

ADVENTURE

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons  
2nd Edition

FORGOTTEN REALMS

Official Game Adventure



## ENDLESS ARMIES

By Jeff Grubb





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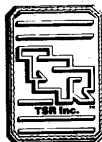
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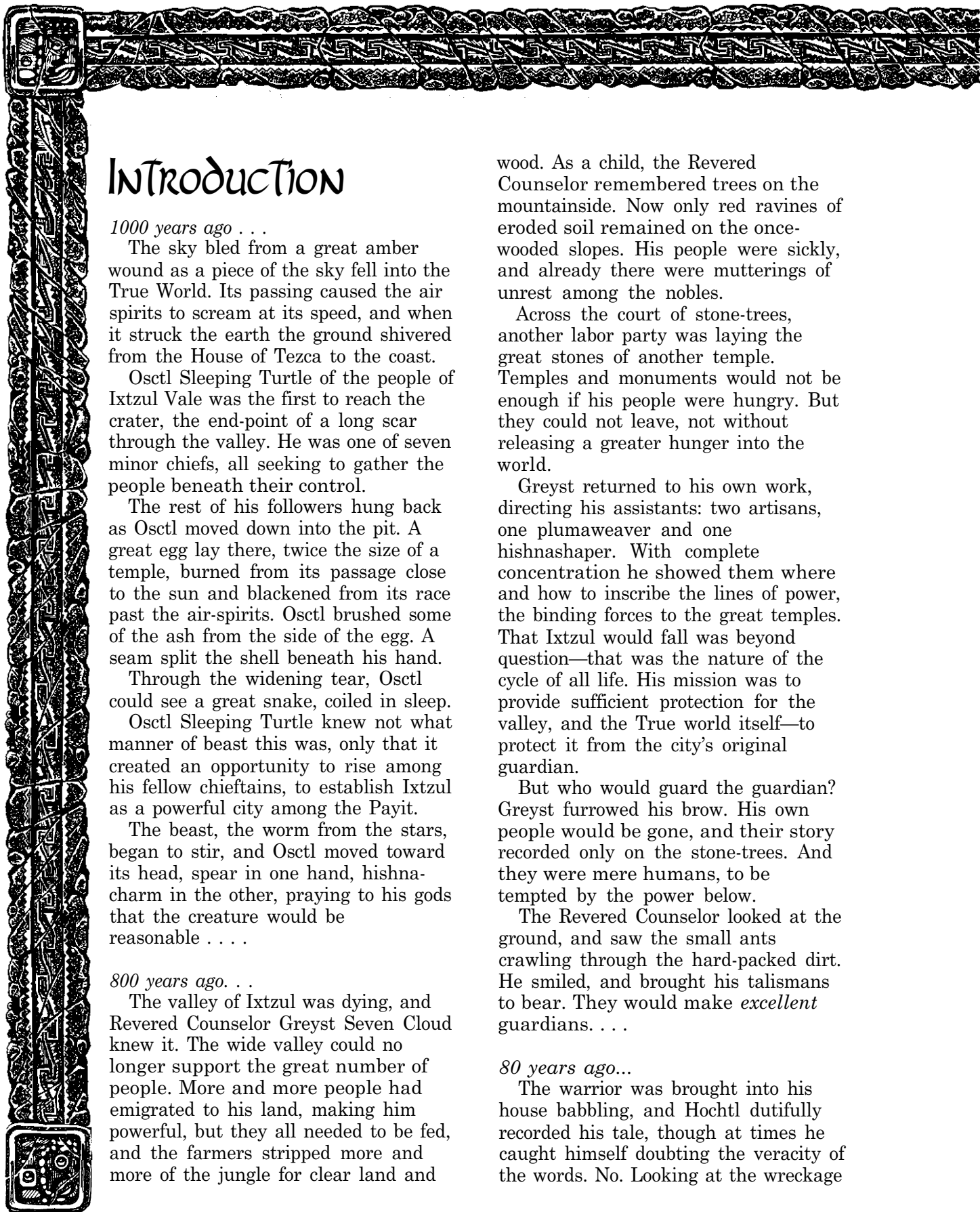
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## Introduction

*1000 years ago . . .*

The sky bled from a great amber wound as a piece of the sky fell into the True World. Its passing caused the air spirits to scream at its speed, and when it struck the earth the ground shivered from the House of Tezca to the coast.

Osctl Sleeping Turtle of the people of Ixtzul Vale was the first to reach the crater, the end-point of a long scar through the valley. He was one of seven minor chiefs, all seeking to gather the people beneath their control.

The rest of his followers hung back as Osctl moved down into the pit. A great egg lay there, twice the size of a temple, burned from its passage close to the sun and blackened from its race past the air-spirits. Osctl brushed some of the ash from the side of the egg. A seam split the shell beneath his hand.

Through the widening tear, Osctl could see a great snake, coiled in sleep.

Osctl Sleeping Turtle knew not what manner of beast this was, only that it created an opportunity to rise among his fellow chieftains, to establish Ixtzul as a powerful city among the Payit.

The beast, the worm from the stars, began to stir, and Osctl moved toward its head, spear in one hand, hishna-charm in the other, praying to his gods that the creature would be reasonable . . . .

*800 years ago. . .*

The valley of Ixtzul was dying, and Revered Counselor Greyst Seven Cloud knew it. The wide valley could no longer support the great number of people. More and more people had emigrated to his land, making him powerful, but they all needed to be fed, and the farmers stripped more and more of the jungle for clear land and

wood. As a child, the Revered Counselor remembered trees on the mountainside. Now only red ravines of eroded soil remained on the once-wooded slopes. His people were sickly, and already there were mutterings of unrest among the nobles.

Across the court of stone-trees, another labor party was laying the great stones of another temple. Temples and monuments would not be enough if his people were hungry. But they could not leave, not without releasing a greater hunger into the world.

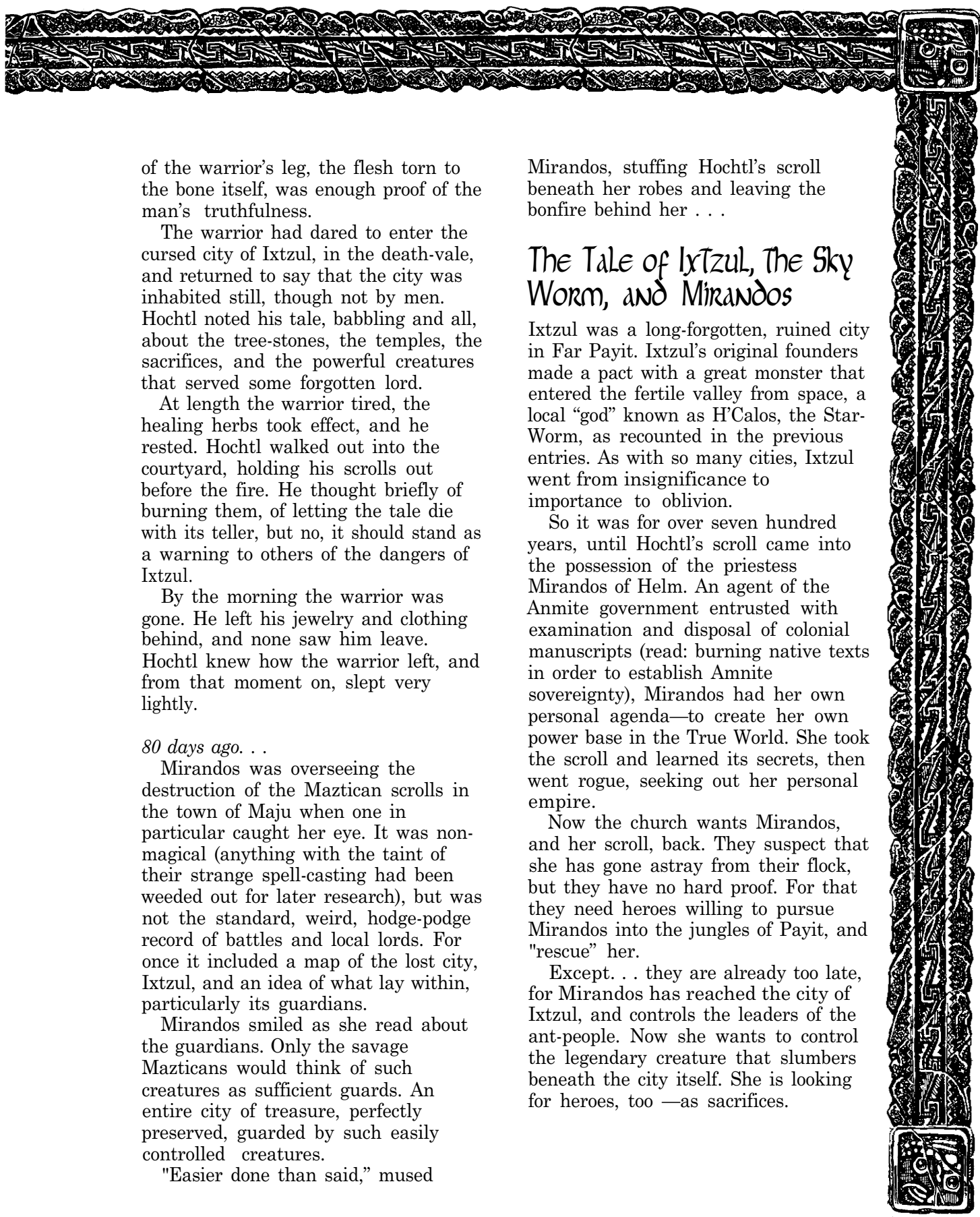
Greyst returned to his own work, directing his assistants: two artisans, one plumaweaver and one hishna-shaper. With complete concentration he showed them where and how to inscribe the lines of power, the binding forces to the great temples. That Ixtzul would fall was beyond question—that was the nature of the cycle of all life. His mission was to provide sufficient protection for the valley, and the True world itself—to protect it from the city's original guardian.

But who would guard the guardian? Greyst furrowed his brow. His own people would be gone, and their story recorded only on the stone-trees. And they were mere humans, to be tempted by the power below.

The Revered Counselor looked at the ground, and saw the small ants crawling through the hard-packed dirt. He smiled, and brought his talismans to bear. They would make *excellent* guardians. . . .

*80 years ago...*

The warrior was brought into his house babbling, and Hochtl dutifully recorded his tale, though at times he caught himself doubting the veracity of the words. No. Looking at the wreckage



of the warrior's leg, the flesh torn to the bone itself, was enough proof of the man's truthfulness.

The warrior had dared to enter the cursed city of Ixtzul, in the death-vale, and returned to say that the city was inhabited still, though not by men. Hocht'l noted his tale, babbling and all, about the tree-stones, the temples, the sacrifices, and the powerful creatures that served some forgotten lord.

At length the warrior tired, the healing herbs took effect, and he rested. Hocht'l walked out into the courtyard, holding his scrolls out before the fire. He thought briefly of burning them, of letting the tale die with its teller, but no, it should stand as a warning to others of the dangers of Ixtzul.

By the morning the warrior was gone. He left his jewelry and clothing behind, and none saw him leave. Hocht'l knew how the warrior left, and from that moment on, slept very lightly.

*80 days ago. . .*

Mirandos was overseeing the destruction of the Maztican scrolls in the town of Maju when one in particular caught her eye. It was non-magical (anything with the taint of their strange spell-casting had been weeded out for later research), but was not the standard, weird, hodge-podge record of battles and local lords. For once it included a map of the lost city, Ixtzul, and an idea of what lay within, particularly its guardians.

Mirandos smiled as she read about the guardians. Only the savage Mazticans would think of such creatures as sufficient guards. An entire city of treasure, perfectly preserved, guarded by such easily controlled creatures.

"Easier done than said," mused

Mirandos, stuffing Hocht'l's scroll beneath her robes and leaving the bonfire behind her . . .

## The Tale of Ixtzul, The Sky Worm, and Mirandos

Ixtzul was a long-forgotten, ruined city in Far Payit. Ixtzul's original founders made a pact with a great monster that entered the fertile valley from space, a local "god" known as H'Calos, the Star-Worm, as recounted in the previous entries. As with so many cities, Ixtzul went from insignificance to importance to oblivion.

So it was for over seven hundred years, until Hocht'l's scroll came into the possession of the priestess Mirandos of Helm. An agent of the Amnite government entrusted with examination and disposal of colonial manuscripts (read: burning native texts in order to establish Amnite sovereignty), Mirandos had her own personal agenda—to create her own power base in the True World. She took the scroll and learned its secrets, then went rogue, seeking out her personal empire.

Now the church wants Mirandos, and her scroll, back. They suspect that she has gone astray from their flock, but they have no hard proof. For that they need heroes willing to pursue Mirandos into the jungles of Payit, and "rescue" her.

Except. . . they are already too late, for Mirandos has reached the city of Ixtzul, and controls the leaders of the ant-people. Now she wants to control the legendary creature that slumbers beneath the city itself. She is looking for heroes, too —as sacrifices.



## The Nightmare Begins

The player characters are summoned to the church of Helm in Ulatos (a map of Helmsport and Ulatos is provided in FMA1, *Fires of Zatal* for those interested, but it is not needed to play this adventure). Native-born characters are requested to attend by their families, while those native to Faerun (as well as those natives which have established legendary reputations through their previous actions) have been contacted individually and politely requested to come to the church on a matter of delicacy and urgency. Note that the native-born characters are asked politely, not ordered, to attend, and hints of monetary reward are dropped.

An acolyte greets them and ushers them into the presence of Bishou Devane of Helm, the highest-ranked church official in the colony of New Amn. The Bishou is seated at a desk carved from Maztican oak, flanked by censers giving off a dull red light and a copious amount of smoke.

"Servants and friends of Helm," begins the chief Godseye of the True World, "you have been asked here to aid the church on a matter of great delicacy and some urgency. One of our priests, engaged in missionary work in the south, is missing."

"We suspected foul play among the savages, but rumors have surfaced that she left Maju of her own volition, perhaps seeking some lost treasure in the hinterlands. If this is so, she is acting without the permission of the church, and her actions may reflect poorly on us and our relationship with the native population.

"We need you to discover the fate of Mirandos. If she has been slain, we

would like you to recover the body for decent burial, if possible. If she has gone astray, we wish you to bring her back for ecumenical trial and punishment.

"We wish this to remain low-key, for political purposes. Governor Cordell is currently on a crusade against Anmites disappearing into the hills and jungles, searching for their own personal cities of gold. Such activities usually serve no purpose save stirring up the native population against our forces and our faith. Should one of Helm's servants be revealed to be involved in such activity, our cause in this new land will be weakened. We need heroes who are both quick and discreet. Are you up to the task?"

Bishou Devane offers a reward of 500 gp for Mirandos' body, 1000 gp for her alive, and an additional 500 gp if they can prove that Mirandos has gone rogue. In addition, the heroes may keep any and all magic items and treasure that they encounter while in performance of their duties (with a note that a tithe to the church is always appreciated).

The church of Helm provides a letter from the Bishou indicating that the characters are on "church business," good for the next 30 days. He also provides horses for the Faerun player characters as far as Maju, and up to 100 gp of equipment and "traveling expenses" for each member of the party.

In Ulatos, little is known of Mirandos. She arrived about two months ago with a supply ship from Amn, with papers indicating that she had been charged by the home church to preach among the friendly Payit tribes of the south. She disappeared about a month ago, and it has taken this long for word to reach back to Ulatos, be confirmed, and be acted on.

The day that Bishou Devane meets with the player characters, Mirandos enters the vale of Ixtzul and steals the *staff of command*. She will be established as shown in the Ixtzul section when the player characters arrive.

**Bishou Devane:** Int High; AL LN; AC 2; MV 12; HD 9; hp 45; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Damage 1-6 + 3/1-6 + 2 (*footman's mace* + 2); SA & SD Spells as a 9th level priest; SZ M; ML 17

**Acolyte:** Int Average; AL LN; AC 4; MV 12; HD 2; hp 12; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Damage 1-6 + 1/1-6; SA & SD Spells as 2nd level priest; SZ M; ML 14

## Maju and The Narabatun Jungle

Bishou Devane thinks it best that the adventurers travel by horse and foot as far as Maju, and then by foot past that point (if need be). Alternately, passage may be booked down the coast to Coxi, and from there overland on foot to Maju (such a sea trip will be without incident).

Travel overland through the plains will be without major incident. Check once per day and evening for a random encounter from the table below. There is a 1 in 6 chance of encounter when on the plains.

| Dice Roll<br>(d8 + d12) | Result                       |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2                       | 1-3 Wild Horses              |
| 3                       | 1 Ankheg                     |
| 4                       | 1-2 Wild Eagles              |
| 5                       | 1 Ant Lion                   |
| 6                       | 2-12 Giant Ants              |
| 7                       | 1-3 Large Scorpions          |
| 8                       | 1-3 Wolves                   |
| 9                       | 1-4 wild Dogs                |
| 10                      | 10-30 Buffalo (Animal, Herd) |

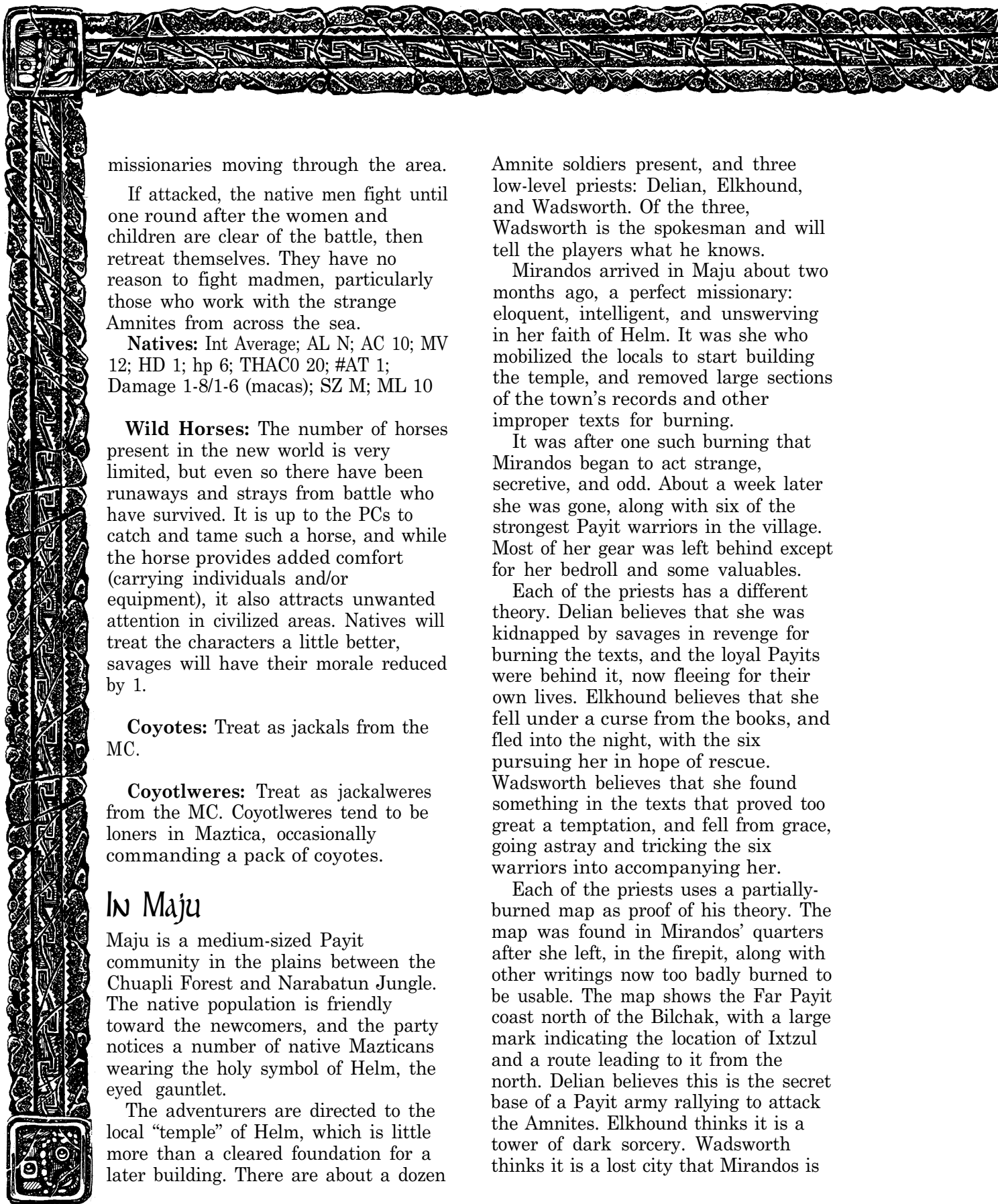
|    |                               |
|----|-------------------------------|
| 11 | 10-40 Antelope (Animal, Herd) |
| 12 | 10-20 Natives                 |
| 13 | 1-4 Coyotes (Jackals)         |
| 14 | 1-2 Wild Cats                 |
| 15 | 1-2 Normal Constrictor Snakes |
| 16 | 1-2 Normal Skunks (Spotted)   |
| 17 | 1-2 Axebeaks                  |
| 18 | 1-2 Coyotlweres (Jackalweres) |
| 19 | 1 Giant Eagle                 |
| 20 | Two Encounters                |

### Notes on Random Encounters

**Natives:** Natives are Payits of 1 HD. Half are women and children. All the men and half the women bear macas and spears. Natives are initially neutral to any passing through their land, though they attempt to avoid large parties with Newcomers among them, and seek to defend the women and children. They are friendly, if cautious, with other Payits, even if Newcomers are with them.

