyemshi garb, she will have great freedom to look about, as long as she makes a grand show of it.

Yenisha makes her scouting mission without any difficulty and returns to the party. She says that the hunters are patrolling the city in force, but that she has located the Gilded Priest. He is staying in the Gilded Kiva, which is near the center of the city. Somehow the characters will need to devise a plan to get into the center of the city without becoming bogged down in a grand melee on the way.

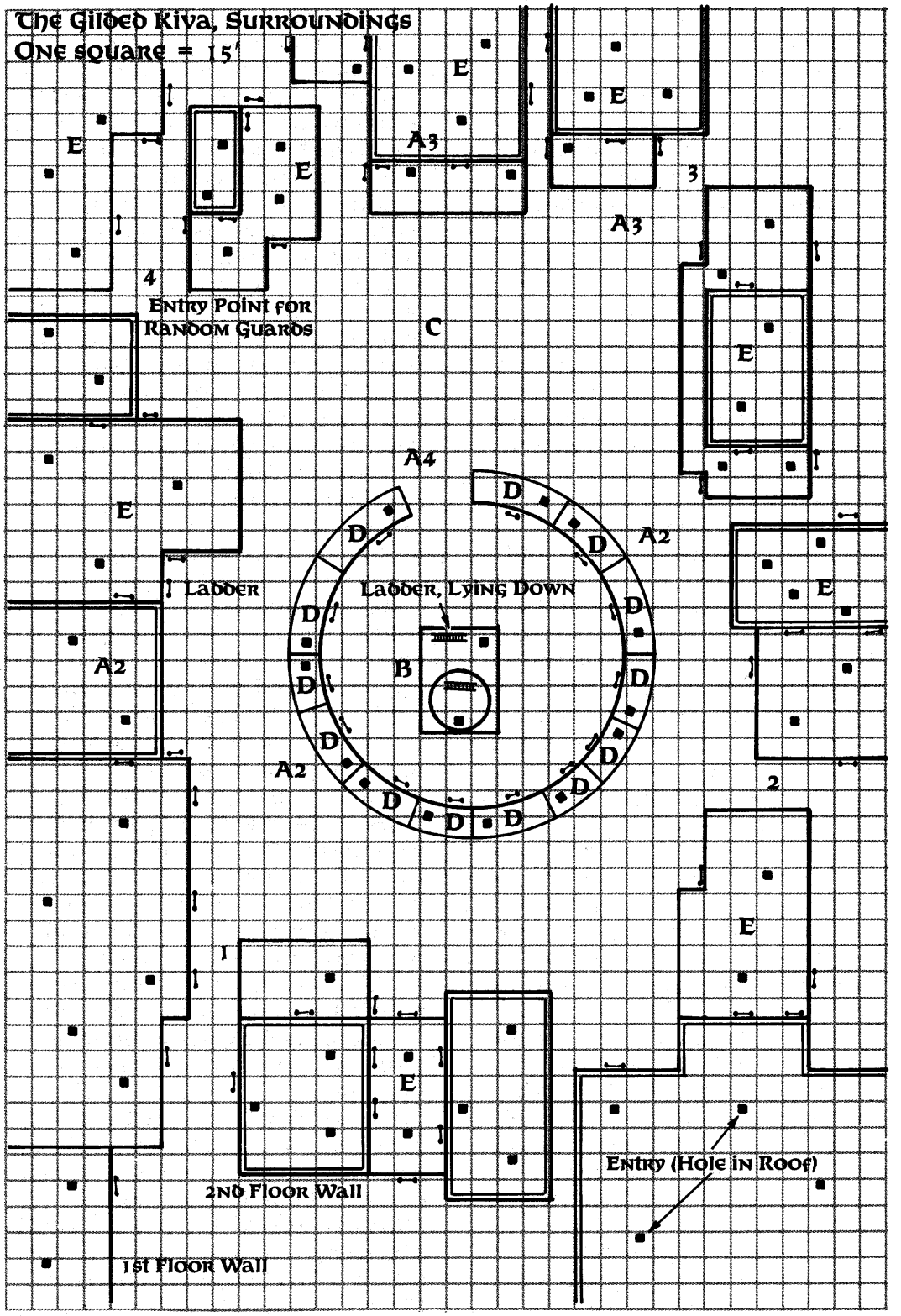
Now the party needs a plan. Sozarro consults the player characters. He asks their opinions about each aspect of the plan. How do we get in to the Gilded Kiva? What special precautions should we make? What do we do in case we are attacked? What do we say to the Gilded Priest if things get difficult? Sozarro and Yenisha also add their own thoughts to this discussion. If the player characters cannot come up with any better ideas, then Sozarro and Yenisha will develop the following plan:

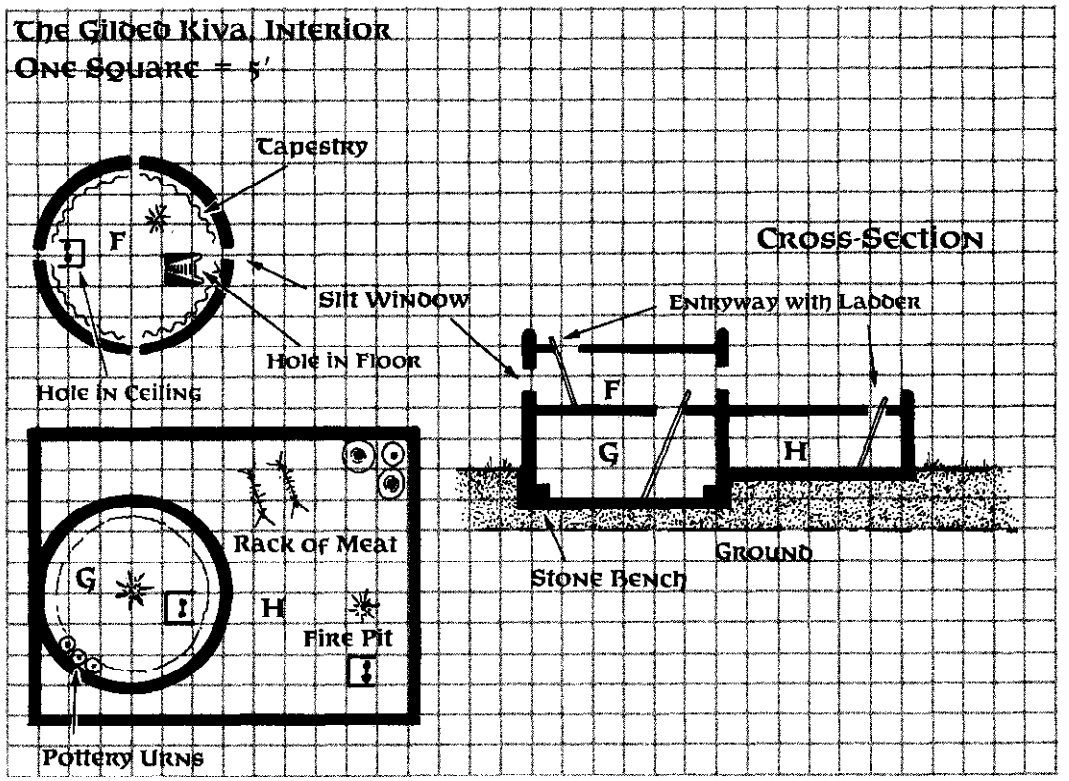
First, Yenisha will go to the koyemshi fraternity and make off with a large amount of costumes, masks, feathers, beads, and ceremonial equipment. Working quickly, she can devise outrageous costumes that will hide armor and weapons, provided they are sheathed. Large weapons, such as pole arms, she decorates with skins and feathers to make them appear harmless. A little short on masks and body paints to hide the Realmsians' fair skin, she improvises with mud and clay—whoever said that being a hero is clean work? Be sure to give the players a hand in designing their characters' costumes, make-up and masks, and describe their appearance when Yenisha is finished with them. Sneaking into a guarded city dressed as Azuposi clowns should be a memory that lasts long in your players' and characters' minds.

Short characters, such as halflings, may draw unwanted attention, but, since midgets are not unknown, and since most of them will be disguised as clowns, a few undersize folk in the party should not prove to be a fatal flaw.

Using these disguises, Yenisha hopes to be able to get past most of the guards. The party can simply walk onto a road and march right up into Michaca. The Gilded Kiva, though, is carefully guarded and will present further problems. Yenisha instructs the characters to babble like fools when approached by guards and to caper about like lunatics, in order to preserve their disguise.

The party will enter, with Yenisha in ceremonial garb leading the way. Any Azuposi met are to be disabled, silenced, bound, scared off, or otherwise dealt with, but not killed. The party will make its way to the Gilded Priest's chambers in the Gilded Kiva and demand the right to


The Gilded Kiva, Surroundings
One square = 15'
E
A3
3
4
Entry Point for
Random Guards
C
A4
D
A2
Ladder
Ladder, Lying Down
B
2
1
2nd Floor Wall
1st Floor Wall
Entry (Hole in Roof)



aid the Azuposi in their plight. As proof of their good will, they will tell him that they have slain no Azuposi, though could have killed many; that they have found Michaca but are not looting it; and that they are willing to face the farastu and Masauwu.

Sozarro instructs the player characters to think very carefully about their plans. He even waits a day to give spellcasters the chance to memorize or pray for the spells they think will be most useful for the mission. Sozarro says that getting to the Gilded Priest may be very difficult, and he wants to be certain that the spellcasters will be able to provide maximum support for the effort.

Once the characters are ready, Sozarro waits until nightfall and then leads the group to the golden city. In their disguises, they walk onto a road and simply head straight into Michaca. Guards question them when they enter, but Yenisha's plan works like a charm, and the characters arrive without incident on the spot marked with a circled "4" on the map of the Gilded Kiva, Surroundings. From here, what they do is left up to them. They can perform an impromptu farce in the open area in front of the Gilded Kiva's courtyard, surreptitiously casting spells at a pre-arranged signal. Putting on a show, however, may attract unwanted attention. Kusiti, for example, may come up out of the antechamber to observe the proceedings, and other guards may even show up for the performance. Alternatively, they can create some sort of distraction and try to slip a few stealthy characters past the guards, but that means splitting up

the group. They could simply launch a surprise attack and try to muscle their way through the guards.

At the building that houses the Gilded Kiva, the adventurers need some way to ascend to the roof, and then rise above the kiva. This delay gives the Michacans more time to amass guards and an opportunity to attack the intruders while they are the most vulnerable.

For every guard subdued, knocked out, immobilized, or otherwise non-lethally dealt with, the party earns normal experience awards. For each Azuposi killed, however, the party loses an equal amount of experience points.

Remember, the micha in the walls of Michaca gives a + 1 level bonus on spells and a -1 penalty on saving throws. For summoning spells, the bonus is +3 and penalty -3. Because of this micha, extra micha used to power a spell further has no effect.

Going It Alone

If, for whatever reason, Yenisha is not with the party, you can force the player characters to devise some other method to get close to the Gilded Kiva without endangering themselves—but good luck to them. With *invisibility, silence spells,* or *flight* they may even make it. Otherwise you may assume that Paiyatemu himself has come to a koyemshi in Michaca and that he finds the characters and offers them similar aid. If the adventurers simply have to tough it out, give them a running battle with several groups of 2-5 guards before they reach the area shown on the detailed map. On horseback, they should be able to frighten or outdistance guards, though they will certainly come under fire from arrows. By the time the party reaches the Gilded Kiva, assuming they are speeding through on horseback, 10 arrows will be fired at them. Each archer has a THAC0 of 20 and does 1-6/1-6 damage. In addition, the alarm will be sounded, resulting in an extra 1-4 guards being posted at the site of the Gilded Kiva.

Key to the Map of Michaca

Most of the buildings in Michaca are one and two story dwellings made of adobe laced with micha. The buildings have no windows or entries on the ground level. Instead, wooden ladders lead to the roofs where the entrance, along with another ladder, is located. The roads are paved with stone and the more important buildings are also made of stone.

A. The Gilded Kiva

This section is detailed on the map of the Gilded Kiva and described in that map's key.

B, C, D, E, F, and G. Tribal Centers

These are the Michacan centers of the six tribes that compose the Azuposi nation: Wolf, Eagle, Badger, Mountain Lion, Shrew, and Bear, respectively. Visitors to Michaca can go to the headquarters of their respective tribes for fellowship and succor. Each of the headquarters has a kiva for the private ceremonies that are conducted by each tribe.

H, I, J, K, and L. Fraternity Centers

These are the headquarters of the fraternities that serve the Azuposi

nation: the healers, hunters, koyemshis, traders, and fetishists, respectively. The leaders of these fraternities are found here, as are numerous underlings and initiates. Like the tribes, each fraternity has secret ceremonies which they conduct in their kivas, as well as public ceremonies which are performed on holidays. These headquarters also provide training for members, especially the healers, koyemshis, and fetishists.

M. Signal Tower

Four signallers work here and live in a temporary adobe home. Two of them, however, are often away from the tower running messages up and down the steep stone trail that has been carved into the canyon wall.

Key to the Map of the Gilded Kiva

A#: Guards

These are hunters currently guarding the city; the number after the "A" indicates the number of guards at that station. Those on the ground use their axes, while those on roofs use their bows when they can. When trouble starts they yell a warning, which brings another 1-3 guards each round. (Roll a d4. The new guards appear at the spot on the map marked with the resulting number, circled.)

2nd Level Hunters: Int Average; AL LN; AC 8; MV 12; HD 2; hp 11 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1 or 2; Damage 1-8/1-8 (axe) or 1-6/1-6 (bow); SZ M; ML 16

B: The Gilded Kiva Building

The ground floor has no windows, and the ladder to the roof has been pulled up. Atop the first floor is a circular room that does have windows. Again, the ladder to reach the roof of that room has been pulled up. The only entrance into the sacred chamber of the Gilded Kiva is from the top of this room, 20' above ground level, then down through the hole in the roof and down once again, through the hole in the room below.

C: Courtyard

This huge, paved area is usually used for business when the Azuposi consult with the Gilded Priest and his subalterns. On holidays, this space is used for the most elaborate ceremonies.

D: Ritual Rooms

These are for private meditation, preparation for ceremonies, and for the storage of food and ritual items.

E: Buildings

Some of these accommodate priests and religious functionaries; others are dwellings containing several separate living areas for different families.

