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GOBLIN-GATE



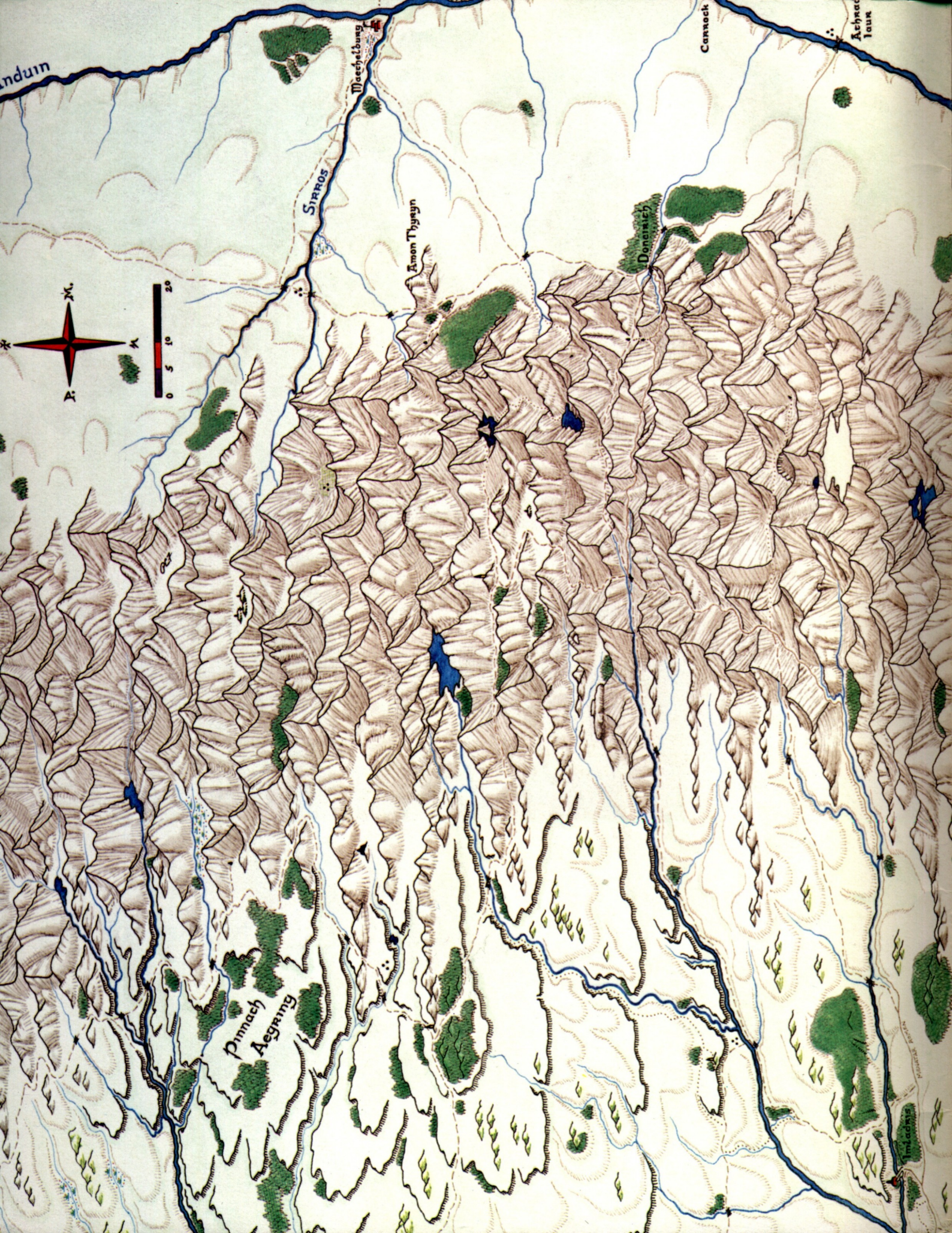
and **EAGLE'S EYRIE**™

A Fantasy Role Playing adventure module from
J.R.R. TOLKIEN'S MIDDLE-EARTH



85 Chris White

Based on THE HOBBIT™ and THE LORD OF THE RINGS™, this package details the High Pass of the Misty Mountains. Adventure into the depths of Goblin-gate, kingdom of the Great-goblin and the hiding place of Gollum, possessor of the One True Ring. Soar with the Great-eagles of Eagle's Eyrie, stroll the streets of Maethelburg, market of the npper Anduin, or battle the Giants of the Misty Mountains.



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Amon Thyeayn

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Pinnach
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Imboden

goblin-gate™

and eagle's eyrie

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The Lord of the Eagles and His Court

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"Orcs ahead," whispered Mirag. The Ranger drew back to her companions in the narrow subterranean passage. Kôma raised his hammer, "We must strike now, while they're not prepared!" the Dwarven warrior urged. "Onree and Mûldec are in chains, and they are lost if the Orcs reach Goblin-town!"

The mystical Half-elf Trevor nodded in reluctant agreement. "This is the last time we rescue these two. The Orcs cannot stand the heat and light from my trident, I will loose a blinding flash before you attack."

From behind came a high Hobbit voice: "I saw the eyes again — following, watching us!" Tobold nervously slipped up next to Trevor, while Kôma laughed, "We do not expect a thief to fight." Trevor laid his hand on Tobold's shoulder, "Already you have done enough to merit my trust, Mr. Goodburrow. Without your sharp sight, we would never have found the Orcs' secret entrance. Stay and guard the rear, if you wish."

Kôma edged forward, lowering the visor of his ornate helm. Mirag, sword in hand, advanced, crouching under the low passage roof. Behind came Trevor, head bent in concentration as he summoned his spell from the trident.

Tobold stood in the darkness for a moment. Then his heart grew chill, as two greenish lights seemed to approach him from the party's rear. "I'm no coward," Tobold muttered to himself. "But Orcs ahead and eyes behind!" His hand trembled for a moment, as he hurried after his friends grasping the hilt of his sheathed dagger.

1.0 GUIDELINES

Fantasy role playing is akin to a living novel where the players are the main characters. Everyone combines to write a story which is never short of adventure. Players help to create a new land and weave strange new tales.

This series is designed as a tool for gamemasters who wish to run scenarios or campaigns set in J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle-earth. The adventure modules are complete and ready-to-run studies of very specific areas, and are intended to be used with a minimum of additional work. Each has statistical information based on the *Middle-earth Role Playing (MERP)* and *Rolemaster (RM)* fantasy systems. The modules are, however, adaptable for use with most major role playing games. Creative guidelines, not absolutes, are emphasized.

Professor Tolkien's Legacy

Each module is based on extensive research and attempts to meet the high standards associated with the Tolkien legacy. Rational linguistic, cultural, and geological data are employed. Interpretive material has been included with great care, and fits into defined patterns and schemes. ICE does not intend it to be the sole or proper view; instead, we hope to provide the reader the thrust of the creative legacy and the character of the given area.

Remember that the ultimate source of information are the works of Professor J.R.R. Tolkien. Posthumous publications edited by his son Christopher shed additional light on the world of Middle-earth. These modules are derived from *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, although they have been developed so that no conflict exists with any of the other sources.

1.1 DEFINITIONS AND TERMS

The following abbreviations and terms are used throughout the series.

1.11 DEFINITIONS

A few crucial concepts are described below. The majority of unique terms and translations from *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* are found in the text proper.

Angmar: (S. "Iron Home"). Angmar is founded around T.A. 1300 by the Witch-king, the Lord of the Nazgûl. An evil realm, it lies nestled in and along the icy flanks of the northern Misty Mountains (S. "Hithaeglir"), in the high plateau of northeastern Eriador. Between T.A. 1301 and 1974, Angmar wars on *Arthedain*, *Cardolan*, and *Rhudaûr*, the three Dúnedain successor states to old Arnor.

Cniht: A mounted officer of the town guard in Maethelburg.

Dúnedain: (S. "Edain of the West"; sing. *Dúnadan*.) These High Men are descendants of the Edain who settled the western island continent of Númenor around S.A. 32. The Dúnedain returned to explore, trade with, colonize, and later conquer many areas along the western, southern, and eastern coasts of Endor during the Second Age. Unfortunately, their hubris and desire for power led them to attempt an invasion of the Valar's Undying Lands (Valinor). As a result, Eru (the One) destroyed their home island in S.A. 3319. Those called the "Faithful" opposed the policies and jealous Elf-hatred that prompted this "Downfall." The Faithful were saved when Númenor sank and sailed east to northwestern Middle-earth. There they founded the "Realms in Exile," the kingdoms of Arnor and Gondor.

The term Dúnedain refers to the Númenoreans and their descendants in Middle-earth, groups which possess considerable physical and mental strength, longevity, and a rich Elven-influenced culture. *Adûnaic* is their native language.

Eriador: (S. approx. "The Empty Lands"). Eriador is a geographic region which includes all the territory north of the River Isen (S. "Sîr Angren") and between the Blue Mountains (S. "Ered Luin") and the Misty Mountains. Eriador incorporates the lands of *Minhiriath*, *Eregion*, *Cardolan*, *Rhudaûr*, and *Arthedain* and, by some, *Dunland* and *Enedhwaith*.

Free Peoples: The "good" races of Middle-earth: Elves, Dwarves, Hobbits, and Men (especially the Dúnedain); specifically those races which were in opposition to Sauron.

Fyrd: The Nenedain regional militia.

Gondor: (S. "Stone-land.") The great Dúnedain kingdom that lies west of Mordor and north of the Bay of Belfalas. It includes a number of regions: (clockwise from the north) *Calenardhon* (Rohan after T.A. 2510); *Anórien*; *Ithilien*; *Lebennin*; *Belfalas*; *Lamedon*; *Anfalas*; and *Andrast*. *Osgiliath* on the Anduin serves as the Gondorian capital until T.A. 1640, when the throne is moved to *Minas Anor* (*Minas Tirith*).

High Pass: The pass through the Misty Mountains east of Rivendell.

Hillmen: This race of short, dark, hardy folk who settled Rhudaûr in the late First Age and early Second Age. Distantly related to Dunlendings, they lived peaceably as hunters and gatherers until the coming of the Dúnedain and Dunlending tribes during the Second Age. Hillmen are of a stocky build, several inches shorter than the Northmen with much the same weight. Their complexion is dusky, and both hair and eyes are brown. Superb mountaineers, they traverse rugged hills with little more effort than others require in clear plains.

A vocal, vigorous and contentious people, Hillmen are deeply suspicious and hostile to most outsiders. They are brave and skillful warriors, if poorly armed, but do not shrink from treachery and ambush. Both Dúnedain and Northmen are traditional foes, and Elves are greatly feared and avoided. Hillmen speak a Dunish dialect, and some know broken Westron for dealing with strangers. Intensely superstitious, Hillmen worship various vengeful petty deities with blood sacrifices.

Mirkwood: The great stretch of forest called by the Elves *Taur-e-Ndaedlos* (S. "Forest of Great Fear"). Like the "Old Forest" and the "Fangorn", it is a remnant of the great forest which once covered most of northwestern Endor.

Misty Mountains: The great mountain chain of northwestern Middle-earth, running over 900 miles from the Northern waste to the Gap of Rohan.

Nenedain: The Northmen of the Anduin vales.

Northmen: Also called the Northrons. A grouping of tall, strong, fair, and hairy mannish folk. They are the "Middle-men", a group culturally and physically closer to Elves than those labeled "common", but nonetheless distinct from the "High Men" or Edain. Branches of the Northmen include: the Wood-men, the Plains-men or *Gramuz*, the Lake-men, the Dale-men, the Eóthraim, the Eótheod, the Beornings, and the Nenedain.

Rhovanion: (S. "Wilderland"; lit. "Wild Place"). Traditionally, this region includes all the land south of the Grey Mountains (S. "Ered Mithrin") and north of Mordor, between the Misty Mountains and the Redwater. This area includes Mirkwood and the northern Anduin river valley.

Rhudaûr: (S. "East Forest"; Du. "Place of Roaring Red-gold"). Easternmost of the three sections of Arnor, Rhudaûr is a rugged, wooded land — hence its name. It is also a culturally diverse and politically volatile territory with a relatively small Dúnedain population. Hillmen (*Hi*. "Ne Dreubhan") and later, migrating Dunlendings form the majority of its populace. Rhudaûr becomes an independent Dúnedain kingdom with the sundering of Arnor in T.A. 861 and falls under the sway of the Witch-king of Angmar between T.A. 1301 and 1350. With the War of T.A. 1409, it ceases to exist as an integrated state.

Trolls: Morgoth bred the first Trolls (S. Tereg, sing. Torog) during the Great Darkness of the Elder Days in mockery of Ents, giving his repulsive creations a substance of stone, with comparable strength, hardness and intellect. The original Stone-trolls have over the ages diversified into several other species, including Hill-, Cave-, and Snow-trolls. Stone-trolls are still the most numerous sort, ranging throughout the broken lands of Rhudaur. Hill-trolls stalk the lower slopes of the Misty Mountains, while Snow-trolls lurk amidst the upper peaks and glaciers. Most hideous of all, the Cave-trolls haunt the caverns beneath the mountains, never venturing onto the surface of the world.

Trolls are a colossal race, 9-11 feet high, with thick bodies and limbs, and tough hides of overlapping scales. Most are greenish or grey, but the rare Snow-trolls are white. Troll blood is black and steaming.

Immensely strong, their ferocity is terrifying, and in battle Trolls are utterly fearless, attacking with crude battering weapons or naked claws and fangs until victorious or slain. Like common Orcs, Trolls can see at night as though it were brightest day, and possess limited vision even in absolute subterranean darkness, Cave-trolls being the most perceptive. Principal Trollish handicaps are direct sunlight, which transforms them back to lifeless stone, and phenomenal stupidity.

Witch-king: The Witch-king of Angmar, also called the lord of Morgul, was the chief of the Nazgûl; he was the Lord of the Nazgûl and possessed the greatest power of independent action.

1.12 ABBREVIATIONS

Game Systems

MERP — Middle-earth Role Playing **RM** — Rolemaster

Character Stats

Ag — Agility (RM and MERP) Me — Memory (RM)
Co — Constitution (RM and MERP) Pr — Presence (RM and MERP)
Em — Empathy (RM) Qu — Quickness (RM)
Ig — Intelligence (MERP) Re — Reasoning (RM)
It (In) — Intuition (RM and MERP) Sd — Self Discipline (RM)
St — Strength (RM and MERP)

Game Terms

AT — Armor Type Lvl — Level (experience or spell level)
bp — bronze piece(s) MA — Martial Arts
cp — copper piece(s) Mod — Modifier or Modification
Crit — Critical strike mp — mithril piece(s)
D — Die or Dice NPC — Non-player Character
DB — Defensive Bonus OB — Offensive Bonus
FRP — Fantasy Role Playing PC — Player Character
GM — Gamemaster PP — Power Points
gp — gold piece(s) R or Rad — Radius
ip — iron piece(s) Rnd or Rd — Round (10 second period)
jp — jade piece(s) RR — Resistance Roll
Stat — Statistic or Characteristic
tp — tin piece(s)

Middle-earth Terms

A — Adûnaic Kh — Khuzdul (Dwarvish)
BS — Black Speech LotR — The Lord of the Rings
Cir — Cirth or Certar Or — Orkish
Du — Dunlending Q — Quenya
E — Edain R — Rohirric
El — Eldarin Rh — Rhovanion
Es — Easterling S — Sindarin
I.A. — First Age S.A. — Second Age
F.A. — Fourth Age Si — Silvan Elvish
Hi — Hillman T.A. — Third Age
H — Hobbitish (Westron variant) Teng — Tengwar
Har — Haradrim V — Variag
Hob — The Hobbit W — Westron (Common Speech)
Kd — Kuduk (ancient Hobbitish) Wo — Wose (Drúedain)

1.13 CONVERTING HITS AND BONUSES

— When converting percentile values to a 1-20 system a simple rule is: for every +5 on a D100 scale you get a +1 on a D20.

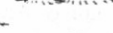
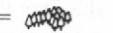
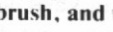
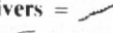
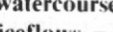
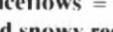
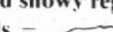
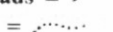
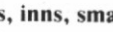
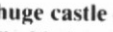
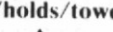
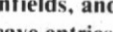
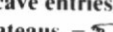
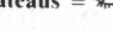
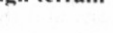
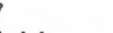
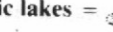
— The concussion hit numbers found in this module represent general pain and system shock. They cover bruises and small cuts rather than wounds. Critical strike damage is used to describe serious wounds and fatal blows. The hit figures shown here are less important than those used in game systems where death occurs as a result of exceeding one's available hits. Should you use a game system that employs no specific critical strike results, such as TSR Inc.'s *Dungeons and Dragons*®, simply double the number of hits your characters take or halve the hit values found in this module.

1.14 CONVERTING STATISTICS FOR ANY MAJOR FRP SYSTEM

If you play something other than *MERP* or *Rolemaster* and you do not use a percentile system, use the following chart to convert 1-100 numbers to figures suited to your game.

1-100 Stat.	Bonus on D100*	Bonus on D20	3-18 Stat.	2-12 Stat.
102 +	+35	+7	20 +	17 +
101	+30	+6	19	15-16
100	+25	+5	18	13-14
98-99	+20	+4	17	12
95-97	+15	+3	16	—
90-94	+10	+2	15	11
85-89	+5	+1	14	10
75-84	+5	+1	13	9
60-74	0	0	12	8
40-59	0	0	10-11	7
25-39	0	0	9	6
15-24	-5	-1	8	5
10-14	-5	-1	7	4
5-9	-10	-2	6	3
3-4	-15	-3	5	—
2	-20	-4	4	2
1	-25	-4	4	2

1.2 BASIC COLOR AREA MAP KEY

- (1) 1 inch = 20 miles
- (2) Mountains = 
- (3) Hills = 
- (4) Mixed forests = 
- (5) Pine forests = 
- (6) Hedgerows, brush, and thickets = 
- (7) Primary Rivers = 
- (8) Secondary Rivers = 
- (9) Streams = 
- (10) Intermittent watercourses = 
- (11) Glaciers and iceflows = 
- (12) Mountain and snowy regions have no coloring.
- (13) Primary roads = 
- (14) Secondary roads = 
- (15) Trails/tracks = 
- (16) Bridges = 
- (17) Fords = 
- (18) Cities = 
- (19) Towns = 
- (20) Manor houses, inns, small villages = 
- (21) Citadels and huge castle complexes = 
- (22) Small castles/holds/towers/keeps etc. = 
- (23) Monasteries = 
- (24) Observatories = 
- (25) Barrows, cairnfields, and burial caves = 
- (26) Caverns and cave entries = 
- (27) Buttes and plateaus = 
- (28) Lakes = 
- (29) Dunes = 
- (30) Extremely rough terrain = 
- (31) Desert = 
- (32) Steep ridge faces and downs = 
- (33) Reefs = 
- (34) Ruins = 
- (35) Swamps and marshlands = 
- (36) Jungle = 
- (37) Dry or periodic lakes = 

2.0 INTRODUCTION

When darkness descends upon the Anduin Vales, the Northmen of this land gather close in their longhouses, barring the gates and piling the fires high. Mere superstitions do not intimidate these hardy folk, akin to the heroic Edain of the Elder Days, and even the howls of the Wargs heard ever closer to the isolated homesteads bring but few shudders. But the valley of the Great River lies under the shadow of the towering Misty Mountains, which have long been the haunts of the Orcs. In the year 1640 of the Third Age, the Great Plague is scarcely four years past, and the Northmen have yet to recover from its grievous devastation. Emboldened by the weakness of their neighbors and the evil emanating from Angmar to the north, Orcs and their Warg allies dare to strike ever more frequently and deeper into the vales of the Anduin.

Looking westward from the river plain, the snowcapped Misty Mountains stab defiantly toward the heavens. Cutting through the mountains' heart is the High Pass, connecting Rivendell and the lands of *Eriador* to the ancient Dwarf-road running east through the dreadful forest of Mirkwood. For three ages of the world, travellers and migrating peoples have followed this route but now the way is increasingly imperiled. Near the summit of the the pass the Orcs have delved one of their infamous subterranean strongholds, known to its apprehensive neighbors as Goblin-gate. Deep under the forbidding mountain crags the Orcs mine, forge and quarrel, while their lords plot the conquest of the surrounding lowlands. Within the Goblin-town a fearsome host of savage Orcish warriors is already mustered. Not far distant is the Witch-king's domain of Angmar and the Orcish capital of Mount Gundabad, rendering the strategic locale of Goblin-gate an incalculable threat to the Free Peoples.

Fortunately, the Men of the Anduin Vales need not trust to their own arms alone to counter the goblin menace. High above the river valley and around the mountain peaks soar the Great Eagles, noblest avians of Middle-earth. Not far from the Orcs' eastern portal rises the solitary pinnacle of Eagles' Eyrie, throne of the majestic Lord of the Eagles. Little below escapes the Eagles' roving gaze, and when on occasion the Free Peoples have confronted impending ruin, the Eagles' intervention has offered unexpected salvation.

Nor are the other inhabitants of the mountains uniformly wicked. In secluded glens and caves dwell the reclusive and solitary Stone-Giants, an ancient race of awesome size and appearance. They do not welcome prying explorers, but they are no friends of the Orcs. When thunderstorms rage over the mountains, the Giants may be seen at their most formidable, casting boulders about in play and bellowing their deafening challenges, enough to make the boldest travellers quaver in fear.

In these troubled times, conflict has become all too familiar to the denizens of the mountains and vales. Adventurers are sure to find more than their fill of both danger and opportunity. Several powers contest for dominion in ever-shifting balance. Peace is a dim memory, and none can predict what the future holds in store.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE REGION

Long have the wild Misty Mountains and their neighboring vales preserved their independence and seclusion. Knowledge of the region has been collected from oral traditions and the accounts of infrequent civilized travellers. Preoccupied with the struggle to survive, the inhabitants have not troubled to record their own deeds. This is regrettable, for many a tale might be told, as this region has figured prominently in the fate of Middle-earth.

The Elder Days and Dark Years

The Elves were first to behold the formidable barrier known as the Misty Mountains, during their legendary journey westward under the guidance of the Vala Orome. Later in the First Age, Men

migrated from the East into the areas surrounding the northern Misty Mountains. These tribes would become known as the Northmen.

Early in the Second Age, following the destruction of Beleriand, the wreck of *Morgoth's* shattered hosts fled eastward and many Orcs found refuge in the caves of the Misty Mountains. Their possession of the heights did not go unchallenged. Giants had been there since the Elder Days, and Dwarven mining colonies were slowly spreading northward from the immense citadel of Durin's Folk known as Khazad-dûm (later to be called Moria). As if this were not enough, the Great Eagles also alighted upon the mountainsides, seeking new eyries to replace those lost with Beleriand's downfall. During the Dark Years that followed, the lands east of the mountains remained a backwater, chaotic and isolated.

The Third Age to T.A. 1640: The Return of the Shadow

Following the overthrow of Sauron in the War of the Last Alliance, the power of darkness in Middle-earth was long crippled. With no dominant overlord surviving, the Orcish mountain tribes degenerated into futile internecine feuding.

For the Northmen, however, the early Third Age proved a time of unparalleled prosperity and expansion. Spreading southward along the river, the Men of the Anduin Vales mingled with the aboriginal Hobbit tribes now making their debut in history. Northmen language, names and customs were readily assimilated by the half-lings. Simultaneously, the Northmen were themselves influenced by the advanced civilization of the Dúnedain through trade along the Anduin with the resplendent kingdom of Gondor to the south. During the reign of King Hyarmendacil I, T.A. 1015-1149, the Men of the Anduin Vales acknowledged the authority of the Dúnedain monarch.

Sauron came in secret to his stronghold of Dol Guldur around T.A. 1100, and turmoil soon returned to the lands about the Misty Mountains. At this time, most Hobbits fled west over the mountain passes. To the north the Witch-king founded his evil domain of Angmar about T.A. 1300, sprawling across both sides of the northern end of the mountains. Evidently the Witch-king's presence compelled a truce in the Orcs' interminable inter-tribal conflicts, for at this time the Orcish population grew explosively. Orcs of the Mountains assailed isolated Dwarven outposts, as wars between the Dúnedain and Angmar engulfed Eriador.

Angmar did not seek to conquer the Anduin Vales from its territories east of the mountains, for the bulk of its armies were needed in the west. Nevertheless, intermittent Orcish raiding from the mountain strongholds often afflicted the disunited inhabitants of the vales who could no longer rely upon the distant power of Gondor. Far worse, in T.A. 1635-36 the terrible Great Plague from the East swept through the region, claiming the lives of half its Northmen inhabitants.

3.0 THE LAND

Eternally cloud-wreathed, the colossal mass of the Misty Mountains divides this land from north to south, rearing above the flanking foothills and vales in commanding majesty. Known to the Elves as the Hithaeglir (S. "Line of Misty Peaks"), or Towers of Mist, these mountains are doubtless the highest in Middle-earth. Climaxing at their center with the triple peaks of Caradhras (S. "Redhorn"), Celbedil (S. "Silvertine"), and Fanuidhol (S. "Cloudyhead"), and at their northern and southern ends with Mount Gundabad and Methedras (S. "Last Peak") respectively, the 700-mile long chain attains an average elevation of 10-12,000 feet, as attested by the permanent snow caps on all the upper peaks.

Though the Misty Mountains are relatively young, as demonstrated by their sharp peaks and extraordinary height, weathering and erosion have already left their scars. Immense water reserves are

trapped in the snowcaps and glaciers, and rapidly descending streams from these sources slash valleys at every turn. Frost weathers and breaks the rock at higher altitudes, leaving slopes just above the tree line covered with angular scree fragments. Such loose rock accumulates on valley sides, poised for descent in thundering avalanches if disturbed. Erosion and melting snow topple boulders from crags and cliff faces with startling frequency.

In this region, the mountains are some 50-60 miles wide, rising gradually from the foothills and moorland on the west, with their more precipitous face to the east. The northernmost reaches of the western foothills (the Ettenmoors and Ettendales) are forbidding and inhospitable. The landscape is composed of grim stony heights and ridges, deep ravines and long valleys, and tumbled rock outcroppings. So rough and barren is the terrain that the mountains themselves are scarcely more difficult to cross. Along the eastern side of the Misty Mountains, in contrast, runs the broad valley plain of the Anduin (S. Long River) sloping gently downward to the east and south, easily traversed. To the Northmen this wide and winding river is known as the Langflood.

3.1 THE CLIMATE

Throughout this region, far from the moderating influence of the Great Sea, winters are cold and summers mild to warm, while both spring and autumn are sudden and fleeting. Climatic distortions arise from the mountain barrier, leading to marked variations between the western foothills of Rhudaur and the Anduin Vales, while the Misty Mountains have weather peculiar unto themselves.

Two conflicting air masses do battle along the western borders of the Misty Mountains. Prevailing moist warm westerly winds from the Great Sea collide with chill northerlies descending from the vast Ice Bay of Forochel, causing alternating gentle drizzles and cold driving rains, or corresponding snowfalls when temperatures fall below freezing. As these warm westerlies ascend the mountain slopes, the air rapidly cools and condenses, inducing both precipitation and the perpetual mists and low clouds for which the mountains are named. Pressure between the rising warm air and the colder mountain atmosphere, especially during the summer, explodes in formidable thunderstorms, a terrifying experience for unfamiliar travelers.

Owing to the mountain barrier, the Anduin Vales are spared the high winds and the excessive humidity and precipitation of Rhudaur. Under the rain-shadow of the mountains the climate is necessarily drier, while temperature ranges between winter and summer are more marked. However, the Anduin Vales are far from arid, as needed moisture is carried into the area by cool winds crossing the low range of the Ered Mithrin to the north and the channeled warm westerlies passing through the gap at the Misty Mountains' southern end.

Temperatures drop swiftly in the mountains, at a rate of 3.6 degrees F for every 1000 feet of altitude, or even as quickly as 5.5 degrees F when air is moving rapidly upslope. Indeed, the mountains are often cooler on the windward than lee sides at identical elevations because of wind effects. High mountain vales are typically colder than exposed slopes at the same altitudes, for in such vales chill air sinks and gathers. Because of the lower temperatures precipitation is commonly in the form of snow through the colder half of the year, even while rain is falling in the lowlands. Crossing the Misty Mountains successfully demands constant attention to the climate, for a lack of care may be fatal.

3.2 THE ROADS AND PASSES

Insofar as travellers are concerned, doubtless the most important geographic feature of this region is the High Pass. Formally known as Cirith Forn en Andrath (S. "High-climbing Pass of the North"), and occasionally termed the Pass of Imladris as well, this cleft in the Misty Mountains offers a crucial access route between Eriador and

the Anduin Vales. It is one of the four generally known passes of the Misty Mountains, the others being the Gladden and Redhorn Passes to the south, and the Angmar Pass farther north.

Less well recognized by strangers to the region is the curious nature of the High Pass, which in fact is a double corridor, comprised of parallel lower southern and higher northern branches several miles apart. The lower and more accessible route snakes along a lengthy ravine at the source of the river Bruinen, attaining an elevation of some 3500 feet before sharply descending toward the Anduin along the course of a southeasterly-flowing stream. By contrast, the upper "mountain-path" follows a spectacular route ascending the slopes of adjoining narrow gorges with numerous twists and bends. It reaches its summit, which is over a mile high, then descends to emerge from the mountains at roughly the same point as its lower companion route. Both passes are vulnerable to minor avalanches and tumbling boulders, and from the months of Hithui to Gwirith, late fall to early spring, are usually blocked by snow, though skilled mountaineers may find a way through. (The mountain path was chosen by Thorin and his companions on their quest with Gandalf's guidance; the wizard, of course, knew of the "different pass ... more easy to travel by," *The Hobbit*, p. 99, which was also notoriously goblin-infested.)

In the foothills of Rhudaur, the stone-paved Great East Road built by the Dúnedain of Arnor runs as far as the Ford of Bruinen (S. Athrad Bruinen); however, the way to the mountains thereafter is no more than a dirt track traversing the rugged Coldfells toward the High Pass. Many such tracks are found locally, mostly leading nowhere or to bad ends, and a map or guide is indispensable. Conditions are better east of the mountains. Those exiting either branch of the High Pass will find it a simple matter to follow the streamcourse and adjoining track to the Anduin at the Athrad Iaur (S. Old Ford). Two days' journey north is the safer Ford of Carrock.

3.3 THE FLORA

Owing to the range of landforms and climate, an impressive array of plantlife flourishes in the environs of the Misty Mountains. Most beautiful, perhaps, are the Anduin Vales. The river plain, where cultivated, is overrun with lush high grasses, while the Anduin's banks and adjoining marshes are rife with wildflowers and tall reeds. Groves of broadleaf trees rise amid the fair meadows, elms and mighty oaks predominating.