Natives have the advantage of either living in or having some familiarity with the territory the player characters are about to move through. If the player characters act positively toward them, the natives may provide some hint to the next day's travel. Roll for encounters for the next day, and truthfully report the results to the players as if the natives have passed through that area.

Natives who are friendly with the adventurers usually offer shelter for the night in a nearby village, sharing their food and campfire. Such offers are valid, and nothing evil befalls these characters in the village. The villagers in the plains north of Maju know nothing of Mirandos, though they have a guarded view of the Helm



missionaries moving through the area.

If attacked, the native men fight until one round after the women and children are clear of the battle, then retreat themselves. They have no reason to fight madmen, particularly those who work with the strange Amnites from across the sea.

**Natives:** Int Average; AL N; AC 10; MV 12; HD 1; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Damage 1-8/1-6 (macas); SZ M; ML 10

**Wild Horses:** The number of horses present in the new world is very limited, but even so there have been runaways and strays from battle who have survived. It is up to the PCs to catch and tame such a horse, and while the horse provides added comfort (carrying individuals and/or equipment), it also attracts unwanted attention in civilized areas. Natives will treat the characters a little better, savages will have their morale reduced by 1.

**Coyotes:** Treat as jackals from the MC.

**Coyotlweres:** Treat as jackalweres from the MC. Coyotlweres tend to be loners in Maztica, occasionally commanding a pack of coyotes.

## In Maju

Maju is a medium-sized Payit community in the plains between the Chuapli Forest and Narabatun Jungle. The native population is friendly toward the newcomers, and the party notices a number of native Mazticans wearing the holy symbol of Helm, the eyed gauntlet.

The adventurers are directed to the local "temple" of Helm, which is little more than a cleared foundation for a later building. There are about a dozen

Amnite soldiers present, and three low-level priests: Delian, Elkhound, and Wadsworth. Of the three, Wadsworth is the spokesman and will tell the players what he knows.

Mirandos arrived in Maju about two months ago, a perfect missionary: eloquent, intelligent, and unswerving in her faith of Helm. It was she who mobilized the locals to start building the temple, and removed large sections of the town's records and other improper texts for burning.

It was after one such burning that Mirandos began to act strange, secretive, and odd. About a week later she was gone, along with six of the strongest Payit warriors in the village. Most of her gear was left behind except for her bedroll and some valuables.

Each of the priests has a different theory. Delian believes that she was kidnapped by savages in revenge for burning the texts, and the loyal Payits were behind it, now fleeing for their own lives. Elkhound believes that she fell under a curse from the books, and fled into the night, with the six pursuing her in hope of rescue. Wadsworth believes that she found something in the texts that proved too great a temptation, and fell from grace, going astray and tricking the six warriors into accompanying her.

Each of the priests uses a partially-burned map as proof of his theory. The map was found in Mirandos' quarters after she left, in the firepit, along with other writings now too badly burned to be usable. The map shows the Far Payit coast north of the Bilchak, with a large mark indicating the location of Ixtzul and a route leading to it from the north. Delian believes this is the secret base of a Payit army rallying to attack the Amnites. Elkhound thinks it is a tower of dark sorcery. Wadsworth thinks it is a lost city that Mirandos is

seeking to raid.

The soldiers spent two weeks searching the area, as far south as the jungle but turned up nothing. The local Payits did not see Mirandos or the other Payits, or if they did, they are not telling. (A player character on excellent terms with the local population may be able to ferret out that a group of Payits with a Newcomer female was seen heading south toward the jungle. The information is third-hand, and it is unknown whether the priest was leader or captive.)

The priests demand that the horses be left at Maju, as they are church property. The soldiers offer to accompany the adventurers to the edge of the jungle with the horses, but to reclaim the mounts at that point. Encounters south of Maju in the plains are identical to those elsewhere, save that the natives will attempt to evade groups accompanying soldiers.

**Priests (Delian, Elkhound, and Wadsworth):** Int Average; AL LN; AC 4; MV 12; HD 2; hp 12; THACO 20; #AT 1; Damage 1-6 + 1/ 1-6; SA & SD Spells as 2nd level priests; SZ M; ML 14

**Soldiers:** Int Average; AL N; AC 4; MV 12 (18 mounted on horseback); HD 2; hp 12; THACO 19; #AT 1; Damage 1-8/1-12 (sword), 1-6/1-8 (spear) ; SZ M; ML 15

## The Narabatun Jungle

The jungle's edge rises like a green wall. A low undergrowth clogs the border, but this soon clears out to a climax growth of trees with very little underbrush. The ground is soft from centuries of decay, and small streams running down from the hills cut across what paths push through the growth.

Check for random encounters once per day and once per night when in the jungle, with a 2 in 6 chance of an

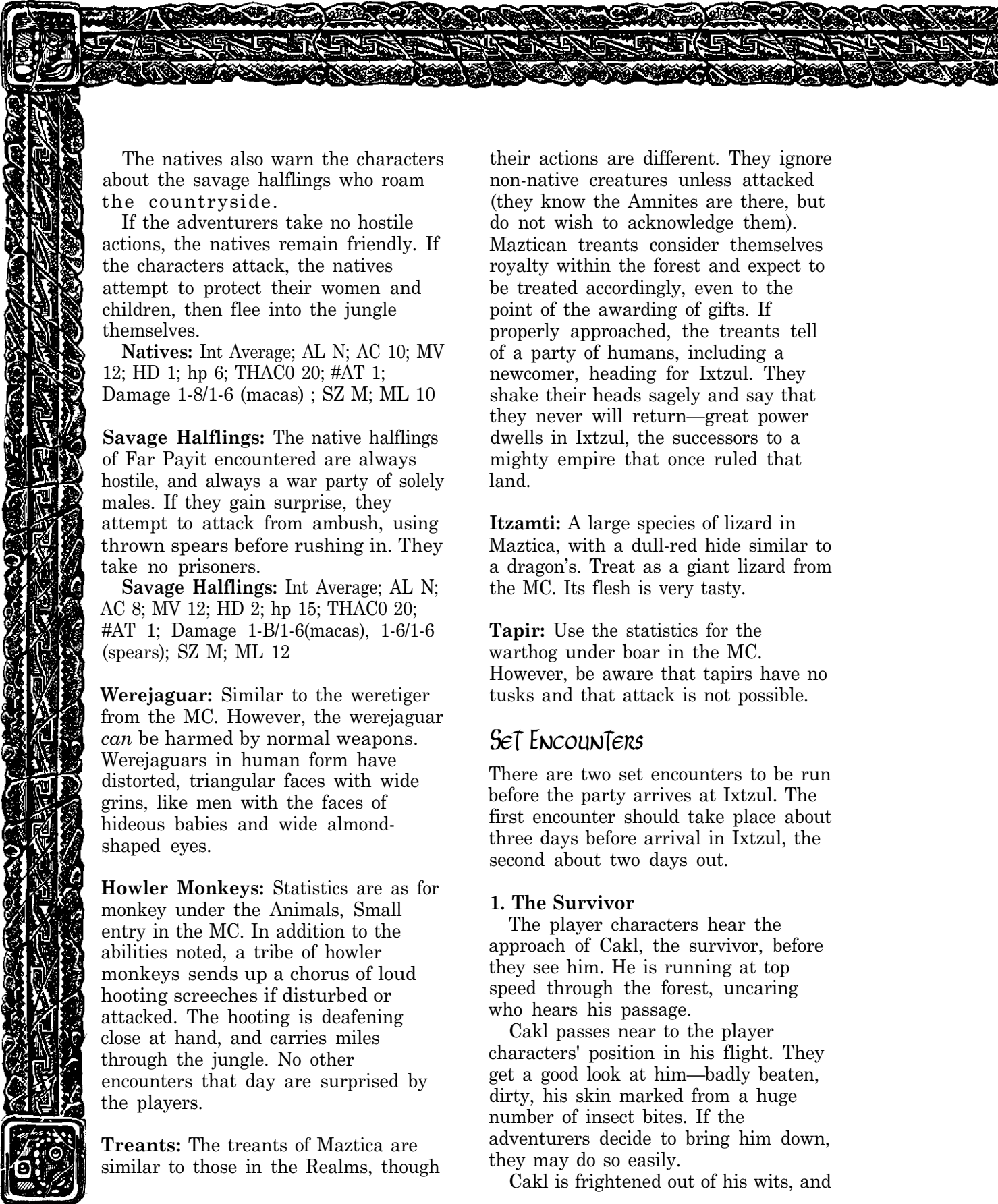
encounter. Use the table below.

| Dice Roll<br>(1d8 + 1d12) | Result                                |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 2                         | 1 Werejaguar<br>(Weretiger)           |
| 3                         | 1 Giant Constrictor<br>Snake          |
| 4                         | 1-3 Normal Porcupines                 |
| 5                         | 1-2 Giant Frogs                       |
| 6                         | 1-3 Giant Spiders                     |
| 7                         | 1-2 Black Bears                       |
| 8                         | 1-4 Tabaxi                            |
| 9                         | 1-3 Tapirs (Warthog)                  |
| 10                        | 3-18 Savage Halflings                 |
| 11                        | 10-20 Natives                         |
| 12                        | 1-3 Jaguars (Cat)                     |
| 13                        | 2-8 Howler Monkeys<br>(Animal, Small) |
| 14                        | 1-3 Itzamti (Giant<br>Lizards)        |
| 15                        | 1-2 Wild Cats                         |
| 16                        | 1-2 Harpies                           |
| 17                        | Two Encounters                        |
| 18                        | 1-2 Treants                           |
| 19                        | 1 Giant Porcupine                     |
| 20                        | 1 Strangleweed                        |

### Notes on Random Encounters

**Natives:** All natives encountered in the jungle along Mirandos' path are friendly; the priest of Helm did a wonderful job selling the advance of the Amnite civilization, vouched for by the six Payit warriors with her. The natives invite the player characters to stay the night safely, and confirm that Mirandos and her followers are heading south. The villagers encountered also note that 1-4 Payits of the village went with the priestess. The natives know of Ixtzul, which is a place of ill-omens from which no one ever returns. Mirandos had expressed an interest in going to Ixtzul, and would not be dissuaded, saying she was protected by Helm himself. A few of the younger men believed her.





The natives also warn the characters about the savage halflings who roam the countryside.

If the adventurers take no hostile actions, the natives remain friendly. If the characters attack, the natives attempt to protect their women and children, then flee into the jungle themselves.

**Natives:** Int Average; AL N; AC 10; MV 12; HD 1; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Damage 1-8/1-6 (macas) ; SZ M; ML 10

**Savage Halflings:** The native halflings of Far Payit encountered are always hostile, and always a war party of solely males. If they gain surprise, they attempt to attack from ambush, using thrown spears before rushing in. They take no prisoners.

**Savage Halflings:** Int Average; AL N; AC 8; MV 12; HD 2; hp 15; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Damage 1-B/1-6(macas), 1-6/1-6 (spears); SZ M; ML 12

**Werejaguar:** Similar to the weretiger from the MC. However, the werejaguar *can* be harmed by normal weapons. Werejaguars in human form have distorted, triangular faces with wide grins, like men with the faces of hideous babies and wide almond-shaped eyes.

**Howler Monkeys:** Statistics are as for monkey under the Animals, Small entry in the MC. In addition to the abilities noted, a tribe of howler monkeys sends up a chorus of loud hooting screeches if disturbed or attacked. The hooting is deafening close at hand, and carries miles through the jungle. No other encounters that day are surprised by the players.

**Treants:** The treants of Maztica are similar to those in the Realms, though

their actions are different. They ignore non-native creatures unless attacked (they know the Amnites are there, but do not wish to acknowledge them). Maztican treants consider themselves royalty within the forest and expect to be treated accordingly, even to the point of the awarding of gifts. If properly approached, the treants tell of a party of humans, including a newcomer, heading for Ixtzul. They shake their heads sagely and say that they never will return—great power dwells in Ixtzul, the successors to a mighty empire that once ruled that land.

**Itzamti:** A large species of lizard in Maztica, with a dull-red hide similar to a dragon's. Treat as a giant lizard from the MC. Its flesh is very tasty.

**Tapir:** Use the statistics for the warthog under boar in the MC. However, be aware that tapirs have no tusks and that attack is not possible.

## Set Encounters

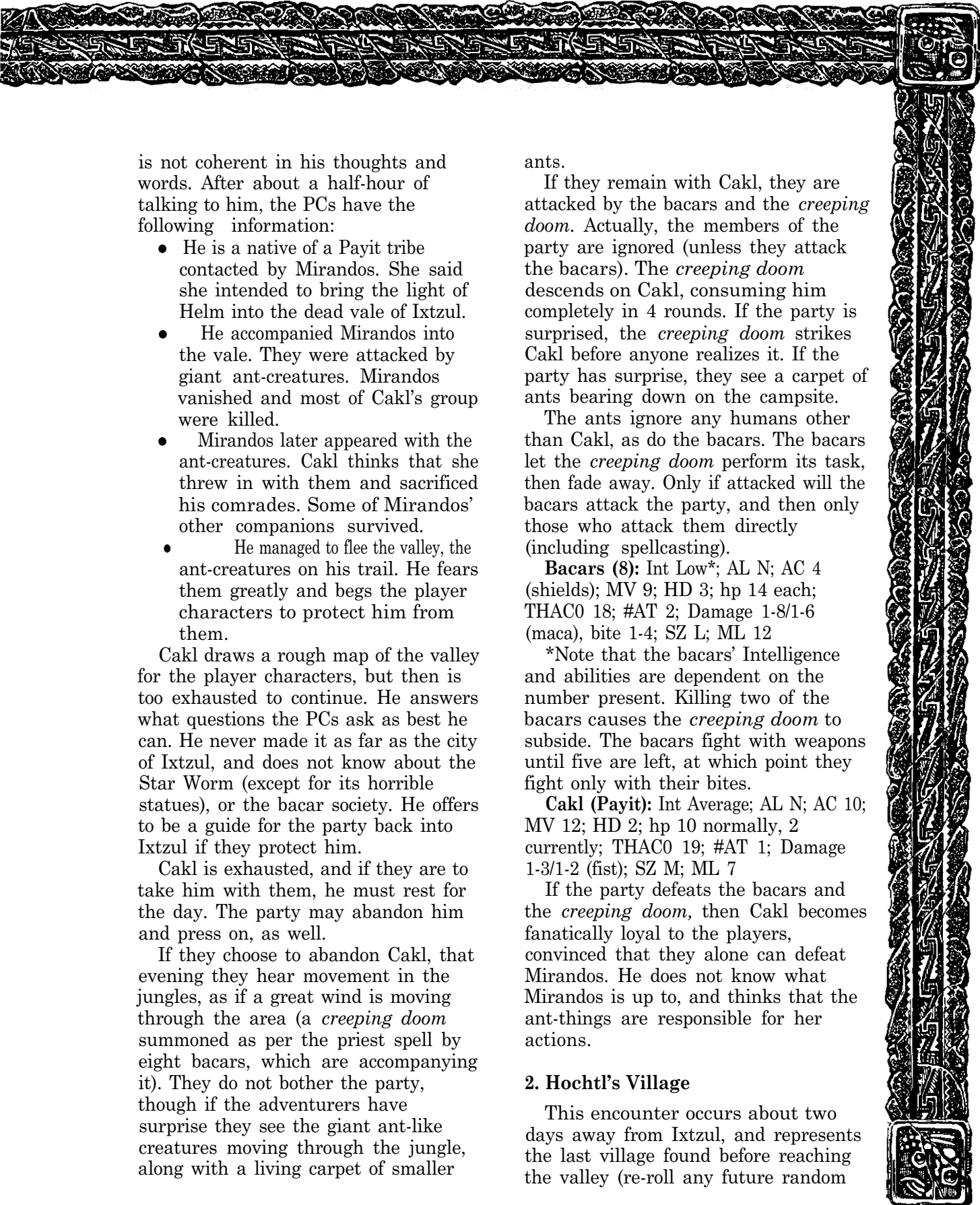
There are two set encounters to be run before the party arrives at Ixtzul. The first encounter should take place about three days before arrival in Ixtzul, the second about two days out.

### 1. The Survivor

The player characters hear the approach of Cakl, the survivor, before they see him. He is running at top speed through the forest, uncaring who hears his passage.

Cakl passes near to the player characters' position in his flight. They get a good look at him—badly beaten, dirty, his skin marked from a huge number of insect bites. If the adventurers decide to bring him down, they may do so easily.

Cakl is frightened out of his wits, and



is not coherent in his thoughts and words. After about a half-hour of talking to him, the PCs have the following information:

- He is a native of a Payit tribe contacted by Mirandos. She said she intended to bring the light of Helm into the dead vale of Ixtzul.
- He accompanied Mirandos into the vale. They were attacked by giant ant-creatures. Mirandos vanished and most of Cakl's group were killed.
- Mirandos later appeared with the ant-creatures. Cakl thinks that she threw in with them and sacrificed his comrades. Some of Mirandos' other companions survived.
- He managed to flee the valley, the ant-creatures on his trail. He fears them greatly and begs the player characters to protect him from them.

Cakl draws a rough map of the valley for the player characters, but then is too exhausted to continue. He answers what questions the PCs ask as best he can. He never made it as far as the city of Ixtzul, and does not know about the Star Worm (except for its horrible statues), or the bacar society. He offers to be a guide for the party back into Ixtzul if they protect him.

Cakl is exhausted, and if they are to take him with them, he must rest for the day. The party may abandon him and press on, as well.

If they choose to abandon Cakl, that evening they hear movement in the jungles, as if a great wind is moving through the area (a *creeping doom* summoned as per the priest spell by eight bacars, which are accompanying it). They do not bother the party, though if the adventurers have surprise they see the giant ant-like creatures moving through the jungle, along with a living carpet of smaller

ants.

If they remain with Cakl, they are attacked by the bacars and the *creeping doom*. Actually, the members of the party are ignored (unless they attack the bacars). The *creeping doom* descends on Cakl, consuming him completely in 4 rounds. If the party is surprised, the *creeping doom* strikes Cakl before anyone realizes it. If the party has surprise, they see a carpet of ants bearing down on the campsite.

The ants ignore any humans other than Cakl, as do the bacars. The bacars let the *creeping doom* perform its task, then fade away. Only if attacked will the bacars attack the party, and then only those who attack them directly (including spellcasting).