F: Antechamber

If the characters betrayed too much interest in Michaca while they were staying in Mitzlato, then a skilled hunter named Kusiti will have been assigned to guard the Gilded Priest. He will stay in this room, and climb out the top of the room to meet the invaders, as soon as the alarm is raised. If the characters were, in your estimation, subtle about their interest in Michaca, this room is empty.

The hole that leads into the room below is trapped with a *glyph of warding* that causes blindness. In addition, the room below is protected by forbiddance—aligned lawful good.

On the second round, after the alarm is raised, Koyisqatapi (from the room below) places a *wall of fire* across this room, directly between the hole in the ceiling and the one in the floor. At the same time, Hulingishasa fills the room with haze using an *obscurement* spell.

Beaded tapestries line the walls. They will catch fire when Koyisqatapi casts his *wall of fire.*

Kusiti: Int Very; AL LG; AC 7; MV 12; HD 5; hp 31; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Damage 1-8/1-8 (axe); SZ M; ML 17

G: The Gilded Kiva

The entrance to this kiva is warded with a *glyph of warding,* so that any who cross without saying the secret word must make a saving throw or be struck blind. In addition, this room is protected by *forbiddance,* so that anyone who is not lawful good will take damage upon entering.

The interior walls are covered with a paint mixture made with micha, so they glitter as if golden. Generous supplies of micha also fill various pottery urns on the stone benches that surround the room.

Inside, Koyisqatapi, the Gilded Priest, and Hulingishasa, a sunwatcher, are keeping vigil. Roll a die to see which of them is awake.

Die Roll

d6	Result
1-2	Koyisqatapi awake.
3-4	Hulingishasa awake.
5-6	Both awake.

Once they hear any type of commotion or alarm, the one that is awake will wake the other. They will then cast the following defensive spells. After Hulingishasa has cast his spells, he removes the ladder from the entrance to their kiva.

Round	Koyisqatapi	Hulingi-shasa
1st	*Wall of Fire*	*Obscurement*
2nd	*Dispel Evil*	*Bless*
3rd	*Protection from Evil*	*Detect Evil*
4th	*Barkskin*	-
5th	*Detect Evil*	-
6th	*Negative Plane*	*Protection*

The two priests then wait for the approach of the "attackers."

Koyisqatapi is old, weak, and paranoid. He is unlikely to listen to any pleas from strangers. Hulingishasa, on the other hand, will cast *tongues* on himself, if need be, and he is willing at least to listen to the player characters, albeit at a safe distance. If the player characters make a good case for themselves, he uses *know alignment* and *detect lie* to verify their statements.

Once Hulingishasa has ruled that the player characters are worth listening to, Koyisqatapi is mortified at his mistake and terribly relieved that someone else is willing to face the creature that caused him such fear

Hulingishasa: Int High; AL LG; AC 10; MV 12; HD 8; hp 28; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Damage 1-6/1-3 (club); SA Priest spells; SD +2 magical defense adj ., priest spells; SZ M; ML 19
Current Spells: Level 1: *detect evil (+ 1), bless, command (-3), light, detect poison (+2)* Level 2: know *alignment (-3), hold person, barkskin, obscurement, augury (+4)* Level 3: *starshine, locate object, speak with dead* Level 4: *detect lie (-4), tongues*

Koyisqatapi: Int High; AL LG; AC 4(10); MV 12; HD 10; hp 45; THAC0 14; #AT 1; Damage 1-6/1-6 (club); SA & SD +3 Magical Attack Adj., spells as 10th level priest; SZ M; ML

18;10th Level Pueblo Priest: Spells: Level 1: *detect evil, command, remove fear, create water, protection from evil (+2), combine* Level *2: warp wood, charm person or mammal (-3), speak with animals, hold person, goodberry (+4), barkskin;* Level *3: negative plane protection, dispel magic (+8), remove curse, hold animal;* Level 4: *repel insects, produce fire, abjure (+7);* Level 5: *dispel evil (*+ 10), *wall of fire;* Note: Koyisqatapi and Hulingishasa have talismans tied to their spells. Those spells that have a (+ #) or (-#) after them have talismans to improve their effect. A plus is added to the caster's effective level for that spell, and a minus is subtracted from the target's saving throw.

H. Preparation Room

Where food for the Gilded Kiva is prepared. It has a firepit, fresh mayz and vegetables, dried meats, tortillas, and various other foods.

Before the Face of a God

In this section, the player characters travel to the Sun Trail to defeat the evil creature blocking the path, and follow the Trail to Wenimats, where Masauwu passes judgment on the Azuposi.

Koyisqatapi's Story

Koyisqatapi sees to it that the player characters are healed, brought food and water, and treated well. He then explains the story of micha. Read or paraphrase the story provided in the Introduction to your players. Once the adventurers know that background, Koyisqatapi tells his own story.

Three years ago, when he became

the Gilded Priest, Koysiqatapi went to Dunobo Springs and ventured onto the Sun Trail. Without warning, a pale, tall, scrawny monster having the wings of a bat, appeared out of nowhere and screeched a blood-chilling screech. Koyisqatapi turned immediately and fled, taking the presence of the creature as a sign of Masauwu's disfavor. After all, Masauwu would certainly keep the Trail free of evil spirits if he wanted the Azuposi to be able to speak to him. Koyisqatapi has repeatedly tried to return to the Sun Trail, but every time he does so the creature is there, and its scream frightens him off. (Koyisqatapi is describing an encounter with a farastu, the lowest type of Gehreleth. It waits, invisible on the path, and becomes visible when it uses its fear ability. Because of his weak will, Koyisqatapi does not get a saving throw versus the

fear.)

With the aid of the player characters, Koyisqatapi hopes to face and defeat the creature.

Dunobo Springs

A large party of Michacans, including leading representatives of the various fraternities and over a dozen priests, escort Koyisqatapi and the player characters upstream to Dunobo Springs.

To prepare the adventurers for the encounter with the foul creature that awaits them, the Michacans hold a large ceremony at Dunobo Springs. The player characters, Sozarro, and Koyisqatapi wade into the pool at the head of the springs. The Gilded Priest enters the springs nude, but the presence of a monster on the Sun Trail allows a break in tradition, and the player characters may enter with their weapons and gear. They would be well advised to hold precious items above the water when entering the springs. Koyisqatapi and the other priests then conduct a ceremony to grant them all good luck. The ceremony ends with the casting of the following spells on each of the characters (including Koyisqatapi and Sozarro): *aid* (lasts 7 rounds after arriving at the Sun Trail), *bless* (5 rounds), and *protection from evil* (16 rounds). In addition, each non-spell user receives the ability to use *cure light wounds* (once or twice depending on the character's level) through *imbue with spell ability* If the adventurers ask for it, the priests may also cast *remove fear* (8 rounds) on them, before they venture out onto the Sun Trail. The player characters can likewise cast various protective spells for themselves.

Once all the spells are cast the characters follow Koyisqatapi's example and squat in the water. The micha rises off their bodies and flows together in a long, growing spiral, and the characters follow the path it makes. As they walk through the water the world becomes grayer until, for a moment, they see and feel nothing, and then suddenly they are standing, dripping wet, at the end of the Sun Trail. The Trail is a path of freshly ground cornmeal, approximately twelve feet wide, that floats in the infinite Astral Plane. From where the characters stand, at the end of it, the path slowly curves to the right until lost in the distance, about a quarter mile away. Behind them is a silvery disk, twenty-five feet in diameter. much like a vertical pool of mercury. Anyone who walks through this "color pool" returns to Dunobo springs. Because of their method of entering the Astral Plane, the characters do not have silver cords, and they can carry all their items with them.

The Sun Trail is a bright path of ground cornmeal and pollen that winds through the Astral Plane from Dunobo Springs to Wenimats, as well as from Wenimats to the middle plane of the Beastlands. Normally this trail is easy to follow, but now a foul farastu bars the way. The farastu, a member of the lowest caste of Gehreleths, has been sent here to keep the Gilded Priest from entering Wenimats. It has been sent here as part of a deal that the bent priestess Ikitipsa has made with various evil spirits. It is part of her ongoing scheme to bring down the Azuposi nation.

The farastu sits, invisible, about 30 yards from where the trail begins. It waits one round to scan the party for invisible creatures and then

attacks with its fear ability, becoming visible. (Koyisqatapi has no saving throw against this attack; he turns and flees back through the silvery disk.) The farastu then might summon one or two more farastus, depending on the strength of the party, before attacking.

Farastu: AL CE; AC -1; hp 50; THAC0 9; #AT 3; Damage 2-7/2-7/3-12; SA + 7 Str bonus on damage, Battle Frenzy, Adhesive, Spells; SD Only hit by + 1 weapons or better; SZ M (7' tall); ML 15

Battle Frenzy. After six rounds of combat or when reduced to 25 hit points, the farastu frenzies, receiving double the normal number of attacks and a +2 bonus on the attack dice.

Adhesive. Each time the farastu strikes or is struck, there is a 5% chance that it sticks. If the farastu was attacking, it is stuck to the target, who then receives an additional attack sequence.

Spells: It can use the following spells as an 11th level wizard: *detect good, detect invisibility, detect magic, dispel magic* (twice per day), *ESP fear, fog cloud* (three times per day), *invisibility, tongues,* and *weakness* (reverse of *strength,* three times per day)

If one farastu is not enough for your party, then assume it successfully summons one or two more from Tarterus. If one is sufficient, assume that it fails to summon help. (Or, if you wish to be random, it has a 40% chance of successfully summoning another 1-2 farastu.)

Skeleton House

After the characters defeat the farastu, Koyisqatapi (who probably fled in fear) returns through the silvery disk, ashamed of his cowardice and grateful to see the slain farastu. He then leads the player characters along the Sun Trail as it winds through the infinite Astral Plane. After several miles the path leads into a vertical circle of faceted green color. The circle is 30' in diameter. Anyone passing through this "color pool" appears in an actual, watery pool in Wenimats, a land of mountains. From here Koyisqatapi can lead the player characters through the mountains and woods to the Skeleton House, where Masauwu can be found. As they approach, Koyisqatapi is visibly nervous, and he explains that Masauwu can appear either as a handsome man or as a terrifying monster. He hopes that Masauwu chooses to show them his more pleasant visage.

Built into the wall of a soaring cliff is a huge stone structure so clean that it virtually shines. It looks very much like an Azuposi town, except that the inhabitants all wear cotton sheets wrapped around their bodies and cotton masks with eye and mouth holes over their heads. These are burial garments, and the inhabitants of Skeleton House are indeed dead. (If the player characters killed any Azuposi, these dead are here now. They approach the party and remove their masks so that they may be recognized. They say that they are sorry that they tried to stop the good hearted adventurers and the dead forgive them for their deaths.)

Masauwu, indeed wearing his gentler visage, climbs out of a building and then down several ladders to walk over to the party. Every character must make a saving throw versus spells or be overcome with awe. Koyisqatapi is not allowed

a saving throw against this power.

First Masauwu asks the player characters and Sozarro who they are and why they have come. Why have they come to the Azuposi, which gods do they follow, and how have the Azuposi been faring? Masauwu attempts to find some small flaw or imperfection in each character, such as not adhering to any religion, coming to the Basin in search of wealth, etc.

When he has asked enough questions, he asks them what they think of the Azuposi. Anyone not overcome by awe may ask one question of Masauwu as well, if he wishes. For the record, Masauwu did know about the farastu, but left it there as a test and because he was disappointed with the Azuposi. He did not, however, place it there. He did not know about the coming of the player characters. He can tell the characters that Esh Alakar, should they know enough to ask about it, is a haunted place once inhabited by evil people that used the power of the spirit world as if it were flint to be shaped as they saw fit—in other words, wizards.

When the player characters have given Masauw their opinion of the Azuposi and have asked any questions they wish, Masauwu turns to Koyisqatapi and glares at him. Suddenly transformed into his hairless, bloody visage, Masauwu says:

"And you, Koyisqatapi. For three years I have waited for you, and never did you come. You, who are the leader of your people, who have been trained in the sacred secrets, in whom all the Azuposi have placed their trust. You were unable to accomplish what this ragtag group of barbaric adventurers has done. You have been taught the way to live, but you have grown weak. Just as those who lived in the Basin long ago were destroyed by the power of micha, so too have you been destroyed. Those who came before you destroyed themselves with hate, but you have destroyed yourselves with laziness, complacency, and dependence on me. These adventurers from distant lands, followers of strange gods and customs, have come and set to right what you yourself could not.

"Hear this, then, Koyisqatapi! First, you must learn from these foreigners. Learn what it means to have courage and resolve, daring and strength. Send your youths out into the world as these brave ones have ventured into your world. Learn the ways of these foreigners so that the Azuposi, too, may be made strong. Second, you have proved too dependent on micha for your comfort. All the micha that washes into Sun Canyon next spring shall be given to these adventurers, your saviors.

"Now go. I shall send the shiwannas to bring you rain, but that shall not make your people strong again. Hope that these courageous people will accept an invitation to stay among you, so that you can learn from them what it is to be courageous. There is hope for you yet, Koyisqatapi. But for now, go, and return when you have acquired the heart of a man."

The characters head back through the mountains to the spring where they entered Wenimats. From there they return to the Sun Trail and follow it back to Dunobo Springs, to be greeted by the enthusiastic cheers of the assembled crowd.

Koyisqatapi, of course, is humiliated by Masauwu's message, but he carries it back to the Azuposi

faithfully. The player characters are asked to remain in Pasocada Basin to teach the Azuposi how to be audacious. In any event, they have to wait until spring to receive their micha. In the mean time, there are plenty of adventure possibilities in the Basin, perhaps with an Azuposi player character joining the group.

Homeward

Having brought Koyisqatapi before Masauwu, the player characters can now enjoy the roles of heros and gain at last the rewards for their efforts. Of course, more adventure may be waiting, in the Basin and along the trip home.

The Azuposi regard the explorers as heroes, and rightfully so. They are given whatever hospitality they desire for as long as they choose to remain with the Azuposi, and a furthermore promise to trade only with the adventurers, and with no others from the southlands.

The Gilded Priest asks the player characters to stay in the Pasocada Basin, or at least return in short order, to live among them and teach them the ways of the outsiders. They will be offered honorary positions in whichever fraternity (hunters, healers, or clowns) they feel comfortable. The offer provides a ready excuse to remain in Michaca and to enjoy more adventures, as suggested in Part Three.