In Rhudaur's hills vegetation is interspersed with barren rock in a bleak tableau. Valleys and sheltered hillsides remain thickly forested with gloom-shrouded ancient pines, while the more exposed hills and moorland are carpeted in monotonous scraggy heather. Rare wildflowers offer touches of color, growing from treacherous bogs. Only around the major watercourses can refreshing patches of meadow and cultivation be discovered.

Extensive coniferous forests climb the ridges and slopes along the base of the Misty Mountains, thriving in the cooler temperatures and thinner soil where broadleaf trees cannot. After a few thousand feet the tree line is passed, and only scrub bushes and grasses grow in the upper mountain vales. Soon even these give way to lichen, bare rock and finally snow.

Some of the region's most singular vegetation is concealed in the extensive cavern systems under the mountains. Only fungi can survive in the absence of light; here it assumes fantastic forms and frequently attains astounding size. Rumors relate that some caverns harbor forests of colossal mushrooms, odd phosphorescent nodules, and other growths that defy description.

Both the sheltered river vales and harsh mountain climes permit differing medicinal herbs to prosper. These gifts of nature promise healing to the ill and injured in the hands of the skilled, and command high prices in the markets of most towns. Supplies are limited, however, and will be depleted if overharvested.

3.4 THE FAUNA

Wild animals abound in this largely unsettled country. Fish teem in the streams and rivers, while common herbivores such as rabbits, voles and hares dwell everywhere that vegetation may be found, sustaining the larger predators. Beavers construct their lodges and dams on secluded streams. Ducks, geese and swans are plentiful along the broad Anduin, and kingfishers perch near the river banks. Pheasants roam through the high grasses of the meadows, and quails through the forest underbrush. In the woodlands the nocturnal great horned owls roost in hollowed trees. The smaller reptiles, turtles, lizards and snakes, are especially common around the marshlands.

Four species of large hoofed mammals are particularly worthy of note. Herds of swift *red deer*, each led by a male, wander along the Anduin's grassy plain. *Reindeer* inhabit the highlands of Rhudaur, grazing on the heather. *Bighorn sheep* prefer the lower mountain slopes and vales. These sheep are distinguished by their thick curling horns, employed in the mating season for butting contests between males, sending loud cracks echoing through the valleys. Above the tree line dwells the *mountain goat*, a climber of extraordinary agility, spending a lifetime roaming along ledges and cliffs. Covered with thick white fur and armed with sharp horns, the goat presents a spectacular image perched on a mountainside, and is well equipped to survive both the climate and predators. Both the sheep and goats tend to travel in separate herds of males and females until the mating season in late fall to early winter.

A distinct subterranean ecology has evolved in the caverns of the mountains. A few inhabitants, such as rodents, are transients from outside. Others, like the pale blind fish swimming in underground lakes, have adapted to permanent darkness. Colonies of bats roost amidst the stalactites of cave ceilings, navigating the twisting passages by ultrasonic echoes to emerge for nocturnal hunting. Most bats are small, only a few inches in wingspan, and are harmless insectivores.

Other nameless slimy creatures, antedating even the Orcs, are "still there in odd corners, slinking and nosing about." (*Hobbit*, p.79.) Few know of these horrors firsthand, and less still of their true nature, whether reptile, degenerate mammal, or something otherworldly left from the formation of Middle-earth. Those who have encountered such antediluvian troglodytes and survived keep silent about what they have learned.

Some creatures of the area are worthy of more than a casual glance.

Giant Vampire Bat

The Misty Mountains are home to one unique and particularly noxious bat: the Giant Vampire Bat, a black monstrosity a foot or more in wingspan, which roosts amidst its lesser relations but hunts in swarms. Giant Vampire Bats have been known to accompany Orc hosts to war in ominous clouds, fastening indiscriminately upon the wounded and slain, who offer an easy source of fresh blood.

Wargs

Most savage of the region's predators, the Wargs (a Northman term for "wolf" and "outlaw") are a wolf breed of unusual size and intelligence. Legends hold that they were created by Morgoth in the Elder Days for his wars in the North. They now dwell primarily on the eastern side of the Misty Mountains, but often cross into Rhudaur when food is short in their accustomed hunting grounds. Male Wargs are some 8-9' long, including tail, while females are slightly smaller. All have long, soft, dense grey fur. A Warg's senses of smell, sight and hearing are acute; it enjoys considerable endurance and can run at up to 30 m.p.h. in high pursuit of prey. Wargs are fearless carnivores, and while they usually eat creatures smaller than themselves, they are well able to bring down large game.

Wargs hunt in small family groups of about half a dozen, led by a dominant male. Occasionally they combine into huge packs to attack

herds of larger prey, and in those packs the males establish a hierarchy of authority based upon strength and ferocity. Packs are territorial, covering a region as large as several hundred square miles.

Hunting techniques best reveal the Wargs' malicious cunning. Whenever possible Wargs prefer not to attack larger prey directly. Instead, they ambush victims or trap them in deep snow. During the hunt, Wargs coordinate their harrying assaults in a simple language of intermittent howls.

However dangerous to others, Wargs are most protective of their own kin. They mate for life, and a Warg pup, which matures in two or three years, remains in its family group thereafter. Mating occurs in winter to early spring, and a typical litter, born about two months later in the spring, consists of 4-14 pups. The den where the mother gives birth and rears the litter can be a cave, rocky crevice or overhanging bank, often stolen from a prior inhabitant. All family members care solicitously for the mother and young, bringing food back to the den.

Wargs often join with Orcs in raiding, finding this an easy way to get meat, and allow themselves to be ridden by smaller goblins. They are notoriously fickle, however, and will feast on fallen Orc allies as readily as on foes. Wargs, unlike lesser wolves have lost any fear of men. They are particularly effective against cavalry, charging among terrified horses and tearing at their flanks, and are deadly in pursuit of fleeing foes.

Bears

If Wargs are more fearsome joined in their packs, individually the great brown bears of the Misty Mountain are by far the more powerful predators. Like their smaller black cousins, the great bears are omnivorous, able to subsist either on plants, roots and berries, or on fish, burrowing rodents, and even large prey. Honey, of course, is the inevitable favorite, and a bear is sure to raid any tempting hive.

The great bear is five-toed, with long nonretractile claws and thick shaggy fur. Though it usually travels on all fours in a deceptively slow and clumsy gait, it is able to rear up on its hind legs to an imposing ten foot height. When threatened, the bear stands erect, fighting with its teeth and front claws. Few can face an enraged great bear and live, for the beast weighs as much as three quarters of a ton, can crush a man's ribs with a swipe of its paw, and can actually move as fast as a horse if pressed.

Bears are normally loners, wandering in search of food and claiming no particular territory. They are among the most ancient inhabitants of the region, having been here even before the coming of the Giants. Ordinarily shy and not hostile to men, the bear's personality is unpredictably transformed during its mating season in early summer, giving new meaning to the word "irascible."

During winter bears retire to their cave dens to sleep out the cold season, having stored vast reserves of fat during autumn. A female bear gives birth every other year during winter hibernation to a litter of 1-4 cubs, which actually weigh less than a pound when born. The cubs stay with their mother for some two and a half years thereafter, and all other creatures do well to keep clear of a mother bear with her cubs in tow.

3.5 COMMERCE

Trade is the lifeblood of the urban Northman settlements along the Anduin, built where routes of commerce intersect. Without a steady flow of travellers and merchants the towns cannot endure. Already, some have reverted to mere fishing villages or have been abandoned, due to the Plague and the dangers of travel through surrounding lands under evil domination.

A trickle of Dwarves passing to and from Kazad-dûm, and some eastern Northmen merchants, still journey along the Old Forest Road, the ancient Men-i-Naugrim. In recent years Sauron's influence in southern Mirkwood has rendered this route increasingly

hazardous, leading to the collapse of the once thriving Northman community by the Old Ford, which provided a vital link to the High Pass. Much trade has been diverted northward to the ill-marked but safer trail through the Wood-elf Kingdom of northern Mirkwood, which emerges from the forest near Maethelburg.

Once Dúnadan merchant caravans from Arnor regularly crossed the Misty Mountains through the lower branch of the High Pass, suitable for horses and loaded wains. Unfortunately, the Orcs of Goblin-gate have effectively closed that route for the past three centuries to all but the largest and best-armed expeditions, or those bearing the safe-conduct of the Witch-king. The upper mountain path is still safe for ordinary wayfarers, but is less practical for trade, as it can only be negotiated by mules and ponies, or travellers afoot, because of its steep inclines.

Only the broad Anduin remains a safe highway, flowing through the heart of the Northman lands down to the borders of Gondor at the Pillars of Argonath, and from there to the crumbling but still populous metropolis of Osgiliath. Northman merchants ply the river in their *cnearras*, light clinker-built craft of shallow draught, which can easily be portaged around the occasional rapids and falls.

As the Northman economy is agricultural and pastoral, the principal exports are unfinished goods: wool, furs, foodstuffs, lumber, and amber. The Beornings sometimes trade their excellent honey, and also beeswax. Grain, meat, beer and mead from the Northman farms find a ready market nearby among the Dwarves of Moria. In return, the Northmen most desire to import metals, and well-wrought jewelry, arms and armor from Dwarves or the imperial armories of Gondor, for Northman smithcraft is relatively primitive and the land is poor in metal ores, having only some bog iron.

In the countryside money is rarely available, and barter is the preferred mode of commerce. In the towns, however, a parallel cash economy has emerged, and transactions can be either in currency or in kind as suits buyer and seller. Gondor's coinage provides the standard of exchange, as the Northman lack a mint of their own or precious metals to coin.

4.0 THE INHABITANTS

The region around the northern Misty Mountains is sparsely populated, but still manages to support a variety of intelligent peoples. These inhabitants include several races of men (Northmen, Beornings, and Hillmen) as well as representatives of some of the most dangerous races in Middle-earth: Orcs, Trolls, and Stone Giants.

4.1 THE ORCS

The true origin of the accursed race of Orcs (S. *Yrch*, sing. *Orch*) is shrouded in mystery. During the Elder Days, the wise believe, Morgoth twisted and corrupted captive Elves in the infernal pits of Utumno, perhaps mingling them with other enslaved beings as well, to spawn these hideous creatures of Darkness in envy and mockery of the fair race of the Firstborn. Designed as expendable laborers and warriors, Orcs have always served evil masters readily, though deep in their dark hearts they loathe both their creator and the powers that still dominate their miserable lives.

Orcs have long dwelt in the grim heights of the Misty Mountains, and are divided into two distinct breeds and castes. Common Orcs, the original stock, are by far the more numerous sort. Among them, however, lives a small elite of greater Orcs, the formidable Uruk-hai, descendents of Orc soldiers dispatched by Sauron from Mordor at the end of the Second Age to command the defense of the passes. The Uruks are carefully bred, superior in intellect and most physical attributes to their common kin, and act as tribal leaders and

bodyguards. Both sorts of Orcs are colloquially termed "goblins," or "hobgoblins" for the Uruks alone.

Few other peoples have amiable dealings with the Orcs. Trolls occasionally share a lair or cooperate in evil ventures. Orcs and Hillmen have served together in the hosts of the Witch-king, but neither really trusts the other. Northmen, often victims of Orcish raiding, have scant affection for their mountain neighbors. Between Orcs and Elves a mutual hatred has endured since the First Age, and battle is certain to ensue whenever any of these two races meet.

Appearance: Orcs have sallow or dark skin, thick hairy hides, clawed hands, grotesque broad flat faces, yellow fangs, slanting eyes with smouldering red irises and unkempt black hair. Their build is squat, with short crooked legs and long arms. Common Orcs are between 3-5 feet tall. Uruk-hai are some 5-6 feet tall, nearly as large as Men, and have a slightly more "human", though obviously still Orcish, look.

Abilities and Weaknesses: All Orcs enjoy tremendous endurance, needing to rest but once every three days if pressed. They are highly resistant to extremes of heat and cold. Common Orcs have superior night vision, able to see as can other folk in daylight, and even in absolute darkness they can perceive a short distance ahead. In full daylight, however, they are seriously weakened and disoriented, and their sight is poor. The night vision of the Uruk-hai is inferior to that of common Orcs, and they generally use torches in darkness, but this handicap is more than offset by the Uruks' ability to function unimpaired under the sun. Common Orcs' sense of smell is acute.

Attitudes and Lifestyle: Bloodthirsty, treacherous and cruel, Orcs are of the basest nature. Their chief pleasures lie in conflict and the torturing of captives. Rarely are they content save when eating or fighting. Orcs mistrust one another, often with good reason, and are prone to fight amongst themselves if no other enemies are at hand. A stubborn rebellious streak and excessive greed render them most untrustworthy servants or allies.

Orcs dislike work, but are capable of great labors in masses under the focused will of a harsh overlord, and can tunnel and mine nearly as well as Dwarves. They lack any appreciation of beauty, and their handiwork is plain, clumsy or grossly ugly, but nonetheless effective. Orcish smiths are exceptionally skilled in crafting weapons, war engines and torture implements. Their healers achieve quick results, though indifferent to pain or scarring. Utility is always paramount.

Social Structure: Violence and fear cement Orcish society. When not under the Dark Lord's direct control, Orcs coalesce in small tribes ruled by strong leaders. Status within tribes is won by craftiness and brute force.

Family Patterns: Orcs breed rather than marry, though they reproduce in the normal manner. Orcish females live together in secluded areas of a lair, well guarded and accessible only to the stronger males, so long as they are of a suitable age for mating. Outsiders are never permitted to see female Orcs. These practices, though brutally unsentimental, ensure the strongest offspring. Young Orc "imps" are raised jointly by the older females, knowing only their fathers. Orcs reproduce prolifically and a tribe losing most of its warriors can replenish its numbers in a few generations if the females are unharmed.

Settlement and Housing: Orcs dwell in underground lairs, typically ill-ventilated mazes of twisting passages and caverns, lightless save in the inhabited areas. Several exits are always delved for surprise attacks and escapes.

Economy: The Orcish tribes survive by a combination of hunting, foraging, and raiding neighboring peoples. Peaceful trade is rare. Within a tribe male and female roles are sharply distinguished, males mining, forging, gathering food and going to war, while females perform domestic labors. Captive slaves carry out the most dangerous and unpleasant work. Any currency owned by Orcs is looted from raiding.

Language: There is no single Orcish tongue, but a variety of mutually unintelligible regional dialects, all harsh-sounding, ungrammatical, and rife with obscenities. For inter-tribal communication Orcs use Westron, the Common tongue. The Orcs in this part of the Misty Mountains have actually adopted Westron in a debased Orcish form as their native tongue, intermingled with elements of Sauron's Black Speech.

4.2 THE NORTHMEN

Since the migrations of the First Age the hardy race of Northmen has made its presence felt in the vales of the upper Anduin. Sharing a common origin with the Houses of the Edain and thus with the empire-building Numenoreans and Dúnedain, these Men of the Anduin Vales (S. *Nenedain*, sing. *Nenadan*) have fended off the lures of organized society, remaining close to nature and cherishing their independence. Among the Dúnedain the Northmen are ranked as "Middle Peoples," neither entirely barbarous nor fully civilized, and worthy of respect for their courage and prowess in arms.

The Men of the Anduin Vales represent a culture diminished greatly by the end of the Third Age, yet still vibrant in T.A. 1640. They are most closely related to the Beornings and Woodmen, with more distant ties to the other two Northmen cultures: the Men of

Long Lake and Dale, and the semi-nomadic Northmen further southeast from which will arise the Rohirrim. Originally a small and isolated folk, the Nenedain population swelled during the mid-Second Age as kindred refugees from Eriador, who had already experienced contact with the advanced Numenoreans, fled over the Misty Mountains to escape Sauron's ravaging armies. Over the following millenia the various Northmen groups of Rhovanion have dispersed over a wide area, but their common ethnic heritage is still clear.

Largely unaltered for thousands of years, Nenedain society has undergone its most significant changes in the past several centuries. This has been caused by the rising influence and commercial power of Gondor to the south, which encouraged a fragile political unity in the Anduin Vales as well as raising material standards of living. Though the Northmen have not forsaken their traditions, and remain mostly a scattered rural folk, along the Anduin a few minor urban centers have arisen. The Great Plague, however, devastated the population and dealt a severe setback to growing regional prosperity, leaving several towns entirely deserted.

Northmen are on good to tolerable terms with most of their neighbors. Best of all are relations with the Dúnedain of Gondor, their mentors and trading partners, but as the South Kingdom's power has receded in the wake of civil strife and the Plague, Northmen must once again fend for themselves. Elves, if considered odd and unpredictable, are nonetheless held in awe for their magic and woodland lore. The Northmen and Hillmen of Rhudaur hold a grudging respect for one another; though occasionally in conflict, each sees in the other a worthy warrior. Only Orcs, the plunderers of herds and ravagers of homesteads, are truly hated.

4.3 THE BEORNINGS

An ancient and unique Northmen people, the Beorning clan (also known variously as Beijabar or Bejaegahar) resides in the Anduin Vales amidst the more numerous Nenedain, in a territory of indeterminate and shifting size centered around the Holy Carrock. Most live on the eastern bank of the Anduin, but a few settle as far west as the Misty Mountains and the High Pass.

While the Beornings are closely akin to the Nenedain, sharing many physical and cultural similarities, several distinctive characteristics merit special mention. Of all Northmen, Beornings are the largest, as tall as Dúnedain and even broader in build, and are doubtless the most hirsute. They can communicate to a remarkable degree with their domestic animals, who aid in farm labors of free will. Beornings eat no meat of any sort, but their culinary skills are magnificent; these folks are held to be the best bakers of Wilderland, and their honey-cakes are legendary.

Customarily shy and solitary, Beornings are radically transformed among kin and trusted visitors, becoming passionate and jovial. In battle their berserk fury is irresistible. A rare few among the clan are Shape-changers, able to assume the form of great bears on occasion, a hereditary skill. The Beorning chieftain, or Wealdanbera (Rh. "Ruling bear") is always a Shape-changer, and presides over the secretive Bear-cult (Rh. Beracynn). Members assemble on certain nights around sacred sites in bear-form, acting out legends and epics through complex dancing rituals. Even real bears are said to gather for these nocturnal festivities; intruders are not welcomed, to put the consequences mildly.

4.4 THE GREAT EAGLES

Middle-earth's most majestic hunters, the Great Eagles rule the skies above the Misty Mountains. Largest of all birds the Eagles believe themselves descended from divine spirits whom Manwe, Lord of the Valar, commanded to take avian form and observe the mortal world on his behalf. Manwë foretold that only the mountains would be tall enough to house the Eagles, and that from their lofty

eyries the Eagles would hear the voices of those who implored the Valar for aid. During the First Age, the Eagles dwelt in the Crissaegrim, the Encircling Mountains of Beleriand near Gondolin, often aiding the Elves in their struggle against Morgoth. At last the Eagles engaged Morgoth's host of winged fire-breathing dragons in the final battle when the Enemy was overthrown. With Beleriand destroyed in that catastrophic war, the Eagles sought new eyries high in the Misty Mountains, where they have remained ever since.

Legend tells that the Great Eagles were once of colossal size; Thorondor, first King of the Eagles, reportedly had a wingspan of 180 feet! Today's Great Eagles do not equal their fabled ancestors, but are nonetheless fearsome antagonists. A Great Eagle's very visage is awe-inspiring, its golden-brown plumage shining magnificently in the sunlight. When fully adult the Great Eagle is four times the size of its common brethren, having a wingspan of 25-30 feet. Armed with a powerful hooked beak and four-toed knifelike talon for grasping or tearing prey, the Eagle need fear no foe, save perhaps an ancient Dragon. Eagles are renowned for their stately, soaring flight, their massive bulk gliding effortlessly on warm thermal columns of air rising from the earth. With eyes eight times as perceptive as a man's and excellent peripheral vision, an Eagle misses little on the ground below; it is said that the Lord of the Eagles can look at the sun unblinking, and see a rabbit moving a mile below in the moonlight. Eagles are among the swiftest of fliers, and when an Eagle spots prey, it dives earthward at a speed of 200 m.p.h., giving its intended meal scant chance to escape.

Being carnivores, Eagles require a huge supply of game, limiting their population to not more than a few score scattered throughout the mountains. Each Great Eagle exercises dominion over a realm of no less than 200 square miles. Within that territory, overlooked by its eyrie, the Eagle hunts a variety of prey, from rabbits and hares up to deer and sheep, which it can easily carry back to its eyrie in its talons.

Great Eagles mate for life and use the same eyrie for generations. An Eagle's eyrie is a vast, bowl-shaped nest of sticks and limbs built upon a cliff ledge or rock pinnacle inaccessible save by flight. The nest is of stupendous size, as much as forty feet in diameter and weighing several tons, as befits its inhabitant. Only once every decade or so does the female Eagle lay a single large brown mottled white egg, which hatches slightly over a month later. The eaglet is unable to fly for three months after birth, and does not acquire its full adult plumage until four to five years have passed. Both parents assume responsibility for the vulnerable eaglet's care. The rarity of offspring nicely offsets the eagle's exceptional longevity of several centuries, for the mountains could not sustain any great increase in their numbers, and the Eagles have no natural enemies apart from the winged Dragons of the Ered Mithrin.

Few have mastered the art of befriending the Eagles. These are not kindly creatures, seeming unsentimental and domineering to others. Free to fly where they wish, Eagles tend to be proud and aloof, accustomed to the respect engendered by their size and power. Nonetheless, the Great Eagles are noble at heart and once an Eagle's gratitude is won, it is an ally for life, willing to bear the traveler long leagues on its back. Exceptionally intelligent and rational, the Eagles are even able to converse in the Common tongue when they choose, presumably a gift from Manwe to aid His servants' mission in Middle-earth. Beware of antagonizing the Eagles, for they can be equally merciless foes, and never will they be persuaded or easily deceived into aiding an evil cause.

4.5 THE STONE GIANTS

Most peculiar of all the region's inhabitants, the Stone-Giants are a race of immense antiquity and obscure origins. Known to Northmen as Stan-eotenas, Giants are thought by some to be distantly related to the forest Ents, in light of their similar size and mastery over stone.

Others among the wise suspect that giants are the original stock from which Morgoth bred the Stone-trolls, the link between Ents and their evil counterparts. Not even the Istari, however, are certain of the truth. Giants occupy no comfortable niche in any of Middle-earth's complex schemes of kinship. Significantly, though, the Ents, Giants and Trolls dwelling in the area of the Misty Mountains seemingly take pains to avoid one another's lands.

Giants dwell principally in the high vales of the Misty Mountains, secluded from civilization, and are so rarely encountered that folk from other lands consider them mythical. Having occupied the mountains since the First Age, Giants are the indigenous inhabitants, and few would dare to contest their possession. Although weak in numbers — only a few dozen are scattered throughout the mountains — each is a fearsome opponent. The Giants lack any real enemies or allies, and generally prefer to be left to themselves, an attitude most other peoples are all too glad to oblige.

Appearance: Stone-Giants are enormous, towering between 10-15 feet in height. Thick limbs, greyish skin and a craggy countenance emphasize a Giant's similarity to stone, from which they claim to have arisen. At a distance Giants may be mistaken for overgrown Men, but upon closer observation their radically different nature is inescapable.

Abilities and Weaknesses: Fantastically strong, Giants possess an extraordinary, almost magical skill in shaping and breaking of stone. Superior night vision is characteristic of the race. While Giants can endure the sun, their vision is poor in daylight, and thus they are primarily nocturnal. Giants are not so dull-witted as Trolls, contrary to popular belief, but due to their size they tend to think and react slowly.

Attitudes and Lifestyle: Giants live for the moment, rarely exercising forethought. They are not evil, but often callous and indifferent. Pensive contemplation is characteristic, but directed to no particular end. Giants enjoy riddles, which they can ponder for days. Many Giants are rather lazy, and think nothing of pilfering dinner from a terrified shepherd's flock instead of hunting it in the wild.

Stone throwing is both a popular Giant sport and a favorite mode of attack. When Giants are making merry or quarrelling casting boulders about from mountains and splintering trees, anyone in the way must suffer the consequences. Giants love nothing more than a spectacular mountain thunder-battle, which brings them out in force, guffawing and shouting until every rock echoes.

Dress: Hides and bearskins are customary attire. A Giant is rarely without his club, fashioned from a tree trunk, which serves both as walking-stick and weapon.

Social Structure: Giants are solitary or at most part of a small family group. Certain inscrutable unwritten customs, handed down from ages past, govern relations of Giants amongst themselves. In times of great danger Giants may assemble for a Giant-moot, but this is very, very rare.

Family Patterns: Giants rarely choose mates, but when they do the relationship is for life, meaning almost forever. Children are free, when grown, to remain with parents or strike out on their own.

Settlement and Housing: A colossal vaulted cavern closed off by massive stone portals is the Giant's typical abode.

Economy: Giants are entirely self-sufficient, having but modest needs, and rarely trading even amongst themselves. Northmen legends relate that long ago, Giants aided in building some of Gondor's greatest fortresses, being well rewarded thereafter, but this is dubious.

Language: The ancient and primitive Giantish language is of their own devising, slow, guttural and rumbling, and incomprehensible to any other folk. Fortunately, a number of Giants can manage a broken Westron as well.

Religion: No form of worship is known to exist. Of all the Valar the Giants are perhaps the closest in sympathies to Aulë the Smith.

5.0 POLITICS AND POWER

There are three primary power groups that may become involved in the adventures presented in this module: the Orcish Realms, the Northman town of Maethelburg, and the Great Eagles.

5.1 THE ORCISH REALMS

Orcish government is authoritarian and rigidly hierarchical, based on mutual domination and submission. Every Orc is both a master and a slave, abusing inferiors while cringing before his lords. Power is personal, dependent on raw force, and there is no law but the point of a sword.

Supreme over all is Sauron, both god and tyrant. Deep in the black pits of Dol Guldur the Dark Lord schemes and gathers strength, while his Shadow of fear envelops the North. He does not yet dare to reveal his identity and full might, but already has unleashed openly his most terrible minion, the Witch-king. From the accursed fortress-city of *Carn Dûm* the Lord of the Nazgûl dominates the bleak land of Angmar, and even compels most of Rhudaur to pay homage. The Witch-king's threats, bribes and the subtle use of spells have constrained the quarrelsome Orcs of the Mountains to acknowledge a single overlord, the *Ashdurbuk* (BS "One All-Ruler"), who reigns from the Orcs' chief citadel of Mount Gundabad. Tribute flows north to Gundabad's coffers, and levies from all the mountain tribes march at the Ashdurbuk's summons to the Witch-king's wars against the Dúnedain. Powerful though he is, however, the Ashdurbuk is but a pawn of the Witch-king.

Many of the Orcs of the Mountains, thanks to their distance from the centers of evil power in the far North, are not yet under the Witch-king's or Ashdurbuk's direct command, but only tributary subjects. Traditional Uruk-hai oligarchies, no less brutal than the Witch-king but more self-seeking, maintain their own despotic petty realms.

Among the most important of these autonomous tribes is the infamous *Uruk-tarkhnarb*, the Orcs of the High Pass, ensconced in their mountain refuge of Goblin-gate. The Tarkhnarb chieftan, formally titled the *Durba-hai* (BS "People-ruler") and more commonly called the Great Goblin, regards himself as nearly the equal of the warlord of Gundabad, paying his annual tribute late and grudgingly. While he entertains envoys from Carn Dûm with due subservience, professing loyalty to the Witch-king, his true policies and plots serve his own ends more often than those of his masters. Relations between Goblin-gate and the northern capitals are frequently strained.

strained.

Leadership among the Tarkhnarb is supposedly hereditary, and is limited to the Uruks, but there is no concept of peaceful succession. A Great Goblin exercises his mating privileges so indiscriminately that there is no lack of potential heirs to the throne. Treachery and assassination among the oligarchy are commonplace, and no orc may seat himself upon the Great Goblin's carved stone dais without besting any challengers in a duel to the death. Once installed as lord, the Great Goblin is charged with safeguarding the tribal banner, a red cleft mountain peak on a black field, and the sacred scimitar *Elf-hewer*, said to have been forged in Mordor during the Second Age.

Whomever of the Uruks prevail in the recurrent power struggles, the masses of common Orcs suffer the same dismal lot. An ordinary Orc is but a contemptible slave (BS *snaga*), condemned to work, fight and die at his lord's bidding. Nevertheless, the common Orcs are so cowed that rebellion is unthinkable. Instead, they exercise their frustrations upon the miserable tribal captives, the only creatures lower than they.

MILITARY FORCES

War is the outward expression of the violent Orcish political order, and the entire society is perpetually organized for battle. Most of the Orcs of the Mountains expend their energies and lives in the periodic invasions of Arthedain ordered by the Witch-king, but enough warriors are always held back to defend the lairs and breed new soldiers for the next conflict.

The Tarkhnarb are unique, for they are charged with the vital duty of holding the strategic High Pass, and are rarely sent far from Goblin-gate. Orcish strength fluctuates wildly, but never are there less than several hundred goblin warriors within striking distance of the High Pass, and often over a thousand threaten it.

Organization: Every adult male Orc is a warrior, and the entire tribe can be mustered for battle on a few hours' notice. Common Orcs are subdivided into units of irregular size 10-15 strong known as *lurgs*, which live, work and fight together. The Uruk-hai stand apart in a single *hoerk* as the Great Goblin's bodyguard, always held in reserve until a decisive moment.

Equipment: Among the mountain Orcs the scimitar, forged of iron or even steel for the Uruks, is the universal weapon. Secondary arms for common Orcs are broad-headed heavy spears or pole arms and horn shortbows, while Uruks also wield handaxes and yew longbows of Mannish design. Weapons are often poison-coated. Most Orcs are armored in heavy chain mail and iron helmets, or rigid leather at the least, and bear shields of hide or ironbound wood.

Tactics: Orcs attack with fanatical ferocity, while seeking to outflank foes. Morale is highly variable, however, and Orcs are easily dismayed by unexpected counterattacks. Many Orcs ride Wargs into battle, forming a deadly cavalry vanguard.

5.2 THE NORTHMEN

Against the savage Orcish despotism of the mountains is pitted the disunited Northmen community of the Anduin Vales. Prizing their freedom above all else, the Northmen have always preferred a minimal government, and that of their own choosing. Law is still largely a matter of inherited customs, and authority exists only with popular consent. Growth of trade with Gondor in the towns along the Anduin has made it necessary for the Northmen to accept some political institutions, but power has been fragmented among several offices. Homegrown tyranny is thereby frustrated, but so is defense against the common foe.

Only one governing body offers the Nenedain any real political unity. This is the ancient *Ealdormot* (Rh. "Elder-council"), comprised of some 20-30 clan chiefs and town officials, functioning both as a legislature and high court. It convenes biannually, or more often when emergencies demand, to debate laws and render judgments. Presiding over its deliberations is the *Kingsman* (Gondor's ambassador), in the role of Lawspeaker, seated on the ornate *Giefstol* (Rh. "Gift-throne"). By tradition the site of the Ealdormot has been the town of Maethelburg (Rh. "Meeting-stronghold"), the largest surviving Northman settlement and the nearest thing to a capital.