**Bacars (8):** Int Low\*; AL N; AC 4 (shields); MV 9; HD 3; hp 14 each; THAC0 18; #AT 2; Damage 1-8/1-6 (maca), bite 1-4; SZ L; ML 12

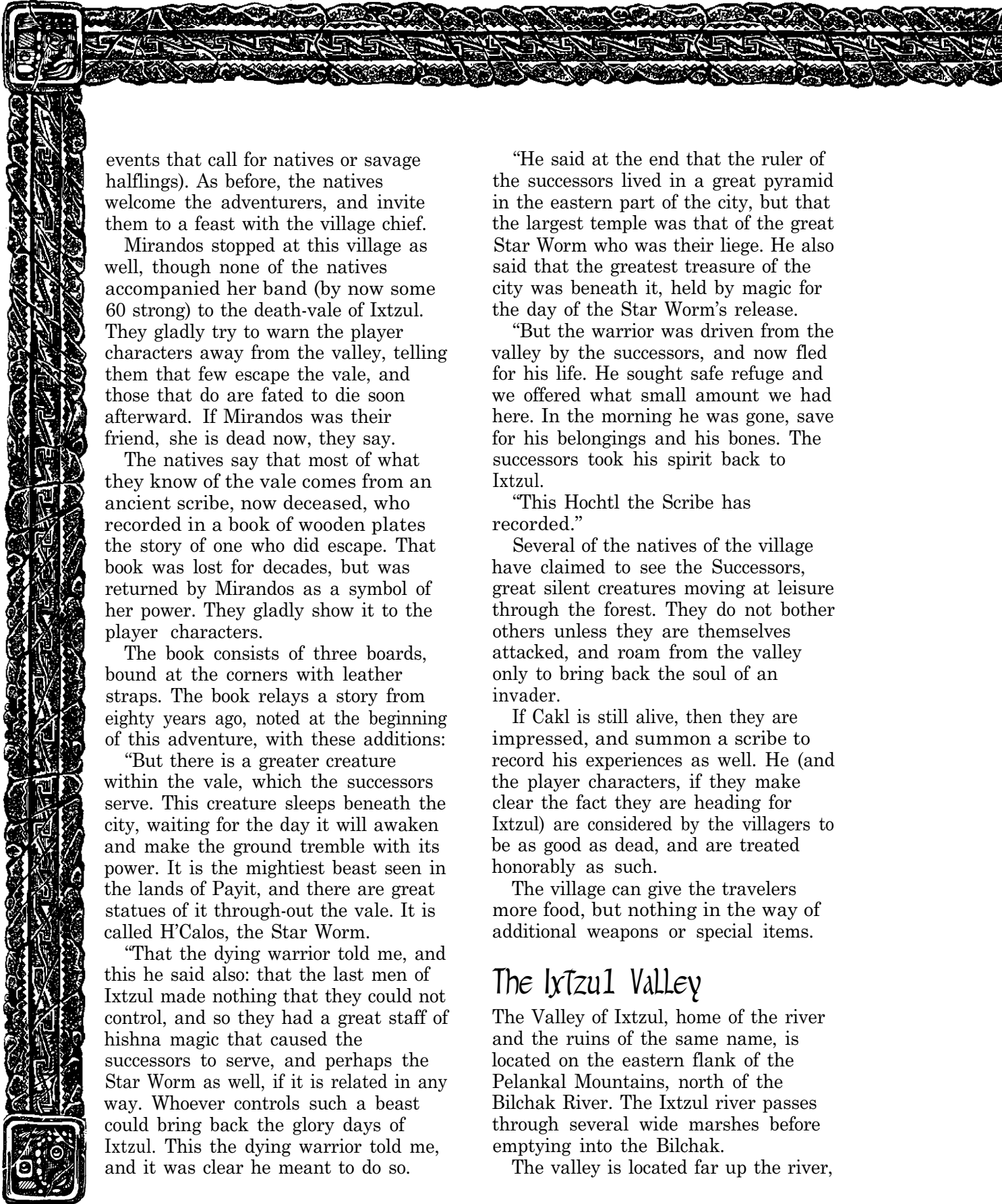
\*Note that the bacars' Intelligence and abilities are dependent on the number present. Killing two of the bacars causes the *creeping doom* to subside. The bacars fight with weapons until five are left, at which point they fight only with their bites.

**Cakl (Payit):** Int Average; AL N; AC 10; MV 12; HD 2; hp 10 normally, 2 currently; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Damage 1-3/1-2 (fist); SZ M; ML 7

If the party defeats the bacars and the *creeping doom*, then Cakl becomes fanatically loyal to the players, convinced that they alone can defeat Mirandos. He does not know what Mirandos is up to, and thinks that the ant-things are responsible for her actions.

## 2. Hocht'l's Village

This encounter occurs about two days away from Ixtzul, and represents the last village found before reaching the valley (re-roll any future random



events that call for natives or savage halflings). As before, the natives welcome the adventurers, and invite them to a feast with the village chief.

Mirandos stopped at this village as well, though none of the natives accompanied her band (by now some 60 strong) to the death-vale of Ixtzul. They gladly try to warn the player characters away from the valley, telling them that few escape the vale, and those that do are fated to die soon afterward. If Mirandos was their friend, she is dead now, they say.

The natives say that most of what they know of the vale comes from an ancient scribe, now deceased, who recorded in a book of wooden plates the story of one who did escape. That book was lost for decades, but was returned by Mirandos as a symbol of her power. They gladly show it to the player characters.

The book consists of three boards, bound at the corners with leather straps. The book relays a story from eighty years ago, noted at the beginning of this adventure, with these additions:

“But there is a greater creature within the vale, which the successors serve. This creature sleeps beneath the city, waiting for the day it will awaken and make the ground tremble with its power. It is the mightiest beast seen in the lands of Payit, and there are great statues of it through-out the vale. It is called H’Calos, the Star Worm.

“That the dying warrior told me, and this he said also: that the last men of Ixtzul made nothing that they could not control, and so they had a great staff of hishna magic that caused the successors to serve, and perhaps the Star Worm as well, if it is related in any way. Whoever controls such a beast could bring back the glory days of Ixtzul. This the dying warrior told me, and it was clear he meant to do so.

“He said at the end that the ruler of the successors lived in a great pyramid in the eastern part of the city, but that the largest temple was that of the great Star Worm who was their liege. He also said that the greatest treasure of the city was beneath it, held by magic for the day of the Star Worm’s release.

“But the warrior was driven from the valley by the successors, and now fled for his life. He sought safe refuge and we offered what small amount we had here. In the morning he was gone, save for his belongings and his bones. The successors took his spirit back to Ixtzul.

“This Hocht1 the Scribe has recorded.”

Several of the natives of the village have claimed to see the Successors, great silent creatures moving at leisure through the forest. They do not bother others unless they are themselves attacked, and roam from the valley only to bring back the soul of an invader.

If Cakl is still alive, then they are impressed, and summon a scribe to record his experiences as well. He (and the player characters, if they make clear the fact they are heading for Ixtzul) are considered by the villagers to be as good as dead, and are treated honorably as such.

The village can give the travelers more food, but nothing in the way of additional weapons or special items.

## The Ixtzul Valley

The Valley of Ixtzul, home of the river and the ruins of the same name, is located on the eastern flank of the Pelankal Mountains, north of the Bilchak River. The Ixtzul river passes through several wide marshes before emptying into the Bilchak.

The valley is located far up the river,

near its source in the Pelankal Range. The land rises sharply on both sides of the vale, such that passage occurs only through the guard posts (area A) near the valley's mouth. The valley runs some five miles, and ends in a waterfall (B) cascading from the mountains beyond.

Most of the valley floor is well-tended by the bacars, with a few trees but very little ground cover. The original Ixtzulians stripped most of the native vegetation for farming, such that low grasses cover the valley floor, similar to the well-manicured lawns of the most refined Helmsport nobles.

The buildings on the valley floor (see "City of Ixtzul") have been well-maintained and repaired by the bacars. Due to the fact the bacars do not perceive color, the original paints on the temples have leached away over time. All that remain are the ghostly visions of the temples, shadows of a greater past.

The wards which hold the Star Worm prisoner are still maintained by the bacars. Any *detect magic* or similar divination spells cast within the valley show a dim radiance of magic throughout the vale, strongest at the site of Ixtzul itself.

The only point overlooking the valley is the hilltop ruins (C), originally home to one of the other tribes of the valley, but in the last years converted to more farmland and homes for minor noble families. Unlike the structures on the valley floors, these have not been maintained, and are little more than foundations. The hilltop ruins can be reached only from the valley floor, but may make a comfortable base to the group once it has entered the vale.

### Tree-Stones

Throughout the valley are a large number of tree-stones, or stelae. These

are columns about ten feet in height, covered with ornate, decorative glyphs and topped with the stylized head of H'Calos the Star Worm. The glyphs on the tree stones are not readable, only ornamental. These tree-stones are responsible for holding the Star Worm in place beneath Ixtzul, and radiate magic strongly. The tree-stones are of white granite, kept clear of vegetation by the bacars.

It is possible to topple a tree-stone with a combined strength of 25. In 1-6 turns, a team of 4 bacars arrives to right the tree stone and reconnect it to the binding web holding H'Calos. This process takes 24 hours, and the bacars work until it is rejoined, ignoring all other tasks. More than three such stones toppled results in the colony deducing that there are intruders in the vale, and go to an alert status, increasing the chance for random encounters by 50%.

There are some 80 tree-stones throughout the valley, not counting the ones in Ixtzul itself. The binding spell is redundant, such that half of these outer stones must be toppled to sufficiently weaken the magical shackles and allow H'Calos to escape.

### A. The Guard Posts

The valley of Ixtzul narrows here to a mere 100 yards across, with the center 50 yards being the river itself, here passing over a set of rapids and into the jungle beyond. There is about 25 yards of shore on either side of the river, between the water and the cliff. Paths remain along both riversides.

The opening of the vale is marked by two great statues, one on each side of the river. Each statue represents a great insect-worm rising out of the ground. These were placed several generations after H'Calos began his slumber, and as such are stylized





renditions of the creature, giving no idea of the beast's true scale. The statues are square stelae with flat tops, are each 10' high, and face the east. The land around the statues, from river bank to cliff wall, has been cleared of all trees. Picture writing in an archaic form of Payit (70% chance for speakers of modern Payit to understand) rings the base of the statues. The rough translation of the glyphs says "This is our guardian, where is yours?"

Each of the statues is the base of a patrol of eight bacars, who have the Guard and Capture orders for the area. They are to prevent any non-bacars from entering the vale, but also to reduce any invaders to 0 hp and drag them to the city of Ixtzul for eventual sacrifice. The Capture orders have been issued since Mirandos has taken command of the community. The bacars remain concealed in the woods on the far side of the glade, and emerge only if individuals pass beyond the statues. If the prey retreats, the bacars pursue.

Heroes may evade the bacars and/or the glade by moving over it (such as flying across the opening, or using thief abilities to scale the cliff sides). There is a -10% to chance to successfully climb walls, as they are quite crumbly. Large chunks pull away with a touch, and spikes planted work loose if any pressure is put on them.

Another method of avoiding the initial guardians is to swim up the river between them. The current is extremely strong, such that only those with a swimming proficiency are allowed a Strength check to swim up the rapids (actually crawling up along the water-slick rocks of the cascade, staying out of the main flow). Those who cannot swim would be unable to make it through this way, though they could be dragged through the water by

rope (with a standard check for drowning). If the swimmer fails his proficiency check, he is dragged down river for 2-20 rounds, with the normal checks for drowning. At the end of that time he may make another proficiency check to regain control (or be carried downstream for another 1-6 rounds).

Escaping downstream past the guards is much easier. The river carries anyone swiftly through the cascade (requiring a Swimming proficiency check to avoid 1-10 points of damage from being slammed into a rock, and dragged down river for 2-20 rounds as described above). Swimming is possible only for those in light-weight armor at best. All native Maztican armor is usable in swimming, though the padded armor creates a -2 debit to any proficiency checks.

The bacars' guardian area extends about 20 yards beyond the statues, such that those who come ashore too soon are attacked in any event.

**Bacars (8):** Int Low\*; AL N; AC 4 (shields); MV 9; HD 3; hp 14 each; THAC0 18; #AT 2; Damage 1-8/1-6 (maca); SZ L; ML 12

## B. The High Falls

At the opposite end of the valley from the cascade and the statues is the high falls, a splendid waterfall that jets from 120' up the cliff face and thunders to the valley below. The western third of the vale is usually foggy and damp from the power of these falls.

The pool at the base of the falls was once redirected for crops, but this plan has been abandoned for over 800 years. The wood of the gates and posts has long since rotted away, even with the care of the bacars. The pool is uninhabited.

The cliff walls around the pool are particularly slippery, and attempts to

climb walls here are made at — 30%.

### C. The HillTop Ruins

The ruins overlooking the vale along the north side were one of the last parts of the valley to be abandoned, long after the rest of the Ixtzulians had left and entrusted the guardianship to Greyst's creatures. These farmers clung to the last bits of arable land far up the mountain-sides, working the fields with the aid of ropes and pulleys. The ruins are 300' up the hillside, and can be reached by a narrow (3' wide) path that only allows one person to move along it at a time.

This region was not placed under the control of the bacars and as such they never come up here, unless in pursuit of prey. This could provide a safe haven for individuals hiding from the bacars, as the approaching path is easily defended. If a patrol of bacars follows the heroes up the path, they can avoid future attacks by killing those bacars in the patrol. If one gets away, another patrol follows in 2-8 turns.

The old palaces along the cliff side have been left to rot. The roofs have toppled in, and only one wall is left standing. The foundations are still good, if overgrown with vines.

From the palace, individuals can watch most of the coming and goings in the vale below. Most of the activity visible through the trees involve bacars engaged in maintenance activities, along with patrols of the ant-creatures. If equipped with a spyglass or other magical device allowing seeing at a distance (e.g., *eyes of the eagle*), the adventurers can make out the human forms of Mirandos and her followers in the largest of the pyramids.

The old palace on the hillside is currently the home of three huge wolf spiders, who live on birds nesting farther up the hill as well as making the

occasional foray into the valley for a bacar. The wolf spiders attempt to ambush their prey when they are within striking distance of the ruins.

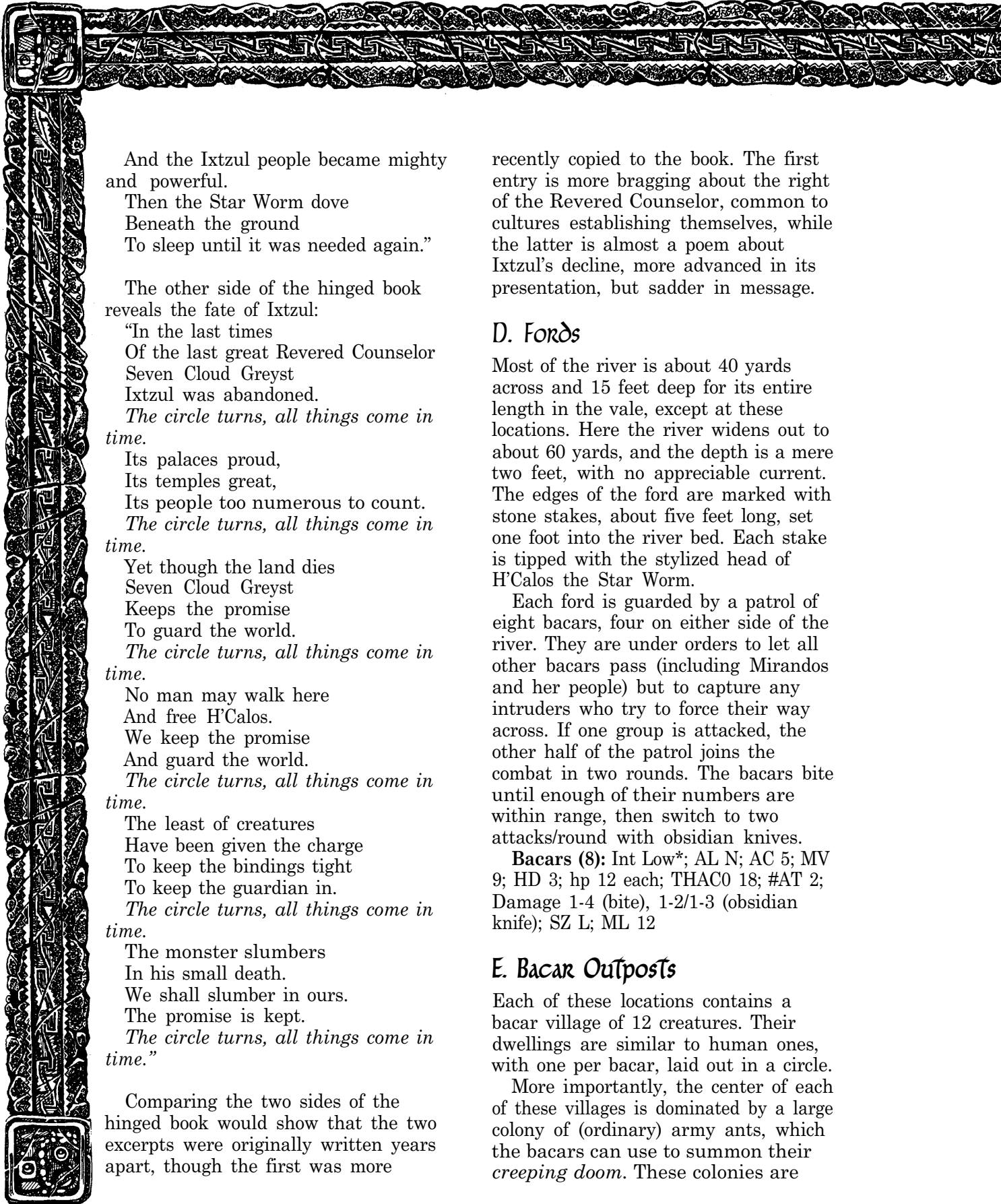
**Huge Spiders (3):** Int Animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 18; HD 2 + 2; hp 16,14,12; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Damage 1-6; SZ M; ML 8

The spider's lair contains a number of avian (and one or two humanoid) bones. Also in the wreckage is an ancient hinged book wrapped in layers of rotted cloth but otherwise intact (worth some 1000 gp back in Faerun, if you can get it out of Maztica without it being burned).

The hinged book opens like a louvered door, with archaic Payit glyphs on both sides of the book. The glyphs are a record of the first and last days of the city of Ixtzul. There is a 70% chance that anyone who can read Payit will be able to decipher the message there, and those who speak Payit but cannot understand the language can get about one in three word/symbols; the DM is free to leave out whatever parts he wishes for these individuals.

One side records the founding of the city, and reads as follows:

“Osctl Sleeping Turtle  
Founding Revered Counselor  
of the City of Ixtzul  
Rose above the other chieftains  
By claiming the Star Worm.  
The Star Worm is powerful  
Came to the True World  
From the skies.  
Air spirits shouted as it fell  
And landed in the Valley.  
Osctl Sleeping Turtle  
Claimed the Star Worm.  
Talked with it.  
Said the people of Ixtzul  
Would protect it,  
If it guarded them.  
The Star Worm agreed.



And the Ixtzul people became mighty  
and powerful.  
Then the Star Worm dove  
Beneath the ground  
To sleep until it was needed again.”

The other side of the hinged book  
reveals the fate of Ixtzul:  
“In the last times  
Of the last great Revered Counselor  
Seven Cloud Greyst  
Ixtzul was abandoned.

*The circle turns, all things come in  
time.*

Its palaces proud,  
Its temples great,  
Its people too numerous to count.  
*The circle turns, all things come in  
time.*

Yet though the land dies  
Seven Cloud Greyst  
Keeps the promise  
To guard the world.  
*The circle turns, all things come in  
time.*

No man may walk here  
And free H’Calos.  
We keep the promise  
And guard the world.  
*The circle turns, all things come in  
time.*

The least of creatures  
Have been given the charge  
To keep the bindings tight  
To keep the guardian in.  
*The circle turns, all things come in  
time.*

The monster slumbers  
In his small death.  
We shall slumber in ours.  
The promise is kept.  
*The circle turns, all things come in  
time.”*

Comparing the two sides of the  
hinged book would show that the two  
excerpts were originally written years  
apart, though the first was more

recently copied to the book. The first  
entry is more bragging about the right  
of the Revered Counselor, common to  
cultures establishing themselves, while  
the latter is almost a poem about  
Ixtzul’s decline, more advanced in its  
presentation, but sadder in message.