When spring comes, the floods not only bring the promise of the first good crop in four years, but also a new layer of micha that washes up on the shores of the canyon. Using ancient techniques, the Azuposi separate the micha from the rest of the sediment and present it to the player characters. The total micha for the year is about two hundred pounds. Even selling this to a merchant (who will raise the price and distribute it to interested wizards) will net the party 32,000 gp. Remember though, Sozarro gets two shares and the "Amnian merchant house" another two shares for each share the characters receive.

The Gilded Priest also tells the Azuposi that Masauwu wants them to travel forth across the land, to learn courage, to develop their skills, and to bring back knowledge of other peoples. If any players want to run Azuposi player characters in other lands, this edict gives them a perfect excuse to do so. They can use the statistics described for various non-player characters in this adventure if they want to generate characters who are near to the current player characters in level.

After Sozarro has traded the goods he has brought along, he has approximately 5,000 gp worth of trade goods left, mostly copper and turquoise jewelry, with plenty of gold jewelry thrown in for good measure. From this amount, Sozarro subtracts the 300 gp which he had spent on his trade goods and 100 gp spent on supplies, leaving about 4,600 gp for the party to split—with Sozarro and his "merchant house", of course, receiving double shares.

There's good news for Yenisha as well. She is given the magical pendant she stole as a reward for her daring and far-sightedness, and her status in the fraternity of clowns grows to new heights.

The journey home might be just as long and arduous as the journey to Michaca. If you want to bring the adventure to a quick conclusion, however, you can decide that a large

party of Azuposi—priests, curious young people, and official representatives—return with the characters, making the party large enough that random encounters do not prove to be a problem and simply gloss over the return.

Sozarro and the player characters attract quite a bit of attention back in Kultaka and word of their success spreads, even to the Sword Coast. Certainly other prospective employers will take an interest in these heroes and perhaps hire them for other dangerous and profitable missions.

The adventurers may get wealthy by overseeing trade with the Azuposi, though that will mean more perilous crossings of the wastelands between Tultaka and the Pasocada Basin. In addition, they may find themselves periodically fighting Nahopacas, monsters, bent priests and Dog People, who interfere with the trade routes. If the player characters want to travel elsewhere and leave the trading to merchants, Sozarro can arrange for them to sell their shares of the trading rights to the Amnian house that funded the expedition in the first place—to Sozarro himself. The total value of the trading rights is 10,000 gp, though this sum is open to negotiation. Calculate the value of each character's share by dividing the total by the number of shares in the party (including two for Sozarro and two for the "merchant house.") Instead of taking a lump sum, player characters can take 50% of the lump sum immediately, with rights to another 20% each year over the next ten years. (This option gives the characters a larger reward and allows Sozarro to use the capital raised through trade to pay off the characters.)

PART THREE: FURTHER ADVENTURES

Part Three is devoted to adventure ideas which will continue your campaign in the Azuposi Basin.

Kin Elbhaz's Little Helpers

This is a role-playing and problem solving adventure. Combat should not normally play a part in it, nor is there great treasure to be found; therefore, this scenario may be used for characters of any level.

Background

Kin Elbhaz is a pueblo widely known for its good fortune. Harvests here are always above average, even during the drought, and disease is a rarity. The reason for Kin Elbhaz's good fortune is a band of brownies who have, for generations, provided secret assistance to the people of the pueblo.

Even brownies have their price, however, although it is a modest one. In exchange for the help they give, the brownies feel entitled to a portion of the Azuposi corn. Since the Azuposi don't even realize the brownies are there, the brownies naturally take the corn surreptitiously. They have a secret tunnel leading into the grain storage room.

Now, the problem: A new storage chamber! Lokoshin, matriarch of the village, decided it was high time the village enjoy new storage facilities. The new chamber was finished a month ago, and all of the mayz moved to it. Now the brownies can't get at it!

The wee folk are angry, and feel betrayed. Never mind that the humans didn't know they were a party to an agreement, let alone that they were violating its terms. Overcome by irritation and pettiness, the brownies have not only stopped helping Kin Elbhaz, they've taken to pillaging and damaging the crops in the fields—to feed themselves, and out of spite.

The people of Kin Elbhaz are almost apoplectic with the situation.

People of the Pueblo

Typical Villager

Int Average; AL NG; AC 10; MV 12; HD 1d6; hp 4 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Damage 1-6 (club); SZ M; ML 11

Lokoshin, Spokeswoman of Kin Elbhaz

A woman in her mid-50s, Lokoshin is such a commanding, charismatic presence that her neighbors have reflexively looked to her as a leader whenever a crisis has arisen in the past decade. Lokoshin is very strong minded and forward looking. She has an intuition that change is in the air, and she doesn't want her people to be left behind. She can never explain this feeling logically, however, so she focuses on a series of small projects (such as the opening of a new storage space) to release her creative energies.

Lokoshin stands 5' 5", weighs 140 pounds, and has graying hair. Her face is weathered, but her eyes sparkle with youth. She walks confidently and speaks in a tone that assumes listeners will obey—and usually they do.

She is curious about foreign adventurers, but a bit distrustful at the same time.

Lokoshin: Int High; AL LG; AC 10; MV 12; HD 1; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Damage 1-6 (club); SZ M; ML 16; Note: Charisma 18

Hopala, Pueblo Priest

Merry, rotund, and slightly incompetent, Hopala is by no means an inspiring figure. He is, however, curious about foreign adventurers and unabashed about approaching and talking to them. Though he might pepper the player characters with questions, he is also willing to tell them anything they ask about (and much more that they don't ask about as well).

Hopala: Int High; AL NG; AC 10; MV 12; HD 4; hp 17; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Damage 1-6/1-6 (club); SA & SD Spells as 4th level pueblo priest; SZ M; ML 10

Pokoso, Sunwatcher

A simpering, reluctant man, Pokoso wears the mantle of authority with discomfort. He constantly worries that he is not worthy of the Sun Father, and sometimes finds himself too nervous even to pray for spells. This only agitates him more, as he fears it indicates the mighty spirit's displeasure.

Pokoso is afraid that the player characters will uncover "the truth", or rather, what he fears is the truth, and so, he will be more an obstruction than anything else. Fortunately he hasn't got the mettle to present a real threat to the investigations. He might, however, lie about having "a vague intuition that this all has something to do with the headwaters of the river," hoping to distract the investigators with a lengthy journey.

Pokoso: Int Very; AL NG; AC 10; MV 12; HD 3; hp 13; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Damage 1-3/1-2 (knife); SA & SD Spells as 3rd level sunwatcher; SZ M;ML 7

The Brownies

The brownies are a small band that live near Kin Elbhaz. This band once wandered over the land searching out food in the harsh Basin environment. When they found the Kin Elbhazans and their storage chamber, they settled down comfortably and have lived nearby ever since.

Dubilitop: Int High; AL LG; AC 3; MV 12; HD 1/2; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Damage 1-2 (short spear), or 1-2 (tiny bow); SA Spells; SD Save as a 9th level cleric; SZ T; ML 13

Brownies (11): Int High; AL LG; AC 3; MV 12; HD 1/2; hp 3 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Damage 1-2 (short spear); SA Spells; SD Save as 9th level cleric; SZ T; ML 11

Solving the Mystery

There are several ways that player characters might solve the mystery. If your players devise a system not mentioned here, improvise.

Investigating the History of Kin Elbhaz

The stories told of Kin Elbhaz are vague, but they assert that a brave priest faced down and chased off a bent priest many generations ago. Ever since then, the town's crops have been very good. The bent priest had almost ruined the town, even managing to destroy a storage chamber and the mayz that had been kept there, before being driven away.

In actuality, when the bent priest destroyed the storage chamber, the Kin Elbhazans began using the adjacent room for mayz storage. Soon the curious brownies entered the ruins of the old chamber and found they could get into the new mayz chamber. Thinking that the Kin Elbhazans had opened this passageway specifically for them, they began taking mayz and returning the favor by helping the crops along. Now that they were closely involved with the Kin Elbhazans, they became annoyed with the bent priest and drove him away with their spells.

Examining the Crops

The adventurers may wish to investigate the crops. Very keen eyes could spot prints left by tiny bare feet. Those who are on watch may see the brownies come in the middle of the night, although they are all but invisible, especially in the dark.

Each night a brownie or two come and deposit crop-eating insects on the fields of Kin Elbhaz. They kill beneficial creatures (such as spiders and earthworms) and pull buds off of plants. The brownies sprinkle a little salt on the ground, and do anything else they can think of to further damage the crops. They have always been extremely cautious about being seen by the big people, and now that they think the big people have become enemies, they are even more vigilant. The adventurers must be very carefully concealed to catch a glimpse of the brownies. And since the Kin Elbhaz crops extend over miles, it will be difficult to guard them just by posting watches.

The brownies, unfamiliar with Realmsians or even Mazticans, may assume that the player characters are evil, perhaps they are the sinister creatures that persuaded the Kin Elbhazans to move their mayz in the first place. The brownies may use *confusion, ventriloquism,* and *dancing lights* in an attempt to drive away the "evil" adventurers. They will not, however, show themselves or risk their skin.

Leaving eggs, mayz, and baubles out for the brownies would go a long way to winning them over, or at least making contact.

Investigating the Old Storage Chamber

In their search for clues, the adventurers may poke about the old storage chamber.

Map Key: Kin Elbhaz Storage Chamber

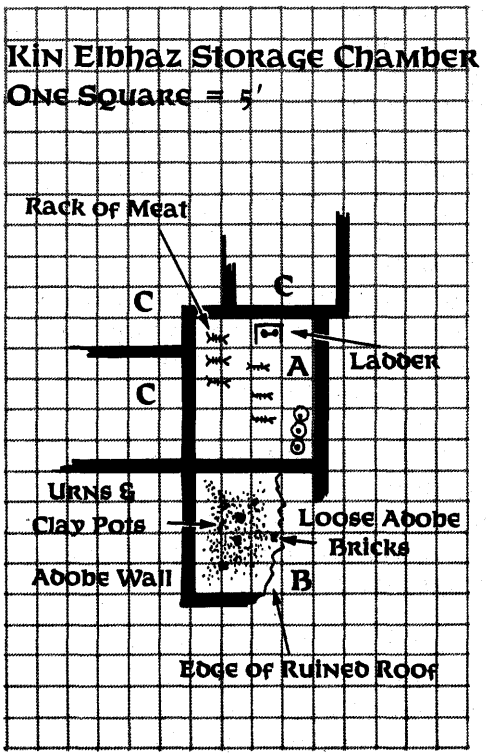
A. Storage Chamber

Now the chamber is filled with dried and drying meat hanging from wooden racks. As avowed vegetarians, the brownies find this food disgusting.

Loose adobe bricks in one wall of the storage chamber are easily removed. (Treat the bricks as a concealed door to see if the player characters find the loose bricks. Also, a dwarf could spot these on a roll of 1-3 on a d6.) The resulting hole leads to the previous storage chamber that had been ruined by the attack of the bent priest many generations ago. It is through this hole that the brownies have been entering the storage chamber and taking their fill of mayz.

B. Ruined Storage Chamber

The brownies no longer enter the storage chamber, though they do sometimes take shelter in the



adjacent ruins. Here the adventurers can find a few old mayz cobs, chips of flint (which the brownies took but abandoned as too small for their needs), bits of string (similarly abandoned), and a few crude designs painted on the walls by brownies who were playfully copying the habits of the Azuposi. If offerings of mayz are left here, the brownies find and take them. The player characters may hide in the chamber to see who is taking the offering, or perhaps the brownies will end their attacks on the crops as long as the offerings continue.

C. Private Dwellings

The Azuposi living here have nothing to do with the storage chamber or the brownies.

Conclusion

If the adventurers slaughter all the brownies, then Kin Elbhaz's problems are over, though their former prosperity will never return. If they kill some of the brownies but let others survive to hold a grudge, then Kin Elbhaz's new difficulties will certainly make them forget their old ones, as the brownies will burn crops and haunt the city.

With no monsters to be fought and no treasure to be won, how do you reward your players if they succeed in this scenario? First you should grant an experience award. Judge how well the characters played their roles and how they responded to the puzzles presented to them. An award of 10-100 experience points, multiplied by the level of the player character, should be given to each, depending upon your judgement of the character's success in the scenario.

Esh Alakar

Any inhabitants of the Pasocada Basin will warn the player characters not to venture into Esh Alakar because it is haunted by the dead who built it and by their devious magics.

These ancient, mysterious ruins were once populated by a powerful, magic-using race. In essence, the ruins are just that—ruins, stone walls weathered by years of wind erosion, and fragments of pottery, now mostly dust. Buried beneath collapsed walls or under several feet of accumulated dust are the remains of the original inhabitants.

The original inhabitants may have been elves, humans, half-elves, or some other race you may wish to develop. They destroyed themselves in a bitter, magical war, and the

haunted Esh Alakar is all that now remains of their once superior culture.

Aboveground, the features of the ruins are devoid of interest, though monsters occasionally live or wander there. (Use the Scrublands encounters table, but re-roll any intelligent beings.)

The Esh Alakarans, as well as many other creatures are imprisoned below the ruins by the wizard spells of *sink* or *imprisonment*. Likewise a few very valuable gems, found in the ruins, may contain beings captured by the 8th-level wizard spell *trap the soul*.

The stone ruins are primitive by Realmsian standards, but advanced over Azuposi architecture. It takes approximately ten hours (60 turns) to investigate the entire ruins. If the characters encounter something that prevents their progress (such as a trap or a creature), assume that the rooms to which they then have no access would take another 1d10 turns to search. Each turn spent searching through the ruins gives the party a 75% chance to encounter the following:

Die Roll (d100)	Find
01-36	Clues
37-48	Disaster
49-52	Magical Trap
53-64	Pasocada Ghost
65-80	1-6 Snakes
81-84	Stone Golem
85-88	Treasure
89-96	Treasure, Guarded
97-100	Special

Notes on Random Encounters

Clues: These are clues to the original nature of the Esh Alakarans. They could include magical wands, now spent of all charges and entirely non-magical; a bent copper axehead with undecipherable (magical) runes carved into it; shards of clay tablets that bear magical, but now unusable, markings; the shattered remains of a stone golem (good foreshadowing for what they are likely to face if they keep nosing around); a room whose stone floor has buckled under an onslaught of magical energy, but whose magical carvings are still partially recognizable; "statues," actually Esh Alakarans turned to stone by their enemies; burned out ioun stones; magical traps that no longer function, but rather produce ineffectual versions of the original attack spells (such as small clouds of stinking smoke, sparks, or small flames); or the bones, fangs, horns, and claws of unidentifiable creatures that the Esh Alakarans *charmed* or *summoned* into their service.