Within towns government is necessarily less sporadic. Established power in Maethelburg is divided between the *Master* (Rh. *Maesta*) and the *Thegn*. The latter holds his office by hereditary right, supposedly descended from a legendary family of chieftains in the Elder Days, and his duties are confined to military matters. By contrast, the Master is responsible for civil government, and controls trade and taxation, very lucrative privileges. He is elected for a seven-year term by all the adult males of the town, and wears a golden chain as the symbol of his office.

Despite the lingering political ties to Gondor, the Northmen are now forced to practice a diplomatic neutrality. Angmar is too close for comfort, and though the Northmen have so far managed to hold the local Orcs of the High Pass at bay, they have few illusions about their ability to withstand the full power of the Witch-king should he be angered. To avoid open hostility, Angmar's Mannish servants are allowed to pass through the Anduin Vales unharmed, and even purchase supplies in the trading towns along the river.

MILITARY FORCES

Two distinct forces bear responsibility for local defense. The *Burgward*, or Town Guard, is a small professional standing company quartered in Maethelburg, numbering only five dozen warriors under the Thegn's direct command. Taxes from town commerce provide the gold for their salaries. In time of crisis, the Ealdormot has designated the Thegn as commander of the *Fyrd*, the regional militia of all able bodied males of military age, several hundred strong. The Fyrd may be summoned whenever needed, but the farmer-soldiers serve for no more than 40 days before they may return to their homes.

Organization: The disciplined Burgwarders are subdivided into three troops of about 20 men, each commanded by an experienced mounted officer, the *cniht*. By contrast, the Fyrd is much more loosely organized, each band of men fighting under its own chief, to whom personal loyalty is owed. To leave a field when one's Ealdor has fallen brings lasting disgrace.

Equipment: By the standards of Gondor most Northman warriors are ill-equipped. Fyrdmen make do with leather armor and helmets, leaf-headed spears, battleaxes, and wooden shields. Only the Burgwarders and chieftains can afford broadswords, chain mail, and iron helmets, which together cost more than most families' total wealth. The most formidable Northman weapon is the yew longbow, which is made locally, and is devastating in skilled hands.

Tactics: Northmen fight primarily on foot, and few warhorses are available. Common tactical formations are the offensive wedge and the defensive shieldwall, similar to those of the Dúnedain. Morale is typically high, and is slow to break.

5.3 THE GREAT EAGLES

Since the Elder Days the Great Eagles have regarded themselves as a single community, scattered but sharing a common purpose in the service of Manwë. While they nested in Beleriand they recognized a King, the colossal Thorondor, and the royal descendents of this first monarch have provided Lords to the Eagles ever after.

The Lord of the Eagles is ordinarily the largest and most magnificent of his kind, the eldest offspring of his predecessor. His accustomed eyrie, the Great Shelf, lies upon a lonely pinnacle of rock extended from the eastern edge of the Misty Mountains near Goblin-gate. An impregnable citadel of the skies, it is called by the Elves *Amon Thyryr* (S. "Eagles' Hill"), by the Northmen *Earnastede* (Rh. "Place of the Eagles"), and by other folk simply Eagle's Eyrie. Fifteen Eagle-chieftains dwell nearby, serving as the Lord's bodyguard and standing army. Several of the Chieftains are relations or younger siblings of the royal House of Thorondor, while the full number is rounded out by other mighty Eagles of notable size and prowess. This assemblage of Eagles is most unique, for all other Great Eagles are solitary or mated pairs.

In times of utmost need, when the Free Peoples are confronted by irresistible hosts of evil, the Lord of the Eagles has power to summon the *Thoronrim* (S. "Eagle host"), or *Earnhere* in the Northman tongue. No sight better relieves despair than the coming of the Eagles on the wind, borne in splendid array in long lines through the skies. Rarely do the Eagles ever intervene with their gathered might, but when they forsake their lofty isolation the consequences are dramatic.

Ordinarily Eagles are not on the best of terms with the Northmen, for their prodigious appetites lead them to occasionally raid Northmen flocks and herds on their hunting forays. They readily admit their deeds, for so far as Eagles are concerned no creature can own another, and why does a sheep care who eats it in the end? Northmen, unimpressed by such logic, loose volleys of arrows from their powerful longbows whenever Eagles swoop too near their livestock, and in consequence Eagles tend to avoid Mannish settlements. Nevertheless, the Eagles bear no real enmity toward the Northmen, who seem otherwise to be decent folk, and they reserve their utmost hatred for the Orcs. Proud Eagles usually disdain to take notice of miserable goblins sneaking below, as Orcs are disgustingly inedible, but they delight in gathering for attacks on Orcish raiding parties, sending the terrified goblins shrieking back to their mountain holes. As the Orcs cannot scale the sheer peaks upon which the Eagles build their eyries, retaliation is impossible, and they must curse and bear it.

Eagles best serve the Free Peoples as an unsurpassed source of intelligence on the movements of foes, being able to spy with impunity from the air. During the late Third Age, the Eagles would regularly keep Gandalf and the Elves informed on Sauron's massing strength and the ridings of the Nazgûl.

NOTE: *Intervention by the Eagles is an extremely potent device, potentially disruptive, and should be invoked sparingly, as even a single Eagle can tip the balance in a battle. Befriended Eagles best serve as transportation across impassible terrain and as a means of escape from otherwise certain death. In any event, Eagles will never intervene unless the cause of good is clearly served.*

6.0 PHYSICAL OVERVIEW

6.1 WILDERNESS TRAVEL

Whatever route adventurers choose to enter the region of the High Pass entails wilderness travel. Several options lie open, balancing considerations of speed, cost and safety. Once established in the area, adventurers will again have to traverse the wilderness in order to reach key sites. Furthermore, wilderness exploration will prove exciting in itself, especially for inexperienced groups not yet confident enough to face the major challenges. General maps with the principal roads and terrain features can be obtained before entering the region, but the details must be filled in by local sources of information or personal excursions.

The Northman town of Maethelburg presents the most convenient base from which to commence exploration. Passage up the Anduin from Gondor may be had on one of the Northmen trading ships, affording a relatively quick and trouble-free journey directly to Maethelburg, the most northerly port of call. Normally, passengers will be discharged there. However, if they are eager to reach the High Pass, they may choose to disembark earlier at the rotting wharves by the ruined town at the Old Ford, abandoned since the Plague. As the river voyage is expensive, however (2-3gp if embarking at Osgiliath), adventurers may have to choose between signing on as deck hands, or forsaking the water route for the more arduous land journey.

Northman merchants ply the river in their *cnearras*, light clinker-built craft of shallow draught, which can easily be portaged around the occasional rapids and falls. A *cnearr* has a single detachable mast, square sail, four to eight pairs of oars, a length of 20-40 feet and beam of 8-12 feet. A full crew ranges from 10-20 men depending on the size of the vessel, but *cnearras* are often undermanned to economize. Passengers may be carried for a price, but in no great comfort; quarters are cramped as space is reserved for valuable cargo, and there is no cabin. Extra hands for the oars, though, are always welcome. A voyage between Maethelburg and Osgiliath in Gondor takes two to three weeks downstream, and three to four upriver.

Travel by land from Gondor is impractical; some would even say foolhardy. On the western bank the forest of Lorien, inhabited by mysterious Silvan Elves, runs straight down to the river. The open lands on the eastern bank seem deceptively easier to cross, but lie within striking distance of Dol Guldur. Many have disappeared, never to be seen again, and the Necromancer is justly suspected.

Coming overland from the east, the only real road is the Men-i-Naugrim, which, thanks to Sauron's minions, becomes more dangerous with each passing year, rife with bandits, spiders and Orcs. The Elf-path in northern Mirkwood, a mere track less desirable from the standpoint of speed, is at least patrolled intermittently by the Silvan Elves of Thranduil's kingdom, and so offers reasonable prospects for getting through to Maethelburg alive.

In the Anduin Vales east of the mountains, travel is comparatively easy, thanks to the open rolling terrain. Many Northmen and a few Beorning homesteads offer shelter and meals for the night at a reasonable price, and it is almost always possible to find one of these farms within a day's march. Hazardous encounters are rare during the day. Travellers are well advised to accept offered lodgings at night, though, for that is when Wargs are active and Orcs prowl.

Rhudaer promises a much worse or more exciting journey, depending on one's perspective. Terrain is a mixture of rough or rough and forest, impassable to wagons and mounts apart from the few ill-marked and confusing trails. Nocturnal raiding by Trolls and Orcs is commonplace. The native Hillmen may offer shelter and food to well-armed and wealthy groups, but are also likely to present sleeping guests with a spear in the gut or at least loot their belongings. If adventurers distrust the Hillmen, which is wise, they must seek out a

ruined Dúnanad watchtower, forsaken Troll hole, or natural overhang. Past Rivendell eastward is the Edge of the Wild, with not a single inn that side of the High Pass.

Lying at the geographic heart of the region, the High Pass with its two branches is the crux of travel, a principal link between Eriador and Rhovanion. Despite its hazards, it still sees frequent use, for it is virtually impossible to cross the mountains anywhere else nearby, even afoot.

Neither of the two branches of the High Pass is a real road, but merely a convenient, well-worn track through the mountains. The lower pass, often denoted the Pass of Imladris, permits horses and wagons if driven slowly, by far the easier of the two options. It has, however, become extremely dangerous, as two days or more are still needed to get through, and the main entrance of Goblin-gate adjoins it. During the day the goblins usually remain underground, but when the sun sets their war parties scour the pass, and woe to any benighted travellers nearby! Only in a very large caravan or in a carefully hidden encampment can capture be averted.

Travel through the higher mountain-path is slower, treated as rough terrain, and only those afoot or aback trained ponies and mules can negotiate the route. Dangers, however, are less severe, confined to lone Trolls or Giants, or stray bands of foraging Orcs. Travellers can expect, unfortunately, to spend several days on the mountain-path. In both passes, the only shelter to be had is a disused cave or cranny, typically damp and uncomfortable. Few dare light a fire encamped in the mountains, as the light can be seen for miles by all predators. Large, dry caves are to be suspected; usually they are already inhabited or are snares built by Orcs. Mountain exploration, while thrilling, is not for the unguided novice.

6.2 GOBLIN-GATE: PORTAL TO THE UNDERWORLD

Beneath the snowcapped peaks of the Misty Mountains lies a vast and intricate subterranean world of caverns and passages, a place of stark grandeur and unimaginable horror. Welcome to Goblin-gate, mighty realm of the mountain Orcs! Between the lower branch of the High Pass and the towering Eagles' Eyrie run the corridors of Goblin-gate, a distance of as much as forty miles, embracing several distinct cave complexes all under the sway of the Great Goblin. At the very summit of the High Pass, joined to the east-west trail by an adjacent ravine, stands the Orcs' main portal, the infamous Wolf Gate, from which Orcish hosts recurrently issue to harry hapless travellers. Many thousands of Men, Dwarves and Elves, over the centuries, have been dragged underground and never seen again by friends and kin.

Goblin-gate is based on a network of natural caverns eroded by water seepage through soluble limestone, which are scattered throughout this part of the mountains. During the Second Age the Orcs first discovered the caverns and perverted them to their own foul uses, but the origins are still apparent. Galleries and chambers harbor cold streams and lakes; stone forests of stalactites, stalagmites, pillars and crystals rivet the eye. As the caves are shaped around irregular fault patterns in the rock, some are split by chasms, and the several cave levels are connected by both sloping passages and vertical shafts. Where the highest caves are partly open to the chill mountain air, spectacular cascades and draperies of ice form. Deep below, the lowest caves connect to the subterranean fires of the inner earth.

During their many centuries of occupation the Orcs, being masterful and tireless miners, have delved numerous connecting passages between the caves, widened entrance shafts and expanded dwelling areas to suit their needs. Goblin-gate is in a state of constant evolution, with new construction always ongoing somewhere. Orcish

architecture is characterized by low passageways, difficult for any creature taller than a Dwarf to negotiate (Uruk-hai run in a crouch). Corridors are tangled, repeatedly crisscrossing and intersecting in a bewildering maze, yet gradually winding from the entrances toward the heart of the lair, Goblin-town. The confusing design is deliberate, designed to delay invaders while the Orcs muster their strength. While Orcish stonework appears rough and crude, far below Dwarvish quality, it is, like all Orcish craft, solid, stable and practical.

Goblin-town, center of the realm and personal fief of the Great Goblin, consists of three main parallel inhabited levels. Each extends over a sizable area of at least a quarter mile. Levels are linked by both winding tunnels and gaping pits. Particularly noteworthy is the terrifying Eye of Darkness, a seemingly bottomless pit which is lit by a sullen red light from below and periodically issues rumbles from its depths. Here in Goblin-town are the Orc-lord's throne, the bulk of the population, workshops, storerooms, treasuries and slave pits.

From Goblin-town a principal corridor gradually ascends some ten miles southward toward the oldest and best known of the entrances, the Wolf Gate, lying at the end of a narrow crevasse. Iron double gates are flanked on either side by the gigantic stone statue of a ravening wolf, and guarded with ceaseless vigilance. Passages delved into the crevasse walls on either side of the gates permit Orcs to loose flanking fire through high arrow slits against any attackers, and drop boulders and boiling oil. A major portion of Goblin-gate's warrior host is mustered behind the gates on a single level of caves, for here is the launching point for the largest raids and the greatest danger of attack.

During the mid-Third Age the other significant entrance to Goblin-gate is the Back Door, the lower gate at the end of an astounding thirty-mile long passage gradually descending northward from Goblin-town. The Back Door was envisioned partly as an escape route if needed, and also as an alternative point for launching raids into the Anduin Vales. Here a massive stone door pivots on an iron post, and a short flight of stone stairs descends into a ravine on the eastern side of the mountains, dropping steeply toward the forested lower slopes. At this time only a single cave level lies behind the Back Door, which, like the Wolf Gate, is always guarded and has never been blocked up.

Below the inhabited levels of Goblin-town and the major connecting corridors are vast caverns where the Orcs harvest fungi, stable captive beasts, and catch fish in lakes and streams. Further down are the Orcs' sprawling mine shafts tunnelled into the heart of the mountains in search of iron ore, precious metals and gems. Yet deeper are curious ancient shafts leading into the mysterious subworld, where even goblins rarely dare to venture. It is rumored that these tunnels connect throughout the mountains, and may even reach to the Underdeeps of Moria, where "the world is gnawed by nameless things." (*LotR, Fellowship*, p. 134).

Later Expansions

About T.A. 2480 the Orcs, seeking new living space for a swelling population, expand their northward tunnel even deeper past the Back Door, adding branching passages on either side. After about a mile they are stopped by the discovery of a large lake-filled cavern and mine no further, leaving a half-completed new level. Unknown to the Orcs, the lake connects to the outer world by a narrow stream passage, through which Gollum had entered several years earlier.

After the Dwarf-Goblin war of 2793-99, the surviving Orcs begin to delve a new passage rising some five miles to end in a secret door and a large cave adjoining the mountain-path, known as the Front Porch. Extensive lesser corridors and caves are shaped behind. Until the Quest of Erebor, in 2941, the Front Porch remains secret, but well guarded and periodically checked by the Orcs.

6.3 MAETHELBURG: MARKET OF THE UPPER ANDUIN

On the western bank of the Anduin, just above its confluence with a minor tributary known locally as the *Foamflood* (S. Sirros, "Foam-stream"), stands in T.A. 1640 the Northman town of Maethelburg. The settlement is situated on a prominent triangular bluff, two sides of which rise steeply from the converging waterways, while the landward end is a gentler slope sinking into the marsh which shields the hill to the north. Effectively, Maethelburg is an island town, protected by river or marsh on all three sides.

As long as the oral traditions of Northmen recall, some sort of market community has existed on this highly defensible site. As a trading center, the hill also became the preferred locale for informal inter-clan gatherings which developed into the Ealdormot, and gave rise to the town's name. Not until the early Third Age, however, did Maethelburg assume its present size and significance, thanks to the expansion of trade between the Northmen and Gondor. Because large vessels can voyage no further up the Anduin, and merchants prefer to ship weighty cargoes by river as far as possible, Maethelburg by T.A. 1000 emerged as the largest and wealthiest port on the Anduin above the Pillars of Argonath. When the Northmen accepted the authority of the Kings of Gondor, the King's representative naturally wished to be at the center of influence, while the Thegns also viewed the hill as the best locale for a fortress. Maethelburg attained its height about 1300, and though the succeeding centuries have witnessed a slight decline, by Northmen standards the town remains unsurpassed. The Plague claimed a third of the inhabitants, but these losses were mostly replaced by refugees from the abandoned town at the Old Ford who fled here for greater security.

Approaching up the Anduin, Maethelburg presents an imposing image. The town is built on three terraces encircling the bluff, culminating in the flat open plaza at the summit. Each terrace is warded by an earthen rampart topped by sharpened stakes and a wall of interlocking logs. Atop the inner rampart is a firing platform. A single wooden gate, lying below a watchtower, pierces each wall. Both riverfronts below the first terrace are lined with wharves, and a wooden causeway stretches across the marsh, terminating in a drawbridge before the first gate.

Scores of wooden buildings line the narrow streets and alleys of Maethelburg. Characteristically, these structures have high gabled roofs of thatch, and a riot of ornamental woodwork. Most are residences of one to three stories, displaying masterful carpentry. Family businesses operate from the lower floors of the multi-story structures or front rooms. Very few stone edifices are in evidence, as the Northmen have no skill in masonry and must hire itinerant Dwarves to keep such buildings in repair. Most notable of the stone structures are the Thegn's Tower, looming impressively from the summit of the hill, and the palatial Kingsmanshouse.

Maethelburg's main avenue, the wide *Wyrmlast* (Rh. "Serpent-path"), snakes around each terrace from the lowest gate to the principal market square at the summit of the bluff, known as the *Maethelstede* (Rh. "Meeting-place"). While the *Wyrmlast* is paved with hewn planks, most of the lesser streets remain rutted dirt.

As a mercantile center, Maethelburg rarely endures a dull moment. Lively, chaotic and confusing, it bustles with tradesmen, merchants, warriors, and travellers. At every hand folk are haggling, making deals and planning expeditions. Northmen from every corner of Rhovanion roam the streets, accompanied by Dúnedain, Silvan Elves, Dwarves, Hobbits from the Gladden, and even some dubious Hillmen and Easterlings.

Gates are open from dawn to dusk, and in daylight hours trading is always underway in the *Maethelstede* and the many shops. For the first three days of each month a regular market fair draws exceptionally large crowds. At night the focus of activity shifts to the

several inns and taverns, rowdy affairs where song is loud and drink flows freely. Brawls are frequent, as might be expected with the varied clientele.

On all this commercial chaos the local authorities attempt to impose only a minimal order. Burgwarders march about town and guard the gates and Thegn's Tower, presenting a formidable sight in their full armor and arms. These warriors are considerably more than the typical town militia, as any opponents will quickly learn. They serve to protect the lives and businesses of the residents and collect the Master's taxes from arriving merchants, but then take their orders from the Theng. Tax evasion is a popular sport, and a good deal of smuggling is attempted by night. Maethelburg is the quintessential frontier town, where almost anything can happen and often does.

Later Developments

By the late Third Age Maethelburg is but a pale shadow of its former self. Trade with the waning kingdom of Gondor has seriously declined, and the town is little more than a glorified fishing village, whose few remaining inhabitants dimly recall their ancient wealth. Surviving stone edifices lie half-ruined and untenanted, and a collection of rude huts, shops and sheds are clustered along the waterfront. No more than a warm bed and food is left to entice the rare traveller.

7.0 ADVENTURE GUIDELINES

This section provides some helpful Gamemaster notes which relate to running adventures in the northern Misty Mountains area, particularly around Goblin-gate and the Eagle's Eyrie. The GM should read over these guidelines before studying and selecting one of the adventures in Sections 8.0 through 10.0.

7.1 SELECTING AN ADVENTURE

Sections 8.0-10.0 are devoted to specific adventure sites and organized according to locale. The principal floorplans and NPCs are described, as are a number sample plot lines. All are accompanied by a story and suggested adventure, although a GM might opt for a different course of action. In order to provide flexibility, a list of adventure alternatives is provided at the end of each section. A difficulty factor has been assigned to each plot.

Gauging An Adventure's Dangers

The GM should take a look at the strength and experience of the PCs involved in the game and choose an adventure which provides a challenge, but is not too difficult.

Starting Adventures

Actually, Section 9.0 covers a safer, more settled area from which to start an adventure or campaign. In this area, PCs can buy and sell goods and solicit aid and information. The players might wish to begin their travels from the point described in Section 9.0.

7.2 CHOOSING A TIME PERIOD

Within a given section, the provided adventures are arranged in chronological order. They permit a ready-to-use sampling of sites, cultures, plots, and characters. Alter them if you desire. Look at these adventures as stories which characterize the place and illustrate the region, no more. Always remember, there is no rule against changing the course of history.

Those GM's desiring a simple adventure may not be concerned with the particular period of the temporal setting. They can, however, enjoy more flexibility and add more of their own designs by choosing a time outside of the scope of those mentioned here.

If you are running a campaign set during a specific era, any adventures around Goblin-gate will naturally take place at that time. This module is designed to accommodate this need and, though the individuals and plots may change with time, the physical layouts evolve slowly. Simply note when a structure was built and occupied, making

appropriate modifications for the subsequent alteration or ruin of the place. Should you run a campaign set in a time preceding the erection of a given structure, account for any changes made to the natural lay of the site, and record any earlier structures set at that location.

7.3 SUGGESTIONS ON RUNNING ADVENTURES

Once you're acquainted with the general background material found in Sections 2.0 through 6.0, look over the statistical summaries outlined on the tables in Section 11.0. Section 11.1 (Master Beast Table) digests information on dangerous animals and Section 11.2 covers local military operations and capabilities.

Then, get to know the nonplayer characters (NPC's). Read what Sections 8.0-10.0 and the Master NPC Table (Section 11.3) have to say about the principal NPC's in an area, and try to think as that sort of person would.

Look over the layouts of the complexes and note where traps, guard points, and weak points are located. Even if a room does not have an occupant indicated, consider the possibility that someone may be there when player characters break in.

7.4 ENCOUNTERS

The northern Misty Mountains region is rich in fauna and inhabitants, and intrigue awaits anyone wandering through the area for any significant period. It is hard to tell when or where the PCs might encounter locals, bandits, beasts, or even invaders.

We suggest the GM determine the possibility of an encounter regularly.

Specific Random Encounters

Section 11.4 contains a Master Encounter Table which outlines rendezvous specific to certain areas or sites in the Misty Mountains region. The Gamemaster can determine the PCs' location, find the appropriate column, and roll for possible encounters once during each period specified in that column. The period is either the time given on the chart or the time it takes for the PCs to cover the specified distance, whichever is shorter.

If an encounter roll is less than or equal to the given % chance of encounter, a second roll is made to ascertain the nature of the rendezvous. Once this is determined, refer to either the Master Beast Table (Section 11.1) or the Master Military Table (Section 11.2).

Other Random Encounters

Unless otherwise specified (e.g., you need or wish to use the Master Encounter Table), this procedure should be employed once every 4 hours if the PCs are moving, and once every 12 hours if the group is resting. If you use *MERP*, use the encounter guidelines in Section 5.24 (p. 50) and on Table ST-10 (p. 51). *Rolemaster* encounter rules are provided in *Campaign Law* in Section 3.34.

7.5 USING TRAPS, WEAPONS, AND SPELLS

The layout sections include frequent references to traps and locks. To speed play, the following cross-references are provided for GMs using *MERP* or *Rolemaster*:

In order to compute the success or failure of attempts to disarm or unlock these mechanisms, simply have the acting PC roll, add his appropriate bonuses, and subtract the difficulty factor assigned to the lock or trap. Then refer to the *MERP* table MT-2, p. 79 (or *RM: Character Law*, Sec. 15.32).

Results of Fall/Crush attacks and animal attacks can be determined using *MERP* tables CST-2 and AT-5 or AT-6, all at p. 70 (or *RM: Claw Law*).

Weapon attacks can be computed using *MERP* table CST-1, p. 72 and AT-1 through AT-4 at p. 71 (or *RM: Arms Law*).

The nature of spells and spell attacks can be determined using *MERP* Sec. 7.1, p. 58-69 (or *RM: Spell Law*).

8.0 ADVENTURES IN GOBLIN-GATE

Throughout the Third Age and into the Fourth Goblin-gate promises unsurpassed opportunities for adventure. Continuously inhabited by the mountain Orcs, the sprawling subterranean fortress holds behind its guarded portals hosts of foes, hundreds of captives and a king's ransom in loot, plundered from merchants and travellers in the High Pass. Whether driven by revenge, hopes of rescuing imprisoned friends and kin, or simple greed, all player-characters will find common cause in braving the perils of the Orcish realm.

No mere party of adventurers could hope to oust the Orcs from Goblin-gate, for the Orcs invariably hold an overwhelming advantage in numbers. The fierce goblin hordes, however, are dispersed widely in their vast domain, so that once a party is past the heavily defended gates, it is possible to slip undetected along the miles of connecting passages, only facing serious opposition at the core of these branching ways in Goblin-town.

This section details three adventures set in Goblin-gate. Each visits the fortress at a different period of its development. The levels of Goblin-town, the Wolf Gate and Back Door, completed by the mid-Third Age, are common to all three, while the two later adventures expand upon the original layout to include Gollum's Lair and the Front Porch.

Goblin-gate's fortunes fluctuate wildly, following a cycle of defeats, furtive recovery and renewed violent outbursts. The first adventure takes place in T.A. 1640, two centuries after the Witch-king's last massive assault on the Dúnedain of Arnor in 1409, which was repulsed after both sides had suffered enormous losses. Orcish strength is again on the rise, and while Goblin-gate is a tributary subject of Angmar, its quarrelsome lords hold the real power locally, and the Great Goblin strives to keep his throne amidst the competing factions.

Many centuries later, the second adventure is set in Goblin-gate in T.A. 2940, after the terrible War of the Dwarves and Orcs, and just before the Quest of Erebor. Goblin-gate, as with all the Orcish mountain communities, suffered a hasty Dwarvish sack in the war, but the Orcs have nearly recovered from their ruinous losses, repaired their damaged lair, and are commencing raids anew. Gollum, unknown to the Orcs, haunts the cavern complex as a deadly invisible predator.

Finally, the third adventure begins at the start of the Fourth Age, as the dispirited remnants of the once mighty Orcish hosts stand on the defensive after Sauron's destruction, and the grim Beornings and Woodmen prepare to take their revenge on their mountain foes.

8.1 THE STRUGGLE FOR THE THRONE: T.A. 1640

Setting: Goblin-gate and the environs of the High Pass.

Requirements: A party of daring and experienced adventurers, of moderate through high level (4th-10th). One or more Scouts (*RM* Rogues or Thieves) are essential, and Dwarves will prove especially useful in exploring Goblin-gate. PC's of any alignment, Free Peoples, neutral or pro-Sauron, may undertake the mission, though their motives will necessarily conflict to some extent.

Aids: Maps showing the route to the High Pass and the principal known entrance of Goblin-gate can be purchased in Maethelburg. No complete map of the interior of Goblin-gate exists, but escaped captives can supply some details for a price, at the GM's discretion.

8.11 THE PLOT

For the past century, the lordship of Goblin-gate has rested firmly in the claws of the dreadful Great Goblin, Urgubal. Recently, though, Urgubal has displayed signs of increasing irrationality, as well as neglect in paying tribute and executing orders from Carn Dûm. Thus, the Witch-king has concluded that the Dark Lord's interests might be better served by a ruler more competent and subservient. Deposing Urgubal, however, is easier said than done. No Orcish tribe is more obstinately independent than the Tarkhnarb, and the Witch-king, realizing Goblin-gate's vital strategic role, has no wish to see its power squandered in a futile and prolonged internal struggle. Rather, the Witch-king's envoys have quietly passed word, in the course of a routine embassy, that the master of Angmar would readily recognize any usurper who can prove himself by a sudden and successful coup.

Most intrigued by this surreptitious message is Balkhmog, Captain of the Wolf Gate. The ambitious officer is confident of the support of his own troops, a substantial host of common Orc warriors and Wargs, but these are outnumbered by the Great Goblin's masses of reserves, and the elite Uruk-hai bodyguard. Nor can the Captain count on the support of the other major lords of Goblin-gate. *Luzog*, Captain of the Back Door, is a loyal and unimaginative pawn of Urgubal; while the clever *Yazhgar*, Chief Priest of Darkness, is so unscrupulous that even Balkhmog dares not include him in the plot. Having no better alternative, Balkhmog has resolved to hire outside mercenaries for a scheme of assassination.

Willing PC's will be recruited in Maethelburg by a travelling Hillman merchant who has dealt with the Orcs on occasion and knows Balkhmog. Each adventurer will be paid 10gp just for setting out and promised 500 gp more for surviving at the successful conclusion. The Hillman himself does not know the full details of the mission, only that Goblin-gate is involved and that the Wolf Gate is a safe point of entry. Once the party is admitted through the Wolf Gate by Balkhmog's trusted minions, the Captain will reveal the goal of the enterprise: a surprise strike into the heart of Goblin-town to slay Urgubal and seize the scimitar *Elfhewer*, symbol of rulership. To claim their reward, the PC's must return to the Wolf Gate with both the weapon and proof of Urgubal's death, such as his head.

Balkhmog expects to swiftly capture the throne, for Urgubal's followers will be thrown into confusion by their Lord's passing, and the powerful Captain expects to appear as a savior in the moment of chaos. Because neither he nor his troops will have been directly involved in the murder of the Great Goblin, Balkhmog will escape blame for the act, and few if any will dare to ask troublesome questions until too late.

If the adventurers cannot get at Urgubal, the wisest course would be to grab any loot at hand and flee toward the Back Door, where the Orcs are likely to be unwary, as *Luzog* knows nothing of the plot. Any survivors of a defeated party foolish enough to return to the Wolf Gate will be slain by Balkhmog before Urgubal can capture and interrogate them. *Yazhgar*, if encountered, will feign friendship and sympathy with the plot, awaiting a suitable moment for betrayal. Even if the PC's succeed, their troubles are hardly over. Balkhmog will pay the agreed reward and send the party on its way, but his Wargs will ambush the adventurers on the return journey in order to destroy all witnesses to the plot. A prearranged rendezvous with the Eagles at this point would prove invaluable.

8.12 OPERATIONS OVERVIEW

Goblin-gate's population in T.A. 1640 is nearly as large as the height attained many centuries later, just before the devastating war with the Dwarves. Some 2500 Orcs now dwell in the cavern complex, including 1200 adult males, 800 adult females, and 500 imps of both sexes combined. Only a small fraction, slightly over one-twentieth of the total, are elite Uruk-hai, while the rest are common Orcs.

The warrior aristocracy numbers 65 Uruks, at the head of which are the *Durba-hai* (the Great Goblin) and his two generals, the Captains of the Wolf Gate and Back Door. Just below these commanders are 12 officers (8th level Warriors) who act as sub-captains over the common Orc masses. Most of the Uruks, who have not displayed any singular aptitude for command, are assembled in the Great Goblin's bodyguard, 50 strong. These Orcs rate as 6th level Warriors.