## D. Fords

Most of the river is about 40 yards  
across and 15 feet deep for its entire  
length in the vale, except at these  
locations. Here the river widens out to  
about 60 yards, and the depth is a mere  
two feet, with no appreciable current.  
The edges of the ford are marked with  
stone stakes, about five feet long, set  
one foot into the river bed. Each stake  
is tipped with the stylized head of  
H’Calos the Star Worm.

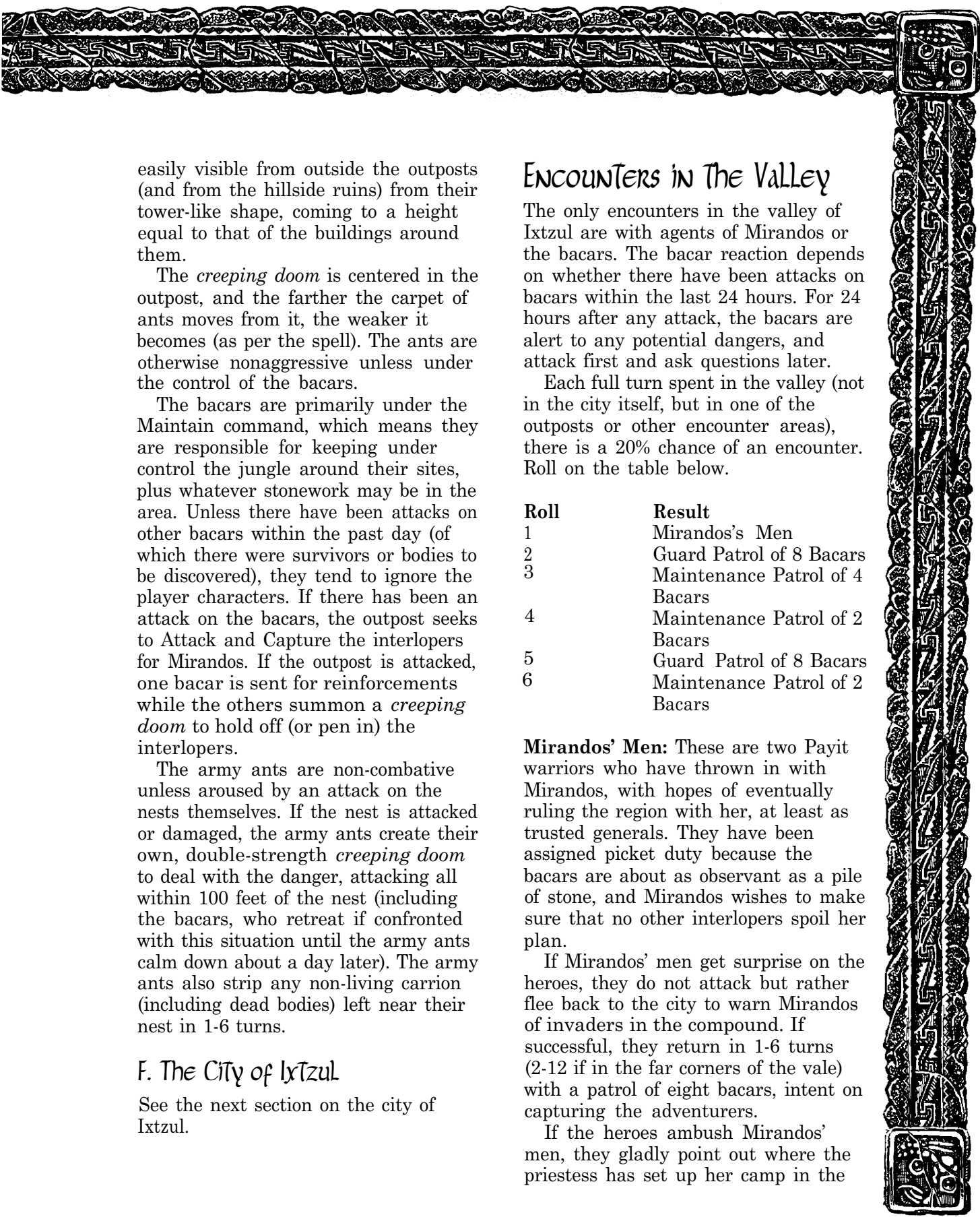
Each ford is guarded by a patrol of  
eight bacars, four on either side of the  
river. They are under orders to let all  
other bacars pass (including Mirandos  
and her people) but to capture any  
intruders who try to force their way  
across. If one group is attacked, the  
other half of the patrol joins the  
combat in two rounds. The bacars bite  
until enough of their numbers are  
within range, then switch to two  
attacks/round with obsidian knives.

**Bacars (8):** Int Low\*; AL N; AC 5; MV  
9; HD 3; hp 12 each; THACO 18; #AT 2;  
Damage 1-4 (bite), 1-2/1-3 (obsidian  
knife); SZ L; ML 12

## E. Bacar Outposts

Each of these locations contains a  
bacar village of 12 creatures. Their  
dwellings are similar to human ones,  
with one per bacar, laid out in a circle.

More importantly, the center of each  
of these villages is dominated by a large  
colony of (ordinary) army ants, which  
the bacars can use to summon their  
*creeping doom*. These colonies are



easily visible from outside the outposts (and from the hillside ruins) from their tower-like shape, coming to a height equal to that of the buildings around them.

The *creeping doom* is centered in the outpost, and the farther the carpet of ants moves from it, the weaker it becomes (as per the spell). The ants are otherwise nonaggressive unless under the control of the bacars.

The bacars are primarily under the Maintain command, which means they are responsible for keeping under control the jungle around their sites, plus whatever stonework may be in the area. Unless there have been attacks on other bacars within the past day (of which there were survivors or bodies to be discovered), they tend to ignore the player characters. If there has been an attack on the bacars, the outpost seeks to Attack and Capture the interlopers for Mirandos. If the outpost is attacked, one bacar is sent for reinforcements while the others summon a *creeping doom* to hold off (or pen in) the interlopers.

The army ants are non-combative unless aroused by an attack on the nests themselves. If the nest is attacked or damaged, the army ants create their own, double-strength *creeping doom* to deal with the danger, attacking all within 100 feet of the nest (including the bacars, who retreat if confronted with this situation until the army ants calm down about a day later). The army ants also strip any non-living carrion (including dead bodies) left near their nest in 1-6 turns.

## F. The City of Ixtzul

See the next section on the city of Ixtzul.

## Encounters in The Valley

The only encounters in the valley of Ixtzul are with agents of Mirandos or the bacars. The bacar reaction depends on whether there have been attacks on bacars within the last 24 hours. For 24 hours after any attack, the bacars are alert to any potential dangers, and attack first and ask questions later.

Each full turn spent in the valley (not in the city itself, but in one of the outposts or other encounter areas), there is a 20% chance of an encounter. Roll on the table below.

| Roll | Result                         |
|------|--------------------------------|
| 1    | Mirandos's Men                 |
| 2    | Guard Patrol of 8 Bacars       |
| 3    | Maintenance Patrol of 4 Bacars |
| 4    | Maintenance Patrol of 2 Bacars |
| 5    | Guard Patrol of 8 Bacars       |
| 6    | Maintenance Patrol of 2 Bacars |

**Mirandos' Men:** These are two Payit warriors who have thrown in with Mirandos, with hopes of eventually ruling the region with her, at least as trusted generals. They have been assigned picket duty because the bacars are about as observant as a pile of stone, and Mirandos wishes to make sure that no other interlopers spoil her plan.

If Mirandos' men get surprise on the heroes, they do not attack but rather flee back to the city to warn Mirandos of invaders in the compound. If successful, they return in 1-6 turns (2-12 if in the far corners of the vale) with a patrol of eight bacars, intent on capturing the adventurers.

If the heroes ambush Mirandos' men, they gladly point out where the priestess has set up her camp in the



city, in exchange for their lives. If let go, they flee the valley and do not return.

**Payit Guards (2):** Int Average; AL NE; AC 8; MV 12; HD 2; hp 10 each; THACO 17; #AT 1; Damage 1-8/1-6 (maca) ; SZ M; ML 8

**Guard Patrols:** These groups of bacars are on the lookout for interlopers, and if they come upon the player characters (or their trail), they close and attempt to capture them. The Patrol retreats if it loses half its members, only to return in 1-4 turns with a full-strength patrol.

**Bacars (8):** Int Low\*; AL N; AC 4 (shields); MV 9; HD 3; hp 14 each; THACO 18; #AT 1; Damage 1-8/1-6 (maca); SZ L; ML 12

**Maintenance Patrols:** These patrols are charged with keeping the valley under control, cutting back the jungle, and otherwise keeping the area clean. If the adventurers have not bothered any of the bacars for the past 24 hours, they are ignored. If there has been a battle with the bacars, they attack (if they outnumber the party), or perform a holding action while one member goes for a full patrol (1-4 turns). The bacars can track their prey even if the characters leave the valley, though they do not pursue up the side of the hill toward the ruins.

**Bacars (2):** Int Low\*; AL N; AC 5; MV 9; HD 3; hp 11 each; THACO 18; #AT 1; Damage 1-3 (bite); SZ L; ML 12

**Bacars (4):** Int Low\*; AL N; AC 5; MV 9; HD 3; hp 15 each; THACO 18; #AT 1; Damage 1-3 (bite); SZ L; ML 12

If just observed, the 4-bacar teams seem to be involved in "real" work, straightening tilted monuments, cleaning moss from buildings, etc., while the 2-bacar teams are just touching temple stones and following in single file across the grass, not really

moving anything or cleaning anything in the process. These 2-creature teams are reinforcing the binding spells that hold the Star Worm beneath the earth. A *detect magic* or similar divination reveals that the area around these working bacars radiates a stronger magic than the rest of the area.

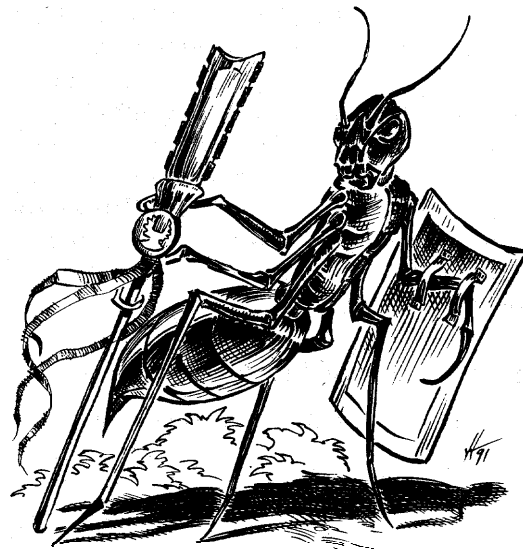
### Bacar Intelligence

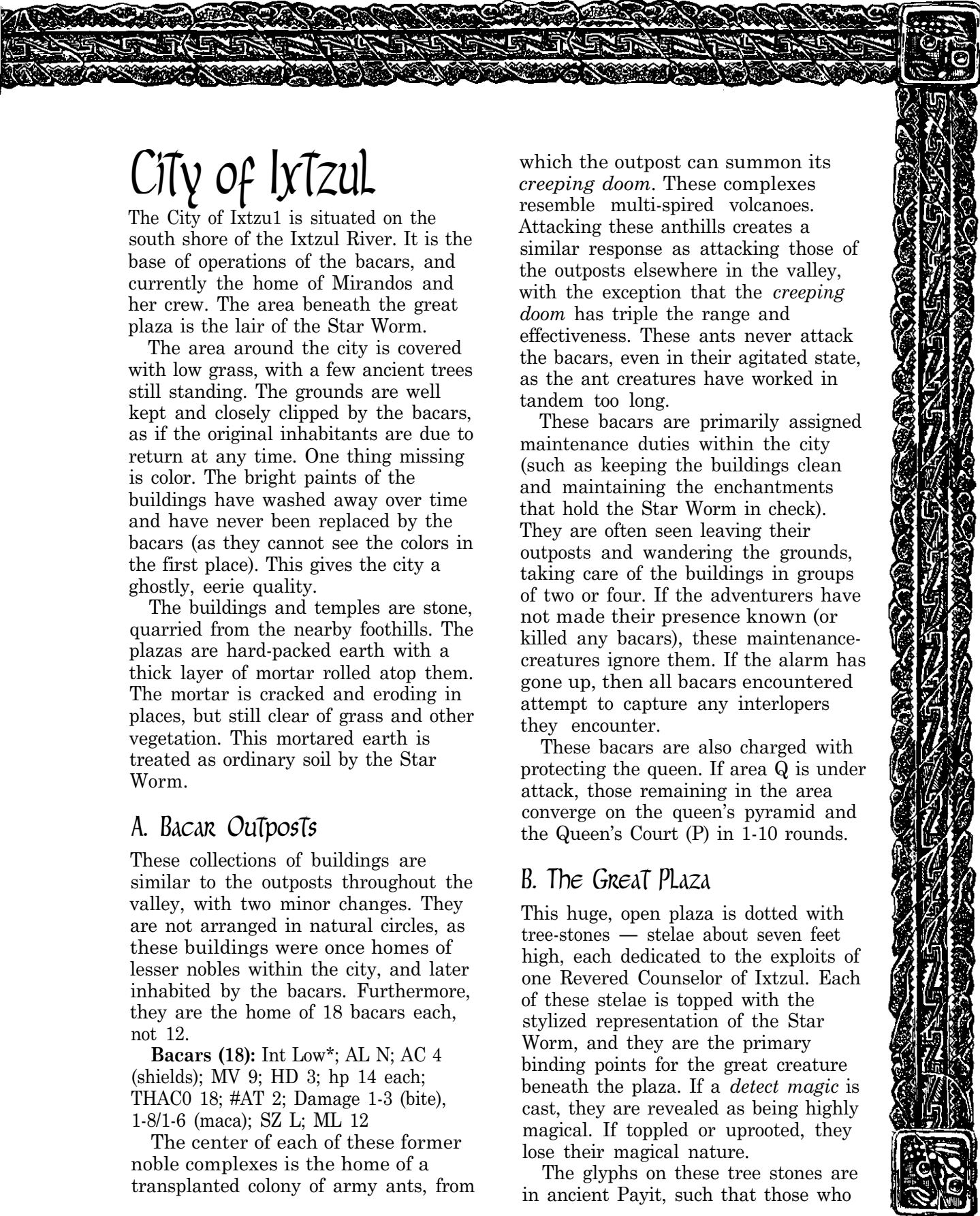
| # of Bacar | Intelligence |
|------------|--------------|
| 1          | 6            |
| 2          | 7            |
| 3          | 8            |
| 4          | 9            |
| 5          | 10           |
| 6          | 11*          |
| 7          | 12           |
| 8          | 13**         |
| 9          | 14           |
| 10         | 15           |
| 11+        | 16***        |

\*At 11 Intelligence, bacar will begin to use weapons and shields.

\*\*At 13 Intelligence, bacar will leave the valley, and be able to summon the *creeping doom*.

\*\*\*Bacar never have more than 16 Intelligence.





## City of Ixtzul

The City of Ixtzul is situated on the south shore of the Ixtzul River. It is the base of operations of the bacars, and currently the home of Mirandos and her crew. The area beneath the great plaza is the lair of the Star Worm.

The area around the city is covered with low grass, with a few ancient trees still standing. The grounds are well kept and closely clipped by the bacars, as if the original inhabitants are due to return at any time. One thing missing is color. The bright paints of the buildings have washed away over time and have never been replaced by the bacars (as they cannot see the colors in the first place). This gives the city a ghostly, eerie quality.

The buildings and temples are stone, quarried from the nearby foothills. The plazas are hard-packed earth with a thick layer of mortar rolled atop them. The mortar is cracked and eroding in places, but still clear of grass and other vegetation. This mortared earth is treated as ordinary soil by the Star Worm.

### A. Bacar Outposts

These collections of buildings are similar to the outposts throughout the valley, with two minor changes. They are not arranged in natural circles, as these buildings were once homes of lesser nobles within the city, and later inhabited by the bacars. Furthermore, they are the home of 18 bacars each, not 12.

**Bacars (18):** Int Low\*; AL N; AC 4 (shields); MV 9; HD 3; hp 14 each; THAC0 18; #AT 2; Damage 1-3 (bite), 1-8/1-6 (maca); SZ L; ML 12

The center of each of these former noble complexes is the home of a transplanted colony of army ants, from

which the outpost can summon its *creeping doom*. These complexes resemble multi-spired volcanoes. Attacking these anthills creates a similar response as attacking those of the outposts elsewhere in the valley, with the exception that the *creeping doom* has triple the range and effectiveness. These ants never attack the bacars, even in their agitated state, as the ant creatures have worked in tandem too long.

These bacars are primarily assigned maintenance duties within the city (such as keeping the buildings clean and maintaining the enchantments that hold the Star Worm in check). They are often seen leaving their outposts and wandering the grounds, taking care of the buildings in groups of two or four. If the adventurers have not made their presence known (or killed any bacars), these maintenance-creatures ignore them. If the alarm has gone up, then all bacars encountered attempt to capture any interlopers they encounter.

These bacars are also charged with protecting the queen. If area Q is under attack, those remaining in the area converge on the queen's pyramid and the Queen's Court (P) in 1-10 rounds.

### B. The Great Plaza

This huge, open plaza is dotted with tree-stones — stelae about seven feet high, each dedicated to the exploits of one Revered Counselor of Ixtzul. Each of these stelae is topped with the stylized representation of the Star Worm, and they are the primary binding points for the great creature beneath the plaza. If a *detect magic* is cast, they are revealed as being highly magical. If toppled or uprooted, they lose their magical nature.

The glyphs on these tree stones are in ancient Payit, such that those who



read modern Payit have a 70% chance of understanding. Most of the stones detail the lineage and achievements of the various Revered Counselors during their reigns. There are fourteen Revered Counselors noted on tree-stones in the great plaza. Each tree-stone shows the face of the ruler, facing toward the Star Worm temple (area N). Osctl Sleeping Turtle's is the farthest east of all stelae in the plaza. Greyst Seven Cloud's (located in the farthest west) is directly in front of Greyst's tomb (building H). This tree stone is unfinished. For more detail see area H.

Each of the tree stones establishes the lineage of the ruler from his illustrious predecessors, along with any battles fought and won, any new tribes brought under dominance, and any new temples and buildings erected in the city. The conquests end with ruler #8 (Hecal Serpent Shell), though sporadic battles are recorded throughout the remaining rulerships.

If the stones are read, it should be noted that the worn original stelae of Osctl describes him as receiving permission to settle Ixtzul from H'Calos, a great Star Worm. The later stelae downplay that fact, so that by ruler #6 (Dosl Flint Macaw), Osctl is described as having defeated H'Calos, and won the valley in victorious combat. Around the time of ruler 6 appear the first references on the stelae of the Revered Counselors as protectors of the people of Ixtzul, and as wardens over the imprisoned H'Calos.

The lair of the Star Worm is about 100 feet directly beneath this plaza.

### C. Pyramid of Pronouncements

This ten foot tall step pyramid has a flattened 10' by 10' square top, and was used by the Ixtzulians in their day as a

meeting place for debate, discourse, and occasionally combat, where many could watch the speakers/fighters.

At the present, it has been readied as a sacrificial area by Mirandos and her followers to summon and control H'Calos. Great iron spikes with chains have been driven into the four corners of the pyramid's peak for this sacrifice.

### D. The Old Market

In the heyday of the Ixtzulians, this part of the plaza was the marketplace, where the city peoples could trade for food, handiwork, and art. It has been kept bare since the departure of the last human Ixtzulians.