This encounter might also mean clues to the plot you have developed to lure the player characters to Esh Alakar in the first place, such as footprints in the dust.

Disaster: A room or hallway that still bears the mark of evil forces, such as a puddle of poisonous goo that covers the floor; an area whose malicious energies cause madness (as the 4th-level wizard spell *confusion)* or other nasty effects; a room filled with the permanent illusion of a raging fire.

Magical Trap: The most common types include those that fire off attack spells *(fireball, polymorph other web, cloudkill,* etc.) when characters cross thresholds marked with runes and other magics.

Pasocada Ghost: The ghost of an Esh Alakaran, usually haunting the site of his death. His unburied

corpse may be nearby.

Snakes: These normal, poisonous snakes are the descendants of the Esh Alakarans, many of whom were turned into serpents by their enemies. The vague image of a screaming humanoid face marks the back of each snake's head. Their bite causes death in 2-5 rounds unless a saving throw vs. poison is made—and even then the victim suffers 1-6 points of damage. Otherwise use the normal statistics for these snakes. (Perhaps their poison has arcane value for certain magical items or uses.)

Special: This could be anything strange and unique, such as a time-stopped Esh Alakaran wizard; eternal echoes of climactic battles; or even a secret teleportation chamber that sends the player characters to another, very distant, ruined stronghold of the Esh Alakarans.

Stone Golem: These are some of the devices responsible for the deaths of the last Esh Alakarans, and they stand waiting to finish the commands given them by their masters—"Kill everyone but me." Many sustained damage before killing their opponents, so roll percentile dice for each one encountered. The number rolled equals its hit points, up to a maximum of 60. (Subtract 1,000 experience points per 5 hit points below 60, down to a minimum of 1,000 experience points.)

Treasure: Some valuables survived the destruction of Esh Alakar. Roll as Treasure Type U, but with the following adjustments.

All gems are polished but not cut. Divide their value by 10.

Objects of art are likely to be gold, but again, any gems used are uncut, so divide their value by 2. Furthermore, all of these pieces are damaged somehow. Divide the value by the roll on 1d10 (with 1 indicating excellent condition and 10 indicating thoroughly damaged).

All magic items are strange in appearance. Weapons are made of copper (magically as strong as steel), shields are of wood, armor is nowhere to be found (re-roll armor results), scrolls are clay tablets in a bizarre language, wizards' items are grotesque and unusual in appearance, and so forth. Furthermore, these items are likely to be damaged or partially used. Roll 1d10. If the item has charges or multiple uses (like a necklace of missiles), then divide the number of uses remaining by this number. If the item has one use or unlimited uses (like a magic weapon), then multiply the d10 roll by 10% to find the chance that it is broken or ruined.

Treasure, Guarded: These treasures are usually in large urns sealed with wax or in stone boxes. This is treasure that tends to be in better shape than that described above. Use the same method for determining it, but roll 1d6 instead of 1d10 to determine how badly each item is damaged or exhausted.

The traps and guards are mostly magical, including *fire traps* (1d4 + 1d10 + 10 damage) and *permanent invisibility* A permanent *wall of force* is a permanent illusion, seeming to be a wall over a niche where the treasure is kept. The biggest clue to its existence is that the illusory wall seems new and clean. Secret doors and various attack spells keyed to the traps, such as *fireball, disintegration,* and *vanish,* also serve as guardians.

A thief has one-tenth the normal chance to detect Esh Alakaran

magical traps because the runes and designs used are foreign to those in the Realms. After discovering each trap, however, the thief's ability increases by one-tenth his normal chance, so that, after ten traps, he will be able to spot the traps normally.

To give the search in Esh Alakar a specific goal, perhaps a bent priest has entered, guided and protected by evil spirits. The player characters must find him before he uncovers the secret of controlling the stone golems and using them to smash the Azuposi society that has banished him. Ogre raiders may have kidnapped a good friend of the adventurers, taking her to Esh Alakar, where they believe no one dares to follow them. The player characters may investigate reports of strange lights and sounds emanating from the once dead ruins, only to find that an original Esh Alakaran has returned through magical means and is gathering his magical powers before establishing Esh Alakar as a center of magical evil. Perhaps rumors of a marvelous magical item, spied by foolhardy explorers, may tempt the player characters to venture into the ruins. The venom of the unique Esh Alakaran snakes might be required for a strange magical ceremony or item.

Clues found in Esh Alakar may lead to other ruins or treasure caches in the Basin, now buried under centuries of sand or dirt.

Other Adventure Ideas

Trouble in the Mines

Miners in a turquoise mine near Ukolo have accidentally broken into a pre-existing cave complex. Through the breach came terrible subterranean monsters that killed some miners and trapped several more deeper in the mines. The adventurers are called on to rescue the miners, which means possibly facing anything from bats to beholders. Those whose curiosity is stronger than their common sense may also want to explore the newfound caves before the miners seal them up.

A Conquest Thwarted

A scouting party of rapacious Legionnaires has been spotted in the east. They are seeking new lands to conquer, and if they bring reports of micha and militaristically primitive Azuposi back to their commander, he may launch a conquest of the Basin. The adventurers may try to talk the scouts out of recommending an invasion, or fight them, or better still, somehow fool them into thinking that this Basin is best left alone. (With the right face paints, for instance, the adventurers could pretend to be victims of a foul disease fatal to Realmsians but benign to the natives.)

Vengeance of Ikitipsa

The bent priestess Ikitipsa was responsible for setting the farastu on the Sun Trail. Now that the player characters have thwarted that ploy, she is ready to unleash her next plot against the Azuposi. Capitalizing on the fear and frustration caused by years of drought, Ikitipsa has gathered a group of misfit rogues and warriors from among the Azuposi. Along with some ogres that she has befriended, she feels she is ready to

strike another serious blow against the Azuposi: assassinating their newfound heroes. With the help of malicious allies who still live in Azuposi society, she is able to hide among the people she hates and strike at those who threaten to teach them courage. The characters have an adventure of equal parts intrigue and dangerous combat, as they first fall prey to assassination attempts, and then must turn the tables and pursue their attacker.

To the Land of the Insect Men

Players who enjoyed playing explorer in the "Quest for the City of Gold" may thirst for further travels. The Azuposi storytellers may be of assistance in inspiring new journeys.

The most intriguing of the tales speak of the far northwest. There, it is said, are yet harsher deserts in which dwell a race of mantis warriors-great insect men—who wander the badlands. Among other fantastic claims made about them, it is said that they mine precious metals and jewels from the earth, and eat them for sustenance! Why not set off to discover their secrets?

In fact there are tribes of thri-kreen in the badlands to the northwest, and their homeland would give a Dungeon Master ample territories to create, and players new vistas to explore.

Monsters

Unlike the southern regions described by the Maztica boxed set, the Pasocada Basin is relatively sparsely inhabited by humankind—thanks to the limited resources of the semi-arid clime. But where humans are scarce, monsters flourish; the deep wildernesses, far from Azuposi pueblos, are home to numerous fantastic creatures.

Following is a list of suitable monsters for the Pasocada Basin. Along with each monster name is its source: which volume of the AD&D® 2nd Edition *Monstrous Compendium,* or elsewhere, as appropriate. This is not an exclusive list and there can, of course, be other sorts of monsters, as the Dungeon Master sees fit. It is simply meant to be a useful guide for rounding out wilderness events.

Note also that encounters may feature the humans and demi-humans of the basin (see the Geography section for brief descriptions of each group besides the Azuposi).

Monster	**Source**
Aarakocra	MC2
Aerial Servant	MC1
Animal, Herd	MC1
Ankheg	MC2
Bats, birds, centipedes, fungus, insects, lizards, porcupines, scorpions, snakes, spiders, toads, weasels-all normal and giant varieties	MC1, MC2
Bear (black, brown, cave)	MC1
Behir	MC1
Berbalang	MC3
Chac	*Maztica* boxed set
Chimera	MC1
Cockatrice	MC1
Displacer beast	MC1
Dog (blink, wild, death)	MC1
Doppleganger	MC2
Dragonne	MC2
Dragon (brass, blue, copper, gold, red)	MC1
Elementals	MC1
Ghost	MC1
Ghoul	MC1

Monster	Source
Giant, Hill	MC1
Giant, Stone	MC1
Gorgimera	MC3
Gremlin	MC3
Harpy	MC1
Jackal (coyote)	MC1
Jackalwere (as coyotlwere)	MC1
Lycanthrope (werebear, werecougar [as weretiger], wererat, werewolf)	MC1
Mountain Lion	MC1
Mummy	MC1
Ogre*	MC1
Plant, Carnivorous	MC2, MC3
Pleistocene Animals	MC2
Plumazotl	*Maztica* boxed set
Pudding, dun	MC1
Pyrolisk	MC1
Rhaumbusun	MC1
Shadow	MC1
Urchins	MC2
Wyvern	MC1
Yeti	MC1

*Ogres have long been a part of Azuposi lore, used to frighten misbehaving children. In fact there are ogres in the deserts of the Pasocada Basin—solitary, homely brutes who enjoy an occasional tasty tidbit of hapless human. They mainly survive by snaring rabbits and digging up tubers. These ogres are in not related to those created by the Viperhand (cf. Maztica boxed set and novels).

New Monster

Pasocada Ghost

CLIMATE/TERRAIN: *Any*
FREQUENCY: *Very Rare*
ORGANIZATION: *Solitary*
ACTIVE TIME: *Night*

DIET: *None*
INTELLIGENCE: *Average (8-10)*
TREASURE: *Nil*
ALIGNMENT: *Lawful Evil*
NO. APPEARING: *1*
ARMOR CLASS: *0* or *10*
MOVEMENT: *9*
HIT DICE: *10*
THAC0: *N/A*
NO. OF ATTACKS: *1*
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *See below*
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Nil*
SIZE: *M (5'-6 tall)*
MORALE: *Special*
XP VALUE: *4,000*

In the Pasocada Basin and in similar areas of the True World, those who die but are not buried properly often return as ghosts who haunt the places of their deaths. They are usually ethereal, but they become semi-material in order to attack those who enter the areas of their haunt. They appear with much the same form as they had when alive, though they are translucent and always carry bows and arrows.

Combat: Pasocada ghosts are usually ethereal but, when someone disturbs them, they become semi-material (and thus visible) and fire ghostly arrows at the intruder. Success is automatic (no attack roll is necessary), and the target must make a saving throw vs. spells or contract a disease (generally the fatal variety described under *cure disease).* A character who saves versus a Pasocada ghost's arrow is immune to that ghost. A character who fails the save will always fail saves against that ghost until rising a level, at which point he again has normal save chances.

While semi-material, a Pasocada ghost can only be struck by silver weapons (half damage) or magical ones (full damage). On the ethereal plane however, their AC is only 10. In addition, they are affected by spells, but only if the caster is ethereal himself.

Habitat/Society: Pasocada ghosts have nothing to do with each other. They are cursed to haunt an area until someone inters their corpse correctly, performs a proper burial service, or otherwise satisfies it. Of course, an area where many have died may have many Pasocada ghosts haunting it.

Ecology: The Pasocada ghost is a very real danger. They are difficult to hurt and destroy, and once one has struck its targets with disease-arrows, it becomes fully ethereal once again. Folklore of the Pasocada basin, therefore, strongly emphasizes the dangers of entering haunted areas, especially Esh Alakar

APPENDIX: AZUPOSI CHARACTER GENERATION

The conditions and culture of Azuposi life are different from those of the Forgotten Realms across the ocean and distinct from the "medieval fantasy" typical of AD&D® campaigns in general. This appendix provides information on how to generate Azuposi characters. Dungeon Masters can use these guidelines to create Azuposi non-player characters, and players can use them to develop player characters.

Character Kits

Azuposi warriors may select the Hunter kit; rogues must select the Clown, Trader, or Fetishist kit; priests must select the Healer, Pueblo Priest, or Sunwatcher kit. If players own copies of the Complete *Fighter's Handbook,* the following kits might be used as well: Barbarian, Peasant Hero, Savage, and Wilderness Warrior. Of course, the cultural role of all these kits will have to be revised to suit the Azuposi milieu. Adjustments to proficiencies and the like may be suitable as well. Doing all the work in advance is a bother—have characters draw up the character, and then use a "line-item veto" to root out the problems you see (e.g., a barbarian cannot use a bastard sword proficiency—there are no bastard swords without metalsmithing, and none of that in the Pasocada Basin).

Kits must be chosen when a character is created. A character may not switch from one kit to another. He may decide to abandon a kit, if the DM accepts his role-playing rationale as legitimate. For example, a Clown might find his lifestyle a hindrance and an oddity in the city of the distant Forgotten Realms, and might wish to relieve himself of some cultural baggage. If this happens, all benefits and hindrances of the kit are lost. Bonus nonweapon proficiencies are not lost, but must be paid for with the next free slots available. That is, as the character gains further experience levels and would normally be entitled to new nonweapon proficiencies, those slots are "eaten" by the formerly free proficiencies. After abandoning a kit, a character is thereafter just an ordinary warrior, priest, or rogue.

The following information is provided for each character kit:

DESCRIPTION: What these characters are like and any requirements needed by a character who wishes to employ this kit.

ROLE: Character's role in society and adventuring campaigns.

SECONDARY SKILLS: We have not included secondary skills in the kit descriptions. If your campaign uses secondary skills rules, then all Azuposi may choose from among the following: bowyer/fletcher, farmer, fisher (if the character grew up by the river), forester (if the character grew up near a wooded region), hunter, jeweler (specializing in working with and appraising turquoise), leatherworker, mason, miner, tailor/weaver, trapper/furrier, weaponsmith (flintknapping), woodworker/carpenter.

WEAPON PROFICIENCIES: Which weapons the character can use.

Only native weapons are included. Azuposi characters who are exposed to new weapons may gain proficiency with such weapons after appropriate experience and training (provided that those weapons are permitted by the character's class).

NONWEAPON PROFICIENCIES: The Nonweapon Proficiencies from the AD&D® 2nd Edition game are a key element of these character kits. Although they are optional rules, they are necessary to make these special characters truly well-defined.