Ten other Uruk-hai perform specialized roles for the tribe. Of these the most significant is the Chief Priest of Darkness, who is aided by three acolytes (5th level Animists, *RM* Evil Clerics). Six Uruk Healers (3rd level Animists, *RM* Lay healers), are responsible for care of the wounded and maimed who can be restored to fighting condition.

Almost all of the male lesser Orcs are warriors, some 980 in total, organized in lurgs of 10-15 Orcs each. 85 (4th level) Warriors are the lurg leaders, while the remaining fighters amount to 170 experienced (3rd level) soldiers, 425 (2nd level) full adults, and 300 green (1st level) young adults. Every lurg includes in its strength a common Orc tracker, treated as a 2nd level Scout (*RM* Thief). Common Orcs are evenly intermingled in the lurgs, allowing the less experienced warriors to be properly trained by their betters in combat.

An elite force of common Orc trackers (4th level Scouts, *RM* Rogues) numbering 60, serves under the Great Goblin's personal command as his spies and informers, and hunters of escaped slaves in the lair. These trackers are in addition to the 85 assigned to the lurgs.

As is customary in Orcish tribes, the Tarkhnarb have taken in various other evil creatures to serve their needs. Five Cave-trolls, abysmally stupid yet extremely powerful beings (12th level Warriors), dwell in a secluded recess of Goblin-gate. They are well-fed and waiting to serve as heavy laborers or the Great Goblin's goon squad. They strike terror into the hearts of the common Orcs. 60 Wargs, nearly as clever and far tougher than most of their goblin masters, inhabit dens near the major gates, acting as mounts for rapid pursuits, ridden by lightly armed warriors. 250 slaves, mostly 1st-3rd level Men and a few Dwarves, are imprisoned in the dark pits of Goblin-town, fated to labor under the lash until they perish for lack of sunlight and fresh air. They survive their horrible existence sustained only by the hope of escape or rescue, and will take any risk if a reasonable chance of flight from Goblin-gate presents itself.

Military forces are distributed as follows:

Goblin-town: Great Goblin, 6 officers, 50 bodyguards, Chief Priest, 3 acolytes, 4 healers, 60 elite trackers, 45 common trackers, 520 common fighters, 5 Cave-trolls.

Wolf Gate: Captain, 4 officers, 1 healer, 25 common trackers, 285 common fighters, 35 Wargs.

Back Door: Captain, 2 officers, 1 healer, 15 common trackers, 175 common fighters, 25 Wargs.

8.13 PROMINENT INDIVIDUALS

Urgubal, the Great Goblin

Succeeding young to the throne through a combination of cunning and savage ferocity, Urgubal won recognition from the Witch-king and the overlord of Gundabad with lavish bribes. Often challenged in earlier days, he overcame all rivals by personal combat to the death or nefarious treachery. Time has claimed its toll on the once terrifying warrior, and while a 6' height and protruding lower fangs give Urgubal a fearsome aspect still, the Orcish ruler is grossly swollen with fat and corruption. His court is the scene of decadent and revolting entertainments and tortures, rife with sycophants, in the midst of which Urgubal squats on his throne, a foul and bloated toad. A network of informers infests every corner of the fortress, and the brutality of Urgubal's bodyguard and Cave-trolls stifles open dissent, enhancing the omnipresent climate of fear. Despite his disgusting and lethargic appearance, Urgubal has retained much of his fighting skill that won him power. Even now, when the Great Goblin is clad in his black chain mail and wielding the scimitar

Elfhewer, which never leaves his side, few Orcs indeed would dare to confront their abhorrent lord.

Balkhmog, Captain of the Wolf Gate

If any Orc can be thought worthy of respect, it is the redoubtable Balkhmog. Having won the honored command of the Wolf Gate through cleverness and bravery, Balkhmog secretly harbors higher ambitions. A son of Urgubal, he despises his repulsive father and aims to overthrow the Great Goblin, but for the moment he is compelled to feign subservience while he gathers his power. Thanks to his mastery of raiding and ambush, Balkhmog has doubled the quantity of loot seized in the High Pass, part of which he diverts to finance his own schemes. Never does the Captain hesitate to fight at the head of his troops, and the Orcs under his command are fanatically loyal despite their commander's harsh discipline. Balkhmog stands 5'10" tall, with a massive, thick build of solid muscle, and characteristically wears a wolf-head helm. He is experienced at dealing with Men. A subtle antagonist, Balkhmog adheres to the letter of his word while twisting the spirit of bargains.

Luzog, Captain of the Back Door

Luzog is a typical product of Urgubal's corrupt despotism. While considered a mighty warrior, the Captain is an uninspired leader, owing his position to being a son of the Great Goblin rather than to any talent. A half-brother to Balkhmog, Luzog realizes that his survival depends on Urgubal remaining in power, and thus he is doggedly loyal to preserving the current regime. Luzog is 5'8" in height, and heavily scarred across the face, the work of a Great Eagle's talons.



The Great Goblin

Yazhgar, Chief Priest of Darkness

No Orc in Goblin-gate is more feared than Yazhgar, the wizened and one-eyed high priest, who preaches Sauron's creed of evil to the goblin masses and predicts the return of the Dark Lord's reign. The ancient Uruk selects victims, both disobedient Orcs and slaves, to be cast into the Eye of Darkness or sacrificed on the bloody altar of the Dark Lord. Utterly treacherous and without a trace of pity or scruples, Yazhgar delights in manipulating the political rivalries in Goblin-gate, both to enhance his own influence and from sheer malice. An unmistakable character, Yazhgar is 5' tall, stooped, always swathed in voluminous red robes, and bears a snake-headed iron staff.

8.14 LAYOUTS

Goblin-gate's passages vary in size, from the 20' wide and 15' high main corridors to the narrower and more common 10' wide by 6' high secondary tunnels, which at many points drop to as low as 4'. Most cave areas, unless otherwise noted, are 10-15' high and of irregular size. Doors are infrequent, used only to block off important areas, and unless otherwise specified are constructed of crude wooden planks, ironbound, 6-8' high, 4' wide, and 2" thick. Locks are of medium difficulty. Keys are held by whomever has charge of the area; the Great Goblin possesses a complete master set.

Passages and caverns are unlit, except in areas currently in use, where light is provided by weak torches and firepits emitting acrid smoke. Heavy shadows prevail even in the illuminated caves. Goblin-gate maintains a constant cool temperature of about 50-55 F., save where chill winds blow in from outside, or subterranean fires are channeled for forging. Ventilation is generally poor, causing smoke and the stench of garbage and rot to remain in the stale, heavy air. Sanitation is sporadic at best. Slaves are dispatched intermittently to sweep out dwelling caves when the goblins can no longer find the

floor. Uncovered coal-fueled firepits are employed for cooking and heat.

Communications present formidable difficulties in a complex of such grand scale. For short distances in inhabited areas runners carry oral messages. When greater speed is required to traverse the miles of subterranean highways, the Orcs use trained giant vampire bats as messengers. A bat carries an encoded scroll tied to its talon. Upon delivery of its burden it is rewarded with a sip of fresh blood from stocks kept on hand by officers.

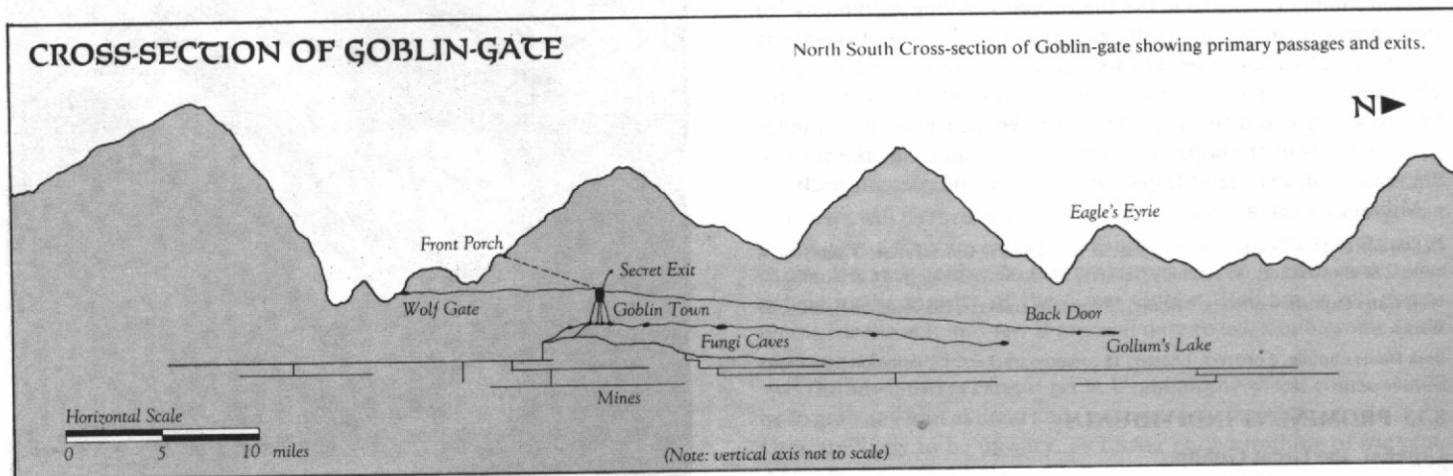
Traps

Orcs are notoriously fascinated by mechanical devices, and have devised a variety of ingenious traps, liberally scattered throughout the complex. Most are designed to capture intruders for slavery, inflicting punitive pain in the process, rather than killing victims outright. The Orcs are trained to avoid trapped areas by recognition of subtle signs, such as unusual patterns carved in the rough stone. For those untutored in the secret Orcish symbols, traps in Goblin-gate are as a rule *Extremely Hard* to perceive, and one must be specifically looking for danger.

The most common forms of Orcish traps are here detailed. More unusual traps are described where found in the fortress.

A. Closing Pit: This is a shaft 20' deep, covered by a stone slab appearing as the surrounding floor, 5-10' wide depending on corridor size. The trap door operates on a counterweight mechanism. If 50 lbs. or more is placed on the door, the slab drops open, the victim plummets downwards, suffering falling damage on the stone bottom, and the cover then promptly recloses. From below it cannot be opened.

B. Murder Pit: Like the standard closing pit but less common, the bottom of the shaft is lined with sharpened iron spikes, inflicting 1-4 "D" puncture criticals. As the spikes are



ROUTE MAPS

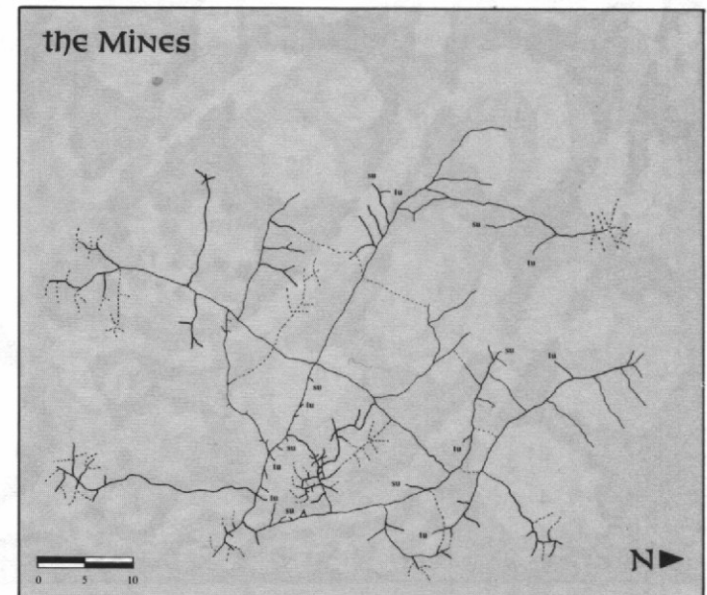
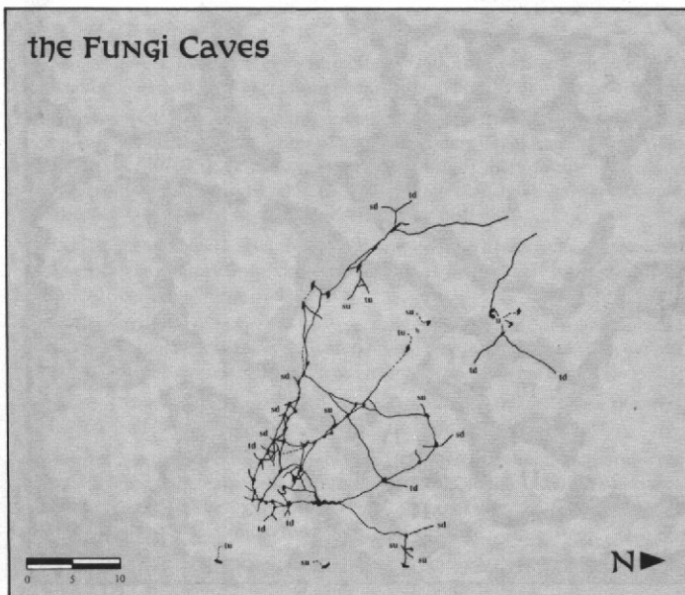
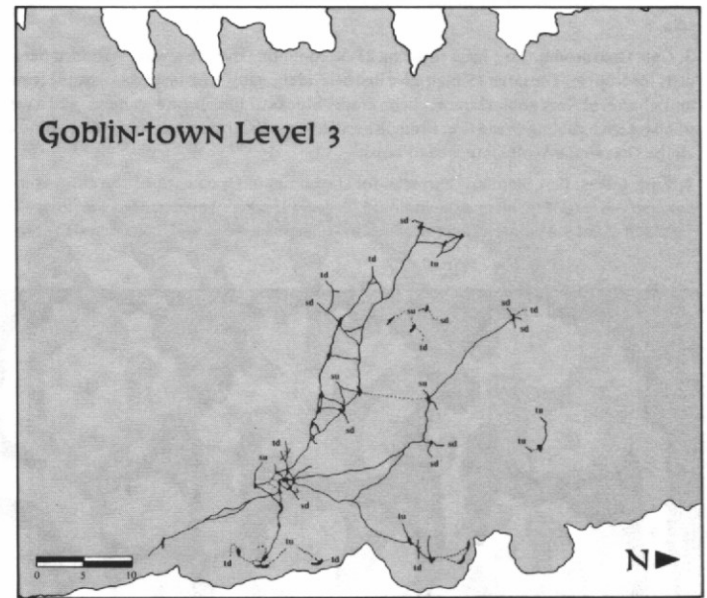
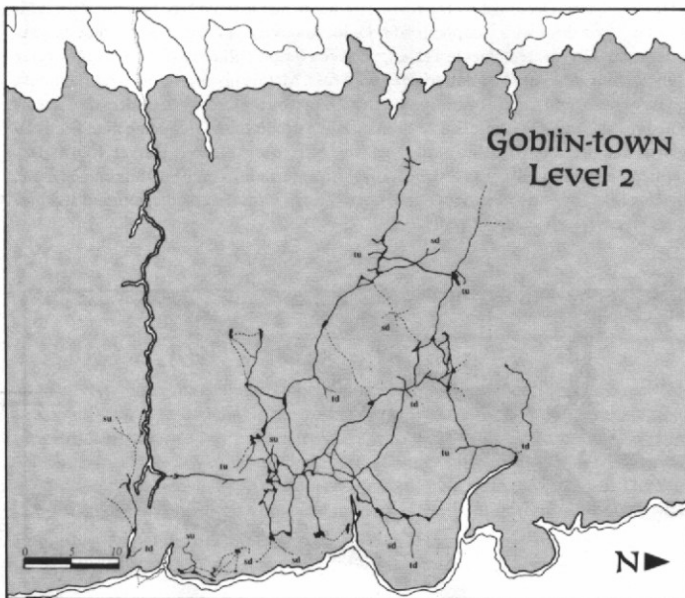
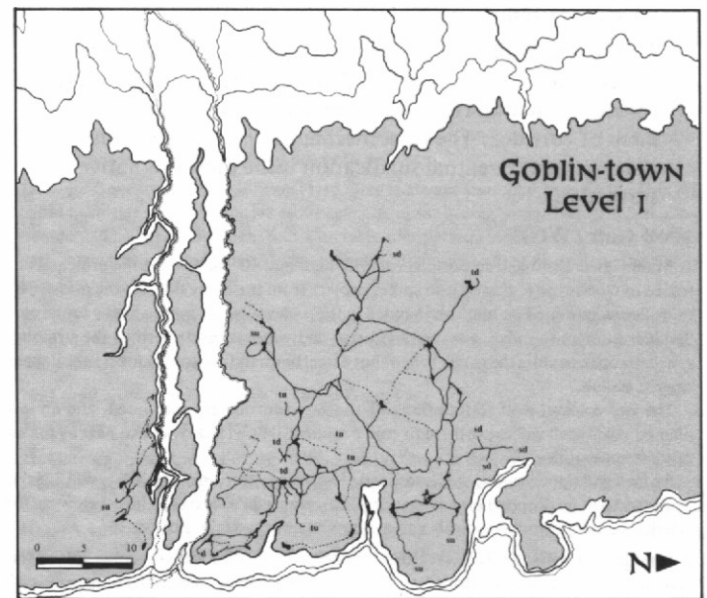
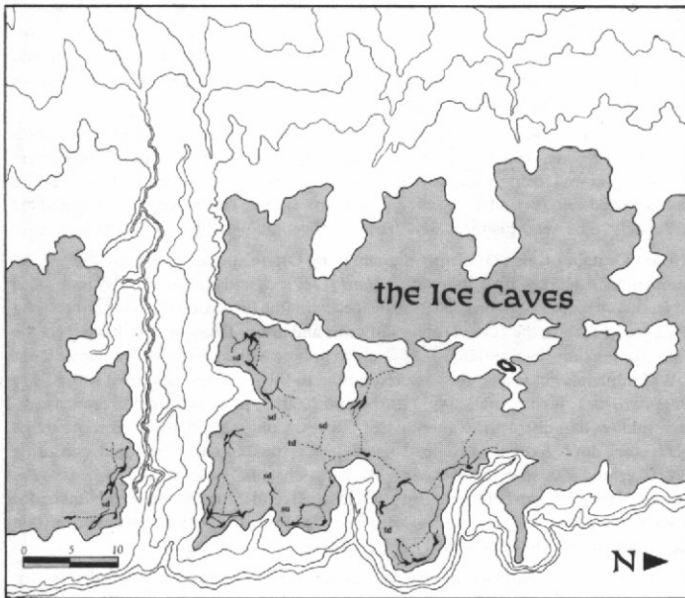
This section contains route maps of the Ice Caves, the three City Levels, the Fungi Caves, and the Mines. These show the main passages, primary rooms, and key locations. Frequently used staircases and traverse connecting routes are also indicated.

The route maps do not show the hundreds of smaller rooms, minor passages, and natural phenomena. To determine the location of these spots, one should rely on the Random Features Table 11.5. This table allows the Gamemaster to determine what features are in or on a particular passage or room, regardless of the region in Goblin-gate. The table can be used during an adventure, with the GM recording the resulting features and creating an ultra detailed map of the specific area. Alternatively, the GM may wish to document these features prior to the beginning of the game session.

THE ROUTE MAP KEY

- s = major stair (up and down)
- sd = stair down
- su = stair up
- t = traverse passage (slopes up and down)
- td = traverse passage (slopes down)
- tu = traverse passage (slopes up)
- = Passage
- - - = Passages added after T.A. 1640
- = Passes outside mountain

The scale is in miles.



barbed, the victim is pinned to the floor, unless he tears free, which is extremely painful.

C. Shifting Walls: Pressure on a trigger stone in the floor of 50 lbs. or more causes a pair of 2' thick stone slabs 30' apart to roll out from the passage walls, sealing in any within that segment of corridor. The reset mechanism is concealed outside the trap area. Eventual suffocation is the only alternative to surrender.

Wolf Gate (WG)

1. Main Gates. Double iron portals, each 18' high and 10' wide, ward the principal entrance to Goblin-gate. 1' long iron spikes project from the outer side. As the massive 6" thick doors, mounted on hinges imbedded in the rock walls, are far too heavy for any individual strength to move, a system of chains and winches inside permits the straining guards to open or close the gates. When shut a steel bar is slid across the doors to seal them against assault.

The two colossal wolf statues flanking the gates outside are enchanted, and an implanted vocal spell will cause them to emit a mournful howl if any seek to pass by under magical concealment.

An iron grill tipped with spikes is suspended horizontally from the ceiling just inside the gates, and will be dropped on any invaders, covering a 20'x20' area. Those below suffer 1-5 "D" Puncture wound criticals and are pinned until the grill is lifted.

2. Flanking Galleries. Passageways are tunnelled into the cliff walls on either side of the gates from the guardroom. Stone stairs ascend to the galleries, pierced by numerous slits overlooking the crevasse 20' below leading up to the gates. Arrows, boulders, boiling oil and other deterrents can be unleashed against assailants, making the approach a death trap.

3. Gate Guardroom. Two lurgs totalling 21-30 common Orcs are always stationed here, alert for trouble. The large 25' high cave just behind the gates is furnished with stone seats and a barrel of fiery goblin liquor, cheap grade. Stocks of missiles are on hand, and a vat of oil is kept bubbling over a fire. From the wall hangs an alarm gong, which will summon all the Orcs in the Wolf Gate area to arms.

4. Lurg Caves. (25) Standard barracks for the common Orcs, each of the caves is inhabited by a lurg 11-15 strong, including: 1 leader, 1 tracker, 2 experienced warriors, 3-7 full adults, and 3-4 young adults. 4-6 female Orcs dwell here as well, considered the pro-

perty of the leader and old warriors, and used mainly for domestic tasks, cooking, scrubbing pots and emptying latrine buckets. Straw pallets in the corners, a stone table and benches, and a crude firepit are the sole furnishings. Trash and bones litter the floor. There is a 50% chance that the inhabitants will be present; if not, they are on raiding, guard, patrol, and laboring duties. Orc warriors each have 1-5 bp and 6-10 cp, while the leader possesses 6-10 sp and 12-30 bp.

5. Officers' Caves. (4) Private dens of the sub-captains, these are marked by locked doors with a bronze plate. An Uruk-hai officer is the only male inhabitant, but 1-3 female Orcs are present as well to do their master's bidding. Furnishings are a stone table and seats, a bed slab piled with furs, a liquor keg, and an ample firepit. The officer and his retinue are 60% likely to be here. Personal wealth of an officer amounts to 11-15 gp and 21-25 sp.

6. Gate Captain's Cave. Opulently appointed by Orcish standards the lair of the local commander is marked by a door with a *Hard* (-10) lock and a silver plate. A wide stone table, carved seats, raised bed platform heaped with fine furs, good stocks of liquor and a large firepit furnish the cave. Trophies of arms and armor taken in raids hang from the walls. At any time the Captain is 80% likely to be here with a retinue of 2-6 female Orcs.

Within plain sight is a large iron chest bolted to the floor and equipped with a *Very Hard* (-20) lock. It contains 400 sp, 1200 bp and 2000 cp, petty cash used to reward common soldiers and distract the attention of thieves. Concealed in a wall closet behind a secret stone door, *Extremely Hard* (-30) to detect, is the Captain's true hoard, consisting of 1500 gp and 2000 sp in two locked chests. If searchers fail to detect and disarm the *Extremely Hard* (-30) trap before entering the closet, several sharpened steel rods imbedded in stalactites above will stab out, inflicting 1-5 "D" Puncture criticals on anyone within the 10' square before the closet.

NOTE: The Captain will have more treasure on hand if needed to pay bribes or rewards.

7. Healer's Cave. Occupied by the sole Uruk-hai healer assigned to the area, the cave is closed off by a door with a copper plate. Inside, an overpowering stench from the compounding of Orcish medicines in a cauldron over a firepit pollutes the air. Furnishings are a simple stone table and bed slab covered with furs. Metal bins and wooden barrels hold a variety of herbs and fungi of curative worth gathered by the Orcs. The healer is 80% likely to be present, and if so there is a 25% chance of 1-5 common Orcs being here for treatment as well. Personal treasure of the healer is 11-20 gp and 22-40 sp. Jars (1-100) of dark ointment, an Orcish salve, can also be found. An application cures 1-10 hits immediately, but stings like fire and leaves permanent scars. Two or more uses on the same day will produce reverse effects, causing 1-10 hits.





8. Wolf Den. A sunken chamber 10' below the level of the entrance, the floor is reached by a sloping walkway surrounding the outer wall. Anywhere from 26-35 Wargs are usually present. Not captives but mercenary allies, the Wargs consent to be stabled here as mounts often ridden by common Orc leaders in return for a steady diet of fresh meat, including an occasional live prisoner thrown in screaming from the entrance. The Wargs have the freedom to roam the area and are very effective in sniffing out hidden foes.

9. Kitchen. Major repasts for the troops and their leaders are prepared in this cavern by a rotating staff of 21-30 female Orcs drawn from the lurg caves. Roasting spits are mounted over two huge central firepits, while around the perimeter are several lesser firepits with bubbling kettles, bread ovens, and stone worktables. Wall racks hold an assortment of odd utensils. Contents of most Orc dishes look unappetizing at best (fungus stew?) and are wisely left unexplored.

10. Smokehouse. Carcasses of every variety hang from iron hooks embedded in the cave roof, and a slow wood fire is kept burning constantly, filling the air with a perpetual haze.

11. Storerooms. (6) The Orcish supply rooms and commissaries have locked doors with iron plates. Inside are chaotic heaps of goods, including liquor barrels, dried rations, piles of hides, furs and clothing, torches, coal, wood, spare missile weapons, and miscellaneous loot of no special value. Only officers and the Captain have keys. Common Orcs deposit their plunder here and buy supplies for their units.

12. Cells. Eight bare 10'x10' cells, iron barred with *Very Hard* (-20) locks, are employed to hold new captives before transport to Goblin-town's slave pits. If captives are present (50%), 6-15 common Orcs guard the area.

13. Bat Roost. In this stalactite-ridden cave, lightless and stinking of guano, roost 13-40 Giant Vampire Bats trained to serve as messengers. They will not harm Orcs, but will attack any other intruders. Bright light tends to agitate and confuse them.

14. Well. A stone shaft descends 100' to a subterranean stream. Above the well are mounted a crude winch and bucket. The water is slightly bitter but potable.

15. Smithy. Not the giant forge or armory, this is but a repair shop, where armor can be mended and weapons sharpened. A large anvil, bellows, firepit and stone worktable are the main furnishings. The Orcish tools scattered about are of strange design, but quite efficient. 6-15 Orc warriors will be laboring here at any time.

16. Descending Passage. Ten miles long, this subterranean highway, a principal corridor, gradually runs with many twists and bends to Goblin-town.

Back Door (BD)

17. Gate. The massive stone door slab, 15' high, 10' wide and 2' thick, is mounted on an iron pivot. At least two strong Orcs are required to open or close it. From the inside, the gate can always be opened by the necessary pressure, but force applied from the outside is unavailing against the cleverly designed mechanism. Once closed, the gate looks much like the surrounding stone, but it is not hard to discern its general location, for a flight of stone stairs leads up to it. The gate lies about 10' above ground level. A chute 15' above the gate permits boulders to be rolled out onto attackers.

18. Gate Guardroom. One lurg of 11-15 Orcs is always stationed here, in the area just behind the gate. Furnishings are stone seats, a liquor barrel, and stocks of missiles and boulders. The cave is 30' high, and a metal ladder permits ascent to the chute over the gate. An alarm gong suspended from the wall will summon all the Orcs in the Back Door area to arms.

19. Twisting Corridor. The passage leading inward from the guardroom, a mere secondary corridor for much of its length, is characterized by corners, convoluted bends and sharp inclines. (See *Hobbit* p. 93-94).

20. Lurg Caves. (15) Same as WG (Wolf Gate) #4.

21. Officers' Caves. (2) Same as WG #5.

22. Gate Captain's Cave. Furnished much as WG #6, the den of the Captain of the Back Door differs principally in its treasure and traps. Its visible iron chest holds 300 sp, 800 bp and 1500 cp. The wall closet behind the secret stone door contains a hoard of 800 gp and 1000 sp. Unless the *Very Hard* (-20) trap is disarmed, a stone slab drops from the ceiling, inflicting 1-3 "E" crush criticals on anyone in the 10' area before the closet.

23. Healer's Cave. Same as WG #7.

24. Wolf Den. Same as WG #8, except that 15-25 Wargs will be found here at any time.

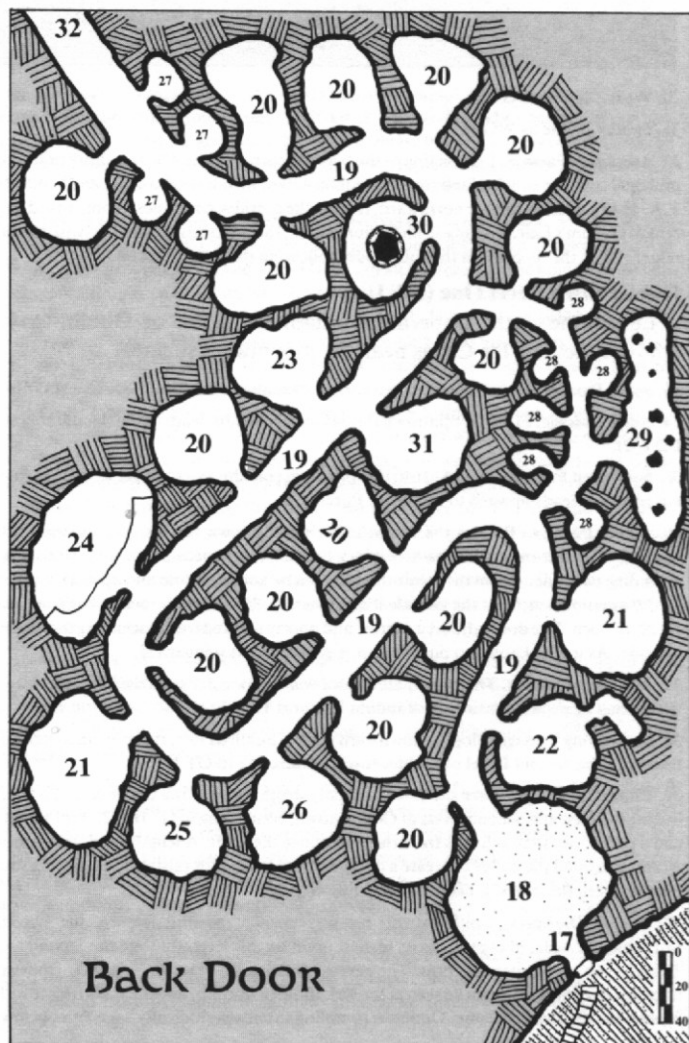
25. Kitchen. Same as WG #9.