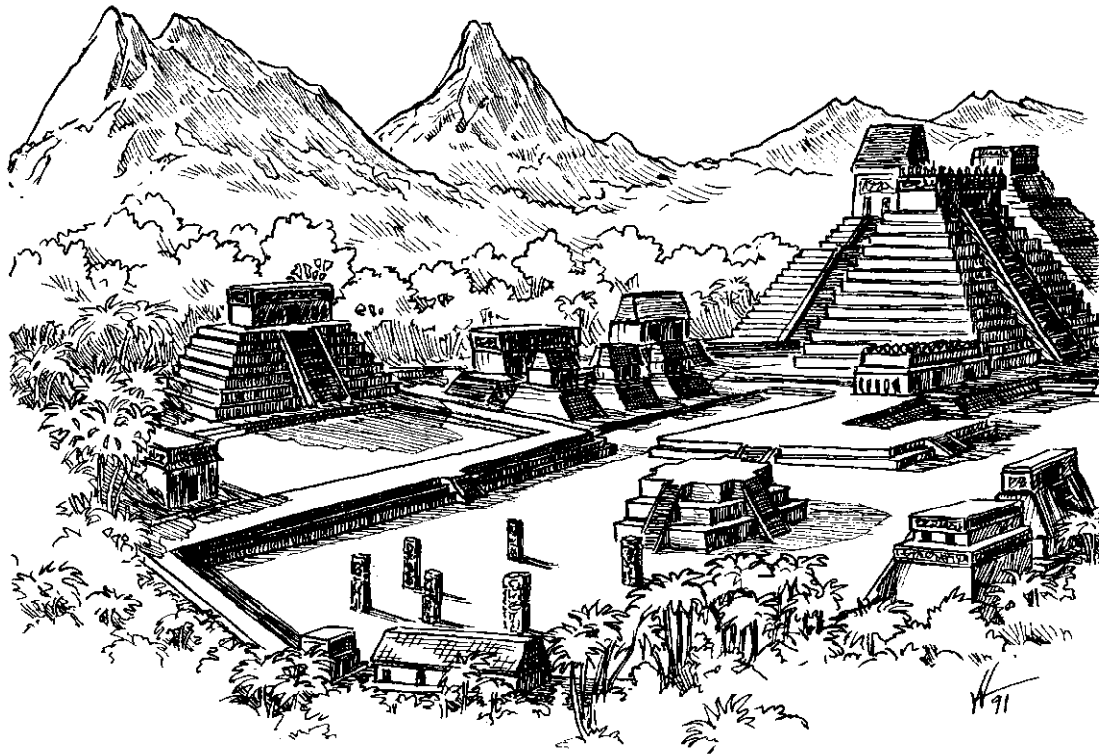
### E. Ball Court

When Ixtzul was inhabited by humans, this complex served as the ball court for the city. The buildings to the north and south of the court were used for ceremonies and seating for the Revered Counselors and other notables, while the commoners either stood at the ends or sat on the risers to the west.

The court has stood empty since the last men abandoned the valley. The bacars have no sense of the play or passion of the ball court, and no games have occurred during their reign.

With the coming of Mirandos, the southern building is now used as a prison for future sacrifices. Interlopers are bound and tossed into the building, fed about once per day, but otherwise ignored. The northern entrance of the building is sealed, while the other entrance is guarded by a pair of Mirandos' men and a patrol of eight bacars. The bacars are ordered to track down and capture (not kill) any prisoners who escape.

**Bacars (8):** Int Low\*; AL N; AC 4 (shields); MV 9; HD 3; hp 14 each;



THACO 18; #AT 2; Damage 1-8/1-6 (maca) or 1-3 (bite); SZ L; ML 12

**Payit Guards (2):** Int Average; AL NE; AC 8; MV 12; HD 2; hp 10 each; THACO 17; #AT 1; Damage 1-8/1-6 (maca); SZ M; ML 8

#### F. Merchants' Quarters

Originally this line of stone buildings was the quarters of visiting merchants who used to attend the market area (D). The buildings remain, but are now used by the bacars as storage areas.

The walls are stacked high with wild grain, shoots, and vines brought down by the bacars and stored for later use. Within the enclosed building, the rotting vegetation has an intense odor, but is otherwise harmless.

In the midst of the rotted vegetation is the skeleton of a Payit explorer who was wounded in battle with the bacars and crawled within the storage area to

die. The skeleton is intact and has a *maca* +2.

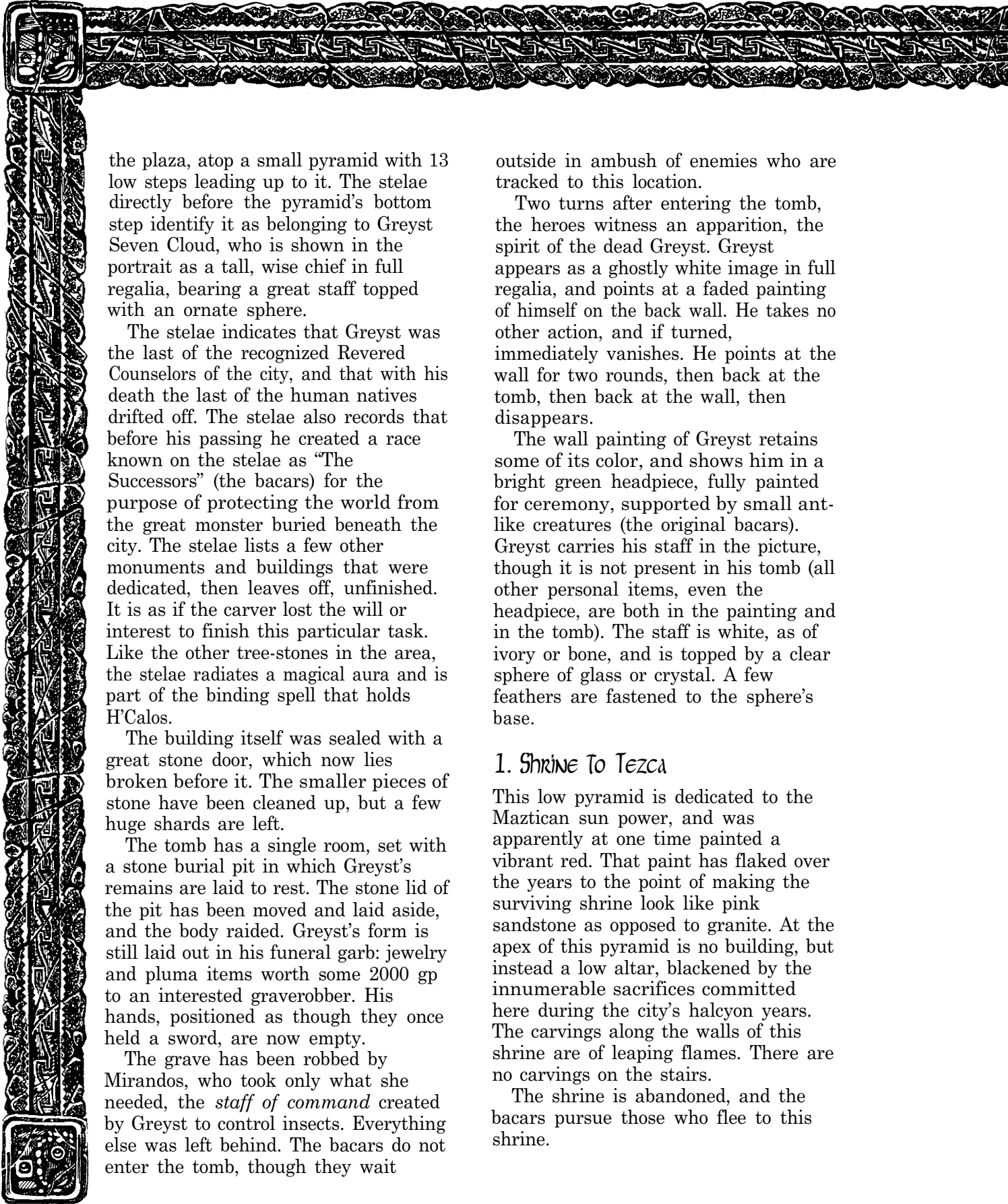
#### G. Shrine of Qotal

This medium-sized pyramid on the northern side of the plaza is dedicated to Qotal, the feathered dragon of good. The steps and walls are carved with symbols of butterflies and eagles. The building at the apex of the pyramid is empty, save for a discarded wicker cage, kept perfectly preserved despite its long abandonment.

Priests of Qotal and other good gods who are defending themselves within and on top of this pyramid do so at +2 to hit and damage. The bacars do not patrol here, though they pursue and track fleeing prey into this structure.

#### H. The Tomb of Greyst

The tomb of the last Revered Counselor is located at the westernmost end of



the plaza, atop a small pyramid with 13 low steps leading up to it. The stelae directly before the pyramid's bottom step identify it as belonging to Greyst Seven Cloud, who is shown in the portrait as a tall, wise chief in full regalia, bearing a great staff topped with an ornate sphere.

The stelae indicates that Greyst was the last of the recognized Revered Counselors of the city, and that with his death the last of the human natives drifted off. The stelae also records that before his passing he created a race known on the stelae as "The Successors" (the bacars) for the purpose of protecting the world from the great monster buried beneath the city. The stelae lists a few other monuments and buildings that were dedicated, then leaves off, unfinished. It is as if the carver lost the will or interest to finish this particular task. Like the other tree-stones in the area, the stelae radiates a magical aura and is part of the binding spell that holds H'Calos.

The building itself was sealed with a great stone door, which now lies broken before it. The smaller pieces of stone have been cleaned up, but a few huge shards are left.

The tomb has a single room, set with a stone burial pit in which Greyst's remains are laid to rest. The stone lid of the pit has been moved and laid aside, and the body raided. Greyst's form is still laid out in his funeral garb: jewelry and pluma items worth some 2000 gp to an interested graverobber. His hands, positioned as though they once held a sword, are now empty.

The grave has been robbed by Mirandos, who took only what she needed, the *staff of command* created by Greyst to control insects. Everything else was left behind. The bacars do not enter the tomb, though they wait

outside in ambush of enemies who are tracked to this location.

Two turns after entering the tomb, the heroes witness an apparition, the spirit of the dead Greyst. Greyst appears as a ghostly white image in full regalia, and points at a faded painting of himself on the back wall. He takes no other action, and if turned, immediately vanishes. He points at the wall for two rounds, then back at the tomb, then back at the wall, then disappears.

The wall painting of Greyst retains some of its color, and shows him in a bright green headpiece, fully painted for ceremony, supported by small ant-like creatures (the original bacars). Greyst carries his staff in the picture, though it is not present in his tomb (all other personal items, even the headpiece, are both in the painting and in the tomb). The staff is white, as of ivory or bone, and is topped by a clear sphere of glass or crystal. A few feathers are fastened to the sphere's base.

### 1. Shrine To Tezca

This low pyramid is dedicated to the Maztican sun power, and was apparently at one time painted a vibrant red. That paint has flaked over the years to the point of making the surviving shrine look like pink sandstone as opposed to granite. At the apex of this pyramid is no building, but instead a low altar, blackened by the innumerable sacrifices committed here during the city's halcyon years. The carvings along the walls of this shrine are of leaping flames. There are no carvings on the stairs.

The shrine is abandoned, and the bacars pursue those who flee to this shrine.

### J. Shrine To Eha

This modest pyramid is dedicated to the wind sprite, Eha, and its sides are engraved with symbols of the wind, clouds, and birds. A low building is seated at the apex of the pyramid, with a small altar before it. The shrine is otherwise unnotable.

The bacars regularly clean this pyramid, and attack any they find within it.

### K. Soldiers' Quarters

This line of low buildings was once the barracks of the city guard. Now it is home (with area T) to most of the bacar natives within the city itself. Those bacars within the city are usually less powerful than those on garrison duty around the vale, but make up for their reduction in power through greater numbers (and thereby greater intelligence). There are 30 bacars living in this complex. They are called upon when there is any disturbance within the plaza of the tree-stones (area 9).

**Bacars (30 total):** Int Low\*; AL N; AC 5; MV 9; HD 3; hp 10 each; THAC0 18; #AT 3; Damage 1-4 (bite), 1-2/1-3 (obsidian knife)x2; SZ L; ML 12

### L. Temple of Azul

This great temple is the largest in the complex dedicated to any of the "standard" recognized powers — that of Azul, the rain-bringer, upon whom much of the crops depended. It was obviously hoped that with more rain would come a respite from the decline in the soil's fertility, and the temple is one of the more recent buildings in the complex. Its dedicated markers indicate that it was first used by Ruler #12 (Vecl Cloud Eveningstar).

The structure is 100' tall. The sides and building of this pyramid were

white-washed and unadorned, in stark contrast to the other copiously decorated shrines. Even today they are kept sparkling white by the bacars.

The apex of the pyramid contains a low building, within which is constructed a deep (100') cistern, which was kept filled with water for sacrifices. The water is currently only about 20' deep, and at the bottom of the scummy water are the remains of five small bacars, miscellaneous bones of animals and humans, and about 500 gp worth of gold jewelry.

### M. Palace of The Revered Counselor

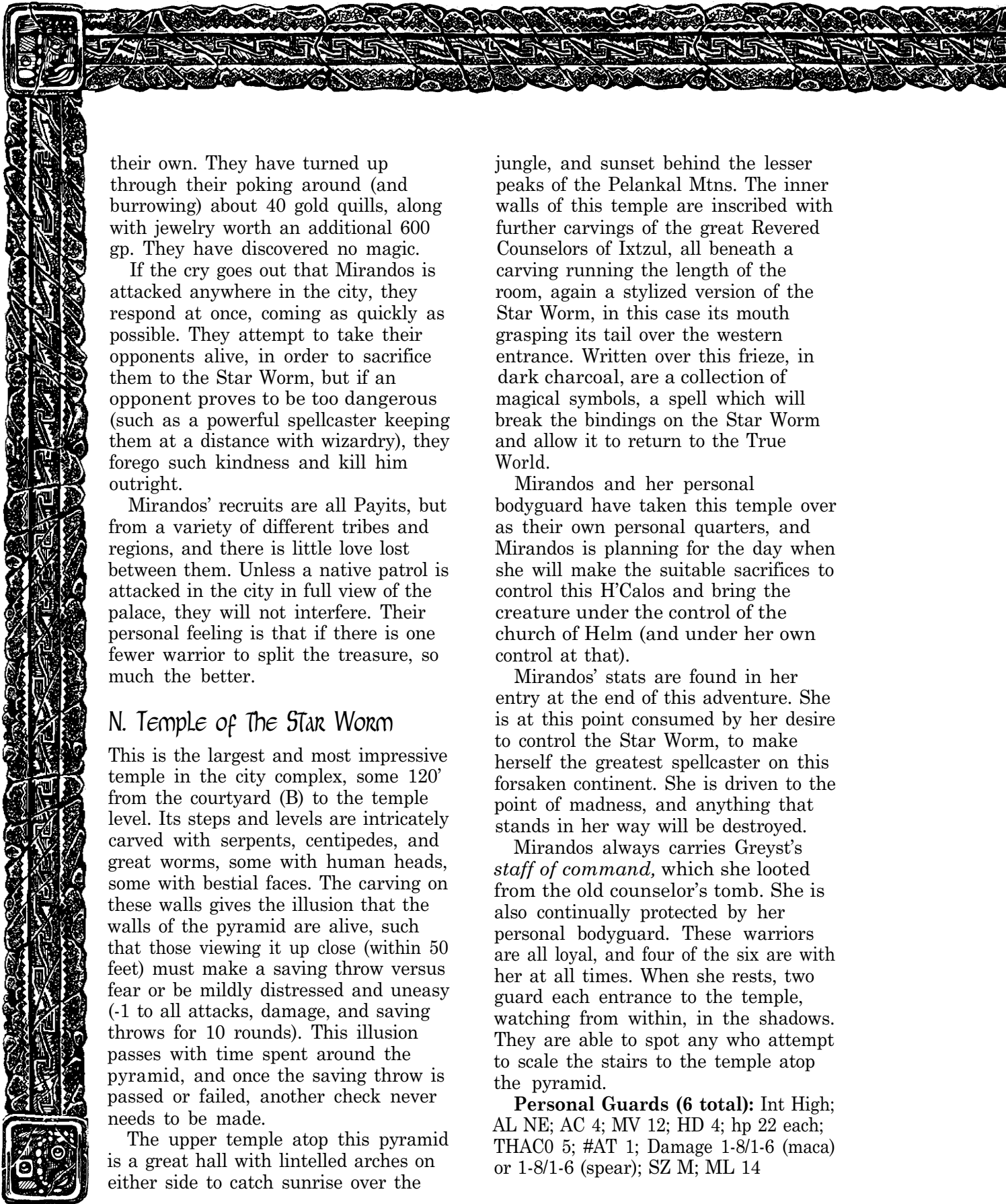
This complex was once the home of Ixtzul's ruler and his family, its last occupant being Greyst before the city's abandonment. It is currently the quarters of Mirandos' men, recruits from the various villages she encountered on her way to the valley.

There are about 20 men total who have accompanied Mirandos and lived to this point, and most are found here unless on other duties (patrol, guards to the prisoners, etc.). Reduce the number from the total for any who have been killed by the adventurers. These natives do not include Mirandos' personal guard.

If more than 10 of the Payit natives have been killed, the guards are extremely edgy, and attack anything that may threaten them. Their morale in such cases is reduced by 2.

**Mirandos' men (Payit guards) (20):** Int Average; AL NE; AC 8; MV 12; HD 2; hp 10 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Damage 1-8/1-6 (maca), 1-6/1-8 (spear); SZ M; ML 8

Mirandos has ordered the bacars to stay clear of this complex of buildings, and as a result the men have engaged in a little exploration and excavation of



their own. They have turned up through their poking around (and burrowing) about 40 gold quills, along with jewelry worth an additional 600 gp. They have discovered no magic.

If the cry goes out that Mirandos is attacked anywhere in the city, they respond at once, coming as quickly as possible. They attempt to take their opponents alive, in order to sacrifice them to the Star Worm, but if an opponent proves to be too dangerous (such as a powerful spellcaster keeping them at a distance with wizardry), they forego such kindness and kill him outright.

Mirandos' recruits are all Payits, but from a variety of different tribes and regions, and there is little love lost between them. Unless a native patrol is attacked in the city in full view of the palace, they will not interfere. Their personal feeling is that if there is one fewer warrior to split the treasure, so much the better.

## N. Temple of The Star Worm

This is the largest and most impressive temple in the city complex, some 120' from the courtyard (B) to the temple level. Its steps and levels are intricately carved with serpents, centipedes, and great worms, some with human heads, some with bestial faces. The carving on these walls gives the illusion that the walls of the pyramid are alive, such that those viewing it up close (within 50 feet) must make a saving throw versus fear or be mildly distressed and uneasy (-1 to all attacks, damage, and saving throws for 10 rounds). This illusion passes with time spent around the pyramid, and once the saving throw is passed or failed, another check never needs to be made.