Nonweapon proficiencies are listed as required or recommended. Required proficiencies are bonuses, given in addition to the nonweapon proficiency choices made normally. Recommended proficiencies are chosen normally.

Nonweapon proficiencies must be chosen from the table in this chapter, The proficiency listing has been modified to suit the milieu, and it includes several new proficiencies.

SKILL PROGRESSION: This entry is included for rogue kits only. It determines how many discretionary points each kit allows the character. Because the Azuposi do not have locks, mechanical traps, pockets, or written language, rogues have only the following skills (equivalent to a thief's): hear noise, hide in shadows, move silently, and climb walls. As with thieves, only half the discretionary points gained with a level can be used on any one skill.

SPELLS ALLOWED: Listed only for priest kits.

EQUIPMENT: There may be special types of equipment recommended for each of the kits; these items are explained in this section.

As with weapons, much equipment is dictated by conditions in the Azuposi lands. A character who travels to other lands may encounter and learn to utilize other sorts of equipment. Many characters will prefer what is old and familiar, however. (It's especially difficult for Azuposi warriors to get used to heavy, metal armor.)

SPECIAL BENEFITS: The special benefits conferred on the character are listed here.

SPECIAL HINDRANCES: As with benefits, each kit requires some things that may be disadvantageous.

ETHOS: Given only for priest kits. The guiding tenets for this type of priest.

The RACE category has been eliminated for these kits: The Azuposi are all human. (In special cases, however, Desert Dwarves or Poscadari Elves may have been orphaned and then raised in the Azuposi nation, subject to approval from the DM.)

Rogue Kits

Two things are peculiar about Azuposi culture: First, they tend to live in very small communities, and second, they have only a rudimentary sense of the meaning of private property. This combination makes the possibility of widespread professional thievery (the mainstay of the AD&D® game rogue class) highly unlikely.

But the Azuposi communities do have their roguish members: clowns (koyemshis), traders, and fetishists. These are the only types of rogues to be found in the Azuposi society.

Clown

DESCRIPTION: Tricksters of the

rogue class, Azuposi clowns (koyemshis) are an integral part of ceremonial life. They are also clever and useful in practical matters such as scouting. Koyemshis wear elaborate costumes for their ceremonial role, but otherwise wear normal Azuposi garb.

Azuposi clowns gather together in fraternities, like other groups such as hunters and healers. These fraternities have a prominent role in dances and festivals, acting out the parts of mischievous spirits and engaging in acrobatics and buffoonery.

A character who wishes to become an Azuposi clown must have a Charisma of at least 12. This score need not reflect physical attractiveness. It measures the social skills vital to the clown's ceremonial role.

ROLE: In the great Azuposi festivals, the clowns are a common and beloved sight. They dress in the most outlandish garb, paint their faces, and dress their hair They engage in all sorts of buffoonery, mocking themselves and everyone else in the pueblo.

Besides humor, the clowns' role has a serious side. It is an expression of the unknown forces of the human psyche. In modern terms, we might say that the clowns open and cleanse the collective unconscious of the Azuposi.

Besides their comic and ceremonial roles, clowns have a traditional attachment to hunting groups and war parties, serving as scouts. Thus they have several skills that are especially useful for adventuring characters.

WEAPON PROFICIENCIES: Clowns can use the club, knife, short bow, and sling.

NONWEAPON PROFICIENCIES:

Required: dancing, juggling, jumping, tightrope walking, tumbling. Recommended: alertness, direction sense, musical instrument, running, signalling, singing, storytelling, survival (desert), tracking and ventriloquism.

SKILL PROGRESSION: Clowns receive 40 discretionary percentage points at the first level, and 20 more for each extra level attained.

EQUIPMENT: Garish and bizarre ceremonial outfits, body paints, props (feathers, gourd "clubs," small drums, etc.).

SPECIAL BENEFITS: Clowns in their ceremonial roles can get away with all sorts of dangerous talk. They can mock authority, deride sunwatchers, and ridicule local heroes. Some clowns use derision only for humor, but many use their unique status to point out the flaws of people who have too much prestige. The strict sense of etiquette which the Azuposi follow prevents them from questioning authorities, but it also makes authorities accept whatever a clown says without thought of revenge. When not in ceremonial guise, clowns have no such favored status.

SPECIAL HINDRANCES: Clowns are expected to perform their ceremonial role without fail. Even if the clown's spouse has died or the village is starving, the audience expects the clown to entertain.

Fetishist

DESCRIPTION: The fetishist combines the practical skills of the rogue with some of the animal-magic normally available to priests. Because they deal with the spirits, they must have a minimum Charisma of 9.

ROLE: The fetishist is of great value to the Azuposi community. He aids the hunters and protects the village from dangerous animals. As an adventurer, a fetishist's well-rounded talents prove very useful.

WEAPON PROFICIENCIES: Fetishists can use the club, knife, short bow, and sling.

NONWEAPON PROFICIENCIES: Required: animal lore, spirit lore, one craft skill (basket weaving, carpentry, copperworking, flintknapping, gem cutting, gold casting, leatherworking, pottery, seamstress/tailor, weaving, or woodworking). Recommended: animal handling, animal training, animal mimicry, heraldry, and craft skills.

SKILL PROGRESSION: Fetishists receive 30 discretionary percentage points, and 15 more for each extra level attained.

EQUIPMENT: Ritual items, possibly one talisman at first level.

SPECIAL BENEFITS: Fetishists may use talismanic magic.

SPECIAL HINDRANCES: Fetishists are practical, but they lack the status of true priests.

Trader

DESCRIPTION: A trader looks and dresses much like any other Azuposi, though many have baubles, charms, or jewelry that they have gathered in their travels. Since trading with other tribes without the benefit of coinage to regulate exchanges requires tact, confidence, and keen discrimination, a trader must have a minimum score of 9 in both Wisdom and Charisma.

ROLE: While the Azuposi have a comfortable life, they still depend on trade with other people. The

Azuposi trader is the one who ventures to other villages, deals with often strange people, and returns with items the Azuposi value. As adventurers, they excel at such people-oriented tasks as making friends, bargaining for goods, and gaining information.

WEAPON PROFICIENCIES: Traders may use the club, knife, short bow, and sling.

NONWEAPON PROFICIENCIES: Required: appraising, survival (desert). Recommended: direction sense, endurance, flintknapping, gaming, gem cutting, heraldry, mountaineering, signalling, storytelling, Modern Languages (Nahopaca, Dog People, Metahel, Poscadari, Short Ones, Desert Dwarf).

SKILL PROGRESSION: Traders have 40 discretionary points at the 1st level and gain another 20 with each subsequent level.

EQUIPMENT: In addition to normal equipment, a trader often has a wide variety of face paints, non-magical charms, and foreign garments that he has acquired (often as gifts) from the people with whom he has traded. He wears these when he visits particular tribes, showing them that he has been there before and that he knows something of their customs, facilitating contact with other groups.

SPECIAL BENEFITS: Traders often take the best trade goods for themselves and still have enough left over to please their fellow villagers. Because they have first pick, they are likely to be "wealthy." Since Azuposi do not hoard goods, this wealth generally means that the trader's home, tools, or ceremonial gear, are nicer than those of other villagers. But it's unlikely that a trader will have many more items than anyone else.

SPECIAL HINDRANCES: Because of their wealth, and because others rarely see the efforts and courage needed to obtain it, traders often earn the envy of others.

Warrior Kit

Hunter

DESCRIPTION: The Azuposi are a peaceful nation, devoted to the nurturing of life in a hostile environment. Hunters are the closest thing the Azuposi have to a professional military. These are individuals who have distinguished themselves by their skill with weapons, and so have gained the honor to provide meat for the pueblo. When any attackers, from monsters to Nahopaca raiders, threaten the pueblo, the hunters have the additional role of organizing defense.

Because hunting in the Pasocada Basin requires speed, stealth and endurance, a hunter must have minimum scores of 9 in both Dexterity and Constitution.

ROLE: First and foremost, a hunter hunts, providing such valuables as meat, skins, bones, and sinew. To honor the spirits of the animals, who have surrendered life in their mortal forms for the benefit of the Azuposi, hunters always leave choice vital organs outside the pueblo for the spirits to reclaim. Like every other group, the hunters also have a fraternity that participates in ceremonial rituals. The village depends on the skill of the hunters against those who would attack the Azuposi.

WEAPON PROFICIENCIES:

Hunters must take short bow and sling among their weapon proficiencies, and most specialize with one of these.

NONWEAPON PROFICIENCIES: Required: dancing, hunting, set snares. Recommended: alertness, animal lore, animal mimicry, direction sense, flintknapping, running, signalling, survival (desert).

EQUIPMENT: Hunting sack, (a leather sack that is strapped snugly onto the small of the back, used for carrying everything needed on a hunting trip), sack with live coals (insulated with ashes), knives, ceremonial items (in case the hunter accidentally transgresses against the spirits), and twine for bundling kills.

SPECIAL BENEFITS: The hunters' fraternity is accorded high status in Azuposi society.

SPECIAL HINDRANCES: The hunter is forbidden by Azuposi etiquette to brag about his successes. Many, however, quietly enjoy hearing their exploits recounted (and perhaps exaggerated) by storytellers.

Priests Kits

Azuposi priests are unlike their typical counterparts elsewhere in the AD&D® game. Their faith is built upon animism, a belief in a multiplicity of spirits that inhabit the natural world. The most powerful of these spirits, such as Masauwu, the death-headed entity who is the special benefactor of the Azuposi, are much like the gods of other cultures.

But Azuposi priests normally do not, unlike other AD&D® game cultures' priests, choose a single deity and serve him or her. In this respect, they are similar to druids. Azuposi priests are mediators between the living human community and the numerous, enigmatic entities of the spirit realm. The Azuposi priest's role is not so much that of servant or worshipper to a god, but more like that of an ambassador who travels to and bargains with many alien powers to ensure the welfare of his people.

To achieve this goal, the priest seeks familiarity with a diversity of spirits, not intimacy with a single, powerful, supernatural entity. Azuposi clerical spellcasting is the result, not of power granted by a single supernatural being, but rather the concerted efforts of many spirits whose assistance the priest has won.

As an Azuposi priest gains experience levels, he acquires two things: an increase in knowledge (knowing the names, dwelling places, interests, desires, and powers of spirits), and a measure of deeds that have garnered the notice of the spirits. The higher the priest's level, the easier it is to bargain for favors from spirits. In game terms, the priest is able to cast higher and more powerful spells.

AD&D® game priests must spend time meditating in order to receive their spells from their patron Power. For the Azuposi, this time is spent in silent communion with the spirit realm arranging specific deals. The. time taken to "learn a spell" is the time spent finding a spirit who will deliver that spells effect, and satisfying that spirit's demands.

Because their work depends on the intercession of fickle spirits, all these Azuposi characters have Charisma (as a measure of persuasive ability) as a second prime requisite. They must have a minimum Charisma score of 9.

Each of these types of priests may

be considered both a class and a kit. If the special trappings (requirements, hindrances, etc.) of the Azuposi class are dropped or abrogated several times, the character will be reduced to a cleric (although he, will always require experience as though a druid to advance in levels). Moreover, the character will have no spells or other spirit-granted special abilities until he has established himself within a new faith. It will be impossible to return to the old faith of the Azuposi spirits.

All Azuposi priests use the Druid column for experience levels and character advancement *(Player's Handbook,* p. 33). The descriptions below merge elements of character class description with kit details. As with the rogue and warrior kits, no mention is made of secondary skills.

Azuposi Healer

DESCRIPTION: Healers wear a turquoise and copper pendant to signify their status.

Healers must have a minimum Wisdom of 12 and Charisma of 9, and must be of good alignment.

ROLE: Healers tend to the health of their village, primarily concerning themselves with childbirth and minor illnesses. As adventurers, they serve as defensive and recuperative spell-casters.

WEAPON PROFICIENCIES: Ideally healers should not engage in combat, since it is inherently inimical to their social and moral purpose. In practical terms, self-defense is sometimes necessary. Healers are not permitted the use of edged weapons, for they do not wish to spill blood. They are limited to clubs and slings, until they learn about other blunt weapons used by more violent people.

NONWEAPON PROFICIENCIES: Required: healing, herbalism. Recommended: animal lore, dancing, etiquette, folklore, singing, spellcraft, spirit lore, and a craft proficiency (for making talismans).

EQUIPMENT: A great variety of masks, paints, powders, herbs, and herbalist tools, often carried in small bundles. Healers are not permitted the use of armor or shields.

SPELLS ALLOWED: Major: all, creation, healing, necromantic, protection. Minor: *charm, guardian.*

SPECIAL BENEFITS: Immune to poisons, talismanic magic, turn undead, as per the cleric class (unlimited).

SPECIAL HINDRANCES: As mentioned, healers are limited to blunt weapons, no armor or shields, and a pacifistic philosophy in general. In addition, each healer develops personal injunctions, such as not eating meat while the sun is in the sky, not killing harmless insects, leaving small offerings to the spirits, always entering a dwelling with the left foot first. These apparently meaningless injunctions constantly remind the healer to watch his behavior and remain humble in the face of the spirits through which he gains his powers. With each level, beginning at Level 1, a healer acquires one new injunction (determined by the player).

ETHOS: To heal all, in body and soul, is the goal of the healer. Most will permit violence in their presence, if it is necessary for the protection of the Azuposi or of other worthy people, but they will advise against violence when they can.

Bent Priest

DESCRIPTION: Some who contact the spirit world have weak souls and are bent by the wills of evil spirits. Without exception, they are cast out of their families and villages. Some were previously pueblo priests who fell into corruption, while others are evil Azuposi to whom dark spirits teach powers. These bent priests are very rare.

A bent priest must be of evil or chaotic neutral alignment.

ROLE: Under no conditions will a bent priest have any connection to a traditional Azuposi community. They flee into the wilds, sometimes bringing with them their families or fellow misfits.

WEAPON PROFICIENCIES: Bent priests use weapons that pierce, just as evil has pierced their minds: short bow and knife only.

NONWEAPON PROFICIENCIES: Required: spirit lore, survival (desert). Recommended: alertness, animal lore, direction sense, endurance, fishing, flintknapping, folklore, spellcraft, and a craft proficiency (for making talismans).

EQUIPMENT: A bent priest, condemned to a life outside the Azuposi community, has everything necessary for survival: weapons, tools, water gourds, and paraphernalia for spells.