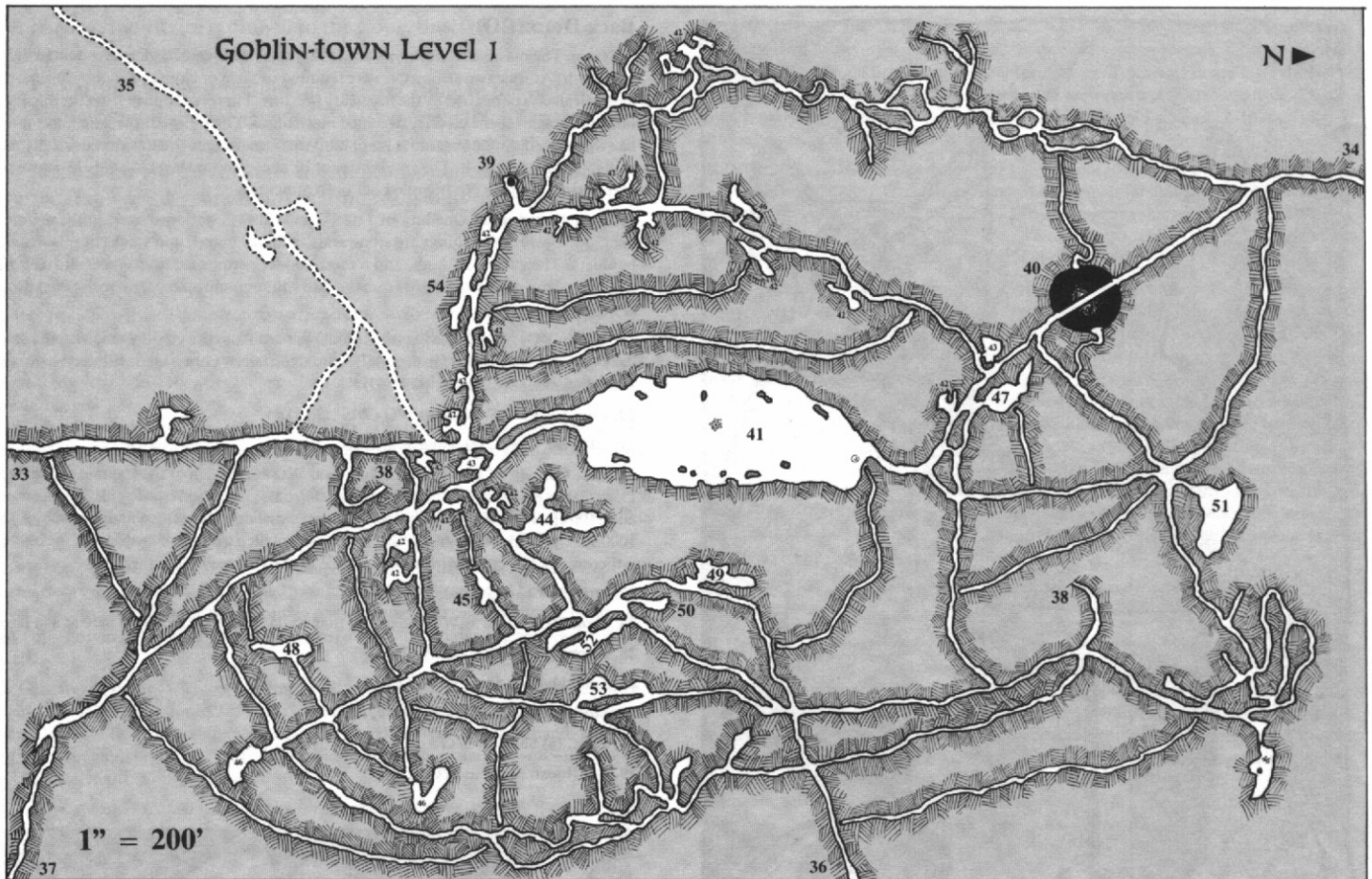
26. Smokehouse. Same as WG #10.

27. Storerooms. (4) Same as WG #11.

28. Cells. (6) Same as WG #12.

29. Bat Roost. Same as WG #13.





30. Well. Same as WG #14.

31. Smithy. Same as WG #15.

32. **Ascending Passage.** Connecting to the twisting corridor, BD #19, this thirty mile long principal corridor slowly climbs toward Goblin-town, with several corners and bends. In T.A. 1640 it goes no further northward. (Later, the corridor continues its northward descent to Gollum's Lair. Coming from Gollum's Lair, the intersection with the twisting corridor, #19, is the seventh on the south side, following the sixth on the north.)

Goblin-town Level One (GT I)

Level One is the uppermost inhabited region of Goblin-town. Above it lies the Ice Caves near the mountain's surface.

33. **South Passage.** Here is the principal corridor leading to the Wolf Gate (see WG #16).

34. **North Passage.** From Goblin-town this principal corridor leads to the Back Door (See BD #32).

35. **Southwest Passage.** In T.A. 1640 this principal corridor does not yet exist. (For later adventures it leads upward to the Front Porch.)

36. **Secret Passage.** Besides the major exits, Goblin-town has its own escape route heading east. It is only a narrow secondary corridor, terminating in a stone door after ascending two miles. From the inside the door can be quickly found and opened, an *Easy* (+20) attempt, but from the outside it is *Extremely Hard* (-30) to detect but still *Easy* (+20) to open. The door adjoins a narrow and poorly marked trail descending the mountainside. As it is unknown to outsiders, it is generally left unguarded.

37. **Ascending Passage.** This principal corridor winds upward toward the inner Ice Caves, which may be explored using the Random Features Table.

38. **Descending Passage.** Sloping downward several hundred feet, this principal corridor leads into the Second Level of Goblin-town, connecting to GT II #55.

39. **Connecting Shaft.** Here the floor suddenly drops away at the upper end of a shaft linking the First and Second levels of Goblin-town, connecting to GT II #57. It is 15' wide, and a pulley mechanism hangs from the roof above the shaft. A lengthy and strong rope wrapped around the pulley to create a double strand is used for raising and lowering supplies between the levels; it can also carry passengers.

40. **Eye of Darkness.** Goblin-town's most spectacular natural feature, the Eye of Darkness, 80' wide, plunges from its highest point on this level, through the Second and Third Levels, to unknown depths. The capped remains of a lava shaft, it is far from extinct, for a reddish glare can be seen at the unfathomed bottom, and the walls flicker with mysterious shadows of flame. Ominous rumbling sounds periodically issue from below,

causing the Orcs to tremble in fear. On this and every level of Goblin-town, passages run up to the very brink of the Eye, and perilous stone arches, 10' wide without any rail, span the gap to the opposite side where the corridor resumes. Should one slip while crossing, it is possible to catch hold of the bridge on any lower level, a *Sheer Folly* (-50) maneuver. Failure means certain death at the end of a long and terrible fall.

41. **Great Hall.** An enormous cavern, 100' wide and 300' long, the Great Hall is the focus of activity on the First Level, being the throne room of the Great Goblin. Wild feasts, mustering of troops, inspection of new captives and horrible tortures all occur here for the tyrant's entertainment. Colossal natural stone pillars uphold the roof 120' above, and are embellished with carved scenes of savage warfare, representing Orcish triumphs. Three entrances lead into the Great Hall, each connecting to the major corridors exiting Goblin-town. A roaring firepit is the cavern's centerpiece, while torches mounted in iron brackets along the walls further illuminate the area.

At the far end of the hall, enveloped in shadows, lies a large flat stone dais upon which rests the Great Goblin's carved basalt throne. The Great Goblin is 40% likely to be enthroned in the Great Hall, surrounded by his bodyguard of 22-40 Uruk-hai. When the Great Goblin is here, 20-30 other common Orc warriors are also present in the cavern, reporting news or awaiting commands. Behind the throne is a secret stone door, *Extremely Hard* (-30) to detect, leading to a narrow escape passage. The throne is also safeguarded by a defensive trap, activated by a lever on the left arm of the seat. Jets of fire 6' high spurt up from concealed tubing in the floor, creating a protective semicircle of flame. Any daring to rush through suffer an "E" heat critical. (Note that when Gandalf slays the Great Goblin in T.A. 2941, the Orc-lord had first rushed from his throne in rage to attack the chained Thorin Oakenshield.)

42. **Lurg Caves.** (15) Same as WG #4.

43. **Officers' Caves.** (2) Same as WG #5.

44. **Kitchen.** Same as WG #9.

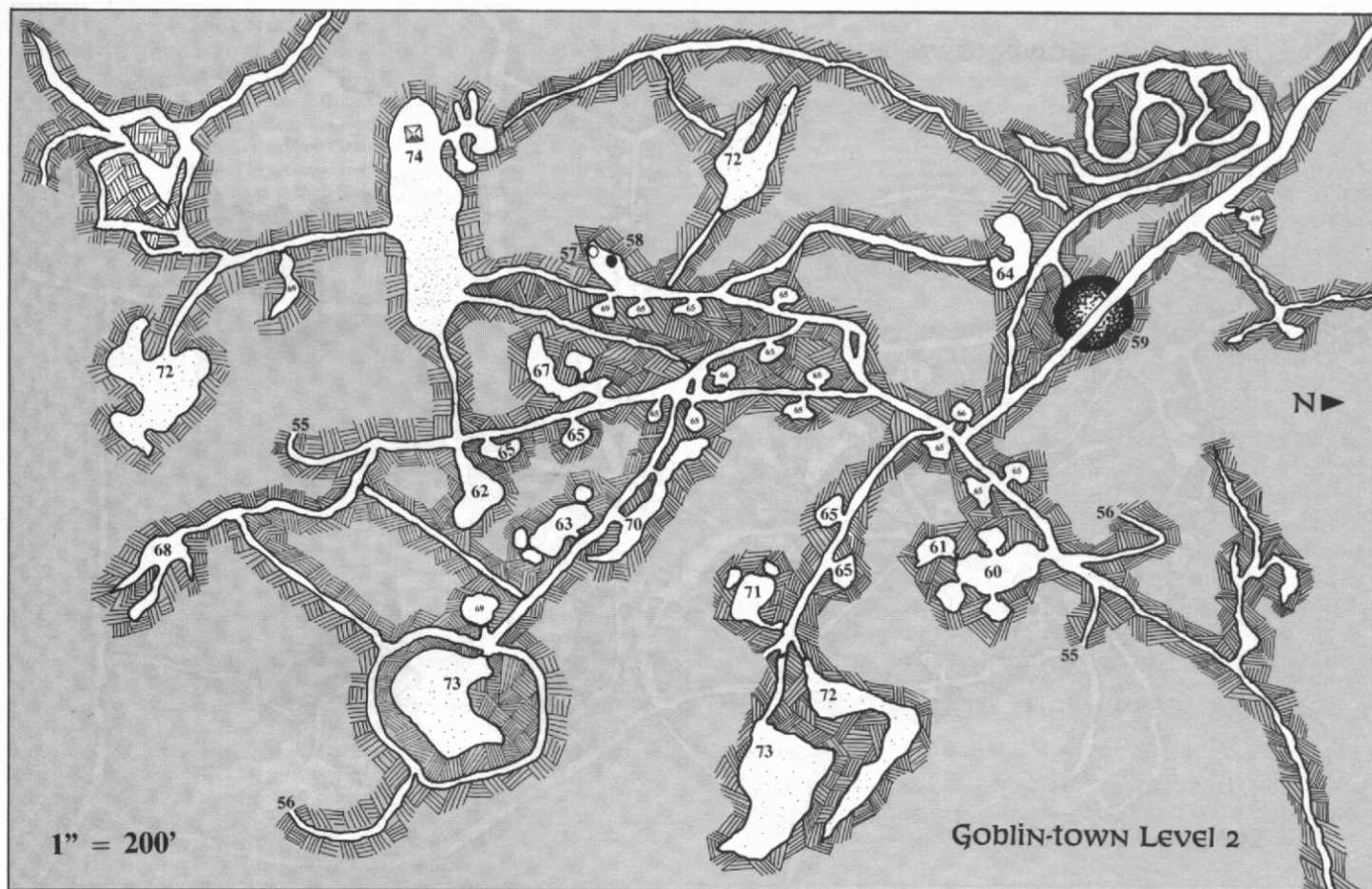
45. **Smokehouse.** Same as WG #10.

46. **Storerooms.** (4) Same as WG #11.

47. **Smithy.** Same as WG #15.

48. **Tannery.** Hides are cured and prepared in this cave, set apart from any dwelling area. Skins are hung from scraping beams, softened with dung, and soaked in vats of mild acids. Even the goblins dislike the stench. 10 slaves work in the area, guarded by 5 goblins.

49. **Brewery.** Most desired of occupations in Goblin-town, the brewers are personally selected by the Great Goblin. The door of the cave, with a *Very Hard* (-20) lock, is always shut. Inside are the fermenting vats and tuns where the Orcs brew and store their fiery li-



quors. Even one swig of the cheap stuff is often enough to knock down the unwary, and the aftereffect is a fierce, invigorating warmth. The better grade, brewed for the Great Goblin and his officers, is so strong it will stun anyone with a constitution of less than 90. 10-15 Orcs work here at any time.

50. Wood Shop. Though the Orcs prefer stone work, wood is often used for doors, barrels, benches and the like. Stone worktables, saws and other tools are scattered about this cave, where rough logs are shaped into finished goods. 10 slaves and 5 goblins guarding them will be found here.

51. Mill. An underground stream surfaces in this cave, which the Orcs have channelled to power a mechanical mill for grinding wild grains gathered by foraging parties. 10 slaves are kept busy in the area sorting and threshing grain and grinding it into meal, guarded by 5 goblins.

52. Butchery. The Orcs enjoy the business of hacking up carcasses too much to leave it to mere slaves. Prey gathered by Orcish hunting parties is kept frozen here on ice mounds until ready for the chopping block or the smokehouse. 6-15 bloody Orcs are employed in this gruesome cave, wielding huge carving knives.

53. Clothworks. Bales of wool shorn from mountain sheep clutter the chamber, amidst great looms and long worktables. Goblin females, 21-30 of whom will be found here, labor at weaving a rough and scratchy fabric which they use for garments.

54. Bat Roost. Same as WG #13.

Goblin-town Level Two (GT II)

Level Two is the central inhabited level of Goblin-Town.

55. Ascending Passage. This principal corridor climbs to Level One, connecting to GT I #38.

56. Descending Passage. Following this sloping principal corridor leads to Level Three below, connecting to GT III #75.

57. Lower Connecting Shaft. This is the lower end of the shaft from GT I #39. A pulley is bolted to the floor, and a sturdy rope is wrapped around it, leading up into darkness.

58. Upper Connecting Shaft. Same as GT I #39, this shaft links Levels Two and Three, connecting to GT III #77.

59. Eye of Darkness. Same as GT I #40, this is the lower continuation of the great shaft. The second bridge on this level is 100' below the first bridge on Level One.

60. Bodyguard Cave. Being of higher status than the common Orcs, the Uruk-hai bodyguards merit a more spacious and luxurious dwelling, with similar furnishings including straw pallets and stone tables, but also gaudy battle trophies and banners,

mounted skulls of fallen foes, and a ready supply of liquor kegs. Whenever the Great Goblin is present in his adjoining den, 22-40 Uruk-hai guards will be stationed in this barracks, gambling, feasting and dreaming ugly dreams. No females dwell here, but the guards have ready access to the harems. Personal wealth of the guards is 6-10 gp and 16-20 sp.

61. Royal Chamber. Lying just behind the bodyguard barracks and accessible only through it, the Great Goblin's private suite is the epitome of Orcish ostentation and bad taste. A door with a gold plate and *Very Hard* (-20) lock safeguards the hold. Furnishings encompass a firepit, an obsidian table with similar seats, a raised stone bed slab heaped with rare furs and canopied in black and red hangings, kegs of good goblin liquor and other captured viands, battle trophies, a dozen jewelled drinking goblets worth 100 gp each, and other loot randomly strewn about. Ornamental leering faces and slaver monster heads adorn bedposts and table legs.

The Great Goblin is 50% likely to be found here in hedonistic repose, with 6-15 exotically dressed female Orcs at hand to attend to his every whim. Behind a secret stone door, *Extremely Hard* (-30) to detect and unlock, is a wall closet holding the Great Goblin's personal treasure stash, 3000 gp, 5000 sp and 2000 gp in gems, in three locked iron chests. The trap protecting the closet, also *Extremely Hard* to find and disarm, is most ingenious, Razor-sharp metal blades imbedded in the portal behind the door are activated when the door slides aside, and the first individual to step into the closet will be sliced into unrecognizable sausage as the blades shuttle vertically along narrow grooves. (4-8 "D" slash criticals) Anyone following through will once again trigger the trap, until it is disarmed.

62. Healer's Cave. Much like WG #7, the main infirmary of Goblin-town is equipped with stone bed slabs for the 4 Uruk-hai healers that dwell here. An even greater assortment of herbs and drugs can be found. One healer is always in residence, and there is an 80% chance of each of the others being present as well. It is 25% likely that 1-10 Orcs will be here seeking treatment of wounds.

63. Shamans' Cave. Closed off by a door with a *Very Hard* (-20) lock, and embellished with a serpent emblem, this large and bizarre chamber is inhabited by the Chief Priest and his 3 acolytes. Blood-red religious vestments, gruesome masks (uglier even than the Orcs), jagged ritual knives carved with evil runes, bunches of poisonous plants and herbs hanging from the ceiling and severed heads all contribute to the pervasive atmosphere of horror and disgust. More conventional furnishings are stone fur-covered bed slabs, a long stone table and seats, liquor kegs, a firepit and recessed shelves. On the shelving is an extensive collection of tribal records carved onto stone tablets dating back to the Second Age, a uniformly distasteful, bombastic and repetitious history, but among the records can be found the only complete map of Goblin-gate (usually after hours of tedious search).

door, and slaves can only get out by climbing a ladder lowered from above by guards. The ladders are kept in nearby storerooms. The area of the slave pits is constantly guarded by a lurch of 11-15 Orcs.

85. Great Forge. Nothing awes the Orcs in Goblin-gate as much as this vast cavern, alive at every hour with noisy industry and engines, almost unbearably stifling and hot. A complex array of pipes, sluices and vats sprawls across the entire area, while blast furnaces dug in the stone walls and heated by subterranean fires smelt raw ore into molten iron and slag. Showers of sparks fly in the air as the liquid metal cascades into channels cut in the sloping floor and pours into its cooling molds, steam surging from the chill water cisterns. Lengthy worktables echo to the pounding of tools, and hammers resound from anvils, shaping iron wire and bars into weapons and armor. 42-60 Orcs and 31-40 slaves are always laboring in the hell of the forge, the slaves performing the most menial and dangerous work under Orcish supervision. Only the skilled Orc armorers are allowed to handle finished weapons.

86. Armory. Behind an iron door with a *Very Hard* (-20) lock, regularly guarded by a lurch of 11-15 Orcs, is the immense weapon hoard of Goblin-gate. Ordinarily 100 leather breastplates, 80 sets of chain mail, 150 shields, 120 helms, 200 scimitars, 200 spears, 60 axes, and 120 unstrung shortbows are stored here, along with 5000 arrows and heaps of miscellaneous military gear.

87. Treasury. Watchfully guarded by a lurch of 11-15 Orcs outside the 4" thick iron door, with a lock *Sheer Folly* (-50) to open, the Treasury cave holds the fabled wealth stolen by the Orcs during innumerable raids. The warding trap is devilish in its simplicity. So long as 200 lbs. or more remains on the 10' square outside the door, nothing occurs. Once that weight is removed (i.e., when the greedy thieves rush inside), a massive stone slab 2' thick descends to seal the entrance passage. From within it cannot be raised, but from the outside it can be reset by pressing a concealed (*Very Hard*, -20) catchstone. If the Orcs wish to take prisoner those trapped inside, a gas can be introduced into the chamber by vents. This gas reduces the victims to spasms of uncontrollable laughter, and the thieves will still be giggling all the way to their cells. The trap is *Absurd* (-70) to detect in advance.

The Treasury contains mounds of loose coins of small value, 30,000 cp and 10,000 bp, and ten locked iron chests, each with a poisoned needle trap *Very Hard* (-20) to detect and neutralize, injecting giant spider venom. Chests 1-4 each hold 5000 sp. Chests 5-6 hold 4000 gp each. Chest 7 contains 800 mp. Chest 8 holds 5000 gp in gems, and Chest 9 holds 4000 gp in jewelry. Chest 10 keeps safe 6-10 magic items for which the Orcs have no immediate use. There are several +5 or +10 weapons of various sorts in which the Orcs are unskilled, and three special items of Note (see Section 8.4 for possibilities). Scattered on the floor in heaps and mounds are ordinary weapons, armor and other objects of no special worth taken in raiding, a mess which will require several hours of fruitless examination.

88. Torture Chamber. Even from behind the locked door the screams of captives undergoing interrogation can be heard. The hellish cave is equipped with the latest in torture implements to satisfy even the most sadistic Orc. 11-15 Orcs will be here at any time as inquisitors or spectators, working over 1-10 prisoners.

89. Arena. An enormous cavern with a domed roof, the Arena is illuminated continually by growths of phosphorescent fungi overhead. Its six tiers of stone benches arranged in a semicircle, branching out from the royal box of the Great Goblin, can accommodate up to 500 jeering and hooting Orcs. Opposite the royal box are the tunnels leading to the beast cages, and immediately below the lord's balcony are pens for the Human, Dwarf or Hobbit combatants. A 20' drop separates the lowest spectator gallery from the arena floor; the galleries are reached by separate stairways.

90% of the time the arena is fairly quiet, its pit being used by a lurch of 11-15 Orcs practicing mock combats. There is a 10% chance that the infamous Games of Goblin-gate are underway, the galleries packed and the Great Goblin presiding from his balcony surrounded by 31-40 bodyguards. Captives, unarmored and given but a single nonmagical weapon (of their choice), are pitted against each other or the worst monsters Goblin-gate's dungeons can offer, in a grim day-long series of struggles. The sole survivor at the day's end, whether beast or man, is actually given the freedom to leave Goblin-gate. For this reason, many prisoners of prowess have volunteered for the arena, despite the poor odds, in the desperate hope of liberty.

90. Menagerie. The cages at the lower end of the shaft leading into the Arena harbor creatures of every fantastic description. There are bears, boars, giant subterranean lizards and serpents, berserk Trolls, mad wargs, giant spiders, and even a wingless cold drake which has been hatched from an egg here (it has not yet been sent into the arena, as the Orcs are not sure if they can control it). Most of the creatures are half-starved, gaunt and savage.

91. Snake Pits. These smooth-sided shafts, covered with hatches, are the Chief Priest's breeding ground for his pet serpents. The masses of snakes seethe at the bottom, eager for food. From the snakes the Priest extracts potent venom for his nefarious purposes. At least 100 vipers are present.

92. Wells. (2) Same as WG #14.

93. Cells. (20) Same as WG #12.

94. Garbage Pit. Under hinged double stone slabs, in a pit of unknown depth, festers and swells an amorphous monstrosity which legends claim comes from the Under-deeps. The creature seems able to devour anything the Orcs throw to it, and aimlessly forms tentacles and organs which dissolve back into the revolting mass. Fortunately, it is vulnerable to fire, and the Orcs regularly burn it to keep its growth in check.

8.15 MOVEMENT AND ENCOUNTERS

Movement within Goblin-gate is at normal rates, but when a party is trying to keep silent, traverse difficult areas, or engage in melee in confined passages, maneuver rolls may be required.

Every ten minutes, within inhabited areas, or every hour when exploring the long connecting passages or uninhabited regions, an encounter should be rolled on the appropriate table. Once Orcs are aware that invaders are in a particular area, all troops in the vicinity will gather there as quickly as possible.

Even if Goblin-gate is thoroughly explored, not all of its inhabitants may be discovered, owing to the random factor built into layouts and the encounter tables. Typically about 25% of Goblin-gate's adult male Orcs are in no fixed location; some are patrolling the corridors, while others are laboring in the mines, or are absent from the lair foraging and raiding. Likewise, the locations of other subgroups in the population and prominent NPC's, while more specific, are not necessarily predetermined. Orcs and their allies not encountered are assumed to have been elsewhere or to have escaped in the confusion. It is also possible for certain individuals or creature types to be encountered even when their numbers have been previously depleted. In such cases, the later encounters are reduced in strength or ignored altogether, as required by the total population. The GM is obliged to keep a running total of Orcish losses and compare it with the overall population as an adventure progresses.

8.2 RESCUE FROM THE DEPTHS: T.A. 2940

Setting: Goblin-gate and the Misty Mountains.

Requirements: Bold adventurers of moderate level (4th-7th). Some lower level PC's may participate. Scouts and Dwarves will be particularly useful. Good or neutral PC's are most likely to accept the mission.

Aids: Beorning guides will direct adventurers to Goblin-gate and provide clues on locating a suitable entrance.

8.21 THE PLOT

During the years after the epic Battle of Azanulbizar in T.A. 2799, when the Dwarves and Orcs of the Mountains butchered one another within sight of Moria, the Beornings of the Anduin Vales found it safe to settle west of the Anduin as far as the High Pass. Meanwhile, the Orcs of Goblin-gate who survived the battle slunk back to their lair, which had been hastily plundered by the Dwarves, and commenced the arduous labor of rebuilding their fortress and breeding a new host of warriors. Fortunately for the Orcs, most of their females and treasures had escaped the catastrophe. Now, after nearly a century and a half, the Orcs have recovered their confidence and begun testing their strength against the dispersed Northmen dwellings nearby. Under the cunning leadership of the new Great Goblin, *Ogrod*, Goblin-gate has once again become a name whispered with dread.

Increasing numbers of Beornings, Woodmen and stray travellers have fallen into the goblins' clutches and been led off to enslavement in the depths of Goblin-town. Among these captives is *Freobeort*, a young nephew of the renowned *Beorn*, much beloved by his uncle. Though Beorn is not yet the chieftain of his people, an honor he attains after the Battle of Five Armies, already he is recognized as the clan's mightiest warrior in memory and commands great influence. Because Beorn's great size prevents him from entering the constricted Orc-tunnels to attempt a rescue personally, he and his kin have agreed to seek the aid of adventurers of proven ability.

Willing PC's will meet with Beorn and his kin at the Carrock, and learn of their quest. Though the Beornings are not a folk wealthy in treasure, they can offer 100 gp raised from ford tolls and as many honey-cakes as one can carry to each surviving adventurer. (It is not wise to sneer at the cakes: they can be resold elsewhere for

1gp each and keep for weeks, while Beorn's temper is legendary.) The reward will be paid upon returning with Freobeort to the Carrock, along with a 10gp bonus for any other Beornings rescued.

Adventurers will be guided to the secret door leading into Goblin-town, which Beorn has discovered on his nocturnal ramblings. Freobeort is imprisoned in one of the slave pits, and will be most grateful for rescue, eager to fight his way out. If a weapon can be lent him, Freobeort will act as an ally for the remainder of the adventure. Other slaves, if given arms, may join the party as well. Note, however, that if the adventurers cause a great commotion, the Orcs are bright enough to realize what is happening and guard the secret entrance, forcing the party to attempt to escape through one of the major gates.

8.22 OPERATIONS OVERVIEW

Goblin-gate in T.A. 2940, though teeming with Orcs, is actually underpopulated compared with its prewar height, when nearly 3000 Orcs crowded the complex. Now only 2200 remain, including 1075 adult males, 725 adult females, and 400 imps. Top priority after the war went to restoration of the Uruk-hai oligarchy, which is not quite as strong as before the war, but has recovered to its T.A. 1640 level of 75 males. The force of elite trackers is reduced to 50, and the 76 lurgs of common Orcs each include a leader and a tracker, along with a total of 152 experienced soldiers, 380 full adults, and 266 young adults. Levels are the same as in T.A. 1640. As in earlier times, 5 mercenary Cave-trolls and 60 Wargs have been gathered, playing their familiar roles as goblin allies. One achievement of the Dwarvish sack was to free the slaves, and so far the Orcs have only managed to capture 200 new prisoners, who are if anything treated worse than before.

Military forces are distributed as follows:

Goblin-town: Great Goblin, 5 officers, 50 bodyguards, Chief Priest, 3 acolytes, 3 healers, 50 elite trackers, 36 common trackers, 414 common fighters, 5 Cave-trolls.

Wolf Gate: Captain, 3 officers, 1 healer, 20 common trackers, 230 common fighters, 30 Wargs.

Back Door: Captain, 2 officers, 1 healer, 12 common trackers, 138 common fighters, 20 Wargs.

Front Porch: Captain, 1 officer, 1 healer, 8 common trackers, 92 common fighters, 10 Wargs.

8.23 PROMINENT INDIVIDUALS

Ogrod, the Great Goblin

Soon after the end of the war with the Dwarves, Ogrod bested all challengers in a series of bloody duels for the throne and seized power in Goblin-gate. An enormous Uruk, standing 6' tall, whose bulbous head seems too large even for his massive body, the Orc-lord presents a distinctively hideous appearance. His followers fawningly salute him as "truly tremendous one," for Ogrod is nearly twice as large as most of the common Orcs. Clever and cautious, Ogrod prefers to continue rebuilding and conserves his strength, while keeping well informed of matters beyond Goblin-gate. He ranks as the greatest vassal of *Bolg*, the overlord of Mount Gundabad, and has so far successfully discouraged *Bolg*'s rash military schemes of conquest. Ogrod's greatest liability is an explosive temper; when confronted with Elves or anyone having anything to do with them, he goes into an insane fury. In battle Ogrod wields *Elfhewer*, the tribal relic which has remained in Orcish hands through countless turmoils.

Freobeort

Nephew of the famed Beorn, Freobeort is currently a captive in Goblin-town, having been ambushed by Orcs during a mountain expedition from which only one companion escaped. Though barely into adulthood, Freobeort already shows great promise as a warrior, but has not yet manifested the hereditary shapechanging ability. Standing 6'2", with thick dark hair and beard, Freobeort looks remarkably like a smaller version of his fearsome uncle. A personable and engaging fellow, always ready with a humorous tale, Freobeort has easily won friends among his fellow captives.

Gollum, Bearer of the One Ring

At once abhorrent and pitiable, Gollum is perhaps the most tragic figure of the entire Third Age. In his tormented fate the accursed power of the One Ring is most clearly revealed.

Long ago he was called Smeagol (a translation of the original Westron *Trahald*, meaning "burrowing, worming in") and dwelt on the banks of the Anduin near the Gladden Fields with his kin, a Hobbit-folk distantly related to the Stoors, most at home around waterways. Born of a large and wealthy clan ruled by a matriarchal grandmother, Smeagol was outstanding from the first among Hobbits. Uniquely curious and inquisitive, he was fascinated by roots and buried secrets. Quick, strong and clever, the young Hobbit, though something of a loner, was fated to go far in the world, but hardly in the way his relations hoped.

One day, in T.A. 2463, Smeagol and a Hobbit friend, Deagol, embarked on a fishing and exploring trip into the Gladden Fields. Deagol, after an inadvertent dunk in the river, retrieved a beautiful golden ring from the Anduin's depths. No one but Smeagol was nearby. Inflamed by greed, Smeagol strangled his companion, hid the body and seized the "precious" as his own "birthday-present," thereby falling forever under the spell of the evil artifact. For this was indeed the One Ring, created by Sauron and lost by Isildur long centuries past, most formidable focus of power in all of Middle-earth.