The upper temple atop this pyramid is a great hall with lintelled arches on either side to catch sunrise over the

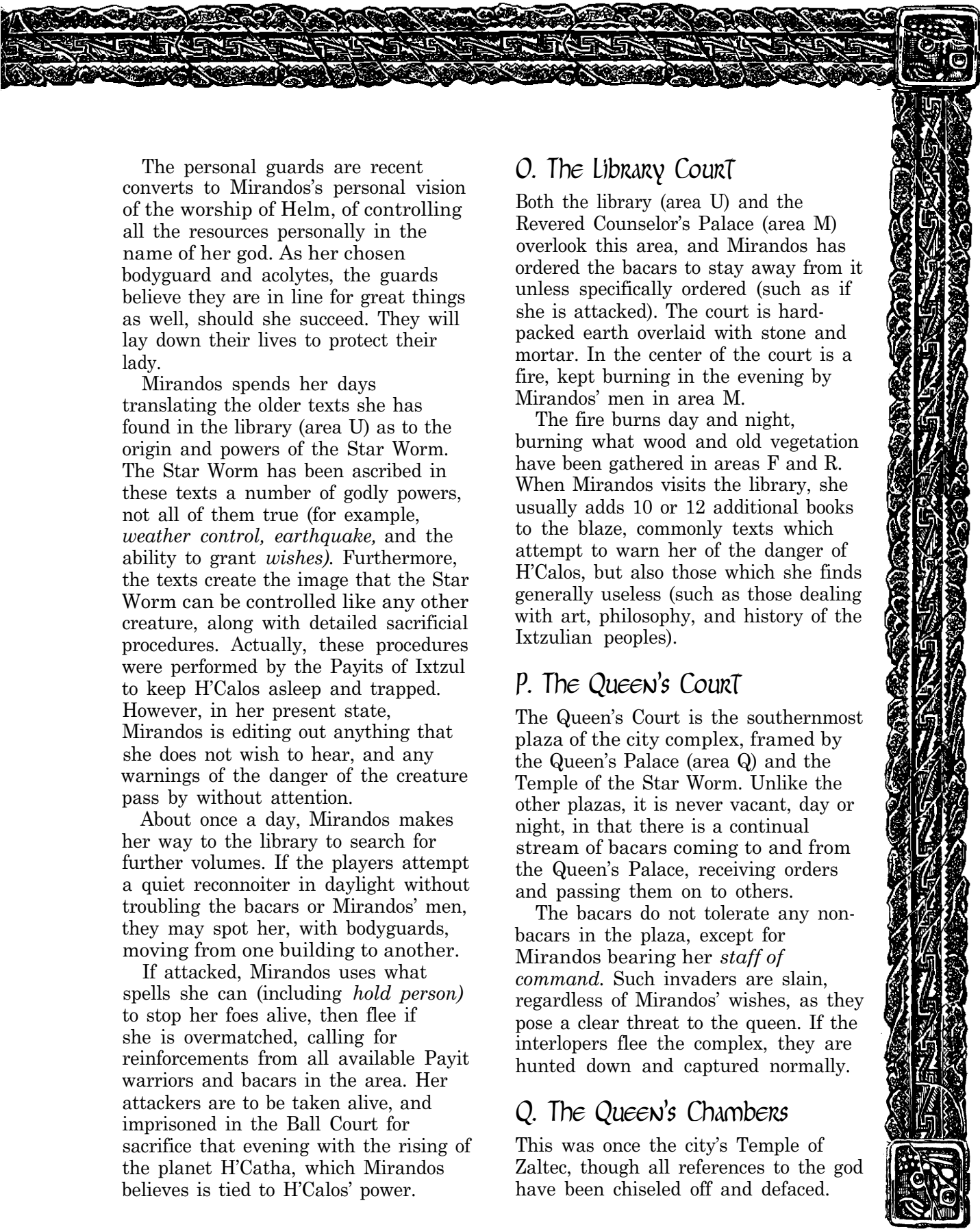
jungle, and sunset behind the lesser peaks of the Pelankal Mtns. The inner walls of this temple are inscribed with further carvings of the great Revered Counselors of Ixtzul, all beneath a carving running the length of the room, again a stylized version of the Star Worm, in this case its mouth grasping its tail over the western entrance. Written over this frieze, in dark charcoal, are a collection of magical symbols, a spell which will break the bindings on the Star Worm and allow it to return to the True World.

Mirandos and her personal bodyguard have taken this temple over as their own personal quarters, and Mirandos is planning for the day when she will make the suitable sacrifices to control this H'Calos and bring the creature under the control of the church of Helm (and under her own control at that).

Mirandos' stats are found in her entry at the end of this adventure. She is at this point consumed by her desire to control the Star Worm, to make herself the greatest spellcaster on this forsaken continent. She is driven to the point of madness, and anything that stands in her way will be destroyed.

Mirandos always carries Greyst's *staff of command*, which she looted from the old counselor's tomb. She is also continually protected by her personal bodyguard. These warriors are all loyal, and four of the six are with her at all times. When she rests, two guard each entrance to the temple, watching from within, in the shadows. They are able to spot any who attempt to scale the stairs to the temple atop the pyramid.

**Personal Guards (6 total):** Int High; AL NE; AC 4; MV 12; HD 4; hp 22 each; THAC0 5; #AT 1; Damage 1-8/1-6 (maca) or 1-8/1-6 (spear); SZ M; ML 14



The personal guards are recent converts to Mirandos's personal vision of the worship of Helm, of controlling all the resources personally in the name of her god. As her chosen bodyguard and acolytes, the guards believe they are in line for great things as well, should she succeed. They will lay down their lives to protect their lady.

Mirandos spends her days translating the older texts she has found in the library (area U) as to the origin and powers of the Star Worm. The Star Worm has been ascribed in these texts a number of godly powers, not all of them true (for example, *weather control*, *earthquake*, and the ability to grant *wishes*). Furthermore, the texts create the image that the Star Worm can be controlled like any other creature, along with detailed sacrificial procedures. Actually, these procedures were performed by the Payits of Ixtzul to keep H'Calos asleep and trapped. However, in her present state, Mirandos is editing out anything that she does not wish to hear, and any warnings of the danger of the creature pass by without attention.

About once a day, Mirandos makes her way to the library to search for further volumes. If the players attempt a quiet reconnoiter in daylight without troubling the bacars or Mirandos' men, they may spot her, with bodyguards, moving from one building to another.

If attacked, Mirandos uses what spells she can (including *hold person*) to stop her foes alive, then flee if she is overmatched, calling for reinforcements from all available Payit warriors and bacars in the area. Her attackers are to be taken alive, and imprisoned in the Ball Court for sacrifice that evening with the rising of the planet H'Catha, which Mirandos believes is tied to H'Calos' power.

## O. The Library Court

Both the library (area U) and the Revered Counselor's Palace (area M) overlook this area, and Mirandos has ordered the bacars to stay away from it unless specifically ordered (such as if she is attacked). The court is hard-packed earth overlaid with stone and mortar. In the center of the court is a fire, kept burning in the evening by Mirandos' men in area M.

The fire burns day and night, burning what wood and old vegetation have been gathered in areas F and R. When Mirandos visits the library, she usually adds 10 or 12 additional books to the blaze, commonly texts which attempt to warn her of the danger of H'Calos, but also those which she finds generally useless (such as those dealing with art, philosophy, and history of the Ixtzulian peoples).

## P. The Queen's Court

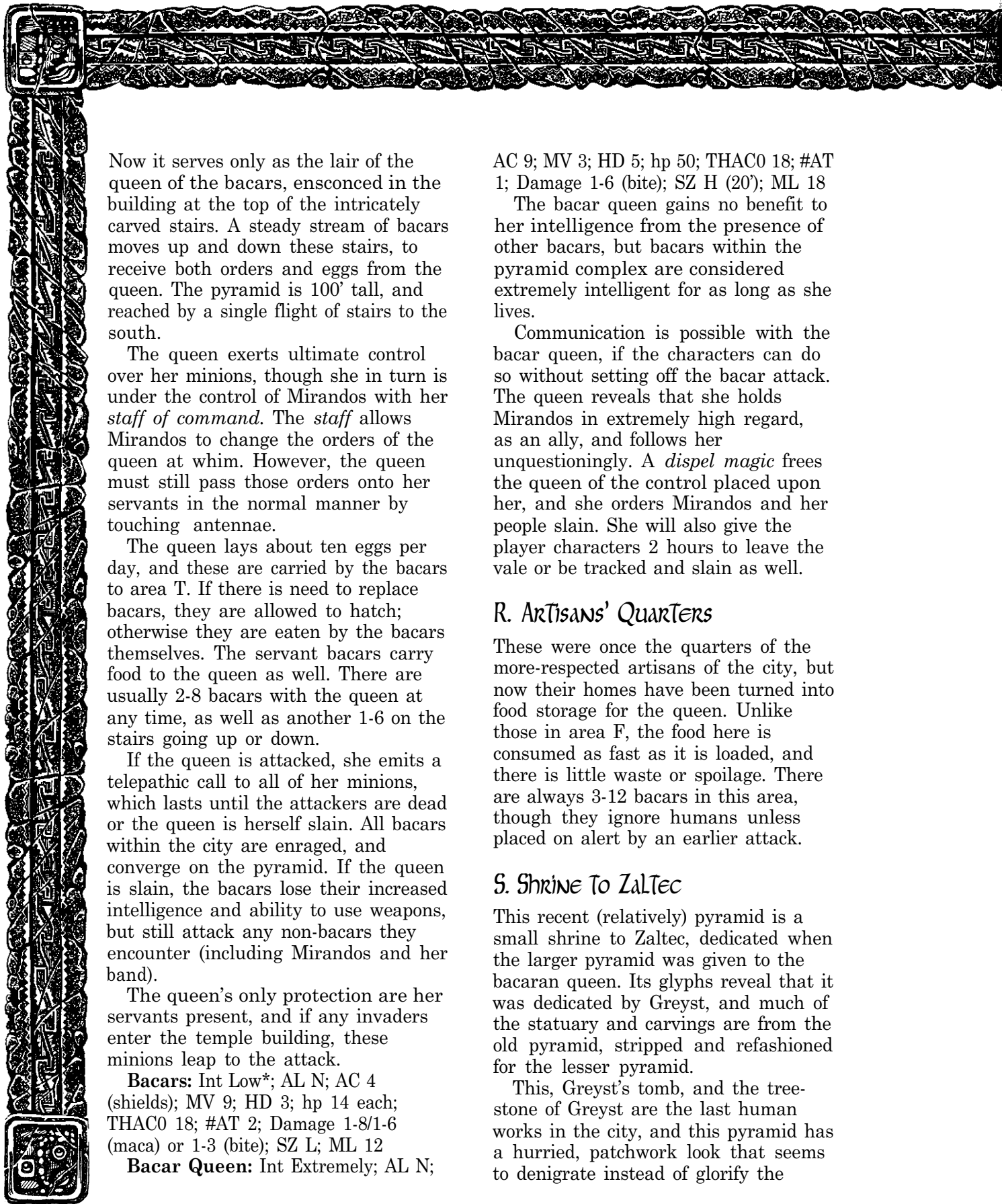
The Queen's Court is the southernmost plaza of the city complex, framed by the Queen's Palace (area Q) and the Temple of the Star Worm. Unlike the other plazas, it is never vacant, day or night, in that there is a continual stream of bacars coming to and from the Queen's Palace, receiving orders and passing them on to others.

The bacars do not tolerate any non-bacars in the plaza, except for Mirandos bearing her *staff of command*. Such invaders are slain, regardless of Mirandos' wishes, as they pose a clear threat to the queen. If the interlopers flee the complex, they are hunted down and captured normally.

## Q. The Queen's Chambers

This was once the city's Temple of Zaltec, though all references to the god have been chiseled off and defaced.





Now it serves only as the lair of the queen of the bacars, ensconced in the building at the top of the intricately carved stairs. A steady stream of bacars moves up and down these stairs, to receive both orders and eggs from the queen. The pyramid is 100' tall, and reached by a single flight of stairs to the south.

The queen exerts ultimate control over her minions, though she in turn is under the control of Mirandos with her *staff of command*. The *staff* allows Mirandos to change the orders of the queen at whim. However, the queen must still pass those orders onto her servants in the normal manner by touching antennae.

The queen lays about ten eggs per day, and these are carried by the bacars to area T. If there is need to replace bacars, they are allowed to hatch; otherwise they are eaten by the bacars themselves. The servant bacars carry food to the queen as well. There are usually 2-8 bacars with the queen at any time, as well as another 1-6 on the stairs going up or down.

If the queen is attacked, she emits a telepathic call to all of her minions, which lasts until the attackers are dead or the queen is herself slain. All bacars within the city are enraged, and converge on the pyramid. If the queen is slain, the bacars lose their increased intelligence and ability to use weapons, but still attack any non-bacars they encounter (including Mirandos and her band).

The queen's only protection are her servants present, and if any invaders enter the temple building, these minions leap to the attack.

**Bacars:** Int Low\*; AL N; AC 4 (shields); MV 9; HD 3; hp 14 each; THACO 18; #AT 2; Damage 1-8/1-6 (maca) or 1-3 (bite); SZ L; ML 12

**Bacar Queen:** Int Extremely; AL N;

AC 9; MV 3; HD 5; hp 50; THACO 18; #AT 1; Damage 1-6 (bite); SZ H (20'); ML 18

The bacar queen gains no benefit to her intelligence from the presence of other bacars, but bacars within the pyramid complex are considered extremely intelligent for as long as she lives.

Communication is possible with the bacar queen, if the characters can do so without setting off the bacar attack. The queen reveals that she holds Mirandos in extremely high regard, as an ally, and follows her unquestioningly. A *dispel magic* frees the queen of the control placed upon her, and she orders Mirandos and her people slain. She will also give the player characters 2 hours to leave the vale or be tracked and slain as well.


## R. Artisans' Quarters

These were once the quarters of the more-respected artisans of the city, but now their homes have been turned into food storage for the queen. Unlike those in area F, the food here is consumed as fast as it is loaded, and there is little waste or spoilage. There are always 3-12 bacars in this area, though they ignore humans unless placed on alert by an earlier attack.

## S. Shrine To Zaltec

This recent (relatively) pyramid is a small shrine to Zaltec, dedicated when the larger pyramid was given to the bacaran queen. Its glyphs reveal that it was dedicated by Greyst, and much of the statuary and carvings are from the old pyramid, stripped and refashioned for the lesser pyramid.

This, Greyst's tomb, and the tree-stone of Greyst are the last human works in the city, and this pyramid has a hurried, patchwork look that seems to denigrate instead of glorify the



following of this warrior power. However, it is kept extremely clean.

## T. Personal Guards

These quarters were once used by young single men of the city, but now are used by the bacars as guard barracks and a nursery for the eggs the queen lays. There are 35 bacars living in the quarters, though they ignore interlopers unless the community is on alert. In addition, there are 30 eggs in the building complex, arranged in order of their laying.

When creating the bacars, Greyst made sure that they would not overpopulate the valley in the way the humans did. Therefore, if an egg is laid, it is only allowed to hatch if there is a need for another bacar: if one has been killed or died of old age. Otherwise, after three days, the egg in question is eaten. If the queen is slain, the next egg is raised as a queen to replace it (taking about a year's time). To destroy the bacar community it is necessary both to kill the queen and destroy all the eggs in these buildings, which the bacars defend with their lives.

**Bacars:** Int Low\*; AL N; AC 4 (shields); MV 9; HD 3; hp 14 each; THAC0 18; #AT 2; Damage 1-8/1-6 (maca) or 1-3 (bite); SZ L; ML 12

## U. The Library

This building perched on the northern plaza of the complex, overlooking the Ixtzul river, was the final resting place of many texts of Ixtzul history, philosophy, and art. These books are great wooden panels (three to a book) with leather hinges, marked with glyphs and written in the archaic Payit tongue (70% chance of understanding if Payit is known). The hinged books have been protected from the elements by storage above the floor and being

wrapped in prepared pieces of cloth, and are as readable today as they were 1000 years ago.

About half the collection is gone, burned in the library court by Mirandos, but that which remains gives a rich picture of the Ixtzulian life, including the lives of its kings and nobles, artisans and farmers, as well as debates in philosophy (man's purpose in the True World) and religion (the dual nature of the gods). There are 100 surviving texts, each worth some 1500 gp back in Faerun for a collector, providing they may be smuggled out past the Amnite masters.

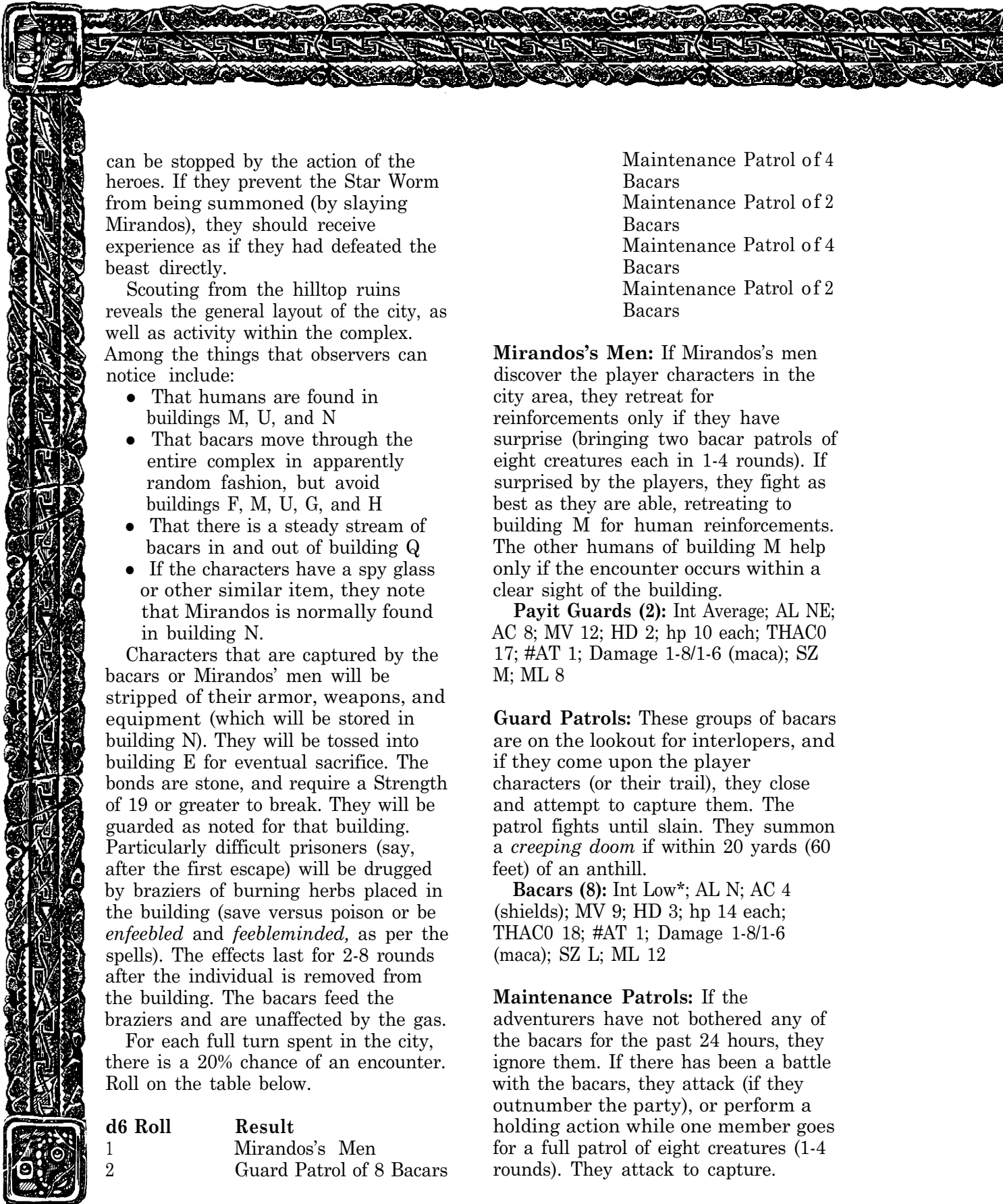
Mirandos has separated books into two categories: worthwhile (in her quarters) and useless (burned). The third category is unread, and these are the surviving texts. Among these texts is Greyst's own instructions in creating both a bacar queen and a *staff of command* for insect using hishna magic. Both of these items are considered artifacts, and can be created by someone capable of using the appropriate spell, plus the instructions within these plates.

## V. Causeway and Ford

This is one of the fords as described in area D of "The Ixtzul Valley" section, with a patrol of four bacars present at either end as guards. The causeway leads to the merchant plaza, and is raised five feet above the surrounding countryside in case of flooding.

## ENCOUNTERS IN THE CITY OF IXTZUL

What occurs in Ixtzul depends to a great degree on player character action. This section covers the general possibilities, leading up to the final summoning of the Star Worm. This



can be stopped by the action of the heroes. If they prevent the Star Worm from being summoned (by slaying Mirandos), they should receive experience as if they had defeated the beast directly.

Scouting from the hilltop ruins reveals the general layout of the city, as well as activity within the complex. Among the things that observers can notice include:

- That humans are found in buildings M, U, and N
- That bacars move through the entire complex in apparently random fashion, but avoid buildings F, M, U, G, and H
- That there is a steady stream of bacars in and out of building Q
- If the characters have a spy glass or other similar item, they note that Mirandos is normally found in building N.

Characters that are captured by the bacars or Mirandos' men will be stripped of their armor, weapons, and equipment (which will be stored in building N). They will be tossed into building E for eventual sacrifice. The bonds are stone, and require a Strength of 19 or greater to break. They will be guarded as noted for that building. Particularly difficult prisoners (say, after the first escape) will be drugged by braziers of burning herbs placed in the building (save versus poison or be *enfeebled* and *feble-minded*, as per the spells). The effects last for 2-8 rounds after the individual is removed from the building. The bacars feed the braziers and are unaffected by the gas.