SPELLS ALLOWED: Major: all, astral, combat, elemental, necromantic (especially reversed forms), *summoning, weather.* Minor: *charm, guardian, healing* (reversed forms especially). Note: *Create Water* is a very important spell for a bent wizard.

SPECIAL BENEFITS: Talismanic Magic (described below). Immune to the venom of desert beasts (e.g., scorpions, rattlesnakes).

Level 4 + : *inspire fear* (as the 4th level wizards spell, useable twice per day)

Level 6 + : Ability to survive indefinitely without food.

Level 9 + : Ability to survive indefinitely without food or water.

SPECIAL HINDRANCES: Bent priests cannot turn undead.

Like a healer, a bent priest acquires one personal injunction per level, though these injunctions are usually darker than those of the healer. Injunctions may include: never spare prisoners, eat meat every day, never bathe, or sacrifice one animal to dark spirits every week.

ETHOS: The bent priest regards himself as strong, able to command the forces of the spirit world and to control mortals with that power. He sees his independence as a strength, but the Azuposi know that it is weakness that has warped him and made him a servant of the dark spirits.

Pueblo Priest

DESCRIPTION: A pueblo priest always wears sacred vestments, often decked with various charms, talismans, and the paraphernalia used in various rituals.

A pueblo priest may be of any non-evil alignment.

ROLE: Pueblo priests see to the general spiritual welfare of the community. In addition to spells, they provide wise guidance to others.

The Gilded Priest, the high priest of Michaca, is usually a Pueblo Priest.

WEAPON PROFICIENCIES: A pueblo priest only uses blunt weapons.

NONWEAPON PROFICIENCIES: Required: dancing, folklore. Recommended: animal lore, etiquette, singing, spellcraft, spirit lore, storytelling, and a craft proficiency (for making talismans).

EQUIPMENT: In addition to his normal equipment, a pueblo priest has various magical paraphernalia, including, perhaps, a talisman (or more talismans at higher levels).

SPELLS ALLOWED: Major access: all, animal, elemental, plant, summoning. Minor: *charm, combat, protection*.

SPECIAL BENEFITS: Talismanic magic.

SPECIAL HINDRANCES: The people depend on the pueblo priest for guidance, advice, magical aid, and storytelling. The pueblo priest may only shirk these duties (to go off adventuring, for example) with the permission of his superiors.

The pueblo priest cannot turn undead.

ETHOS: Unlike the healers and sunwatchers, the pueblo priests are almost more concerned with the social functions of the priesthood than with their magical tasks and abilities. They mean to guide their people through any hardship that may arise.

Sunwatcher

DESCRIPTION: A sunwatcher always wears the white and gold poncho signifying his special status.

A sunwatcher must possess minimum Wisdom of 13 and Charisma of 9.

Sunwatchers must be of lawful neutral, neutral good or lawful good alignment.

ROLE: The role of the sunwatcher is primarily ceremonial, tracking the sun through its seasons and

performing the necessary rituals to keep the Azuposi in the sun's good graces. They also have access to magics unavailable to the pueblo priests and healers. It is rare to find a sunwatcher willing to go adventuring since he would have to forgo his duties to do so.

WEAPON PROFICIENCIES: Sunwatchers use only the spear, short bow, and knife; and all of these must be consecrated in a special ceremony before use. The first two weapons represent the piercing rays of the sun, and the knife is merely practical.

NONWEAPON PROFICIENCIES: Required: sun-watching, weather sense. Recommended: agriculture, animal lore, dancing, etiquette, folklore, signalling, singing, spellcraft, spirit lore, and a craft proficiency (for making talismans).

EQUIPMENT: A sunwatcher always carries a spear, though most are gaudy ceremonial devices ill-suited to the demands of combat. Tied to the spear may be a talisman (or more than one for higher level priests).

SPELLS ALLOWED: Major access: all, astral, divination, sun, weather. Minor access: *charm, plant.*

SPECIAL BENEFITS: Talismanic magic.

SPECIAL HINDRANCES: The sunwatcher cannot turn undead.

ETHOS: The sunwatcher is a liaison between his people and the sun—the most powerful spirit in contact with them. He takes his duties very seriously, often becoming otherworldly and losing touch with daily affairs of the community.

Nonweapon Proficiencies

The Azuposi have a cultural and economic milieu radically different from the European-based model of the typical AD&D® game. The latter model is assumed for the nonweapon proficiency groups in the *AD&D 2nd Edition Player's Handbook*. We suggest using modified nonweapon proficiencies, as described below.

The lists have been changed to reflect Azuposi traditions and culture. The fighter proficiency of Endurance, for example, would be invaluable for any person wishing to flourish in the harsh desert climate; we've made it a General Proficiency, available to an Azuposi character of any class. Some proficiencies have been dropped—e.g., seamanship is an illogical skill for a landlocked desert people. Other proficiencies are modified. The Azuposi Stonemasonry proficiency, for example, is not quite the same as its Realmsian counterpart. Modified proficiencies are marked with an asterisk (*); the changes are then described in the text that follows.

Finally, there are a few new proficiencies, peculiar to the Azuposi. These are included in the lists, but marked with a plus sign (+ 1, so you'll know to consult the text description for complete information. "New" proficiencies that were presented in the Maztica boxed set and are appropriate for these northern characters as well are also marked and described for easy reference. If a proficiency has neither a plus sign nor an asterisk following, you'll find complete information as described in the *Player's Handbook* (p. 55-66).

Azuposi Artists: Note that the general proficiency of "artistic ability" is not included below. The Azuposi do not have a category of

"fine art," as may be found in the Forgotten Realms. This is not to suggest they lack aesthetic sensibilities, on the contrary, they infuse every aspect of their lives with beauty and meaning, rather than restricting it to an abstract realm. Azuposi artists are concerned with the creation of beautiful, yet practical, objects.

Rather than a general, all-encompassing Art skill, Azuposi characters may select more particular artistic aptitudes, such as: basket weaving, gold casting, leatherworking, pottery, woodworking, and weaving. All of Azuposi life involves an effort to be in harmony with the beauty and order of nature.

General

Name	# of Slots	Relevant Ability	Check Modifier
Adobe +	1	Strength	0
Agriculture	1	Intelligence	0
Alertness +	1	Wisdom	+1
Animal Handling	1	Wisdom	- 1
Animal Lore	1	Intelligence	0
Animal Mimicry	1	Charisma	- 2
Animal Training*	1	Wisdom	0
Basket Weaving +	1	Dexterity	0
Carpentry	1	Strength	0
Cooking	1	Intelligence	0
Copperworking +	1	Intelligence	- 1
Dancing*	1	Dexterity	0
Direction Sense	1	Wisdom	+1
Endurance	2	Constitution	0
Etiquette*	1	Charisma	0
Fire building*	1	Wisdom	- 1
Fishing	1	Wisdom	- 1
Flintknapping +	1	Dexterity	- 1
Gem Cutting*	1	Dexterity	- 2
Gold Casting +	1	Intelligence	- 1
Heraldry*	1	Intelligence	0
Herbalism	2	Intelligence	- 2
Languages Modern*	1	Intelligence	0
Leatherworking	1	Intelligence	0
Local History	1	Charisma	0
Mining*	2	Wisdom	- 3
Mountaineering*	1	NA	NA
Musical Instrument	1	Dexterity	- 1
Pottery	1	Dexterity	- 2
Rope Use	1	Dexterity	0
Running	1	Constitution	- 6
Seamstress/Tailor	1	Dexterity	- 1
Set Snares	1	Dexterity	- 1
Signalling + Singing	1	Charisma	0
Stonemasonry*	1	Strength	- 2
Storytelling +	1	Charisma	0
Survival, Desert	2	Intelligence	0
Swimming	1	Strength	0
Weather Sense	1	Wisdom	- 1
Weaving	1	Intelligence	- 1
Woodworking	1	Dexterity	0

Priest

Name	# of Slots	Relevant Ability	Check Modifier
Engineering	2	Intelligence	- 3
Folklore +	2	Intelligence	0
Healing	2	Wisdom	- 2
Religion	1	Wisdom	0
Spellcraft	1	Intelligence	- 2
Sun-Watching +	1	Intelligence	0

Rogue

Name	# of Slots	Relevant Ability	Check Modifier
Appraising	1	Intelligence	0
Blind-fighting	2	NA	NA
Disguise	1	Charisma	- 1
Gaming	1	Charisma	0
Juggling	1	Dexterity	- 1
Jumping	1	Strength	0
Reading Lips	2	Intelligence	- 2
Tightrope Walking	1	Dexterity	0
Tracking	2	Wisdom	0
Tumbling	1	Dexterity	0
Ventriloquism	1	Intelligence	- 2

Warrior

Name	# of Slots	Relevant Ability	Check Modifier
Blind-fighting	2	NA	NA
Bowyer/fletcher	1	Dexterity	- 1
Gaming	1	Charisma	0
Hunting	1	Wisdom	- 1
Tracking	2	Wisdom	0

Adobe: The character is skilled at making a plaster of mud, to build strong walls and overhanging roofs. A skilled character can build a section of wall 20' long by 5' high in one day.

Agriculture: The character can grow mayz, beans, cotton, tobacco, squash, and melons, as well as irrigate fields effectively.

Alertness: A character with this proficiency is able to instinctively notice and recognize subtle signs and disturbances in the immediate vicinity, adding 1 to the surprise roll whenever he makes a successful proficiency check.

Animal Mimicry: This is the skill of making sounds in imitation of the birds and animals of the desert. It is useful for hunters, who naturally desire to call to their prey. It is also used as a form of secret, simple communication among both hunters (who don't want to spook prey between them) and warriors out raiding.

Animal Training: Azuposi usually train dogs, though some train birds as well.

Basket Weaving: The character can weave baskets out of pliable plant fibers. For those baskets with special or magical significance, the weaver often includes turquoise beads or sea shells (obtained from the Metahel). The character can make a very serviceable basket in half a day, though ornate ones take longer.

Copperworking: Copper is a rare and precious metal among the Azuposi. A few artisans have the skill of beating a raw piece into a useful shape or can cast small objects (in a technique similar to gold-casting). Weapons and armor may be made of copper, but are not equal in quality to those of flint or obsidian.

Dancing: The character knows ritual dances associated with the various celebrations and ceremonies among the Azuposi.

Etiquette: Azuposi etiquette demands humility and performance of minor rituals.

Fire Building: The character can produce fire solely by friction ("rubbing two sticks together"). He also knows how to preserve hot coals in ashes inside a leather pouch. Placed with tinder and dry grasses and blown upon, these can save the time and effort of building a new fire each night or meal.

Fishing: This is specialized—the Azuposi only know river fishing from the shore, using lines and hooks, or nets.

Flintknapping: This is close to the Maztican skill of obsidian working except that it involves using flint, which is slightly faster to work with. Typical rates for flint crafts are listed on the following table:

Weapon	Work Time
Arrowhead	1-4 per hour
Spearhead	1-4 per day
Knife	1 day
Axehead	1 day

Folklore: Since they have no writing, the Azuposi have no "ancient history," as such. They do have an expansive oral tradition, however, that tells the story of their tribes and ancestors, and the gods and spirits. A lot of folklore deals with ancient mysteries and lost treasures.

Folklore differs from storytelling in that the former is much more a collection of facts, faithfully transmitted from one loremaster, or wisewoman, to the next. Storytelling, on the other hand, involves more the techniques of communication and the ability to improvise to delight an audience. (Hence folklore is an Intelligence-based proficiency, while

Storytelling relies on Charisma.)

Shamans are typically the transmitters of folklore, so this is listed as a Priest proficiency. If the DM desires, it may be available to exceptional individuals of other classes, if it seems suitable to the character.

Gold Casting: The character can carve an object from wax, and then build a clay mold around the wax image. He then pours in the gold, melting the wax, which runs out of a hole in the bottom of the mold.

Gem Cutting: The Azuposi work only with turquoise, usually shaping it into beads. They do not facet their gems, as Realmsian gem cutters do. Because of these limits, gem cutting requires only 1 slot.

Heraldry: The character is familiar with the particular clothes, body paints, and other signs of different cultures, tribes, clans, and sometimes important extended families among and bordering the Azuposi.

Hunting: Since the harsh climate of the Pasocada Basin permits few large game animals, this proficiency includes catching snakes, lizards, and large insects.

Languages, Modern: Azuposi can learn the languages of Poscadar Elves, Desert Dwarves, Dog People, and the Metahel.

Mountaineering: The character does not need spikes, pitons, or ropes. However, the skill allows him to scale rough slopes with occasional hand and footholds only.

The Azuposi use this skill extensively, as they build and inhabit their cliff-cities. In addition, they must occasionally scale to the tops of the mesas to work on their irrigation systems, for example.

Musical Instrument: The character can play the flute (fashioned from clay, wood, or bone) or drums.

Pottery: Azuposi potters roll long strings of clay, which are woven together into the desired object as though they were making a straw basket. Then the clay is smoothed over, to make a regular surface, before being baked and painted. The pottery proficiency includes knowledge of how to mix paints (from natural ingredients) suitable for ceramics.

Signalling: The character can send a coherent message through smoke signals.

Stonemasonry: The Azuposi have a distinctive style of stone architecture, using particular techniques of construction. The stonemasonry proficiency indicates knowledge of those techniques. They involve building walls of a "core-and-veneer" style: a center filled with rubble and mortar, and sides of flat-faced stones to provide a smooth surface. Stonemasonry also involves knowledge of plasters and whitewashes, and the construction of floors out of logs, branches, and plaster.

The time required for an Azuposi to erect a wall is the same as for the regular proficiency in the *Player's Handbook*. Sometimes the procuring of materials may be a serious consideration for time, however.

Storytelling: The character can choose a story appropriate to the audience and tell it satisfactorily. If a storyteller changes a story, other storytellers may repeat the change if it is an improvement. Since these stories gradually alter, they might be entirely different from those told years earlier, even if the storyteller says, "I heard this story from my grandfather, who heard it from his

grandfather, who heard it from his grandfather before him." Storytellers follow and determine the collective imagination of the Azuposi.

Sun watching: Priests among the Azuposi serve practical as well as ritual functions, and sun watching is among them. By observing the sun's position in relation to known landmarks, the priest will know the date, and what practical and ritual tasks are appropriate (e.g., Pus-chuts-otes, "sticky ground," when crops are to be sown; or the beginning of the Soyal festival at winter solstice).