Smeagol escaped the worst of the Ring's curse, for he never learned to use its major powers of command. Quickly realizing the inherent invisibility the Ring conferred on a wearer, Smeagol turned his new possession to petty and malicious ends, for the Ring gave him power "according to his stature" (*LotR, Fellowship*, p. 85). Becoming a proficient spy and thief, Smeagol earned the hatred of his kinfolk. He began making gurgling, swallowing noises in his throat, conceivably a minor Ring-induced nervous disorder, and his relations derisively dubbed him "Gollum." At last, to restore peace, Gollum's grandmother ordered him exiled and booted him from her hole.

Wandering miserably up the Anduin, a stooped and lonely figure with eyes cast downward, Gollum learned to survive in the wild, catching by hand and eating raw fish. He grew to hate the moon and still more the sun, which pained his eyes, which were becoming increasingly sensitive to light. Finally, Gollum journeyed by night into the Misty Mountains, following a stream into a deep lake cavern in T.A. 2470. There he made his lair on a slimy island, with the Ring as his only companion.

Soon after Gollum's arrival, the Orcs of Goblin-gate delved their passage northward from the Back Door, halting where their road was blocked by the lake, and cutting off the original entrance. By now, however, Gollum had mastered the subterranean life. He caught blind fish in the lake, and strangled goblins from behind when any strayed alone into the vicinity of his lair, for he found their raw flesh tough but tasty, especially the little imps. Sneaking about the passages of Goblin-gate, Gollum eventually memorized much of the complex, protected by the invisibility of the Ring. As the Ring prolonged life indefinitely, Gollum lived on for centuries in this wretched and scrounging existence.

In T.A. 2940 Gollum is some five hundred years old, and is hardly recognizable as a Hobbit any longer. The combined proximity to the Ring's evil power and a degenerate subterranean lifestyle have wrought hideous changes. An emaciated, misshapen and slimy creature, Gollum has lost most of his thin, lank hair, and his few remaining teeth are sharpened to jagged points. Still, he has never faded into a wraith, thanks to the innate Hobbit toughness and infrequent wearing of the artifact.

Gollum's pale, lamplike eyes are his most singular characteristic. Illuminated from within by a greenish glow, they enable him to see clearly in the utter darkness of his subterranean lair, but react poorly even to artificial light and can barely withstand full daylight. Hearing and scent have been sharpened as well by furtive underground life, so

that Gollum is virtually immune to surprise. Extraordinarily tough and agile, Gollum's scrawny frame is deceptively strong, and his hands form a viselike, nearly unbreakable grip. Gollum wears only rags, and bears no weapon of any kind, but his phenomenal stalking talent enables him to throttle most foes from behind. An indefatigable tracker, Gollum cannot be lost in any terrain, and no foe is more slippery or tenacious.

Worse even than the physical transformation has been the Ring's effect on Gollum's mind. Torn by hatred of the object that has ruined him and fierce desire for its power, Gollum has been split into two distinct personalities, which do battle for control of his vacillating will. For now, the malevolent side ("Stinker"), hissing and cursing, is predominant. Deep within, however, is a trace of the original Smeagol, whining but gentle and eager to please ("Slinker"), which can be drawn to the surface by stray memories of life before the Ring, especially in the presence of another Hobbit. Though full of resentments, suspicions, lies and self-pity, Gollum is not altogether beyond hope. Any who manage to befriend him, and can endure his loathsome ways, will find Gollum a most useful ally in exploring Goblin-gate.

Level: 15

Professions: Scout (RM: Thief)

Race: Hobbit (Stoor)

Hits: 130

Melee Bonus: Primary- +125 Medium Grapple (MGr)
Secondary- +85 Medium Bite (MBi).

Armor Type: None/AT 1 (-60 defensive bonus). Can wear armor but rarely does. Gollum has no missile attacks or spells.

RM Stats: ST:100, QU:101, EM:50, IN:60, PR:5, CO:101, AG:102, SD:30, RE:90, ME:95

MERP Stats: ST:100, AG:102, CO:101, IG:95, IN:60, PR:5

Items: The One Ring (see Section 8.4).

NOTE: Fate has marked Gollum for a decisive role in the War of the Ring. His death, or loss of the Ring to anyone but Bilbo Baggins, would be most inappropriate. Bear in mind that Gollum will never confront multiple opponents at once, will seek to preserve himself at all costs, and is easily able with the Ring to avoid any serious danger.

8.24 LAYOUTS

All general information found in 8.14 can be used in T.A. 2940 as well, and the specific layouts for Goblin-town, the Wolf Gate and Back Door are largely unchanged. A Gamemaster may wish to reduce treasure amounts in hoards (but not personal carried wealth) by 20% to reflect the consequences of the Dwarvish sack, but this is optional. The following changes must be made, however, due to shifts in population.

Wolf Gate:

- 4. Only 20 of the lurg caves are inhabited.
- 5. Only 3 of the officers' caves are inhabited.
- 8. 21-30 Wargs are found in the Wolf Den.

Back Door:

- 20. Only 12 of the lurg caves are inhabited.
- 24. 11-20 Wargs are found in the Wolf Den.
- 32. The major passage descending from Goblin-town to the Back Door now continues downward to Gollum's Lair, known to the Orcs as the Lake Cave.

Goblin-town Level One:

- 35. The passage ascending to the Front Porch is now open.
- 42. Only 12 of the lurg caves are inhabited.

Goblin-town Level Two:

- 62. Three Uruk-hai healers dwell in this area.

65. Only 12 of the lurg caves are inhabited.

70. 21-30 elite trackers are found in this cave at any time.

72. Each of the harems holds 90-110 female Orcs.

73. Each of the imp nurseries holds 200 Orc imps.

Goblin-town Level Three:

80. Only 12 of the lurg caves are inhabited.

81. Only one of the officers' caves is inhabited.

84. 20 slaves are found in each pit at any time, out of a workforce of 40.

Two new layouts, the Front Porch and Gollum's Lair, are now added.

Front Porch (FP)

95. Outer Cave. Directly adjoining the upper mountain-route of the High Pass, this cavern has been designed by the Orcs as bait for wet and weary travellers. Immediately behind a large rock jutting into the path is the low arching entrance, a tight squeeze, easily defended against outside attackers (which are not the real problem). The cave is roomy but not intimidatingly huge, with a dry floor, comfortable sleeping nooks and an open area for pack animals. To the rear, *Sheer Folly* (-50) to detect (even Gandalf missed it), is the "Black Crack," a stone door mounted on an iron pivot, 10' high, 6' wide and 2' thick. A strong Orc can open the door in perfect silence, achieving complete surprise. The goblins check the cave nightly.

96. Gate Guardroom. One lurg of 11-15 common Orcs is always on guard duty here. The cave is furnished with stone seats, a liquor barrel, stocks of missiles, and an alarm gong to alert the area if trouble arises.

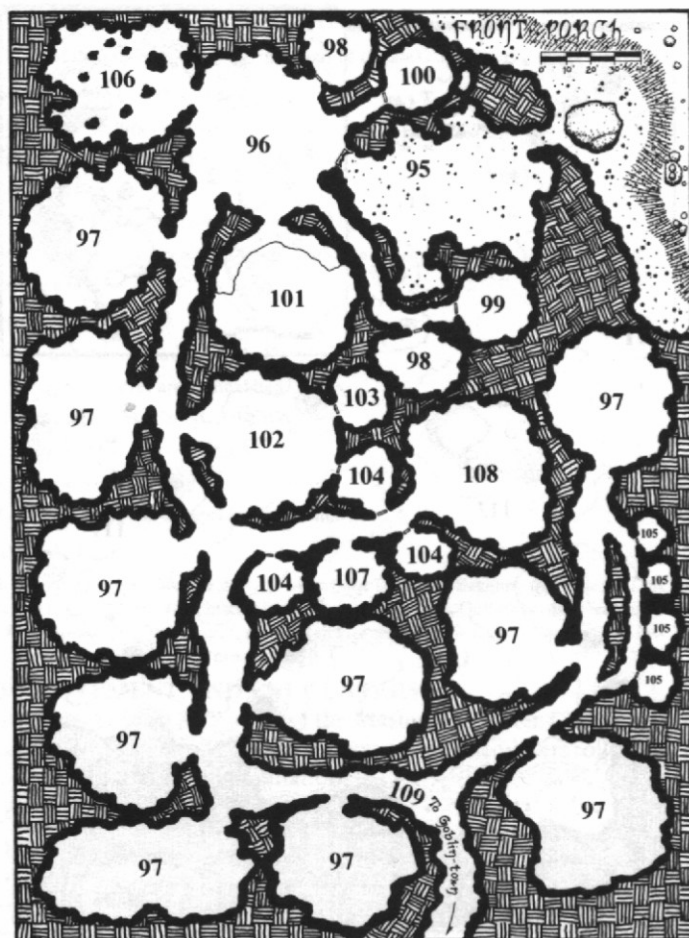
97. Lurg Caves. (10) Same as WG #4. Only 8 of the caves are inhabited.

98. Officers' Caves. (2) Same as WG #5. Only one is inhabited.

99. Gate Captain's Cave. Furnished just as WG #6, the den of the Captain of the Front Porch differs principally in its treasure and traps. Its visible iron chest holds 200 sp, 600 bp and 1000 cp. The wall closet behind the secret stone door contains a hoard of 500 gp and 800 sp. Unless the *Very Hard* (-20) trap is disarmed, the 10' square area immediately before the door sinks 3', and a steel blade scythes across the pit from its now exposed side, inflicting an "E" slash critical on anyone in the way.

100. Healer's Cave. Same as WG #7.

101. Wolf Den. Same as WG #8, but only 6-10 Wargs will be present.



102. **Kitchen.** Same as WG #9, but only 11-20 female Orcs work here.
103. **Smokehouse.** Same as WG #10.
104. **Storerooms.** (3) Same as WG #11.
105. **Cells.** (4) Same as WG #12, but the guard, if any, is but 6-10 Orcs.
106. **Bat Roost.** Same as WG #13.
107. **Well.** Same as WG #14.
108. **Smithy.** Same as WG #15, but only 6-10 Orcs are working here.
109. **Descending Passage.** This principal corridor runs downward to Goblin-town for five miles, connecting to GT I #35. Numerous branching passages make it confusing and difficult to follow.

Gollum's Lair, The Lake Cave (GL)

110. **Entry Passage.** Here is the lower end of the mile-long shaft excavated by the Orcs from the Back Door, #32. Upon reaching the brink of the lake centuries ago, the Orcs simply stopped tunneling in that direction, seeing no way to get around or bridge it. Along the lake runs a narrow shore extending from the passage mouth.

111. **Underground Lake.** Several hundred feet across at its narrowest point, the lake fills the entire cavern area, fed by water dripping through the stalactite-encrusted roof. Originally it was created by water seepage, the residue running off into the stream by which Gollum entered. As the stream is now blocked, the only way out is through the tunnel the goblins made. Because the water originates in the mountain snows and is never exposed to any source of heat, it is icy cold, too chill to swim. Nor is it possible to wade out from the shore, as the lake bottom drops off swiftly to a depth of 10-20'. Schools of blind fish inhabit the lake, as well as other small subterranean creatures. Orcs rarely come near the lake anymore, unless ordered by the Great Goblin, who fancies the fish caught here. The Orcs suspect that something hostile is now lurking in the cave, though no goblin has ever seen the monster. Many lone Orcs have disappeared mysteriously in the area.

112. **Island.** In the midst of the lake, about 100' from the shore, is a small, slime-covered rock island. Gollum dwells here, in a damp and miserable hole under a tilted stone slab, where he is 75% likely to be found at any time. He can see the shore from his isle with his powerful infravision; the perceptive may notice two minute points of light out in the lake. In his hole Gollum stashes assorted bits of trash, either saved from his possessions of old or stolen from the Orcs to keep in practice, none of which has any real value. Under the heaps of garbage the One Ring is hidden in a leather pouch whenever Gollum is at home. If he leaves on a hunting expedition, the Ring invariably accompanies him. On the shore of the island, or near the entry passage when Gollum is away, is beached a tiny boat, barely large enough for one. Gollum has constructed this craft from stolen scraps of wood and

rope. He paddles about the lake in it fishing, his broad flat feet acting as oars. Should Gollum wish to approach the shore in his boat, he can do so in complete silence.

Gollum will hide from any large parties of explorers, but may (60% likely) follow them to steal anything interesting later while the adventurers are unwary. Lone intruders are 90% likely to be ambushed by surprise, but there is only a 20% chance that Gollum will attack a Hobbit outright.



Gollum

8.25 MOVEMENT AND ENCOUNTERS

See Section 8.15 and use the Master Encounter Chart 11.4. Note that Gollum's lair is treated as an uninhabited cave level for encounter purposes. Encounters with Gollum there, unlike other areas of Goblin-gate, are not random.

8.3 RAID ON GOBLIN-GATE: F.A. 1

Setting: Goblin-gate and the Misty Mountains.

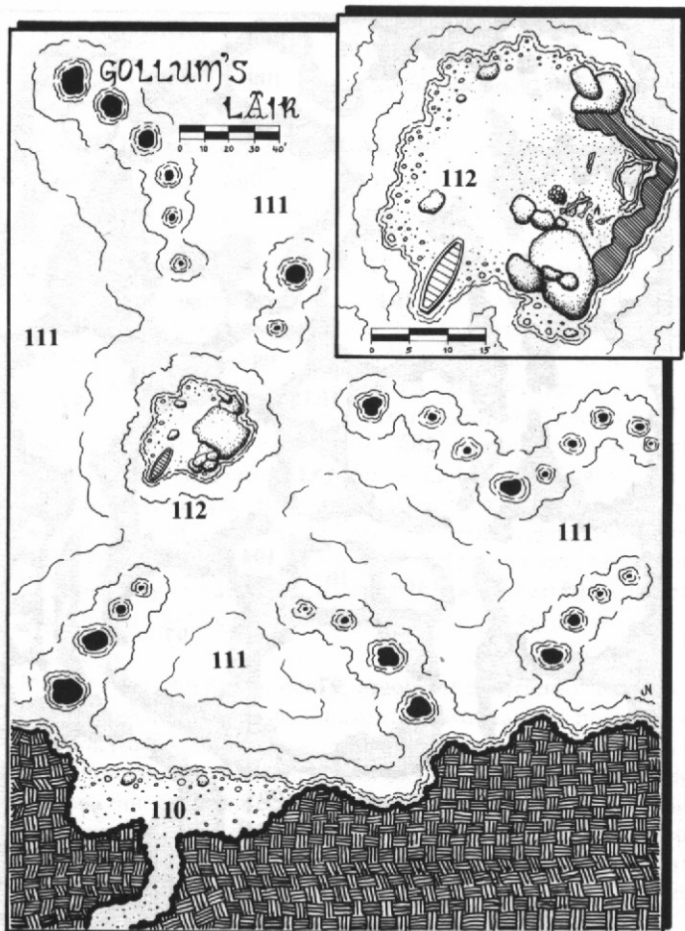
Requirements: A determined and probably greedy party of low to moderate levels (2nd-7th). Scouts are essential; Dwarves and Northmen will be most eager to participate.

Aids: Beorning guides are available for the Misty Mountains. Maps pointing out known entrances to Goblin-gate, which include not only the Wolf Gate and Back Door but now also the Front Porch, may be had on request. General rumors circulate concerning the interior of Goblin-gate, especially since the Dwarves, Bilbo and Gandalf escaped from the Great Goblin's clutches during the Quest of Erebor.

8.31 THE PLOT

Nearly a century ago, in T.A. 2941, Gandalf slew the reigning Great Goblin. The furious Orcs were led to abandon their usual caution and march with Bolg's goblin horde to the Battle of Five Armies at Erebor, lulled by promises of easy loot from the slain Smaug's horde and dreams of revenge. Though the Orcs came within a hair of victory over the combined but outnumbered armies of the Dwarves, Wood-elves and Lake-men, their hopes were dashed by the intervention of the Great Eagles and Beorn. Bolg fell and the Orcs broke, hotly pursued. Only one out of four goblin warriors were left alive in Goblin-gate when the casualties were numbered from the slaughter.

When the War of the Ring came, the Orcs had not yet fully recovered from their earlier catastrophe, but heedlessly marched half-prepared into battle against the Beornings and Woodmen at Sauron's command. Soundly whipped, they fled back to the mountains upon the Dark Lord's fall. Now the Northmen, scenting a decisive triumph, are mustering for assault on Goblin-gate, where the Orcish remnants are led by a new and inexperienced Great Goblin, *Volog*. Against the Orc-lord is pitted the redoubtable and seasoned *Grimbeorn the Old*, son of Beorn and commander of the Beorning-Woodmen alliance.



Grimbeorn knows that his army, however eager, has little experience in subterranean warfare, and cannot launch a blind attack. He is most interested in acquiring reliable information about the strength of the Orcs, the layout of Goblin-gate, and the most vulnerable points for assault. For such intelligence he is willing to pay from 200-1000 gp to a party, depending on the quality of the reports, having raised a sizable war chest from ford tolls. Notices of the proposal are posted throughout the Anduin Vales.

Adventurers intrigued by the prospect assemble at the Carrock, where Grimbeorn is encamped with his mustered host. There they learn the details of the mission. Experienced Beorning fighters may come along if requested to strengthen the group. Though the mission is surreptitious in nature, and will be ruined by random hack and slash, some fighting is inevitable, and Grimbeorn insists on a few Orc heads as proof that the party has not made up false intelligence but really went inside. Besides the reward for information, PC's are entitled to keep any loot they recover from Goblin-gate, and if they rescue any slaves may receive appropriate compensation from kin.

8.32 OPERATIONS OVERVIEW

By F.A. 1 Goblin-gate's population is but a pitiful remnant of its former might. Scarcely 1500 Orcs are left in the complex, including 700 adult males, 500 females, and 300 imps.

Even the Uruk-hai have suffered grievously, and the warrior aristocracy numbers but 40, including the Great Goblin, his three Captains, 6 officers and 30 guards. The Chief Priest, his 3 acolytes, and the 6 healers have escaped the disasters unharmed, as they were never near a battlefield.

Among the Common Orcs the losses have been crippling. 50 lurg leaders and an equal number of trackers, 100 experienced warriors, 250 adult warriors, and 175 young troops are the survivors of the proud, savage host of old. 25 elite trackers, 3 Cave-trolls and 40 Wargs round out Goblin-gate's army. As the slaves have had nowhere to go, 200 are still imprisoned in Goblin-town, worked harder than ever, for the goblins are frustrated by their defeats and fear revolt from the idle.

Military forces are distributed as follows:

Goblin-town: Great Goblin, 3 officers, 30 guards, Chief Priest, 3 acolytes, 3 healers, 25 elite trackers, 24 common trackers, 276 common fighters, 3 Cave-trolls.

Wolf Gate: Captain, 2 officers, 1 healer, 12 common trackers, 138 common fighters, 20 Wargs

Back Door: Captain, 1 officer, 1 healer, 8 common trackers, 92 common fighters, 12 Wargs.

Front Porch: Captain, 1 healer, 6 common trackers, 69 common fighters, 8 Wargs.

8.33 PROMINENT INDIVIDUALS

Volog, the Great Goblin

The reigning Orc-lord has only held his throne for two years, having usurped power when his predecessor suffered an embarrassing series of defeats. In some skirmishes, the demoralized Orcs actually threw away their weapons and ran. Volog has pledged to restore the power of Goblin-gate, but reality is at odds with his grandiose boasts. The Orcs know that their enemies are gathering in superior strength, and a climate of apathy and despair pervades Volog's realm. Still, Volog is resolved not to go down without a fight, and is a rough opponent by any standard. 5'8" tall, squat and muscular, missing an ear from a glancing axe blow, he epitomizes the Orc fighter, and skillfully wields the legendary Elfhewer. Volog will never surrender, nor will Orcs fighting in his presence dare to do so either.

8.34 LAYOUTS

Goblin-gate in F.A. 1 shares the same layout as in T.A. 2940, with the following modifications to account for population declines. Treasure hoards should be reduced by one third. Personal carried wealth remains the same.

Wolf Gate:

4. Only 12 of the lurg caves are inhabited.
5. Only 2 of the officers' caves are inhabited.
8. 11-20 Wargs are found in the Wolf Den.
9. 11-15 female Orcs work in the kitchen.
12. No prisoners are in the cells, or guards present.
15. Only 6-10 Orcs work in the smithy.

Back Door:

20. Only 8 of the lurg caves are inhabited.
21. Only one of the officers' caves is inhabited.
24. 8-12 Wargs are found in the Wolf Den.
25. Same as #9.
28. Same as #12.
31. Same as #15.

Goblin-town Level One:

41. When the Great Goblin is present, only 16-20 bodyguards are at hand, along with 11-15 other common Orc warriors.
42. Only 8 of the lurg caves are inhabited.
44. Same as #9.
47. Same as #15.
49. 6-10 Orcs work in the brewery.
52. 6-10 Orcs work in the butchery.
53. 11-20 goblin females labor in the clothworks.

Goblin-town Level Two:

60. When the Great Goblin is in his den, 16-20 Uruk-hai bodyguards are stationed here.
64. 3 Cave-trolls inhabit the Troll Hole.
65. Only 8 of the lurg caves are inhabited.
66. Only one of the officers' caves is inhabited.
67. Same as #9.
68. Same as #15.
70. 11-15 trackers are found in this cave.
72. Each of the harems holds 52-70 female Orcs.
73. Each of the nurseries holds 150 imps and 12 female Orc overseers.

Goblin-town Level Three:

80. Only 8 of the lurg caves are inhabited.
81. Only one of the officers' caves is inhabited.
82. Same as #9.
85. 26-45 orcs and 21-30 slaves labor in the forge.
88. 6-10 Orcs are interrogating 3-7 captives in the torture chamber.
93. Same as #12.

Front Porch:

97. Only 6 of the lurg caves are inhabited.
98. The officers' caves are uninhabited.
101. 4-8 Wargs will be found in the Wolf Den.
102. Same as #9.
105. Same as #12.
108. Only 4-8 Orcs will be working in the smithy.

Gollum's Lair:

112. Gollum left his island in T.A. 2944 to hunt for Bilbo Baggins, the "thief" of his precious Ring. In T.A. 3019, in a moment of supreme drama, Gollum actually recovered the Ring from Bilbo's heir Frodo, only to fall into the volcanic cone of Orodruin an instant later, perishing with his "precious."

8.35 MOVEMENT AND ENCOUNTERS

Refer to Section 8.15 and use the Master Encounter Chart 11.4. The Gamemaster should halve the frequency of encounters rolled, to account for the reduced population.

8.4 ITEMS OF NOTE

Following are some of the more interesting or unusual magic items found in Goblin-gate during various periods of its history. All have either a specific possessor which they will accompany, or a predetermined location.

The One (or Ruling) Ring: Possessed by Gollum (T.A. 2463-2941)

Crafted by the Dark Lord Sauron in S.A. 1600 in the forge of the Sammath Naur within the volcanic cone of Orodruin, the One Ring is greatest of all the twenty Rings of Power, doubtless the most potent artifact extant in Middle-earth. In form it appears as a beautiful, unadorned band of pure gold, never suffering any signs of wear. When heated in fire, a fine, minute inscription becomes visible running along both the interior and exterior of the band. Engraved in Tengwar characters, using the archaic Black Speech, the legend reads:

"Ash nazg durbatuluk, ash nazg gimbatul,
ash nazg thrakatuluk agh burzum-ishi krimpatul."
("One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find them,;
One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them.")

In creating the One Ring, Sauron transferred into the object a major portion of His own evil godlike essence, so that the Ring has acquired sentient will of its own. Sauron's own existence is inextricably linked to the Ring's survival. Parted from it He is still immensely powerful; rejoined, nothing in Middle-earth in the Third Age could hope to resist Him. If the Ring perishes, though, Sauron will forever be crippled and bodiless, an impotent wraith. Sauron does not believe that anyone would deliberately seek to destroy the Ring, but realizing that peril of inadvertent injury, he so safeguarded it that nothing can harm it in the least, save only the fire of Orodruin wherein it was forged.

As is often true of artifacts, the Ring confers numerous benefits upon its possessor, not all of which will be immediately apparent, but it also inflicts a gradual and terrible curse. The Ring is most renowned for its major powers of command and control, the full limits of which remain unexplored. It is known that the Ring can dominate all the other Great Rings (except for the 3 Elven Rings), either enslaving their wearers or revealing and twisting all that is done with their powers. Evil creatures invariably display immense fear of the Ring, even without knowing what it is. However, these powers can only be invoked to full effect by an already strong will trained to exercise authority over others.

exercise certain lesser powers when it is worn:

- 1) **Invisibility**, which is not broken even in combat; and
- 2) **Sense enhancement**. Hearing becomes extremely acute, and sight extends into the invisible realm (e.g., one can see the true forms of Nazgul), but vision of objects in the material world is blurred.

Mere possession of the Ring, whether or not worn continually, ensures immortality, slowing the aging process indefinitely. This power, however, is also linked to the curse, for depending on frequency of use and innate magical resistance, the possessor will eventually fade into a wraith under the Dark Lord's control. Complete fading may be postponed for centuries.

An utterly evil and treacherous device, the Ring has a mission: to return to the hand of its creator, from which it was cut by Isildur. Thus, it plays upon whatever weaknesses its possessor may have, encouraging him to use its powers more frequently, so as to have more opportunities to wear down the possessor's will and ultimately capture his mind. When major servants of Sauron such as the Nazgûl are at hand, the Ring will seek to persuade the keeper to wear it for "safety," or even force itself to be worn outright, thereby revealing its presence. Such a possession attack is difficult to resist at best, and the Ring becomes even stronger the closer it comes to Sauron. (Treat possession attacks as Essence spells of variable level, 10th- 50th depending on circumstances.) A Ringbearer invariably feels compelled to guard the artifact from supposedly envious eyes, and becomes intensely suspicious of others' motives where the Ring is concerned. Giving the Ring away is nearly impossible, and no Ringbearer could ever simply discard it.

Nonetheless, the Ring may "discard" itself, if dissatisfied with the potential of its bearer. As it can adjust its size to fit comfortably on any bearer's finger, it can also expand if desired and drop off, to await a more suitable finder.

All told, the Ring is far from truly desirable, though its allure of unlimited power has corrupted many. The wise will shun it, for its power exacts a terrible and irreversible toll.

MOST POTENT ITEMS**Elfhewer** (Possessed by The Great Goblin)

Traditional weapon and symbol of authority for every Orc-Lord of Goblin-gate, Elfhewer has remained in Orcish claws since its forging in the late Second Age in Mordor, shortly before the War of the Last Alliance. A massive 4 ½' long scimitar, with a mithril blade stained black and a ruby pommel carved in the form of a dragon's head, Elfhewer is an enchanted weapon, +20 to hit. It tingles with a surge of power whenever one of the Eldar (an Elf) is within 1000', and is "Of Slaying" Elves, delivering, in addition to any normal critical strike, a second critical at +10 upon any Elves struck. The spell "Utterdark" (**MERP**: "Utterlight I", reversed) of the open Channeling lists is imbedded in Elfhewer and may be cast regardless of magical skill up to three times/day. Furthermore, the wielder continually enjoys a Protection II spell (-20 elemental attack rolls, +20 resistance roll vs. spells). The scimitar is evil and harbors a medium intelligence of its own.

POTENT**Viperstaff** (Possessed by the Chief Priest of Goblin-gate)

A 5' long iron staff, its head shaped in the fashion of a coiled snake, this weapon is the symbol of office of the Orcish Chief Priest in Goblin-town. Forged long centuries past by a founder of the revived cult of Sauron, it passes to each new hierophant upon instatement. The Viperstaff functions as a x3 channeling power point multiplier, and may cast the spell *Shadow* (on the "Protections" list) twice/day at no expenditure of power points. When used as a weapon, it has a +15 enchanted bonus, and any critical hit forces the target to save against a 10th level poison attack or be paralyzed for 2-24 hours.

Elencala (Q."Star-light", located in Treasury of Goblin-gate)

As with all Elvish creations, the Elencala projects an entrancing beauty. A transparent crystalline globe 6" in diameter, it seemingly displays within it all the stars of the firmament, and can be rotated so as to depict the sky on that night from any angle, a useful device for Astrologers. Up to four times/day at will, a user of Channeling can direct it to produce a *Sudden Light* spell (on the "Sound/Light Ways" list), to which the holder is immune. Finally, the Elencala functions as a +4 spell adder. Due to its Elvish origins, this object inflicts 1-10 hits per round on any evil creature holding it.

Khazadshathur (Kh. "Dwarf-head", located in Treasury of Goblin-gate)

Molded in the appearance of a fiercely grimacing face, this Dwarven enchanted battle helm, high-crowned and visored, is so cunningly fashioned that only one of the race of the Khazad can comfortably wear it. Its steel alloy construction negates all head crits 80% of the time, and the wearer enjoys a continual Resist Elements spell (immune to natural heat and cold, +20 RR vs. heat, cold attacks).

MODEST**Annayulma** (Q. "Gift-cup", located in Treasury of Goblin-gate)

A silver chalice encrusted with beryls, the Annayulma was crafted by the Elves of Rivendell. Any holder can will it to fill with fine Elven *miruvor*, a delightful and invigorating cordial, until he and each of his friends on hand (up to 27 different people) has drunk once; it cannot then be used until a day has passed. To those of evil disposition, the contents taste vile and induce vomiting.

9.0 MAETHELBURG

Adventures may commence from the Northmen town of Maethelburg at any point in the Third or Fourth Ages, for a settlement is continuously on the same site. Unlike Goblin-gate however, Maethelburg undergoes radical transformations, due to its dependence on commerce. While the Maethelburg of T.A. 1640 thrives on a still flourishing system of trade routes, at the end of the Third Age these routes have all but vanished. First the Wainrider invasions of T.A. 1851-1944 destroyed the eastern Northmen culture, then Arthedain fell to the Witch-king in T.A. 1974, and the Dwarves fled Moria to escape the Balrog's wrath in T.A. 1981. Only Gondor, ever diminishing in wealth and power, survives throughout the Age, and by the War of the Ring even the tenuous commercial links along the Anduin have almost been severed by the rise of Sauron's power on the eastern bank. Maethelburg in the late Third Age is little more than a regional fishing port.

This section details both the glorious era of Maethelburg, not yet over in T.A. 1640, and the decayed, struggling town much later in the Third and early Fourth Ages. The physical environs will remain familiar, though the two towns built on the same hill bear scant resemblance. Visitors in T.A. 1640 will discover a prosperous mercantile center striving to avoid entanglement in the conflicts of neighboring major powers, and may become embroiled in complex local intrigues. In T.A. 2940 or F.A. 1, the political tapestry has faded with the town's wealth, and the conflicts have become much more immediate, threatening the community's very survival.

9.1 THE SPIES OF THE WITCH-KING: T.A. 1640

Setting: Maethelburg and the Anduin Vales.