For each full turn spent in the city, there is a 20% chance of an encounter. Roll on the table below.

| d6 Roll | Result                   |
|---------|--------------------------|
| 1       | Mirandos's Men           |
| 2       | Guard Patrol of 8 Bacars |

Maintenance Patrol of 4 Bacars  
Maintenance Patrol of 2 Bacars  
Maintenance Patrol of 4 Bacars  
Maintenance Patrol of 2 Bacars

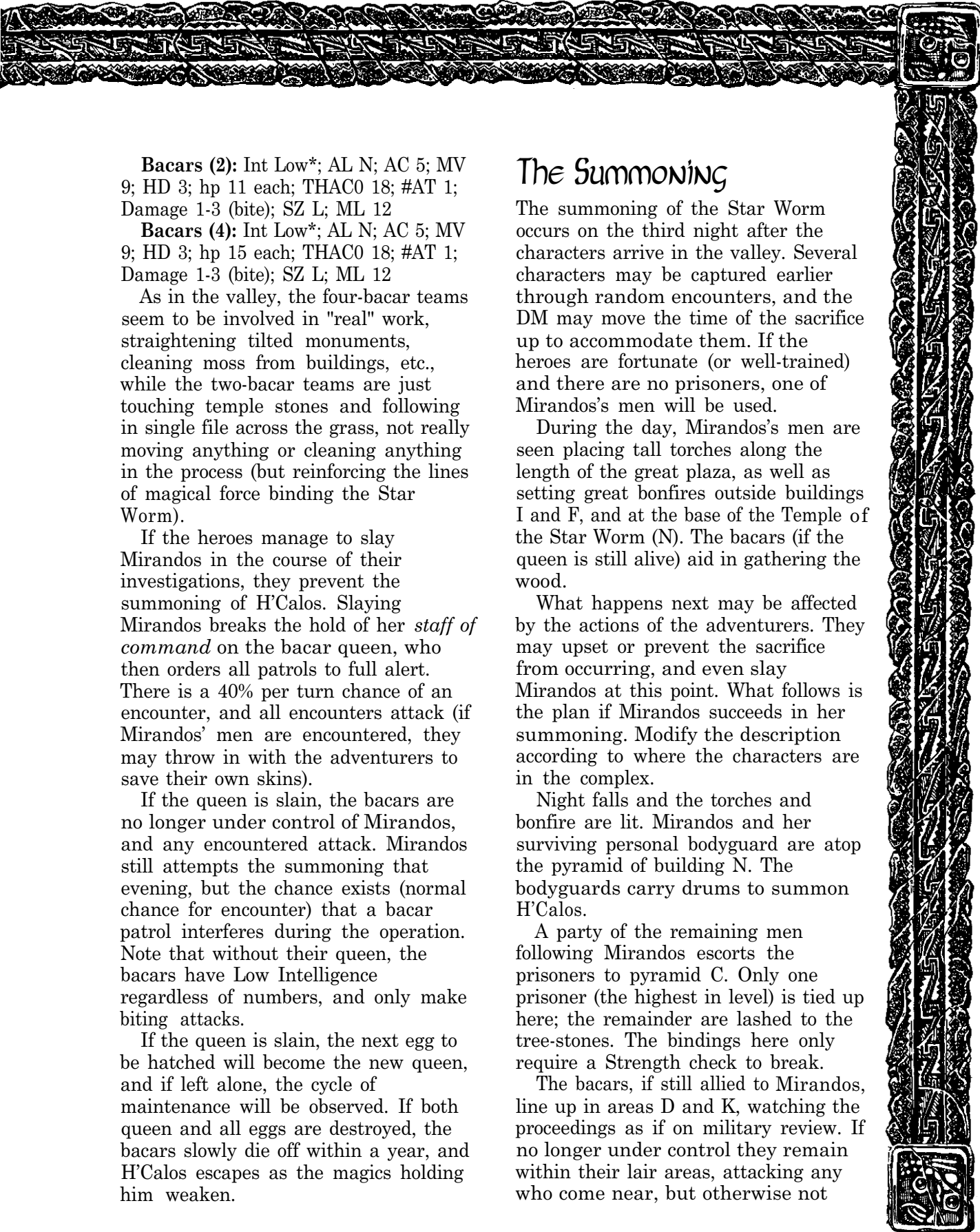
**Mirandos's Men:** If Mirandos's men discover the player characters in the city area, they retreat for reinforcements only if they have surprise (bringing two bacar patrols of eight creatures each in 1-4 rounds). If surprised by the players, they fight as best as they are able, retreating to building M for human reinforcements. The other humans of building M help only if the encounter occurs within a clear sight of the building.

**Payit Guards (2):** Int Average; AL NE; AC 8; MV 12; HD 2; hp 10 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Damage 1-8/1-6 (maca); SZ M; ML 8

**Guard Patrols:** These groups of bacars are on the lookout for interlopers, and if they come upon the player characters (or their trail), they close and attempt to capture them. The patrol fights until slain. They summon a *creeping doom* if within 20 yards (60 feet) of an anthill.

**Bacars (8):** Int Low\*; AL N; AC 4 (shields); MV 9; HD 3; hp 14 each; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Damage 1-8/1-6 (maca); SZ L; ML 12

**Maintenance Patrols:** If the adventurers have not bothered any of the bacars for the past 24 hours, they ignore them. If there has been a battle with the bacars, they attack (if they outnumber the party), or perform a holding action while one member goes for a full patrol of eight creatures (1-4 rounds). They attack to capture.



**Bacars (2):** Int Low\*; AL N; AC 5; MV 9; HD 3; hp 11 each; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Damage 1-3 (bite); SZ L; ML 12

**Bacars (4):** Int Low\*; AL N; AC 5; MV 9; HD 3; hp 15 each; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Damage 1-3 (bite); SZ L; ML 12

As in the valley, the four-bacar teams seem to be involved in "real" work, straightening tilted monuments, cleaning moss from buildings, etc., while the two-bacar teams are just touching temple stones and following in single file across the grass, not really moving anything or cleaning anything in the process (but reinforcing the lines of magical force binding the Star Worm).

If the heroes manage to slay Mirandos in the course of their investigations, they prevent the summoning of H'Calos. Slaying Mirandos breaks the hold of her *staff of command* on the bacar queen, who then orders all patrols to full alert. There is a 40% per turn chance of an encounter, and all encounters attack (if Mirandos' men are encountered, they may throw in with the adventurers to save their own skins).

If the queen is slain, the bacars are no longer under control of Mirandos, and any encountered attack. Mirandos still attempts the summoning that evening, but the chance exists (normal chance for encounter) that a bacar patrol interferes during the operation. Note that without their queen, the bacars have Low Intelligence regardless of numbers, and only make biting attacks.

If the queen is slain, the next egg to be hatched will become the new queen, and if left alone, the cycle of maintenance will be observed. If both queen and all eggs are destroyed, the bacars slowly die off within a year, and H'Calos escapes as the magics holding him weaken.

## The Summoning

The summoning of the Star Worm occurs on the third night after the characters arrive in the valley. Several characters may be captured earlier through random encounters, and the DM may move the time of the sacrifice up to accommodate them. If the heroes are fortunate (or well-trained) and there are no prisoners, one of Mirandos's men will be used.

During the day, Mirandos's men are seen placing tall torches along the length of the great plaza, as well as setting great bonfires outside buildings I and F, and at the base of the Temple of the Star Worm (N). The bacars (if the queen is still alive) aid in gathering the wood.

What happens next may be affected by the actions of the adventurers. They may upset or prevent the sacrifice from occurring, and even slay Mirandos at this point. What follows is the plan if Mirandos succeeds in her summoning. Modify the description according to where the characters are in the complex.

Night falls and the torches and bonfire are lit. Mirandos and her surviving personal bodyguard are atop the pyramid of building N. The bodyguards carry drums to summon H'Calos.

A party of the remaining men following Mirandos escorts the prisoners to pyramid C. Only one prisoner (the highest in level) is tied up here; the remainder are lashed to the tree-stones. The bindings here only require a Strength check to break.

The bacars, if still allied to Mirandos, line up in areas D and K, watching the proceedings as if on military review. If no longer under control they remain within their lair areas, attacking any who come near, but otherwise not

affecting the ceremony (unless a group wanders in, with standard random chance).

The ceremony begins when the planet H'Catha, here an emerald green beacon, rises on the horizon. Mirandos then descends the pyramid stairs to a position even with the ball court, taking about 5 rounds. Any characters who break free and run at this point are attacked by Mirandos's men. The bacars remain in place, unless the queen (who remains in her temple with eight bodyguards) is attacked.

At the end of five rounds, Mirandos raises her *staff* and casts her spell to free H'Calos. The casting takes a round. At the end of that round, a rumbling begins, starting low and building in 2 rounds to a massive thunder.

In the third round, the entire city of Ixtzul is hit by an earthquake, as per the spell. Areas A, E, F, G, I, J, K, R, and S are leveled by the attack and all other areas damaged. Areas B and C are initially unharmed, as are characters within that area (including Mirandos and her servants). The bacars are in confusion, and 1 in 8 are swallowed by the cracking earth. Characters anywhere in the valley must make a saving throw versus death or take 3-30 points of damage from falling trees, cliffs, etc. The hillside ruins slide into the valley floor, delivering 10-100 points of damage to any near them, and half that to those who make a saving throw versus death magic. The bindings holding the player characters are loosened sufficiently by the blast to allow them to escape.

Then things get worse. H'Calos arrives.

H'Calos bursts through the great plaza (area B), rising some 50' out of the group, affecting all who witness this with the fear power. Mirandos (if still among the living) attempts to



control the great Star Worm, using her staff to do so.

The crystal globe at the end of her staff explodes in shards.

H'Calos then takes his first prey, smashing into pyramid C and taking the sacrifice (if still there) with it. It still smashes the pyramid even if no creature is present.

The next round it surfaces beneath Mirandos, carrying her high into the night sky, screaming, before smashing back into the earth.

At this point, pandemonium breaks out both among the men and bacars, and every being is for himself. The bacars muster what intelligent attack they can, while the men flee in panic.

What the heroes do is up to the players. H'Calos makes only one (incredibly deadly) attack each round, and is vulnerable to attacks from all sides during that period. After the fear power wears off, heroes may fight

normally, even if days pass between battles.

Furthermore, H'Calos senses its prey through ground vibrations (as through footfalls or drums). There is a 1 in 8 chance of a hero being attacked by H'Calos if running. There is a 1 in 10 chance if they are stationary, and 1 in 12 if not moving at all. Check for every round, using the worst possible version, but only choosing among those targets for one using that type of movement (if two heroes are running, and two are standing still, there is a 1 in 8 chance of H'Calos attacking them this round, but only the two runners are targets). Check for this type of attack for every round the heroes remain in the valley, or as long as H'Calos is alive. H'Calos has been imprisoned for 1000 years, and has a lot of energy to work off killing the population. If the heroes are not attacking, H'Calos attacks bacars, Mirandos' men, or other targets, and there is a 50% chance that such an attack is close enough for a player character to have some effect on the Star Worm.

Lastly, the heroes may escape by jumping in the river. The Star Worm does not attack targets in the river until all other targets are dead. Adventurers floating downstream should remember the rapids (area A of "The Ixtzul Valley" description).

## Resolution

If H'Calos is summoned, and is not stopped by the player characters (they are either slain or flee the valley), the horror is just beginning for Maztica. It takes H'Calos about a month to entirely destroy the city of Ixtzul. Then he begins to move out.

The next target is the village closest to the valley (Hochtl's former home). H'Calos then moves northward,

destroying one village a week in the process. Payits begin fleeing the path of the creature, heading into lands where the situation comes to Amnite attention.

H'Calos takes about 14 weeks to reach Maju, where he remains for a month. Then he moves on Coxi two weeks later, then burrows under the bay and surfaces in Patil for another month. A week after finally destroying Patil, the worm heads for Ulatos and Helmsport. By this time the Amnites are sending as many groups of heroes as they can muster to deal with the creature before it arrives at their door.

Alternately, if the heroes stop Mirandos, they should receive full experience points for stopping the beast from coming (the story of what would happen can be pieced together from the unread volumes in the library). If they bring news of Mirandos' death (and possible proof) back to Helmsport, they are paid as promised, and if they bring Mirandos back alive, they are paid and the Amnites send an exploratory mission (perhaps with the characters) to investigate the lost city, and to post a permanent garrison to keep H'Calos in his place.



# Mirandos of Helm

## Level 9 Priest

Armor Class: 3  
Move: 12  
Hit Points: 37  
No. of Attacks: 1  
Damage/Attack: 1-6/1-6 (Mace)  
or 1-6/1-6 (Staff)  
Special Attacks: Priest Spells  
Special Defenses: As for  
Specialty Priest of Helm.  
Magic Resistance: Nil  
Size: M (5' 9")  
Alignment: LN  
Psionic Ability: Nil  
STR: 14 DEX: 12 CON: 17  
INT: 17 WIS: 17 CHA 17  
Spell Ability: 6/6/4/2/1

### First Level Spells

*Bless* (2)  
*Combine*  
*Create Water*  
*Cure Light Wounds* (3)  
*Detect Evil*  
*Detect Magic*  
*Detect Poison*  
*Detect Snares & Pits*  
*Endure Cold/Endure Heat*  
*Light* (1)  
*Locate Animals or Plants*  
*Magical Stone*  
*Protection from Evil*  
*Purify Food & Drink*  
*Shillelagh*

### Second Level Spells

*Augury*  
*Barkskin*  
*Chant* (1)  
*Detect Charm*  
*Dust Devil*  
*Fire Trap*  
*Heat Metal*  
*Know Alignment*  
*Produce Flame*  
*Resist Fire/Resist Cold*  
*Silence, 15' R.* (2)  
*Slow Poison*  
*Speak With Animals* (2)  
*Spiritual Hammer* (1)  
*Withdraw*  
*Wyvern Watch*

### Third Level Spells

*Continual Light*  
*Create Food & Water* (1)  
*Dispel Magic* (2)  
*Flame Walk*  
*Glyph of Warding*  
*Locate Object*  
*Magical Vestment*  
*Meld Into Stone*  
*Negative Plane Protection*  
*Prayer*  
*Protection from Fire* (1)  
*Pyrotechnics*  
*Remove Curse*  
*Remove Paralysis*  
*Speak With Dead*  
*Starshine*  
*Stone Shape*  
*Water Breathing*

### Fourth Level Spells

*Detect Lie*  
*Divination*  
*Protection from Evil, 10' R.*  
*Protection from Lightning*  
*Reflecting Pool*  
*Repel Insects* (1)  
*Spell Immunity* (1)  
*Tongues*

### Fifth Level Spells

*Anti-Plant Shell*  
*Atonement*  
*Commune*  
*Commune with Nature*  
*Dispel Evil*  
*Flame Strike* (1)  
*Insect Plague*  
*Magic Font*  
*Moonbeam*  
*Plane Shift*  
*Rainbow*  
*True Seeing*

Numbers following particular spells indicate those spells that Mirandos normally carries, with numbers indicating multiple spells of that type. If given sufficient warning in combat, she will cast her *spell immunity* against *charm*, followed by *protection from fire*, and lastly *bless*, before going into combat.

As a specialty priest of Helm, Mirandos gains a number of special powers as well. She has a bonus of +2

on all surprise rolls if alone, +1 if with others. She may also lay *glyphs of warning*, one per day. If she knows that the player characters are present in the vale, she will begin to lay in *glyphs* keyed to her *insect plague* spell, and triggered by any non-Maztican who crosses over the area (excluding herself). Such *glyphs* are situated, one per day, in areas where the player characters have been operating.

|                   |                           |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| CLIMATE/TERRAIN:  | Tropical                  |
| FREQUENCY:        | Very rare                 |
| ORGANIZATION:     | Colony                    |
| ACTIVITY CYCLE:   | Any                       |
| DIET:             | Omnivorous                |
| INTELLIGENCE:     | Low (6) and see below     |
| TREASURE:         | A                         |
| ALIGNMENT:        | Neutral                   |
| NO. APPEARING:    | 2-8                       |
| ARMOR CLASS:      | 5 (4 with shield)         |
| MOVEMENT:         | 9                         |
| HIT DICE:         | 3                         |
| THACO:            | 18                        |
| NO. OF ATTACKS:   | 2 or 3 (bite + weapon(s)) |
| DAMAGE/ATTACK:    | 1- 6/by weapon type       |
| SPECIAL ATTACKS:  | Insect control            |
| SPECIAL DEFENSES: | Nil                       |
| MAGIC RESISTANCE: | Nil                       |
| SIZE:             | L (10')                   |
| MORALE:           | Steady (12)               |
| XP VALUE:         | 270                       |

The bacars are intelligent, enchanted ants created by hishna and pluma magic as the guardians of the sacred site of Ixtzul. They appear to be giant ants, but carry weapons and shields. Their bodies are dark red, running to black along the thorax, and their underbellies are a steel blue, consisting of overlapping plates of chitin.

**COMBAT:** The bacars are organized along a military society, and are usually found only in patrols of 2-8 creatures, save at their lair at Ixtzul. In patrols they fight only with their bite, and only if in groups of 6 or more do they use weapons and shields.

A lone bacar is relatively unintelligent, following its orders to the exclusion of other matters (such as "Patrol," "Gather," "Scout," etc . . .). Their base Intelligence is 6. For each additional bacar within 20', however, the collective Intelligence is raised by one, so that a party of 3 bacars have Average Intelligence of 8, and 6 bacars are Very intelligent (11). At the Very Intelligent level, they begin to use their weapons, including long obsidian knives (1-3), macas (1-8) and slings (1-4). When using macas, the bacars use shields, raising their Armor Class to 4. When using slings or knives, they do not use shields, but they wield two knives at the same time.

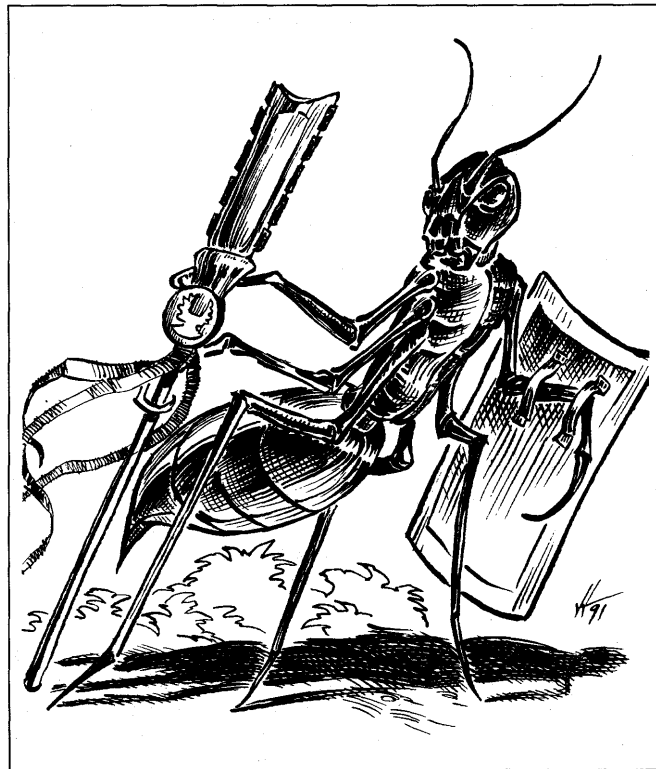
At the Highly Intelligent level (13 or better), bacars may operate outside the valley. In addition, at that stage they may mentally command colonies of army ants in the area. This allows them to effectively cast the priest's *creeping doom* spell once per day in a typical jungle. (See the valley area itself for locations of ant colonies in the Ixtzul Vale.)

**HABITAT/SOCIETY:** The bacars exist in an expanded version of ant society, aided by their limited telepathic abilities. Orders are passed from the queen (and in this case Mirandos) to the soldiers by means of touching antennae. Individually, the bacars have little initiative, and do not act unless ordered to. A bacar sent to gather food pays no attention to an advancing army (though if the army is edible, they try to drag parts of it off as food, then inform the nest that new food exists in that direction).

Typical bacar tasks include:

*Gather:* Bring back carrion, small living creatures, and succulent leaves and vines to feed the colony.