The skill also includes knowledge of the movement of the moon and stars. (It is in this respect similar to other cultures' Astrology skill.)

A skill check is required only if the priest is in an unfamiliar locale—meaning any place 20 miles or more from his home, where he does not have well-known landmarks.

Woodcarving: Includes how to mix paints for decorating wood carvings.

Fetish Magic

A special form of Azuposi magic, fetish magic consists of calling on the smallest of spirits—the animal forces of the environment-through sympathetic magic. It is available only to the fetishist rogue.

A fetishist uses the spell progression chart of the priest, but has major access only to the Animal Sphere of spells. Their Wisdom limits the maximum level of spells available. (Note: the fetishist's *charm person or mammal* spell works only against animals, not humanoids.)

To work his spells, a fetishist must first create a fetish—a small representation of the type of animal to be affected, such as a clay statuette. At first level, the fetishist is assumed to have made one fetish for one first level spell under the guidance of his teacher—the player chooses the spell. For each additional first level spell, the fetishist must make a proficiency check with a craft-related nonweapon proficiency. Success indicates that the fetishist has created a fetish for that spell. Failure means he has not been able to make the fetish, and he must rise in level before trying again. Until he makes the proper fetish, he cannot cast the spell. At each level, the fetishist may try again to create a fetish for each spell which he has previously failed to make, as well as for any new spells now available to him.

In addition to the normal casting requirements, the fetishist must perform a small ritual to manipulate the fetish. Casting time for all spells is 1d6 rounds (rolled secretly by the DM when the fetishist begins the spell). If the normal casting time exceeds this time period, only the normal casting time applies.

In practical terms, a fetishist regains cast spells like a priest, although he is making contact with the spirits, rather than with a deity.

Fetishists can make talismans to improve their spell-casting abilities. A fetishist's talisman is added to a normal fetish associated with a specific spell, thus creating an improved version of a normal fetish.

Talismanic Magic

A talisman is a ritual item related in shape or substance to the spell to which it is tied. Its actual

appearance depends on the craft used to create it, the spell it affects, and its design. Fetishists and Azuposi priests can use talismans, which improve the potency of their spells.

With each level, beginning with the first, a character can try to create one talisman. To be successful, he must make a proficiency check against a craft-related nonweapon proficiency. Failure indicates that the character cannot make a talisman at this level. If successful, he now has a talisman tied to a specific spell, and it adds to the priest's effectiveness when casting that spell. Only the maker can use the talisman.

For those spells whose power is related to the level of the caster, the talisman increases the caster's effective level. The bonus equals the level of the character when the talisman is created.

For spells whose power is not related to the level of the caster, the talisman reduces the target's saving throw. The penalty on the saving throw equals half the level of the creator (round up) when the talisman was created. (A roll of 20 still indicates a successful save, regardless of penalties.)

For example, a 3rd level pueblo priest creates a talisman for *invisibility to animals.* That talisman will add 3 levels to the priest's effective level when casting this spell. If the priest, after attaining 5th level, casts *invisibility to animals,* he will be able to affect up to 8 creatures, not the normal 5, and the spell will last 1 turn + 8 rounds, not just 1 turn + 5 rounds.

If, on the other hand, the priest had created a talisman for *animal friendship,* it would give targets of that spell a -2 penalty on their saving throws.

The effects of more than one talisman cannot be combined, and talismans to lower saving throws cannot be made for spells whose effect is dependent on the caster's level.

If a character rises a level, before trying to make a talisman while at that lower level, the opportunity to make the talisman is lost. If a 4th level character rises to 5th level before making his 4th level talisman, he will never be able to make that talisman.

Economy & Equipment

The Azuposi rely on barter. This makes for flexible and unpredictable trade arrangements. Neither object (or service) exchanged has a fixed value, as would money, or the established "currencies" of Maztica—cocoa beans and the like.

The more portable items common in the Basin are turquoise and gold. The value of gold depends on its quantity, and may be affected by its form (if it is crafted into jewelry). Turquoise varies widely in quality, since it comes in diverse sizes, shapes, and states. Raw turquoise is worth less than processed turquoise.

For a coarse rule of thumb, you may use the Economy and Equipment chapter of *A Journey to the True World,* in the Maztica boxed set, for guidelines on the relative worth of items. Following Table IV in that booklet, an ear of mayz may be considered about the same barter value as a cocoa bean (the chief Maztican currency) or a copper piece (across the sea in the Realms). This does not take into

account the present drought, however, in which mayz is more precious—costing up to 5 times as much as is usual. This means that a piece of turquoise which in prosperous times could bring 5,000 ears of corn (about 50 gp), in the drought would bring at most 1,000—if there was anyone interested in selling!

The technology of the Azuposi nation is different from other places. For instance, there is no wheel, nor have the metallurgical processes for making bronze or steel for weapons and tools been developed. Consequently, the range of weapons, armor and equipment initially available for characters native to the region is limited. Also, characters from other areas, who are used to better equipment, may be forced to make do with local substitutes, if they lose what they have brought.

The following table lists the stats of weapons and armor that are readily available in the Pasocada Basin. Prices are not indicated. You may give values by extrapolating from the AD&D® 2nd Edition *Player's Handbook,* or you may role-play transactions.

Example: The party enters the Azuposi pueblo of Kinopal after a harrowing battle with a band of rampaging Nahopaca warriors. A PC dwarf lost his axe, and is now looking for a replacement. He'll have to make do with a flint weapon, since there is no steel available. The dwarf locates a flintknapper in Kinopal, and sees an axe he likes. The craftsman made the axe for his brother-in-law, and is not eager to sell it. Moreover, the craftsman is not interested in silver coins. What use are they to an Azuposi craftsman? The dwarf will have to offer some object in exchange for the axe, one that could be used by the craftsman or easily traded. Perhaps the dwarf will have to perform some sort of service, such as using masonry skills needed to repair a collapsing wall in the craftsman's dwelling.

Weapons

Item	Weight	Size	Type	Speed Factor	S-M	L
Axe*	5	M	S	7	1d8	1d8
Bow, short*	2	M	P	7	1d6	1d6
Club	3	M	B	4	1d6	1d3
Knife*	1	S	P/S	2	1d3	1d2
Spear*	4	M	P	5	1d6	1d8
Sling	1	S	-	6	--	
Sling stone	112	S	B	-	1d4	1d4

*All of these weapons use flint blades, which are as fragile as obsidian. Use rules for obsidian blades in *A Journey to the True World.*

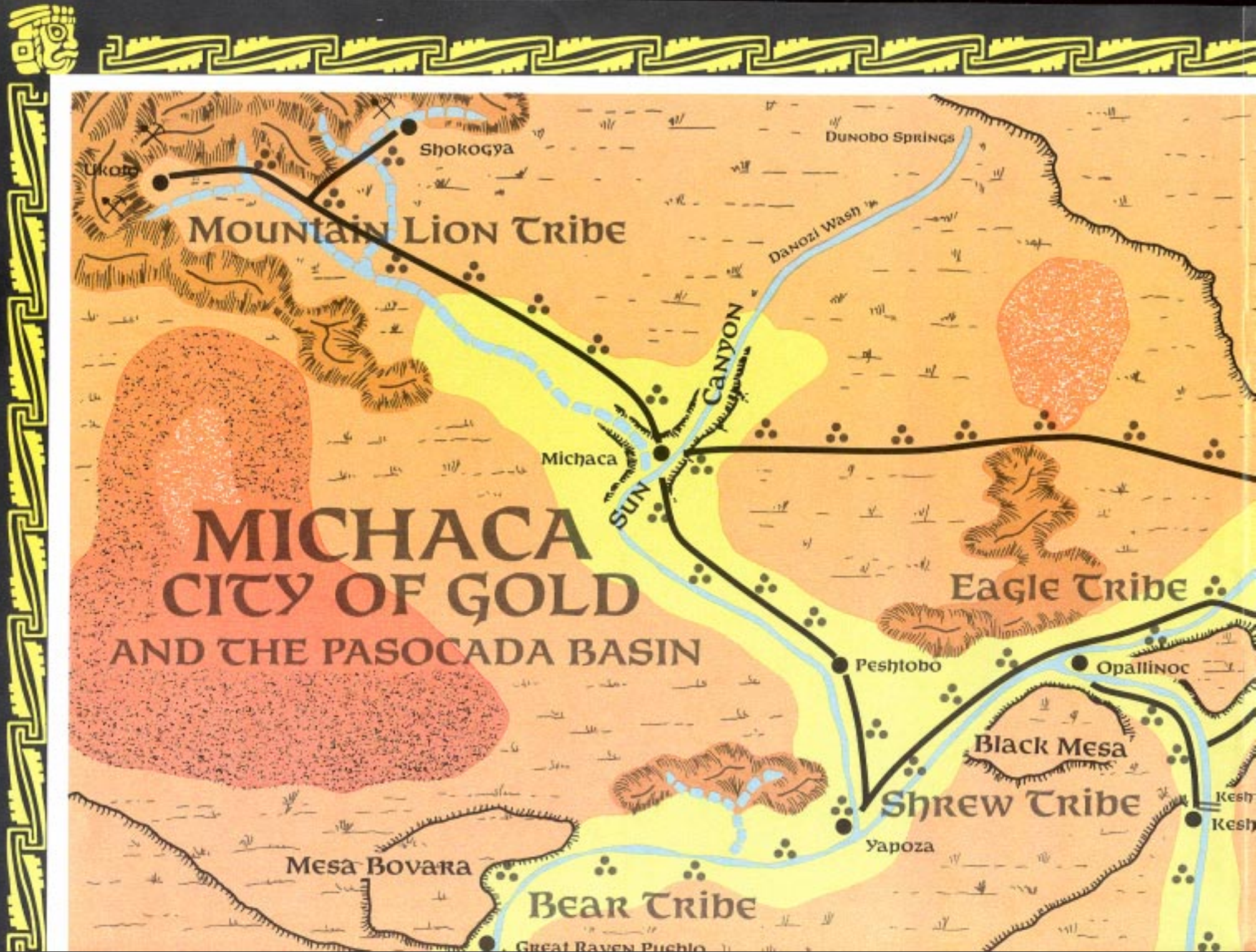
Armor

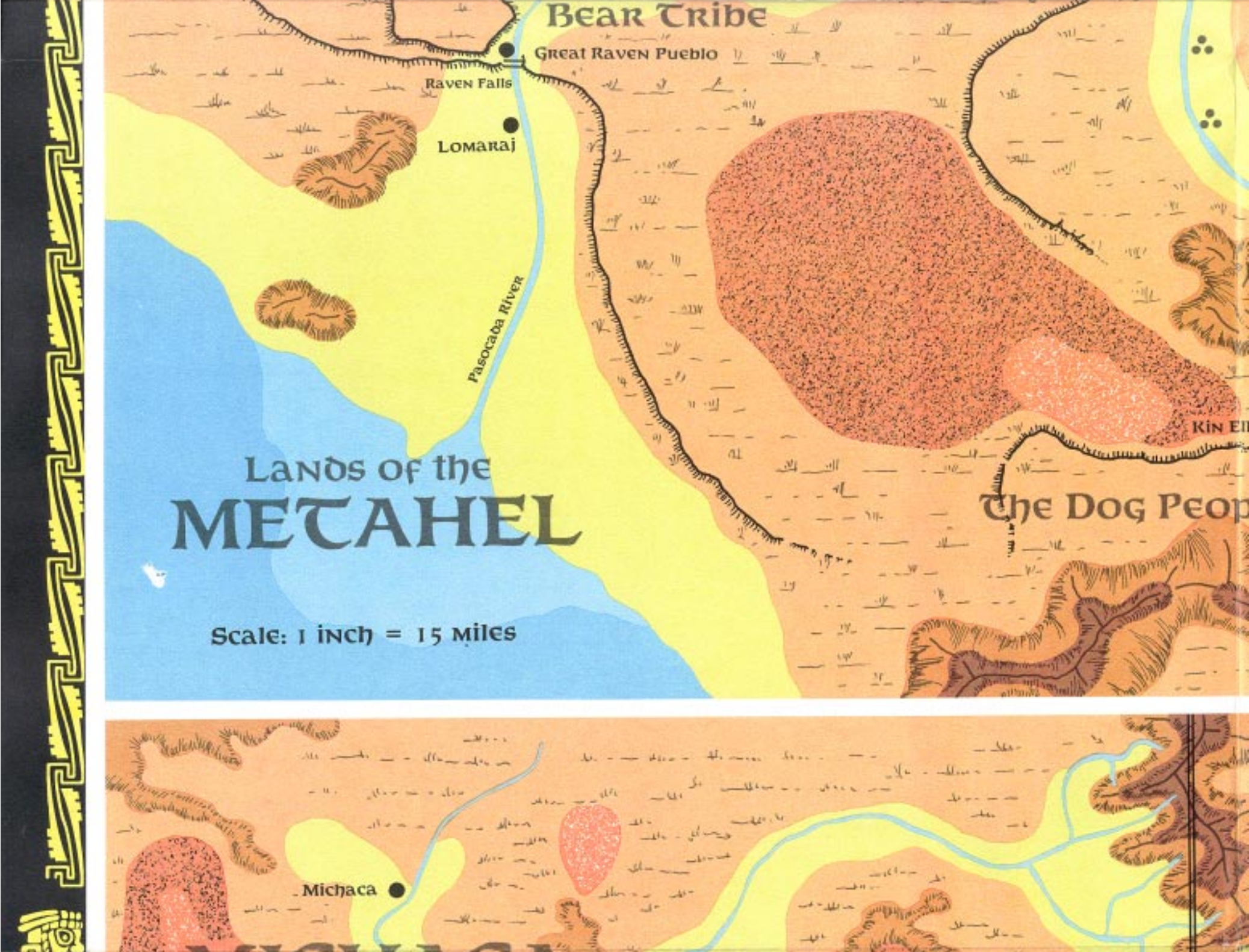
Type	Weight	AC
Shield, wooden	5	(-1)
Shield, frame	3	(-1)
Padded cotton	5	9
Stiff leather	20	8

Frame Shield: Toughened leather stretched over a wooden frame.

Padded Cotton Armor: A densely woven suit of cotton cloth, providing minimal protection against attacks.

Stiff Leather: Since the Azuposi are not as adept at making armor, this set is much bulkier than a standard Realmsian set of leather armor.