Requirements: A party of low to moderate level adventurers (1st-6th), adept at investigation and willing to stay their swords until needed. Northmen will be especially at home in the area. Evil types need not apply.

Aids: Background information and local maps are easily obtained.

9.11 THE PLOT

Of late the Kingsman *Herion*, Gondor's ambassador, has suspected that Angmar's agents are becoming increasingly active in Maethelburg. He prepared a coded report on the politics of the locale for the King, but his intended messenger was kidnapped before leaving town and the report disappeared. Herion has no idea who is responsible, nor does he dare to seek direct aid from the local officials, the Thegn *Osric* and the Master *Guntram Goldenhands*, for he is unsure who can be trusted and realizes that any forewarning would simply cause the evidence to disappear. Preferring a more subtle approach, Herion intends to recruit the aid of newly arrived adventurers of good repute, with the help of his friend *Chilperic*, the local healer, who can move about attracting less attention.

Possible suspects are many, for all manner of scoundrels and smugglers pass through the town. Around the waterfront lounge groups of dubious rivermen, while two offbeat characters in town are noteworthy: the mysterious female Ranger *Morwen*, and the local travelling minstrel *Wistan*, both involved in unexplained comings and goings. Herion is willing to pay 500 gp for the safe return of his report and messenger, no questions asked.

9.12 OPERATIONS OVERVIEW

Maethelburg's resident population in T.A. 1640 is about a thousand Northmen. One or two hundred transients can be counted upon to be passing through as well, keeping the several inns in business.

As the 63-man **Burgward** is the principal armed force in town, its activities are necessarily worthy of attention. The Burgwarders operate in 8-hour shifts, so that one troop of 20 and its *cniht* are always on duty, guarding the gates and patrolling the streets. The re-



maining 42 men, off-duty, are mostly found at their barracks in the Thegn's Tower in reserve status. If any threat to the town arises, the Burgward is promptly summoned to arms, and in true emergencies the town's Fyrd militia will gather shortly. Within a few days the much larger rural Fyrd and nearby Beorning allies can be summoned by the Thegn.

Two lesser forces of note also operate in Maethelburg. The **Kingsman's Guard**, a body of 20 Dúnedain men-at-arms dispatched from Gondor as an honorary escort, protects the Kingsman and his residence, where they are quartered. Six soldiers accompany the Kingsman when he has business about town.

Of less repute is the local smuggling gang known as **Offa's Men**, which carries on its illicit dealings covertly around the waterfront. Typically this gang of rogues and thieves has a dozen or so members at any time. Some find their way to the gallows uphill, but there is rarely a shortage of fresh recruits.

9.13 PROMINENT INDIVIDUALS

Herion, the Kingsman

Appointed to the post of Kingsman four years ago, after his predecessor died in the Plague, Herion is still seeking to master his distant and unfamiliar office. As a Dúnedain of a minor noble house, and a younger son not slated to inherit the family title, Herion elected to enter the royal service, after completing an apprenticeship in the magical arts. Since then, he has become an accomplished diplomat. Appropriately, his robes are invariably black with silver trim, the colors of his monarch. 6' tall, with long silvery-grey hair, the Kingsman truly looks the part of a mage, and instantly stands out in a crowd of Northmen. He is respected if not yet beloved by the folk of Maethelburg, but his rumored experiments attract a good measure of local gossip.

Osric, the Thegn

Osric is the scion of an ancient Nenedain house of chieftains and warriors, and naturally succeeded his father to the honor of the Thegnship. All acknowledge him the most skilled of the townsfolk in arms, and his personal courage is beyond dispute. However, his caution as a commander draws criticism from more hotheaded folk who think he should strike back at the raiding Orcs more vigorously. Osric is famed for his unruly red hair and beard, characteristic of his line, and though of but average Northmen height, his heavy muscular frame makes his skill as a fighter and wrestler evident.

Guntram Goldenhands, Master of Maethelburg

Currently into his second term as Master of the town, Guntram has amply displayed his expertise at both business and town politics. In earlier years, before settling down to his current occupation, Guntram was a river captain of some repute, earning the name "Golden-

hands" by amassing the largest fortune in town within a decade of trading. Four ships comprise his private fleet, outstanding by local standards, and Guntram resides in a stately mansion adjoining the Maethelstede. Now rather rotund and balding, Guntram has become the butt of local wags, who chuckle that a Great Eagle will someday mistake him for a misplaced egg. A canny and avaricious sort, Guntram cares nothing for politics beyond the bounds of his town, and is always looking for profit in any affair.

Chilperic, the Healer

Venerable and white-haired, Chilperic has served faithfully as Maethelburg's physician, apothecary and herbalist for over fifty years. Much beloved by all the townsfolk, he is a familiar figure in the streets and market. A few unsentimental sorts whisper that Chilperic is growing addled, and at times his behavior does seem a bit eccentric, but no matter. A frequent companion of Herion, Chilperic loves to hear news and tales from Gondor, where he studied his art with masters in Minas Anor many years past. His patient and open ear has made him the Kingsman's best source of reliable local information. The healer wears green or brown robes, and leans on a gnarled wooden staff.

Morwen, a Travelling Ranger

Ten years ago the beautiful Morwen appeared in Maethelburg, and since then the town has never been quite the same. A score of men have been captivated by her stunning figure, shining dark eyes, and clever wit, but Morwen has spurned them all, leaving a trail of ugly rumors generated by rejected suitors. She has no permanent abode, but lodges at one of the better inns, and is often absent from town for weeks at a time. No one knows anything certain of her origins, but it is believed that the Dúnadan lady came over the mountains from Eriador seeking to distance herself from some family trouble. Some less charitable voices whisper that she has dealings with the Witch-king, and is a witch herself. Nothing could be less true, but Morwen does not trouble to dispel the rumors, which offer good cover. In fact, she is an agent of the King of Arthedain, his best spy in the Anduin Vales, whose duty is to watch Angmar's eastern territories. She is obliged to keep her purposes concealed, even from the Kingsman, for stray truth could be fatal. Should anyone seem too interested in her activities, Morwen will swiftly learn of it and take appropriate measures.

Wistan, Bard of Maethelburg

Born of Northmen and Hillmen parents, Wistan is heir to the diverse musical traditions of both cultures, and ranks as a highly accomplished poet and balladeer. Slightly shorter than the average Northman, but with long brown hair and blue eyes, he blends superbly into the local atmosphere. Wistan's bawdy songs and wild tales keep the taverns roaring, and he treats it as a professional duty to make the acquaintance of any new arrivals in town, exchanging tales over frothing tankards of ale. Much in demand, the bard is invited to every gathering of consequence. Nor is Wistan's knowledge confined to popular melodies alone. He is learned in the great epics, which he will perform on demand. These are less requested, however, for Wistan's unconventional versions hint of deeper and darker matters that leave listeners unaccountably disturbed.

As well they might. Wistan is the Witch-king's chief agent in Maethelburg, seduced years ago by his fascination with the ancient lays and desire for the power of the beings about which he sung. Dark knowledge has enhanced his talents well beyond what the townsfolk suspect. Wistan will seek to induce drinking companions to reveal their business in Maethelburg, all of which, if significant, finds its way into his coded reports to Angmar. Ruthless and cunning, Wistan will prove a formidable antagonist.

9.14 LAYOUTS

Waterfront

The waterfront lies outside the Maethelburg walls, on the two sides of the hill adjoining the Anduin and the Sirros. Pathways lead from the 20-odd wharves to the main landward gate.

1. Mill. Powered by the rushing Sirros, the waterwheel of this large stone structure grinds grain for the local farmers.

2. Warehouses. (12). A nondescript jumble of sheds, one of these weatherworn structures is the hideout of Offa's Men. A secret cellar, *Very Hard (-20)* to discover, is used to stash the gang's illicit goods, worth some 800 gp and also contains the bound and gagged royal messenger. The individual who commissioned the kidnapping was disguised and cloaked; all the thugs know is that he (or she?) paid well and took a manuscript from the messenger. Offa and 12 thugs will either be in the warehouse or along the waterfront, on lookout.

3. Boatwrights. (3) Skilled building and repair work is offered.

First Terrace

The lowest terrace of Maethelburg is protected by a wall 8' high along the waterfront, rising to 12' on the landward side of the hill.

4. Gate. The single main portal to the town, facing the drawbridge and causeway, is built of ironbound logs, and swings inward, a double door. It is barred at night. Above the gate rises a 20' high wooden watchtower, reached by a ladder. 6 Burgwarders are always on duty here, 4 by the gate and 2 in the tower. Travellers must state their names and purposes, pay a 1 bp tax and any tariffs due on trade goods (10% of value) upon entry. An officer collects proceeds regularly.

5. Inns. (3) Large rambling structures of 2-3 stories, the typical Maethelburg inns have a common room and kitchen on the ground floor, an ale cellar below, and the guest rooms and quarters of the innkeeper's family on the upper floors. Usually lodging is readily available, except when a market fair or Ealdormot is ongoing. The inns on the first terrace are of the cheap sort (half price), catering to farmers, sailors and anyone else who can pay for the space. They are: The Wharf Rat (a true dive), Harvest Moon (a farmer's favorite), and Blue Wolf (fights common).

6. Taverns. (2) These offer good food and drink but no lodging.

7. Stables. (1) Inn customers get first preference.

8. Coopers/Wainwrights. (4)

9. Cobblers. (3)

10. Woodcarvers. (4) Staves and cudgels can be fashioned to order.

11. Tanners/Leatherworkers. (3)

12. Potters. (5)

13. Weavers/Tailors. (5)

14. Saddlers. (2) Harness and riding gear of good quality are for sale.

15. Residences. (15)

Second Terrace

Maethelburg's middle terrace is protected by a wall 8' high along the waterfront and 10' high to the landward side.

16. Gate. Facing the landward side of town, it cannot be reached directly from the lower main gate, but only by the winding route around the hill. Its design is the same as #4. However, only 3 Burgwarders are on duty, 2 behind the gate and 1 in the tower, and passage is free and perfunctory.

17. Inns. (3) Same as #5, except that these establishments serve travellers of reasonable means, merchants and the like, and are better maintained. They are: the Bear's Head (known for good drink), Golden Anvil (preferred by Dwarves), White Oak (best kept, favored by Elves).

18. Taverns. (2) Same as #6.

19. Stables. (1) Same as #7.

20. Grocers/Feed. (4)

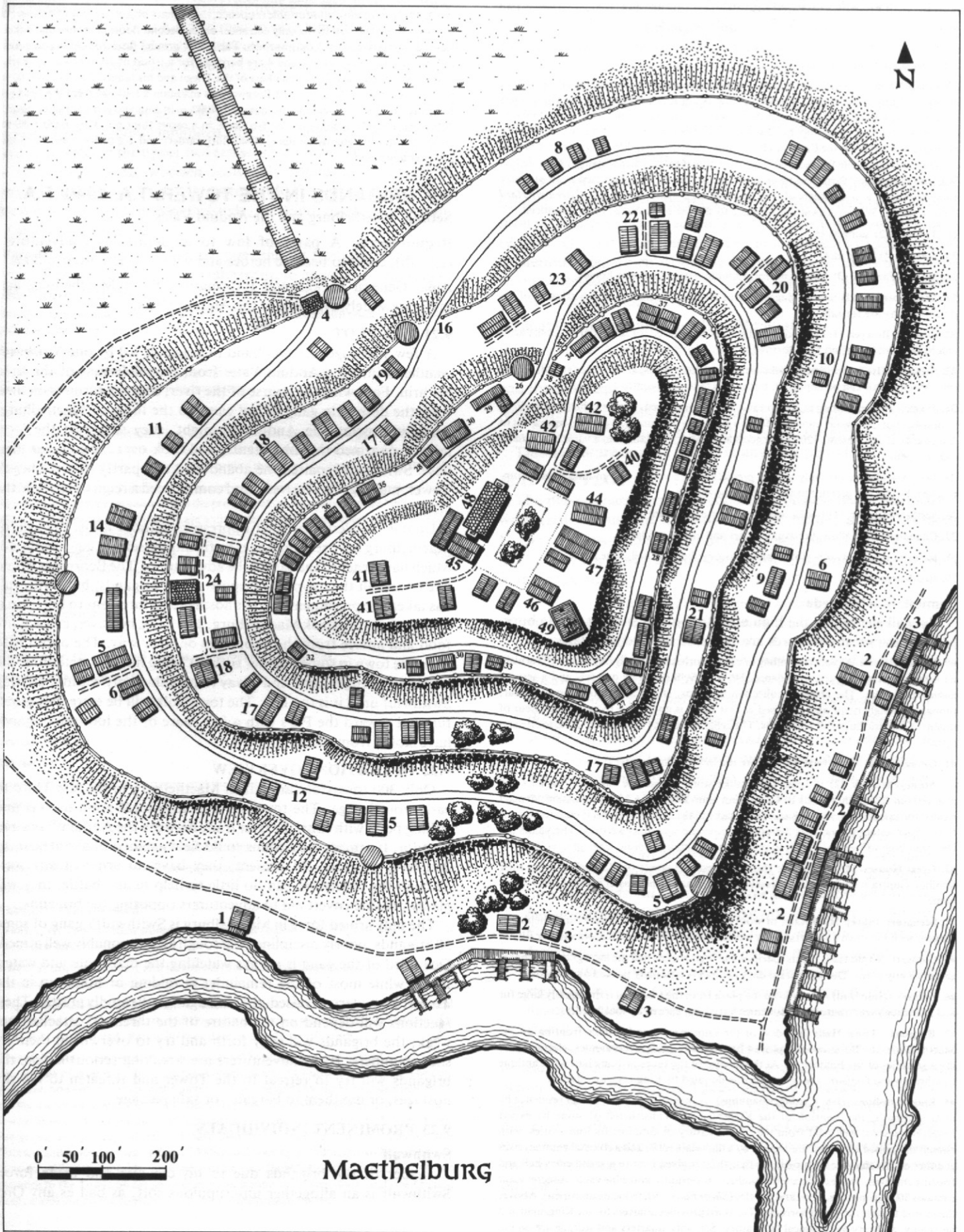
21. Butchers. (2)

22. Brewers. (3) Local ale is justly renowned. No free samples given.

23. Bakers. (4)

24. Theatre. (1) Performances by local talent or travelling troupes occur here, to the applause or jeers of the uninhibited populace, who always bring eggs or overripe tomatoes to the show.

25. Residences. (30)



Third Terrace

The wall around the third and highest terrace is 10' high toward the waterfront and 15' high to the landward side.

26. Gate. Designed as #16, with 3 Burgwarders. There is no charge to pass, but those with a bad reputation may be searched.

27. Inns. (2) Same as #5, but these high-quality establishments, the Old Longship and the Captain's Pride, accommodate travellers of the better sort who can pay the higher rates (double rates). Rooms afford a splendid view of the waterfront and the valley. Morwen resides at the Old Longship (a Dúadan favorite) when in town, while Wistan's customary lodging is at the Captain's Pride (best place in town). Morwen is only 30% likely to be at her inn, while Wistan is 60% likely to be present. Concealed within plain sight in Wistan's luxuriously furnished room is the stolen manuscript, disguised as an ordinary tome of poetry, among others of the same sort on a shelf. The trick is *Extremely Hard* (-30) to detect. Wistan is awaiting a chance to slip the book out of town unnoticed.

28. Taverns. (2) Same as #6.

29. Stables. (1) Same as #7.

30. Smiths/Farriers. (3) Able to perform simple repairs and shoe horses.

31. Weaponsmith. (1) Spears, daggers, broadswords, handaxes, and battleaxes of ordinary quality are for sale.

32. Fletcher/Bowyer. (1) Longbows and arrows are offered for sale. Higher quality arms can be made to order, up to +10.

33. Armorer. (1) Only ordinary leather armor, various helms, and wooden shields are for sale. Metal armor can be imported, but orders take two months to arrive.

34. Jeweler. (1) Gems of up to 200 gp value will be purchased. Higher valued gems will be appraised, but the jeweler cannot afford to buy them personally. 2 guards, equivalent to Burgwarders, are present. 1200 gp in gems and jewelry are stored in a vault (*Ext. Hard*, -30, to open).

35. Seer-Astrologer. (1) Only simple predictions are within this mountebank's competence, but he will pretend to far greater knowledge.

36. Scribe/Stationer. (1) Books, maps, and rune paper are sold.

37. Chandlers. (2) Tallow, beeswax candles and oil are available.

38. Barbers. (2) Can also perform minor surgery; buy and sell some herbs.

39. Residences. (20)

Summit/Maethelstede

No wall surrounds the high and steep-sided summit of the burg. Most of the great structures are clustered around the plaza.

40. Healer's House. A modest dwelling of only 2 stories, but solidly built and well furnished within, this is Chilperic's residence. He is 70% likely to be present, and a servant announces visitors. The Healer's collection of herbs, elixirs and potions in his cellar, though seemingly rustic and confused at first sight, is impressive to any connoisseur of quality. Chilperic buys and sells herbs. The cellar is hidden (*Very Hard*, -20 to locate and open).

41. Granaries. (2) These huge barns store the town's food reserves.

42. Moneychangers. (2) In these fortresslike stone houses the two rival bankers will change coin from other lands to Gondorian equivalents at a 5% commission, deposit wealth for safekeeping at no charge, and make loans for short terms if collateral is offered. Each establishment has 3-4 guards, equivalent to Burgwarders. The vaults are Dwarven-built (*Sheer Folly*, -50, to open); each contains around 2000 gp in coin.

43. Great Houses. (8) Here reside the wealthiest merchants of Maethelburg and their families. Guntram's house is the largest and most ornate. The Master is 80% likely to be at home.

44. Scaepsael. (Sheep Hall) Bales of wool clutter this wide hall, where rural shepherds bargain with the town's staplers (cloth merchants) and an occasional wandering Elf.

45. Cornsael. (Grain Hall) In this spacious and high-roofed hall the local grain merchants gather to buy crops. During market days the hall is especially packed and raucous.

46. Fellsael. (Hide Hall) Across from the plaza from the Cornsael is the equally large fur and hide exchange, where many fortunes have been earned by local traders.

47. Burgsael. (Town Hall) Grandest of the impressive wooden halls fronting on the Maethelstede, the Burgsael is employed for public meetings, ceremonies, elections and the assemblies of the Ealdormot. At the far end of the tapestry-hung hall is the antique leibethron wood *Giefstol*, the ornate throne donated by King Hyarmendacil I.

48. Kingsmanshouse (Rh. Cynningesmannhus). A magnificent and palatial residence by local standards, the mansion of the Kingsman was constructed of stone by expert Dwarven masons, well paid from the royal treasury of Gondor. Its four stories, with elegant mullioned windows, are topped by a high slate roof, and a colossal chimney rises at either end of the manse. Inside, the first floor is given over to a grand entry hall and feasting chamber. In the cellar are the kitchen, storerooms, and wine vault. A secret vault contains 3000 gp in coins, gems and jewelry (*Sheer Folly*, -50, to locate and open). Above, the second floor is the guard barracks. The third provides quarters for the Kingsman and his family, a library and magical laboratory. Servants' quarters and storage are on the fourth floor. The Kingsman is 80% likely to be home. 6-7 guards of the 20-man garrison are always on duty.

49. Thegn's Tower (Rh. Thegnes Celicn). The fortress of the Thegn is a square tower, 90' high, constructed of rough stone with walls 10' thick. Windows are narrow slits admitting little light. Not the most comfortable residence, the primary object was ease of defense. A stairway climbs the wall to the only entrance, on the second floor, an ironbound oaken door, always guarded by 2 Burgwarders. The lowest ground floor contains cells, a well and storage, while floors 2, 3 and 4 are barracks for a troop of 20 Burgwarders each. Floors 5 and 6 are the private chambers of the Thegn and his family. The Thegn is 60% likely to be present. At all times 2 Burgwarders maintain a lookout from the flat battlemented roof, where a catapult is mounted. 4000 gp in coin and gems are safeguarded within the Thegn's quarters on the 5th floor, in a secret floor pit, *Very Hard* (-20) to detect. Besides the guards on duty, 30-40 Burgwarders and 1-2 officers will be in the Tower at any time.

9.2 BRIGANDS IN THE TOWER: T.A. 2940/ F.A. 1

Setting: Maethelburg and the Anduin Vales

Requirements: A party of low to moderate level adventurers (1st-6th), eager to become heroes and willing to risk lives to do it.

Aids: General background information about Maethelburg and maps are widely available in the Anduin Vales.

9.21 THE PLOT

A few years ago, a small band of brigands led by one *Swithwulf* wandered into the Anduin Vales from the wilderness of the Ered Mithrin. Following the course of the river, robbing farmers on their way, the desperate gang at last came to the town of Maethelburg. Secretly crossing the Anduin by night, they surprised the local militia, disarmed the inhabitants, and took over the town as their base. Swithwulf repaired the abandoned and partly ruined Thegn's Tower, making it his fortress, and commenced a reign of terror in the vicinity.

Unable to overthrow their oppressors without arms, the folk of Maethelburg have sent messages by fishing vessel seeking outside aid, which have reached the ears of the adventurers. The Beornings would like to assault the town and dispose of the brigands, but Swithwulf has taken the prominent citizens hostage and threatens to kill them if anyone seeks to attack Maethelburg. The PC's, however, can acquire food and advice from the Beornings on their way. The object is to enter the town in some manner without being noticed, determine the brigands' strength, and find a way to pick them off without alerting Swithwulf until it is too late. The townsfolk will be extremely grateful, and reward the PC's with a fair share of the loot the brigands have stolen from them.

9.22 OPERATIONS OVERVIEW

Only 300 townsfolk are left in Maethelburg in the late Third to early Fourth Age. The town survives as a local grain market and fishing port, with sporadic river trade between the Anduin Vales and Gondor. If armed, the citizens could field a militia of about 60 men, 2nd level warriors. At present, they have no army of any sort. Though the townsfolk can do little to help in any battle, they will gladly provide covert aid to adventurers opposing the brigands.

The only armed force in Maethelburg is Swithwulf's gang of some 30 brigands, poorly disciplined but tough and reasonably well armed. One third of the gang is always watching the main gate and waterfront, while most of the remainder is raiding or holed up in the Tower. If an alarm is raised, the entire gang will rapidly muster. Their reactions will depend on the nature of the threat. If attackers are weak, the brigands will sally forth and try to overwhelm them by sheer numbers. If the adventurers are wreaking serious havoc, the brigands will try to retreat to the Tower and threaten to kill the hostages, or use them to bargain for safe passage.

9.23 PROMINENT INDIVIDUALS

Swithwulf

Leader of the brigands due to his cunning and brute force, Swithwulf is an altogether unscrupulous sort, as bad as any Orc.

Brave and daring so long as the odds are in his favor, he loses heart if hard pressed, but always has a trick up his sleeve, and will not hesitate to sacrifice innocents or his own men to save himself. A Northman with much Easterling blood, Swithulf has long blond braided hair and a swarthy complexion. He bears many visible scars.

9.24 LAYOUTS

Though the terraced hill of Maethelburg still exists in its previous physical form, it is only inhabited along the waterfront and first terrace. The walls of the upper two terraces have mostly crumbled, and of the former great wooden halls only foundations survive in testimony to the more splendid town of old. The stone structures at the summit, around the Maethelstede, yet stand, but are partly ruined and mostly deserted.

Waterfront: A dozen dilapidated piers jut out from the shore. Two brigands stand watch over the waterfront, to prevent any escapes or unauthorized landings.

Mill. Poorly maintained, this stone building with its waterwheel still grinds local farmers' grain for a steep fee, half to the brigands.

Boatwright. (1)

Warehouses. (4) These are either empty and full of dust, attesting to the decline in trade, or are used to store fish and stink appropriately.

First Terrace

Gate. A single portal leads into the town proper, built of ironbound logs and swinging inward. Above the gate is a 20' high wooden watchtower reached by a ladder. 5 brigands are always stationed here, 2 in the tower and 3 behind the gates, able to quickly man the wall.

Inns. (2) Once offering simple comforts and good cheer, the remaining travellers' lodgings now see very little business due to the presence of the brigands, and are badly in need of repair. Rooms are cheap, threadbare and tawdry, and the innkeepers apathetic. Standards will soon be restored if the brigands are banished.

Taverns. (2) Various townfolk and 1-4 off duty brigands may be found here. The brigands rarely bother to pay their bills.

Stables. (1) Inn customers are preferred.

Cooper/Wainwright. (1)

Cobbler. (1)

Woodcarvers. (2) Staves and cudgels can be made here in secret.

Tanner/Leatherworker. (1)

Potters. (2)

Weavers/Tailors. (2)

Grocers/Feed. (2)

Butcher. (1)

Brewer. (1) Good ale is still brewed, and the townfolk drink heavily.

Bakers. (2)

Chandler. (1)

Barber. (1) Also performs minor surgery and buys and sells some herbs.

Smith/Farrier. (1) Able to effect simple repairs and shoe horses.

Residences. (30)

Summit/Maethelstede.

Granary. (1) This tall barn stores the town's food reserves, one-fifth of which are confiscated to feed the brigands.

Ruins. (2) Broken chimneys and fragments of walls are all that remain of the stone structures that housed the moneylenders of old.

Kingsmanshouse Ruins. The former splendor of the mansion may even now be discerned in the surviving roofless shell, for the Dwarvish stonework was built to last. The brigands think the ruins haunted. Rarely do they dare to search the structure.

Thegn's Tower. Now restored as the brigands' headquarters and barracks, the Tower shows signs of wear over the centuries, crudely patched by unskilled masons. The core structure, however, is substantially intact, and the brigands have constructed a new floor. On the lowest level beneath the entrance, supplies for a prolonged siege are stored, and several hostages are imprisoned. 10 brigands are each quartered on levels 2, 3 and 4, one full group always being absent off duty. Swithulf has taken the most comfortable floors, 5 and 6, for his own. 400 gp, 1200 sp and 3000 cp in loot is stored in Swithulf's quarters on the 6th floor, in a large chest with a *Very Hard* (-20) lock. 2 brigands guard the entrance to the Tower on the second level, an ironbound oaken door, and one brigand keeps a lookout on the rooftop. 11-20 others are present inside.

10.0 OTHER ADVENTURE SETTINGS

The vicinity of the High Pass provides a multitude of varied adventure settings. In this section, two specific adventure sites are detailed in order to give the Gamemaster an idea of the myriad of possibilities that exist in a rich setting like the Misty Mountains.

10.1 THE GIANTS' ISLE

Strike northward from the upper branch of the High Pass near its summit, wandering into the trackless Misty Mountains, and you may soon encounter a mist-shrouded lake, from which juts a solitary jagged peak. Or so it is told in old tales. Few now dare to seek out the mysterious isle, which would lie in the heart of the Stone-giants' country. Perhaps lost wealth lies there ... or, more likely, only death for the foolishly inquisitive.

Setting: Giants' Isle and the Misty Mountains

Requirements: A party of high level adventurers (6th-10th) willing to stake their lives for the sake of glorious battle against monstrous foes and the slim hope of loot.

Aids: Maps of the Misty Mountains and the High Pass. No guides will dare to accompany the adventurers into the giants' realm.

This adventure may be played in any time period.

10.11 THE PLOT

The player characters have come into possession of an ancient, weathered manuscript authored by one *Nabin*, a long-deceased Dwarven scholar and explorer of unimpeachable veracity, a member of Durin's Folk in Moria. His tale is most intriguing, and is set forth in the original:

"..... Winter had scarce run its bitter course in the high mountains, when I, having barely escaped from the foul Orcs, came upon the strange isle. I know not even today where it lieth for certain, though I have ventured to guess its position from certain Clues. Ghostly it seemed, arising from the mists of its chill and deep mere. Lost in the mountains, I thought at first I beheld some world not of this Middle-earth. Whilst I stood with gaze transfixed, distracted in contemplation, I was seized from behind, and turned to face the grinning countenance of a horrible Giant. The Monster strode rapidly down to the lake shore, grasping me in its huge hand, and there boarded a skiff, small to it maybe, but a ship to me. I was borne to the Isle, and there, after ascent of many hundreds of steps, entered the Giant's cave. The Giant revealed to me a marvelous Treasure: Rubies, Diamonds, and other rare and wonderful Gems, which the Giant said he and his kin had unearthed. Not long was I to enjoy this spectacle, for the Giant proposed to stew me in his deep Cauldron. Desperate, I challenged him to a riddle-game for my life, and as I am writing this, thou knowest who won; my master-riddle shall stay a secret. The Giant set me down far from his Isle, and never had I the courage or folly to seek once again to find it."

For those braver or more foolhardy than clever old Nabin, the goal is clear. Appended to the manuscript is a rough sketch map on which Nabin presents his informed guess as to the location of the Giants' Isle, and which is very nearly correct. On one point in the tale Nabin is distressingly obscure; the numbers of the Giant's kin. The treasure, though, was sufficiently wonderful to impress a Dwarf who had known the glories of Khazad-dum at its heyday. What more could one ask?

10.12 OPERATIONS OVERVIEW

Giants' Isle is still inhabited in force by the monsters for which it is named. Altogether there are six of the great creatures: the old patriarch *Gilim*, who had captured Nabin, his giant-wife *Obusa*, and *Gilim*'s four strong and ferocious but not overly clever sons. The giant-wife is always at home on the forsaken isle, while there is an 80% chance, rolled individually, for the presence of *Gilim* and each of his sons.

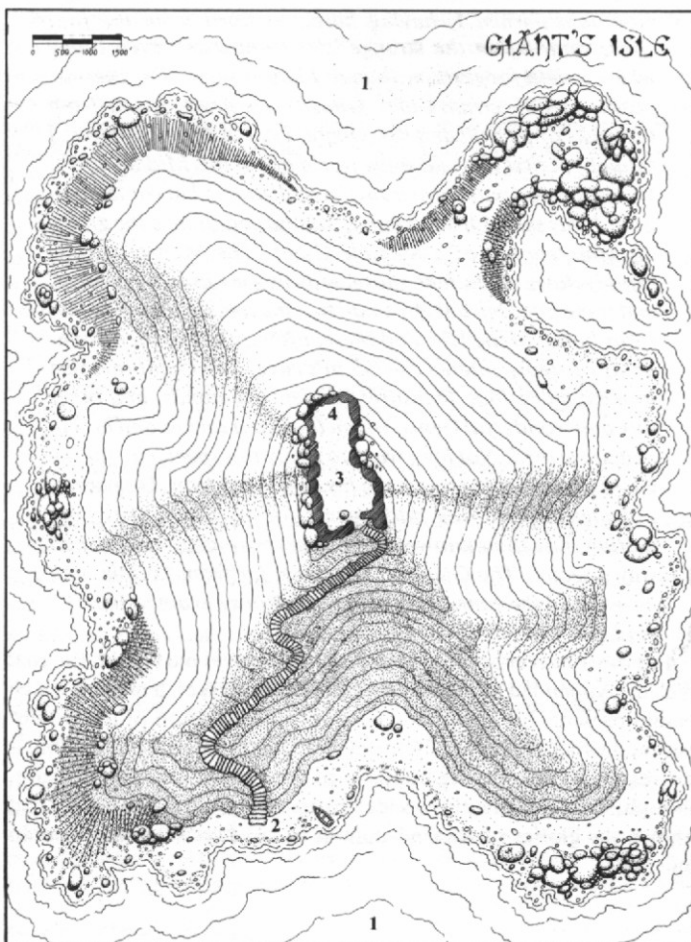
An especially greedy and industrious clan, these Giants have amassed a stupendous gem-ward by mining into the depths of the Mountains, especially beneath their own isle. Defense of the hoard against attacking thieves will be extremely resolute. If the giants spot adventurers crossing the lake, they will try to sink the boat with cast boulders, and are likely to succeed. Even if the PC's get ashore unharmed, the giants can make it difficult for them to attain entrance to the cave and the treasure. At least one giant is always on lookout from the cave, so that surprise is not easily achieved.