*Scout:* Look for things that were not there before. If things



are present, or changed, report immediately back to the nest. If there is a potential danger (one of the scouting bacars is killed), one scout is sent back, the others forming a rearguard.

*Guard:* Let nothing that is not bacar (except Mirandos and her followers) pass. Do not report back; fight until dead (18 morale when in this state).

*Attack:* Used when a particular enemy is identified (usually by scent). The enemy is to be slain. All non-bacars are slain. Use of *creeping doom* where applicable.

*Capture:* As for Attack, but the targets are to be knocked unconscious and taken alive. If the *creeping doom* is used, it is to herd the target to the bacars.

*Track:* Used against a retreating foe. The prey is to be tracked down. If possible use the *creeping doom*. All other potential targets are ignored unless they attack the trackers. Once captured or slain, the trackers return to Ixtzul.

*Maintain:* The most common function of the bacars when not involved in battle, they patrol the grounds, cleaning up bits of vegetation and debris, checking with their antennae to maintain the wards that hold the Star Worm. The colony has the power to reinstate the wards that weaken over time. Bacars engaged in maintenance do not fight unless attacked. They report strange activity in their area.

**ECOLOGY:** The bacars have a queen to which all defer, who provides both the eggs for new bacars (though not at levels of a normal ant colony), and orders for her soldiers. The queen is a large, bloated creature with no defenses of her own, AC 9, with 50 hp. Attacking the queen brings all bacars within 50 yards, with an additional 2-12 arriving each round thereafter.

If the queen is slain, the bacars lose their telepathic abilities. They act as individual monsters, attacking when attacked or hungry. Killing the queen also breaks the bonds holding H'Calos the Star Worm in check.



# H'Calos

|                          |                         |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>CLIMATE/TERRAIN:</b>  | Tropical (Ixtzul)       |
| <b>FREQUENCY:</b>        | Very rare (Unique)      |
| <b>ORGANIZATION:</b>     | Singular                |
| <b>ACTIVITY CYCLE:</b>   | Any                     |
| <b>DIET:</b>             | Omnivorous              |
| <b>INTELLIGENCE:</b>     | Low (4)                 |
| <b>TREASURE:</b>         | Hx3                     |
| <b>ALIGNMENT:</b>        | Chaotic neutral         |
| <b>NO. APPEARING:</b>    | 1                       |
| <b>ARMOR CLASS:</b>      | - 3                     |
| <b>MOVEMENT:</b>         | 9 (6 burrow)            |
| <b>HIT DICE:</b>         | 20                      |
| <b>THACO:</b>            | 1                       |
| <b>NO. OF ATTACKS:</b>   | 1 or 4                  |
| <b>DAMAGE/ATTACK:</b>    | 2-20 or 1-6/1-6/1-6/1-6 |
| <b>SPECIAL ATTACKS:</b>  | Swallow, fear           |
| <b>SPECIAL DEFENSES:</b> | Immune to gas, fire     |
| <b>MAGIC RESISTANCE:</b> | 20%                     |
| <b>SIZE:</b>             | G (100' long)           |
| <b>MORALE:</b>           | Fanatic (18)            |
| <b>XP VALUE:</b>         | 20,000                  |

H'Calos is a (hopefully) unique creature found in Maztica. It appears as a monstrous centipede with a black, chitinous shell. Its forward end is crowned by two glowing green eyes and a four-hinged jaw capable of swallowing any creature of size L or smaller. The forward two sets of legs have grown in the shape of a preying mantis's forelimbs, perfect for rending larger prey. The forward limbs also allow H'Calos to burrow through earth at normal speed, and through rock at one-third that speed.

**COMBAT:** H'Calos's favored method of attack is from below. It can sense vibrations through the earth and selects the loudest collection of individuals or people to attack from beneath. H'Calos emerges from the earth at high speed, taking one target with it, rising some forty feet above the ground. The target is subject to a swallow attack (see below-successful saving throw vs. breath weapon means he hasn't been swallowed, merely carried aloft), but even if he lives, he falls from that height unless he hangs on to his attacker.

H'Calos's rising from the ground causes fear (as for dragons) in all who witness it for the first time. Intelligent creatures of less than 1 HD flee in panic, with no saving throw. All others must make a saving throw against fear or fight at -2 to hit and damage for the next 10 rounds. The bacars are unaffected as long as the queen is alive, but if dead, the bacars are affected as normal monsters.

The round after rising from the earth, H'Calos plunges back down, trying to take another target with it in a swallow attack. If the original target is still alive, H'Calos tries to rend it with its forelegs instead, but crashes to the ground. H'Calos is unaffected by this maneuver. During its dive it is vulnerable to attack (its entire body must follow it down the hole). A target hit by two of the four claws is secured, and is dragged underground as well.

H'Calos can swallow its prey on a +4 or better attack roll (e.g., if the creature needs a 13 to hit and the roll is a 17 or better). Swallowed prey then takes 2-16 points of (stomach acid) damage each round, automatically, until dead. The prey may use small hand-held weapons in the creature's gullet, though slashing and blunt weapons inflict only 1 point per attack. H'Calos' insides are AC 10. Spellcasters attempting to



use spells, wands, or magical items must first make a Dexterity check.

H'Calos's tunnels through normal soil last about 3-18 rounds before caving in. Tunnels carved through stone are permanent, but softer soils (such as swamp) fill in almost immediately.

H'Calos is immune to fire and gas-based attacks, including *cloudkill*.

**HABITAT/SOCIETY:** H'Calos lives to eat, period, and has spent the past 800 years in hibernation. He awakens with an all-consuming hunger, and eats until he is killed. He eats anything, but prefers animals, if only because they are easier to track through vibrations in the ground.

The breeding or creation of creatures such as H'Calos is unknown, although the idea of more than one of these creatures chills the blood.

**ECOLOGY:** H'Calos the Star Worm fell to earth about a thousand years ago, encased in a meteorite. Whether this spaceborn rock was his lair or his prison is unknown. His landing near the Vale of Ixtzul reverberated around the True World, and his coming may have closed off the last of the dwarven tunnels back to Faerun.

H'Calos' landing in the True World has had much to do with his long slumber. Without huge underground civilizations (as in Faerun), no delving society found him by accident. Also, without organized nations, Ixtzul was quickly forgotten. Those who did adventure into the valley of Ixtzul were dealt with by the bacars.

Should H'Calos be freed, he will be at full power, but hungry, such that entire towns and cities will vanish overnight under his assault.

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons  
2nd Edition



# ENDLESS ARMIES

By Jeff Grubb



Deep within the heart of the jungles of Far Payit is a city lost to time and the modern people of Maztica. Long ago abandoned by its people, it holds a deadly secret deep beneath its ruined surface, a secret held safe by a tribe of inhuman guardians.

A secret that has remained inviolate until now.

A cleric of the church of Helm has disappeared. A piece of a map to the lost city of Ixtzul has been found.

Great armies of ants perform deadly assassinations. And in the jungle, a new leader has appeared, promising power to those who follow her into the forbidden vale.

Now the heroes must follow as well, to uncloak the mystery and prevent the unleashing of a deadly force on the surface world of Maztica, a force that threatens both the people of Payit and the newcomers' civilization in Helmsport. Should the heroes fail to defeat the endless armies of their foe, all in Maztica will perish!

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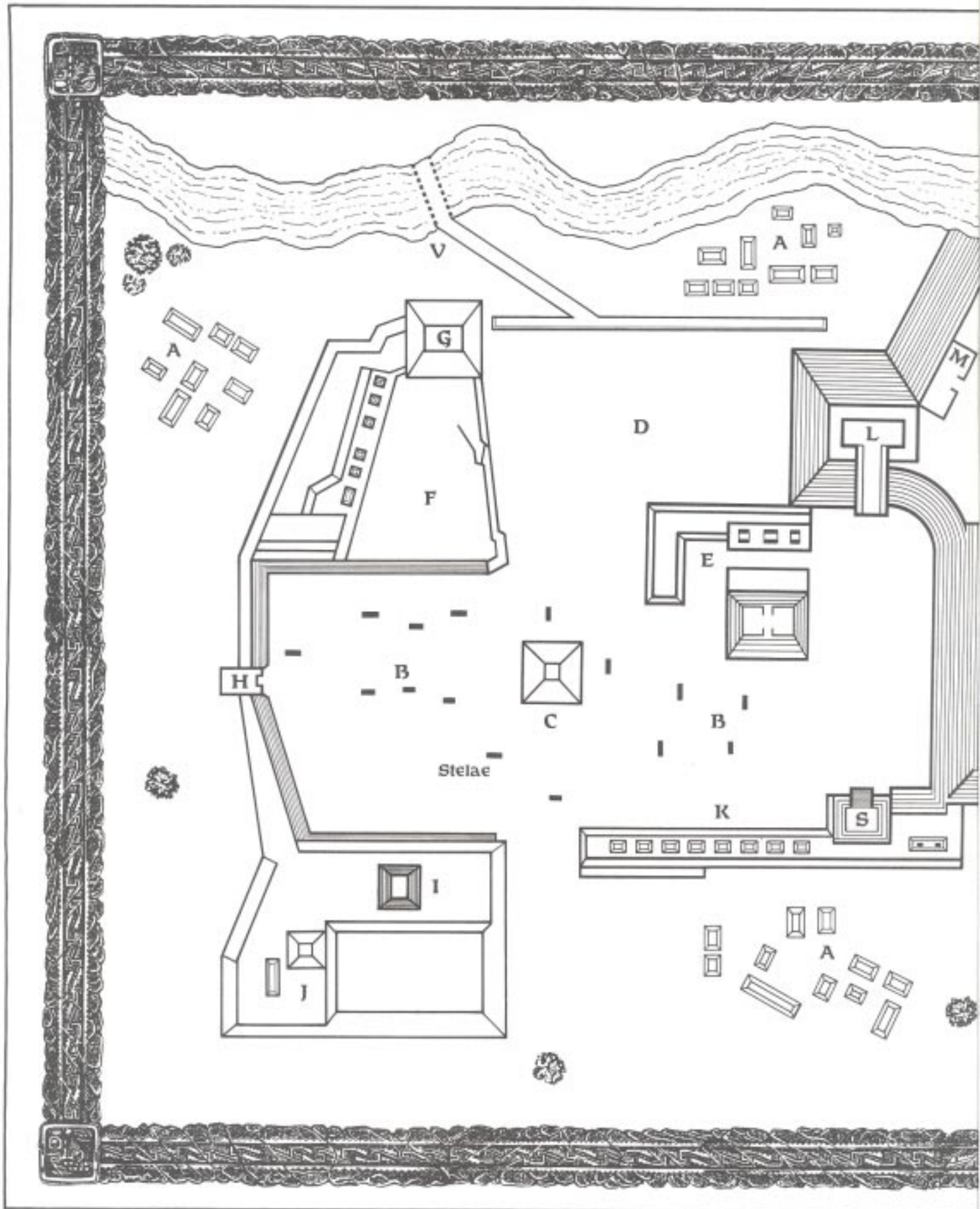
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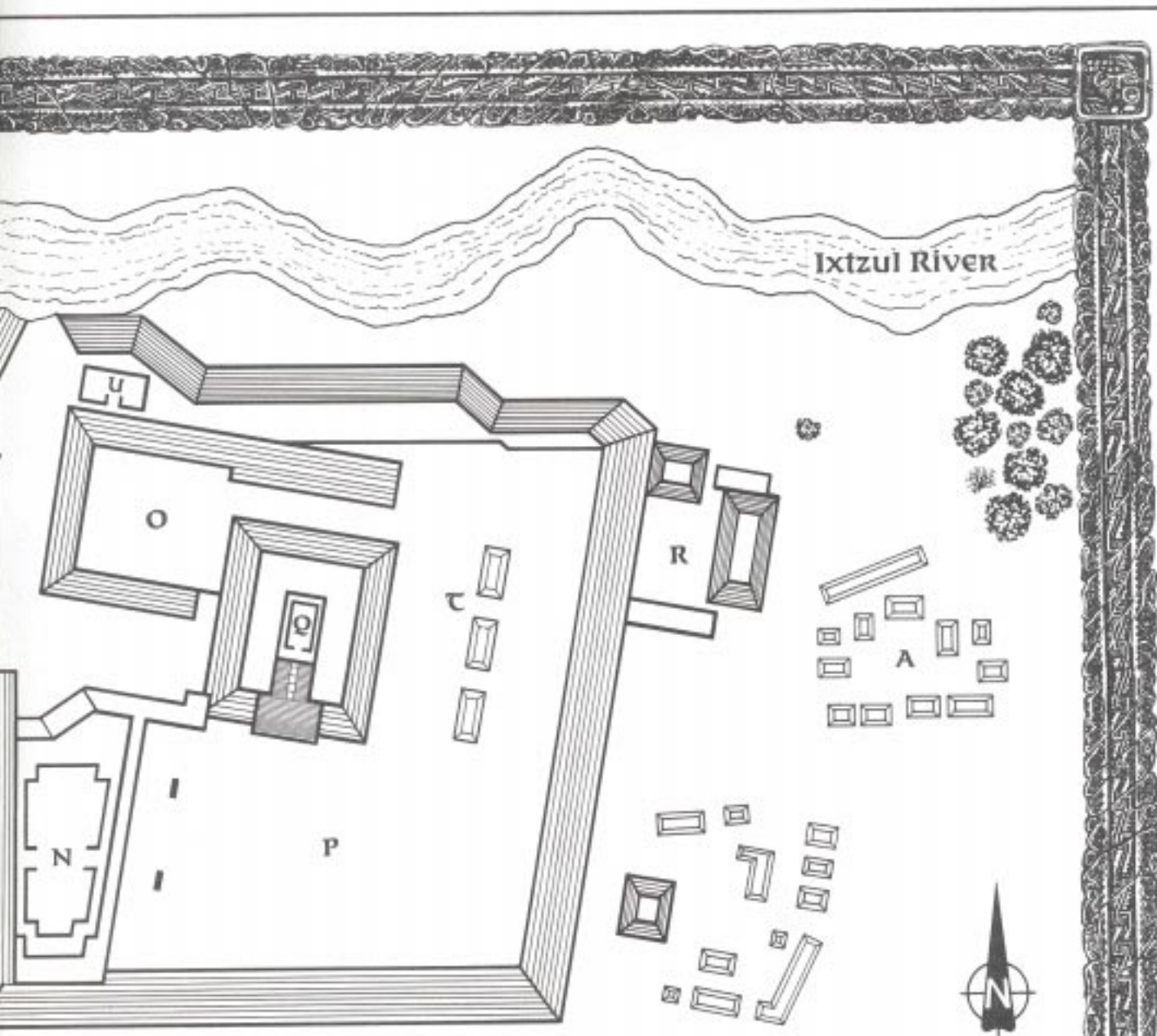


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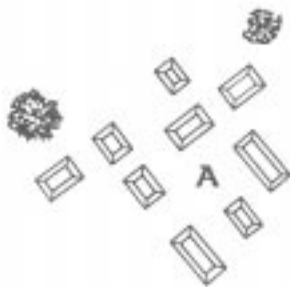


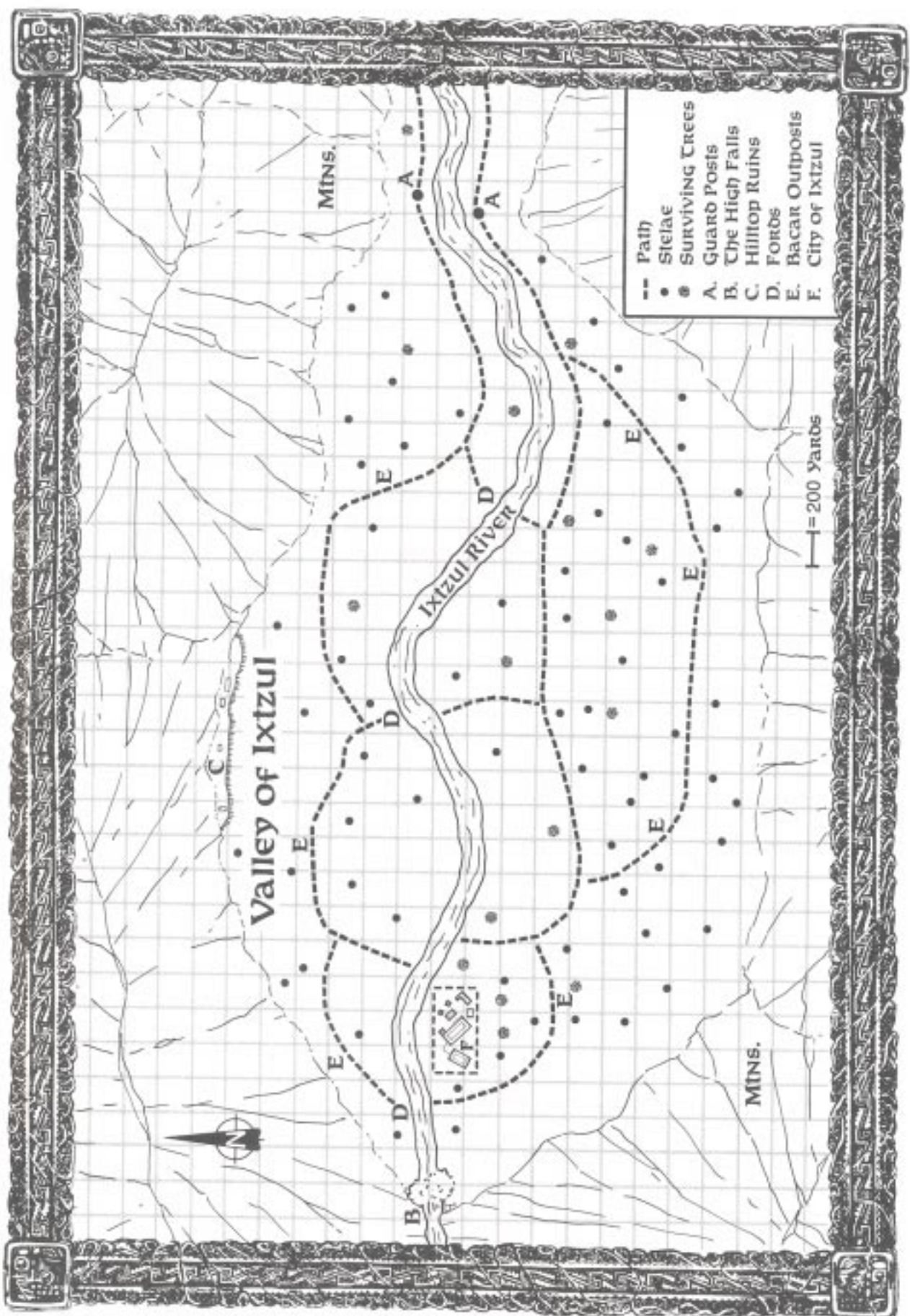
Ixtzul River

## CITY OF IXTZUL

- |                              |                                    |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| A. Bacar Outposts            | L. Temple of Azul                  |
| B. Great Plaza               | M. Palace of the Revered Counselor |
| C. Pyramid of Pronouncements | N. Temple of the Star Worm         |
| D. The Old Market            | O. The Library Court               |
| E. Ball Court                | P. The Queen's Court               |
| F. Merchants' Quarters       | Q. The Queen's Chambers            |
| G. Shrine to Qotal           | R. Artisans' Quarters              |
| H. Tomb of Greyel            | S. Shrine to Zaltec                |
| I. Shrine to Tezca           | T. Personal Guard Quarters         |
| J. Shrine to Eha             | U. Library                         |
| K. Soldiers' Quarters        | V. Causeway & Ford                 |

0 10 20 50  
Yards





# Valley of Ixtzul

MINS.

MINS.

Ixtzul River

- Path
- Stelae
- Surviving Trees
- Guard Posts
- The High Falls
- Hilltop Ruins
- Forbs
- Bacar Outposts
- City of Ixtzul

1" = 200 yards





To Helmsport/Ulatos

Narabatun Jungle

Valley of Ixtzul

Tulom-Itzi

River Ixtzul

Mt. Ixtli

Bilchak River

Zulán River

Zula

Mt. Ushtak

FAR

PAYIT

Pelankai Mtns.