Shokogya
Ukoto
Mountain Lion Tribe
Dunobo Springs
Danozi Wash
Canyon
Sun
Michaca
MICHACA
CITY OF GOLD
AND THE PASOCADA BASIN
Eagle Tribe
Peshtobo
Opallinoc
Black Mesa
Shrew Tribe
Yapoza
Mesa Bovara
Bear Tribe
Great Raven Pueblo


Bear Tribe
Great Raven Pueblo
Raven Falls
Lomaraj
Pasocaba River
Lands of the
METAHEL
Scale: 1 inch = 15 miles
The Dog Peop
Michaca

Michaca
MICHACA
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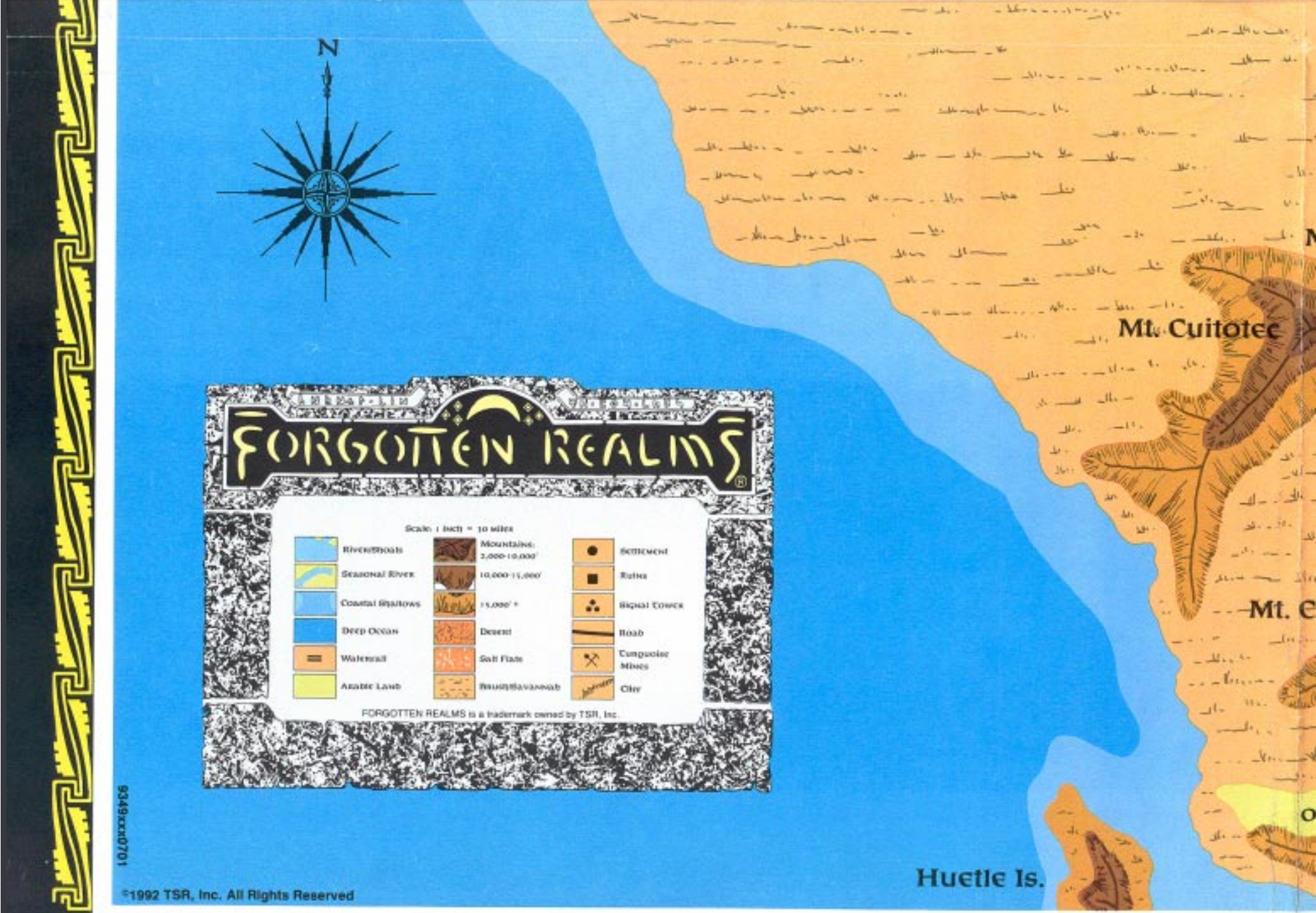

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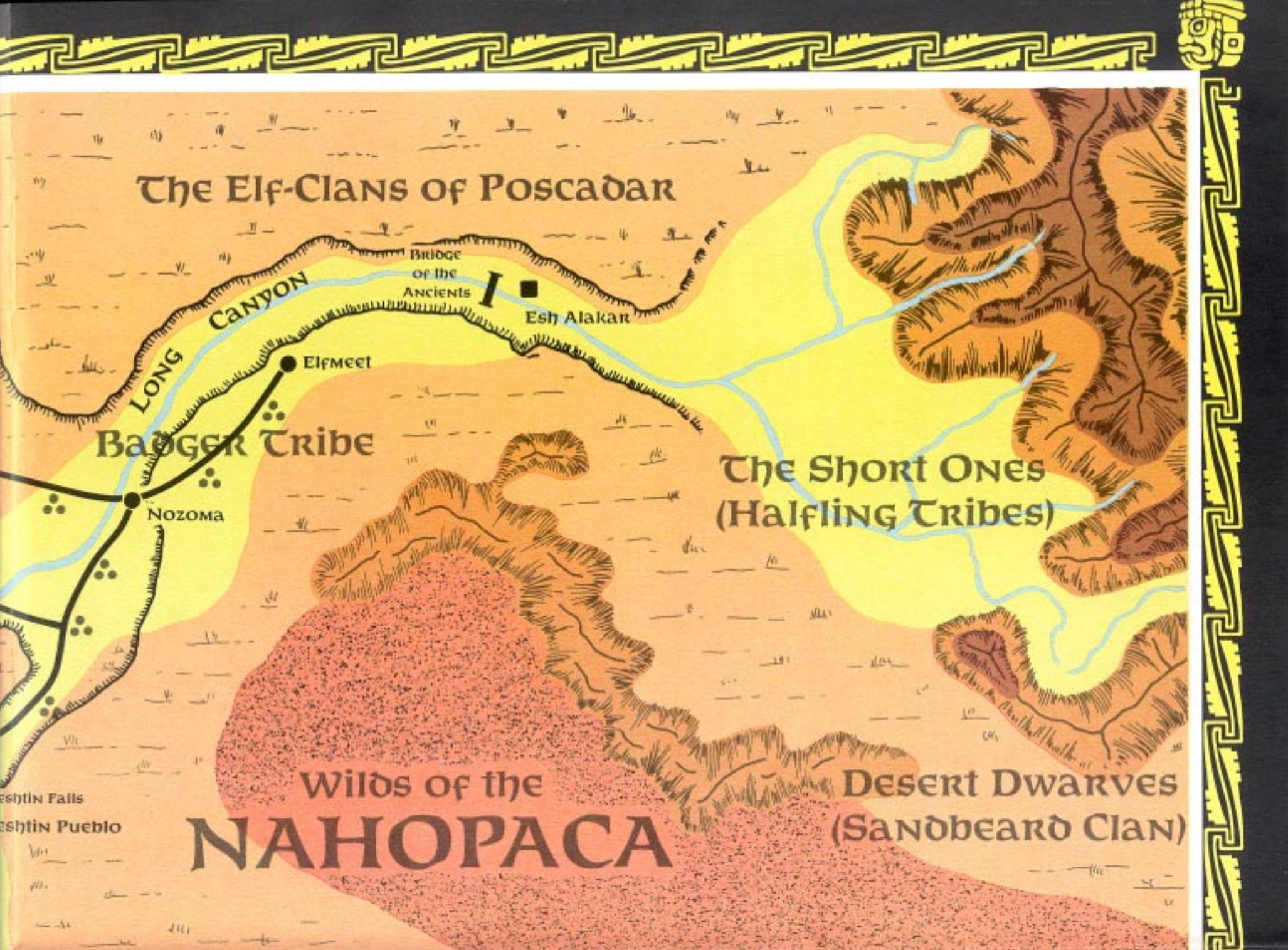
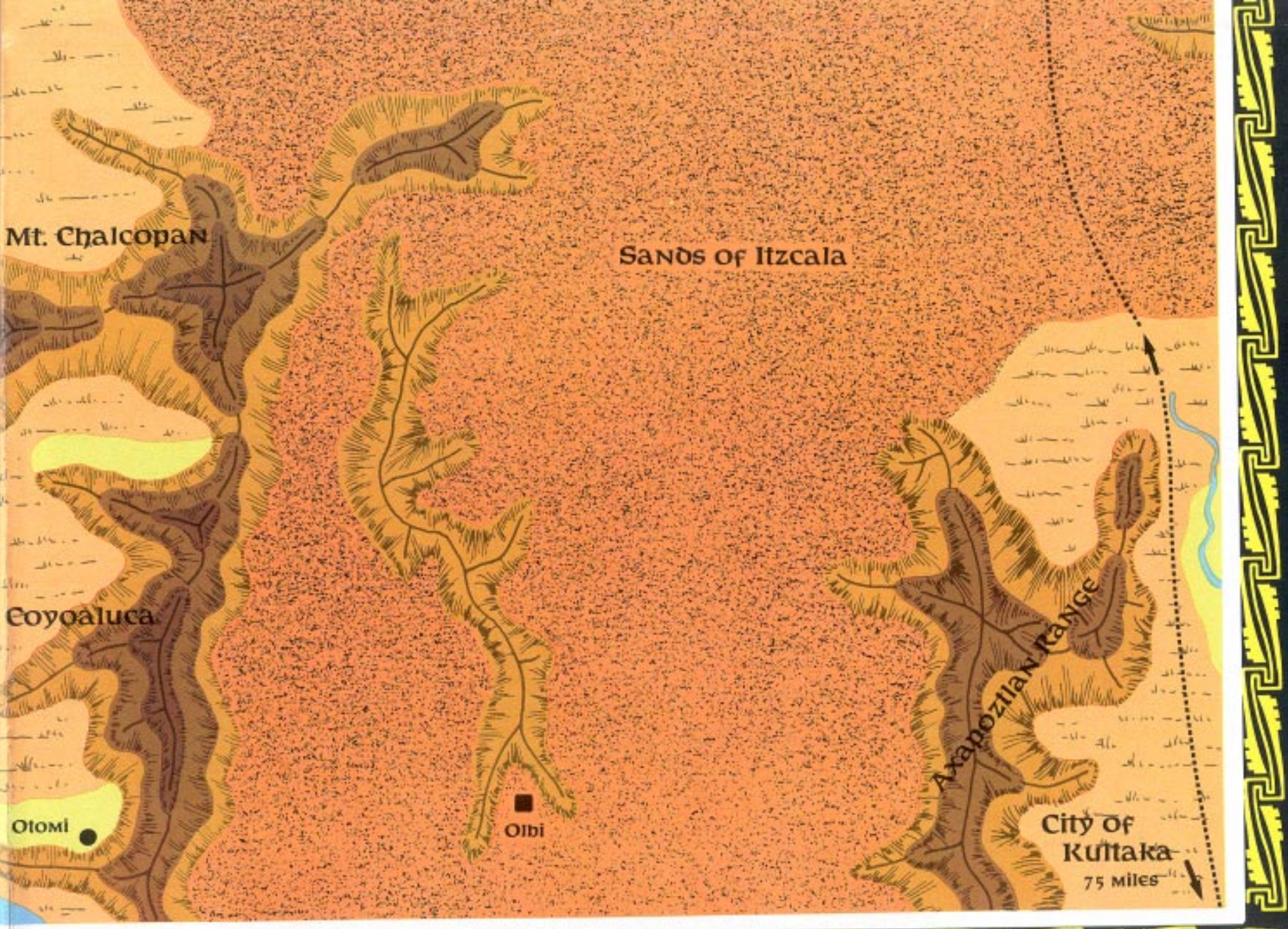

The Elf-Clans of Poscadar
Bridge of the Ancients
Esh Alakar
Long Canyon
Elfmeet
Badger Tribe
Nozoma
The Short Ones (Halfling Tribes)
Wilds of the
NAHOPACA
Desert Dwarves (Sandbeard Clan)
eshtin Falls
eshtin Pueblo

Kinopal
Wolf Tribe
Mitzlato
Elbhaz
Growling Falls
Desert Dwarves
(Rockjaw Clan)
Dog People


Mt. Chalcopan
Sands of Itzcala
Coyoaluca
Axapozilan Range
Otomi
Olbi
City of
Kultaka
75 Miles

Kinopal
Wolf Tribe
Mitzlato
Elbhaz
Growling Falls
Dog People
Desert Dwarves
(Rockjaw Clan)

Trail to Ukolo & Shokoya
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Trail to Nozoma

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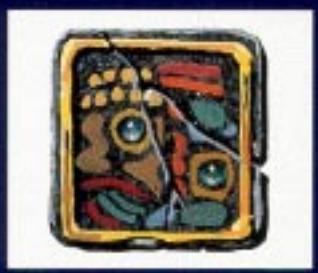
by John Nephew and Jonathan Tweet



Somewhere in the True World, to the north of the lands you know, lies the City of Gold: Michaca. It is a city of legend, of fable, and of wonder. The journey is hard, and the perils are many; you know, however, that the rewards will far outshine any treasure you have ever seen.

This supplement for the Maztica Campaign Setting is a new type of product: a combination adventure and accessory. In this booklet you will find information on a new character race, the Azuposi; on new character classes for rogues, including the clown (or *koyemshis*); on new priest classes, including the "bent priest"; and a new magic unique to Maztica, fetishism.

The adventure itself leads your party from the known areas of the True World into the northlands, through the lands of the desert dwarves, the Poscadar elves, the Dog People, and others. Your characters will deal with desert hardships they have never endured before. They will also confront spirits they've never heard of: the spirits that have caused the downfall of Michaca, the City of Gold.

And do not forget the words of a poet of another place, and another time: "Nor all that tempts your wand'ring eyes / And heedless hearts, is lawful prize; / Nor all, that glisters, gold."

TSR, Inc.
POB 756
Lake Geneva,
WI 53147
U.S.A

TSR Ltd.
120 Church End,
Cherry Hinton
Cambridge CB1 3LB
United Kingdom

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