10.13 LAYOUTS

1. Mountain Lake. Icy cold and of unfathomed depths, the lake around the Giants' Isle cannot be waded or swum, even by giants. The lake acts as an ideal barrier to assault, for the distance between the shore and the isle is about half a mile, and the crossers have no cover at all. The Giants always leave one of their huge skiffs (unless they are all on the isle), constructed from tree trunks, on the outer shore of the lake as well as on the isle. A giant's skiff can hold up to 6 ordinary passengers, and is propelled by a long oar pole.

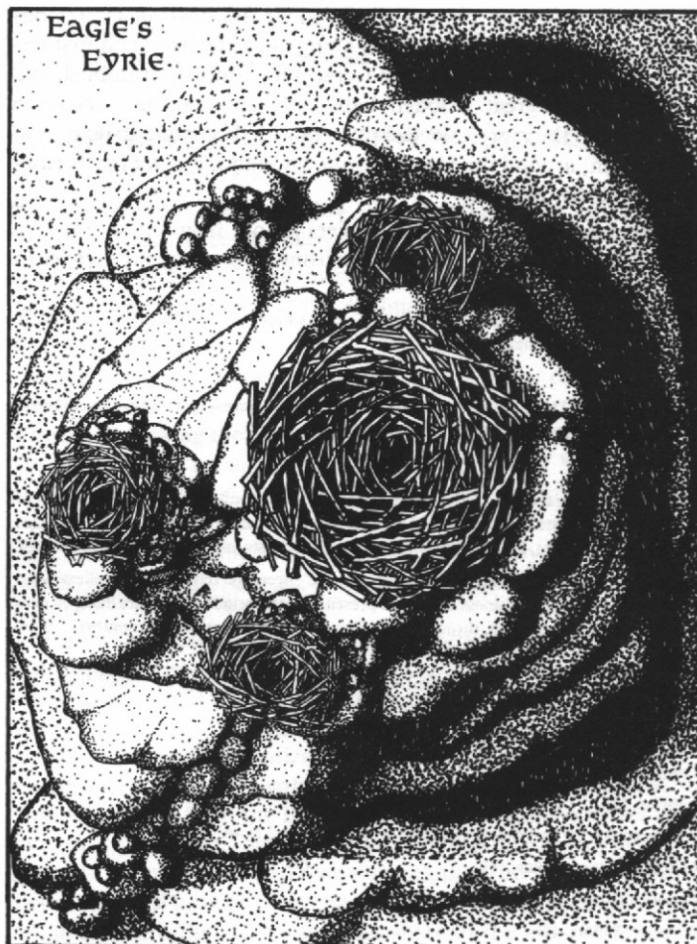
2. Stairs. From the steep foot of the island mountain, gargantuan stone steps wind upward along the face of the mountain, to a cave mouth 500 feet up. Boulders may be tumbled down from the heights above against unwanted climbers.

3. Giant Lair. An artificial cavern, the dwelling of the Giants has but one entrance, closed by an enormous stone door which is kept sealed by a boulder rolled against it on the inside. Only another Giant, an elephant or powerful magic could hope to force entry. Unless the Giants are aware of the approach of foes, however, the door stands open, and one Giant maintains a lookout across the lake from the top of the stairs.



Within the Giants' cavern is a colossal vault, 2000' long, 500' wide and 100' high. Every piece of stone furnishings, of course, is twice human proportions. To the back is the object of the quest: an enormous treasure bin covered by a stone slab weighing half a ton. The Giants' fortune is suitably huge, worth 14,000 gp in uncut gems, and several pack animals would be necessary to haul the lot away.

4. Mines. Several gaping shafts, 20' wide, descend into the mountain from the rear of the cavern, should any wish to emulate the gem-delving Giants.



10.2 EAGLE'S EYRIE

A solitary mountain jabbing sharply upward amidst the plain of the Anduin, extended from the Misty Mountains at the end of a lengthy ridge, Eagles' Eyrie is an unmistakable landmark. 7200' high, it overshadows anything else in the vicinity, though actually lower than the main mass of the mountains to the west. On every side the tower of natural stone drops off in irregular steplike shelves, affording ideal nesting spots for the Lord of the Eagles and the 15 Chieftains of his permanent court, whose eyries cluster about the royal Great Shelf. Virtually unscaleable (a series of maneuvers ranging from *Extremely Hard* (-30) to *Absurd* (-70), the mountain is the impregnable fortress of the noble avians, who can simply pluck any foolish climber off the mountainside for a terrible drop, and cannot be matched by any other winged creature in aerial battle.

In any event, the Eagles have no treasure to make an assault on their citadel worth the bother, save for some ornamental gold collars conferred by the Dwarves after the Battle of Five Armies. Eagles are simply not acquisitive creatures, and have no use for such things as gold and gems. Eagle's Eyrie, then, is not an adventure site in the usual sense. Nevertheless, it may play an integral role in any number of other adventures in the region. Player characters wishing to implore the aid of the Eagles will find no better site than the foot of Eagles' Eyrie to deliver one's plea. Individuals are often transported here after harrowing escapes to rest before going on, or to confer with the Lord of the Eagles.

PRICES AND CURRENCY: T.A. 1640

Gondor's currency is based upon a silver standard: silver coins weigh .25 oz. Other coinage includes: tin (.5 oz), copper (.5 oz), bronze (.25 oz), and gold coins (.5 oz). The exchange rate in this area is as follows:

- 1 gold piece (gp) = 20 sp
- 1 silver piece (sp) = 10 bp
- 1 bronze piece (bp) = 5 cp
- 1 copper piece (cp) = 10 tp

Food and Lodging: Good lodging and alcoholic beverages costs double standard price, all rations are half-priced, and all other food and lodging cost standard prices.

Transport: Small boats, wagons, mules, ponies, and horses available at standard prices. Boat service for passengers = 2 sp/day; average speed 7 mph downstream, 5 mph upstream.

Accessories: Backpack, Packframe, Bedroll, Caltrops, Flint & Steel, Lantern, Rope, Scabbard, Tarp, Tent, Lockpick Set, Oil Flask, and Weapon Belt = 1.5 x standard cost. Other accessories cost standard prices.

Protective Equipment: Leather Armor = 2 x standard price. Metal Armor = 4 x standard price. All other protective equipment cost standard prices.

Weapons: Blade weapons = 2.5 x standard price. Other Weapons = 1.5 x standard price.

NOTE: Standard prices can be found in Table ST-4 in MERP. If using RM, goods requiring complex manufacturing range from 1.5x to 5x standard costs.

11.1 MASTER BEAST TABLE

Type	Lvl	#/Encoun	Size	Speed	Hits	AT	DB	(Primary/ Secondary/Tertiary) Attack	Notes
Animals									
Bat	0	1-100	S	VF/VF	4	No/1	60	25Ti/-/-	Will not attack unless provoked.
G. Vampire Bat	1	12-30	S	VF/VF	25	No/1	40	40SBI/40SCI	1-5 hits/rnd after a critical is achieved.
Brown Bear	5	1-2	L	MF/MF	170	SL/8	10	70LGr/60LCI/20MBi	May choose to charge (LBa + 60).
Black Bear	4	1-5	M	F/F	150	SL/4	30	60LGr/70LCI/30MBi	Will not attack unless provoked.
Cave Bear	12	1-5	H	MF/F	300	SL/8	40	95HBa/90HCl/85HGr	Use Large Creature Criticals.
Great Bear	10	1-2	L	F/F	200	SL/8	40	80LGr/70MCI/30MBi	Semi-intelligent. Use "Large" creature criticals.
Chamber Bird	2	21-30	M	F/F	25	No/1	30	40MPi/45MCI/-	Uses smell and batlike sonar for sensing.
Wild Boar	3	1	M	F/MF	120	No/4	30	40LHo/30MBa/20MTS	Mean-tempered. Vicious if cornered.
Cliff Buzzard	5	3-9	M	VF/F	80	No/1	40	60LCI/50MPi	Semi-intelligent; will attack weak targets.
Crow	1	1-10	S	F/F	6	No/1	50	30SBI/20SCI	
Deer	2	1-12	M	VF/F	70	No/3	40	20MHo/20MTS	Only males have horns. Will flee if possible.
Golden Eagle	3	1-5	M	F/F	30	No/1	30	45MCI/35SPi	Rarely attack large creatures unless provoked.
Great Elk	4	1-4	L	F/F	200	SL/4	20	65LHo/55LBa	Found in woods and highland regions.
Wild Goat	2	1-12	M	F/MF	50	No/4	30	40MHo/40MBa/10MTS	Only males have horns to use. Mildly aggressive.
Hornets	0	2-200	T	M/VF	1	No/1	30	0TSt	Attack only when disturbed.
Moose	4	1-3	L	SL/M	240	SL/4	15	55LBa/35LTS	Found in the woods.
Vault Shrike	1	1-5	T	VF/BF	5	No/1	60	45Ti/-/-	Aggressive red bats; 4th lvl nerve poison.
Cave-troll	12	1	L	M/M	175	RL/11	25	100HCl/85Weapon	Use Large Creature critical tables.
Hill-troll	10	1-3	L	SL/M	150	RL/11	20	95LBa/85LCI	Use Large Creature Critical tables.
Forest-troll	6	1-6	M	M/MF	100	RL/11	10	70LCI/60LBI	Found in the woods.
Stone-troll	7	1-5	L	SL/M	120	RL/11	15	80LBa/65LCI	Use Large Creature Critical tables.
Young-troll	4	1-4	M	M	80	RL/11	10	45LCI/35MBi	Of all types.
Pit Viper	2	1-2	S	SL/BF	20	No/1	40	40SSt/Poison	Poisonous: 2nd lvl muscle poison.
Warg	6	1-10	M	VF/VF	150	No/4	50	75LBI/60LCI	Operate in packs and will warn Orcs.
Wolf	3	5-15	M	F/F	110	No/3	30	65LBI	Will not attack groups unless provoked.
Undead (a representative sampling)									
Ghost	7	1-5	M	F/F	100	No/1	30	Special/60MBa/50We	Use Large Creat. Criticals. Drains 3 CON pt/rnd (10'R).
Ghoul	2	any	M	M/F	35	No/1	15	30SBA/40SCI/20SBI	Stupid, animated corpse; infects wounds.
Skeleton	5	any	M	F/F	80	No/1	30	50We/60MBa/-	Casts "Fear" (10'R).
Minor Wight	10	1	L	M/M	90	RL/11	30	90We/80LBa/-	Use Large Creat. Criticals. Casts "Fear" (15'R). Paralysis and sleep, upon touch.

Codes: The statistics given describe a typical creature of that type. Most of the codes are self-explanatory: **Lvl** (level), **#/Encoun** (number encountered), **Size** (Tiny, Small, Medium, Large, or Huge), **Hits**, and **DB** (defensive bonus). The more complex statistics are described below.

Speed: A creature's Speed is given in terms of "Movement Speed / Attack Quickness": C = Creeping, VS = Very Slow, SL = Slow, M = Medium, MF = Moderately Fast, F = Fast, VF = Very Fast, and BF = Blindingly Fast.

AT (Armor Type): The two letter code gives the creature's *MERP* armor type (No = No Armor, SL = Soft Leather, RL = Rigid Leather, Ch = Chain, Pl = Plate); the number is the equivalent *ROLEMASTER* armor type.

Attack: Each attack code starts with the attacker's Offensive Bonus. The first letter indicates the size of the attack: T = Tiny, S = Small, M = Medium, L = Large, and H = Huge. The last two letters indicate the type of attack: Ti = Tiny, Pi = Pincher/Beak, Ba = Bash, Bi = Bite, Cl = Claw, Cr = Crush, Gr = Grapple, Ho = Horn, TS = Trample/Stomp, St = Stinger, and We = Weapon. These codes differ slightly from the *MERP* codes and the *ROLEMASTER* codes.

(Primary/Secondary/Tertiary): Each creature usually initiates combat using its "Primary" attack. Depending upon the situation or success of the Primary attack, it may later use its "Secondary" attack or "Tertiary" attack.

11.2 MASTER MILITARY TABLE

Name/#	Race	Lvl	Hits	AT	DB	Sh	Gr	Missile/ Melee OB	Secondary OB	Mov M	Notes
Uruk-tarkhnarb Military Forces: T.A. 1640											
Officers/12	Uruk-hai	8	110	Ch/14	45	Y5	A/L	105sc	90lb	10	+ 5 Chain, Shields, and scimitars. Some use whips(wp).
Guards/50	Uruk-hai	6	100	Ch/14	40	Y	A/L	95sc	75lb	5	+ 5 Scimitars. Some use handaxes (ha).
Leaders/85	Lesser Orcs	4	75	Ch/13	25	Y	—	70sc	50sb	0	Also carry whips (wp). Some ride Wargs.
Exp. War./170	Lesser Orcs	3	60	Ch/13	25	Y	—	60sc	40sb	0	Some use handaxes (h).
Adult War./425	Lesser Orcs	2	45	RL/9	20	Y	—	45sc	30sb	0	Many carry spears (sp).
Young War./300	Lesser Orcs	1	35	RL/9	20	Y	—	35sp	20sb	-5	Some have scimitars (sc). "Snaga" orcs.
Trackers/85	Lesser Orcs	2	30	RL/9	30	Y	—	40sc	35sb	5	Scouts & Rangers / Thieves & Rogues & Rangers. Good pursuers.
Elite Trackers/60	Lesser Orcs	4	45	RL/9	35	Y	—	65sc	55sb	10	As above, plus skilled in ambush and stalking.
Priests/3	Uruk-hai	5	40	RL/9	25	Y	—	25ma	25cp	0	Animists/Evil Clerics; PP10, 6 lists.
Healers/6	Uruk-hai	3	30	RL/9	25	Y	—	25ma	25cp	0	Animists/Lay Healers; PP6, 4 lists.
Troll Guard/5	Cave-trolls	12	150	RL/11	30	Y	—	140wh	110LCI	5	Berserk in battle, never retreat.
Wargs/60	Wolves	5	150	SL/4	30	N	—	80LBI	60LCI	30	Very Fast, Fast if ridden.
Females/varies	Lesser Orcs	0	25	No/1	15	N	—	20cl	15da	0	Will fight if cornered.
Imps/varies	Lesser Orcs	0	15	No/1	25	N	—	10cl	10da	5	Will fight if cornered.
<i>General Notes: Lesser Orcs' bonuses reduced by -60 full daylight and by -25 in artificial or magical light. Trolls are turned to stone by direct sunlight. Uruk-hai and Wargs are unaffected by light.</i>											
Uruk-tarahnarb Military Forces: T.A. 2940											
Captains/3	Uruk-hai	10	130	Ch/14	45	Y5	A/L	120sc	100lb	10	Warriors. + 5 chain and shield, + 10 scimitar.
Chief Priests/1	Uruk-hai	8	55	RL/9	20	N	—	65qs	50da	5	Animist/Evil Cleric; Ring of Protection + 15 (DB and RR's); Viperstaff; 48 PP (16 x 3 staff), 9 lists.
<i>General Note: Remaining forces use identical stats from T.A. 1640. Numbers differ as follows: Officers—11; Guards—50; Leaders—76; Experienced Warriors—152; Adult Warriors—380; Young Warriors—266; Trackers—76; Elite Trackers—50; Priests—3; Healers—6; Troll Guard—5; Wargs—60.</i>											
Uruk-tarkhnarb: F.A. 1											
<i>All Orcish forces are identical in stats to those in T.A. 1640 and T.A. 2940. Numbers differ as follows: Captains—3; Chief Priest—1; Officers—6; Guards—30; Leaders—50; Experienced Warriors—100; Adult Warriors—250; Young Warriors—175; Trackers—50; Elite Trackers—25; Priests—3; Healers—6; Troll Guard—3; Wargs—40.</i>											
Nenedain Military Forces: T.A. 1640											
Cnihtas/3	Northmen	8	115	Ch/14	45	Y5	A/L	105bs	90lb	10	Mounted warriors. + 5 chain and shield; + 5 broadsword.
Burgwarders/60	Northmen	4	75	Ch/13	30	Y	—	70bs	50lb	5	Professional warriors. Guard Gates, Thegn's Tower.
Fyrd Chiefs/2	Northmen	10	140	Ch/15	40	Y10	A/L	140sp	80lb	5	Clan chief, one leads each Fyrd.
Town Fyrd/200	Northmen	2	45	SL/5	25	Y	—	50sp	25lb	5	Regional militia. Can be summoned on short notice.
Rural Fyrd/700	Northmen	2	55	SL/5	25	Y	—	55sp	40lb	0	Regional militia. Can be summoned in a couple of days.
Warriors/100	Beornings	4	75	RL/9	20	N	—	80ba	75lb	10	Experienced Warriors.
Men-at-arms/20	Dunedain	3	70	Ch/14	25	Y	A/L	65bs	45cp	0	The Kingsman's guard.
Offa's Men/11-20	Northmen	2	30	SL/5	35	Y	—	45ss	45da	10	Scouts/Thieves & Rogues. Smugglers, loaf around waterfront.
Military Forces in the Anduin Vales: T.A. 2940/F.A. 1											
Brigands/30	Northmen	3	60	RL/9	25	Y	—	60sp	45cp	0	Swifwulf's gang of bandits.
Warriors/250	Beornings	4	75	RL/9	20	N	—	80ba	75lb	10	Experienced Warriors.
Warriors/550	Woodmen	2	50	No/1	30	Y	—	50ha	40lb	5	Standard available Warriors.
Military Forces of the Great Eagles: All Periods											
Eagle Lord/1	Great Eagle	40	350	RL/11	80	N	—	180HC1	150HPi	40	Lord of the Eagles.
Chieftains/15	Great Eagle	30	300	RL/11	85	N	—	120HC1	95LPi	40	The Lord's Court/Bodyguard.
Warriors/120	Great Eagle	20	250	RL/11	90	N	—	110HC1	80LPi	50	Scattered over the northern Misty Mountains and the west/central Grey Mountains.
<i>General Note: Criticals against the Great Eagles are treated as "Large" creature criticals; for the Eagle Lord use "Super-large" criticals. The Lord and his chieftains fight in organized squadrons. The sheer force of the massed beating of their wings is often enough to knock opponents of medium size or less to the ground. They favor repeated diving and slashing attacks, and will attempt to dislodge nonwinged foes from precipices to fall to their deaths, or simply lift them high into the air and drop them.</i>											

OB's (Offensive Bonuses): Weapon abbreviations follow OBs: fa—falchion, ss—short sword, bs—broadsword, sc—scimitar, th—two hand sword, ma—mace, ha—hand axe, wh—war hammer, ba—battle axe, wm—war mattock, cl—club, qs—quarter staff, da—dagger, sp—spear, ml—mounted lance, ja—javelin, pa—pole arm, sl—sling, cp—composite bow, sb—short or horse bow, lb—long bow, lcb—light cross bow, hcb—heavy crossbow, bo—bola, wp—whip, ts—throwing star, hb—halbard, ro—Rock (Large Crush). Animal and unarmed attacks are abbreviated using code from The Master Beast Chart. Combatants untrained in a type of weaponry (e.g., Orcs untrained in missile combat) suffer a penalty of -25 when attacking. Melee and missile offensive bonuses include the bonus for the combatant's best weapon in that category.

11.3 MASTER NPC TABLE

Name	Lvl	Hits	AT	DB	Sh	Gr	Melee OB	Missile 2ndary OB	Mov M	Notes
Goblin-gate: T.A. 1640										
Urgubal	16	155	Ch/14	45	Y10	A/L	160sc	130sb	0	Uruk-hai Warrior/Fighter. The Great Goblin. + 10 Chain and Shield; + 10 shortbow; <i>Elfhever</i> (see 8.4).
Balkhmog	13	145	Ch/14	50	Y5	A/L	135bs	120sb	10	Uruk-hai Warrior/Fighter. Captain of the Wolf Gate. + 5 Chain and Shield; + 10 broadsword; + 5 shortbow.
Luzog	10	130	Ch/14	45	Y5	A/L	120sc	100sb	5	Uruk-hai Warrior/Fighter. Captain of the Back Door. + 5 Chain and Shield; + 10 scimitar; + 5 shortbow.
Yazhgar	10	65	RL/9	30*	N	-	75qa	60da	15	Uruk-hai Animist/Evil Cleric. Priest of Darkness. Ring of Protection + 15 (to DB and RR's); <i>Viperstaff</i> (see Section 8.4); 60PP (20 x3 staff), 11 lists.
Goblin-gate: T.A. 2940										
Ogrod	15	160	Ch/14	55	Y10	A/L	160sc	135lb	10	Uruk-hai Warrior/Fighter. The Great Goblin. + 10 chain and shield; + 5 shortbow; <i>Elfhever</i> (see Section 8.4).
Freobeort	6	110	RL/9	35	Y5	-	100ha	70lb	10	Beorning Warrior/Fighter. Captive, Beorn's nephew. Stats assume availability of arms/armor.
Gollum	15	130	No/1	60	N	-	125MGr	85MBi	50	Hobbit Scout/Thief. Bearer of the One Ring. Possesses <i>The One Ring</i> (see Section 8.4) until T.A. 2941.
Goblin-gate: F.A. 1										
Volog	13	140	Ch/14	60	Y10	A/L	150sc	135sb	10	Uruk-hai Warrior/Fighter. The Great Goblin. + 10 chain and shield; + 5 shortbow; <i>Elfhever</i> (see Section 8.4).
Maethelburg: T.A. 1640										
Herion	10	75	No/2	35*	N	-	40qs	15da	10	Dúnadan Mage/Magician. The Kingsman. Staff, x3 multiplier; Ring of Protection + 15 (DB and RR's); PP 60 (20 x3 staff), 14 lists.
Osric	14	150	Ch/14	55	Y10	A/L	150sp*	135lb	10	Northman Warrior/Fighter. The Thegn. + 10 chain and shield, + 5 longbow; <i>Thegnspear</i> , + 15, + 25 and "slaying" vs. Orcs and Trolls.
Guntram	8	65	RL/9	50*	Y5	-	90bs*	80lb	15	Northman Scout/Rouge. Master of Maethelburg. + 10 broadsword; + 5 armor and shield; <i>Chain of the Master</i> , + 10 Protection (DB and RR's), + 25 to Perception and Trading, golden.
Chilperic	12	55	No/2	50*	N	-	60qs*	50cp	5	Northman Animist/Lay Healer. Maethelburg's physician. Staff x2 multiplier, + 10 to OB; Robes, + 30 to OB; PP 72 (36 x2 staff), 15 lists.
Morwen	10	90	Ch/13	45*	Y5	-	110bs*	90lb	x12	Dúnadan Ranger. Agent for the King of Arthedain. + 5 chain and shield; + 10 broadsword; + 5 longbow; Elven Cloak (+ 20 stalking/hiding maneuvers). PP 20 (+ 2 spell adder), 5 lists.
Wistan	9	60	No/1	40*	Y10	-	80bs	65lb	10	Northman/Dunlending Bard. Agent for the Witch-king. + 10 broadsword; + 10 shield; lute, x3 bardic multiplier; 81 PP (27 x3 lute), 7 lists.
Offa	5	50	RL/9	45	Y5	-	75ss	55wh	15	Northman Scout/Thief. Smuggler leader. + 5 shortsword; + 5 shield.
The Anduin Vales: T.A. 2940 / F.A. 1										
Swithwulf	7	105	Ch/14	40	Y5	A/L	110ms*	85cp	5	Northman Warrior/Fighter. Brigand leader. + 10 morning star; + 5 armor and shield.
Beorn	30	200	RL/10	30	N	A/L	200ba	180lb	15	Beorning Warrior/Fighter. Shapechanger.
(Bear)	30	280	SL/8	80	N	-	180HRa	120LBi	30	Use "Large creatures" criticals when in bear-form. Beorning lord-warrior in T.A. 2940, later chieftain.
Grimbeorn	20	165	RL/10	30	N	-	160ba	150lb	15	Beorning Warrior/Fighter. Shapechanger.
(Bear)	20	240	SL/8	60	N	-	140HRa	100LBi	30	Use "Large creatures" criticals when in bear-form. Beorning warrior-chieftain during War of the Ring and F.A.1
Giants of Giant-isle										
Gilim	25	400	RL/11	40	N	-	180HRa	110Ro	10	Stone-giant Warrior/Fighter. The old Patriarch.
Obusa	18	350	RL/11	30	N	-	160HRa	100Ro	0	Stone-giant Warrior/Fighter. Gilim's giant-wife.
Styvyn	16	365	RL/11	30	N	-	140HRa	110Ro	5	Stone-giant Warrior/Fighter. Gilim's oldest son.
Kyvyn	15	325	RL/11	30	N	-	150HRa	70Ro	5	Stone-giant Warrior/Fighter. Gilim's 2nd son.
Shaûn	12	288	RL/11	35	N	-	120HRa	90Ro	10	Stone-giant Warrior/Fighter. Gilim's 3rd son.
Gûdê	10	250	RL/11	40	N	-	100HRa	100Ro	15	Stone-giant Warrior/Fighter. Gilim's youngest son.
General for the Giants: Melee attack is a club (use Huge Bash), Ro (rock) indicates a thrown object attack (any large object will do): treat as a Large Crush attack (LCr), range is 300' for Gilim and 200' for the rest. All of the Giants can also stomp opponents as a secondary attack, use their standard OB on a Huge Crush attack delivering double damage. Treat all of the Giants as "Large" creatures for the purposes of criticals.										
The Great Eagles										
Gwaihir	45	350	RL/11	80	N	-	180HC1	150HPi	50	Lord of the Eagles (T.A. 2939-3019). Gwaihir helped save Thorin and Co. from Orcs and Wargs in T.A. 2941 (<i>Hobbit</i>). During the War of the Rings (<i>LOTR</i>), he freed Gandalf from Isengard, he rescued Gandalf from the peak of Zirak-zigil after his fight with the Balrog, and he rescued Frodo and Sam from the slopes of Orodruin.
* — Armor or weapon is magical or specially made.										
Codes: The statistics given describe each NPC; a more detailed description of some of the more important NPC's can be obtained from the main text. Some of the codes are self-explanatory: Lvl (level), Hits, Sh (Shield), and Mov M (Movement and Maneuver bonus). The more complex statistics are described below. A parenthetical reference indicates that the NPC possesses an equivalent device or spell.										
AT (Armor Type): The two letter code gives the creature's MERP armor type (No = No Armor, SL = Soft Leather, RL = Rigid Leather, Ch = Chain, Pl = Plate); the number is the equivalent Rolemaster armor type.										
DB (Defensive Bonus): Note defensive bonuses include stats and shield. Shield references include quality bonus(e.g. "Y5" means "yes, a + 5 shield").										
Gr (Greaves): "A" and "L" are used to indicate arm and leg greaves respectively.										

11.4 MASTER ENCOUNTER TABLE

Encounter	Western	Eastern	Misty	High Pass		Maethel-	Front Porch	Goblin-	Ice	Fungi	Mines
	Foothills	Foothills	Mountains	Upper	Lower	burg	Wolf Gate Back Door	town	Caves	Caves	
Chance (%)	15%	10%	15%	20%	35%	7%	40%	30%	10%	15%	6%
Distance (miles)	5	8	3	2	4	.2	.2	.2	2	1	2
Time (hours)	4	4	6	2	2	1	1	1	8	6	8
Inanimate Dangers *											
Closing Pit Trap	—	—	—	—	—	—	01-02	01	01	01-02	01
Murder Pit Trap	—	—	—	—	01	—	03-04	02	02	03-04	02
Shifting Walls Trap	—	—	—	—	—	—	05-06	03	03	05-06	03
General Trap	01-02	01-03	01	01-05	02-06	01	07-09	04-05	04-05	07-09	04-08
Falling Rocks	03	04	02-06	06-11	07-10	—	10	—	06-11	10-13	09-23
Avalanche	—	—	07	12-14	11-12	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sites/Things											
Cave/Cavern	04-06	05-06	08-13	15-20	13-15	—	—	—	—	—	—
Mine/Quarry	07-08	07	14	21	16	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ruins	09-10	08-09	15	22	17	02	11	—	12	14-16	24-28
Settlement/Camp	11-13	10-13	16	23	18	—	—	—	—	—	—
Animals											
Bat (N)	14-16	14-15	17-19	24-26	19-20	03	12-14	06-07	13-20	17-21	29-32
G. Vampire Bat (N)	17	16	20	27	21	—	15	08	21-23	22-23	33-35
Brown Bear	18	17-18	21	28	22	—	—	—	—	—	—
Black Bear	19-20	19-20	22	29	23	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cave Bear	21	21	23	30	24	—	—	—	—	—	—
Great Bear	22	22	24	31	25	—	—	—	—	—	—
Chamber Bird (N)	—	—	—	—	—	—	16	09	24-28	24	36-38
Wild Boar	23	23-24	25	32	26	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cliff Buzzard	24-25	25-26	26-27	33-34	27	—	—	—	—	—	—
Crow/Birds	26-30	27-30	28-31	35-38	28-31	04-08	—	—	—	—	—
Deer	31-34	31-34	32	39	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Golden Eagle	35-36	35	33-35	40-43	32	—	—	—	—	—	—
Great Elk	37	36-37	36	44	33	—	—	—	—	—	—
Goat/Mtn. Sheep	38-40	38-40	37-42	45-50	34	09-11	—	—	—	—	—
Hornets	41	41-43	43-44	51	35	12	17	—	—	—	—
Moose	42	44-45	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Vault Shrike (N)	—	—	—	—	—	—	18-19	10	29-34	25-26	39-42
Pit Viper	43-44	46-47	45-46	52-53	36-37	13	20	11	35	27	43
Warg	45-46	48	47-49	54-58	38-42	—	21-28	12-16	36-37	28-29	44-45
Wolf	47-48	49-50	50-51	59-60	43	—	—	—	—	—	—
Other Animal §	49-62	51-63	52-65	61-64	44-46	14-18	29	17	38-39	30-32	46
Undead (N)	63	64	66	65	47	19	30	18	40-49	33-37	47-54
Men											
Locals	64-74	65-73	67-71	66	48	20-55	—	—	—	—	—
Foreigners	75-77	74-76	72	67	49	56-70	—	—	—	—	—
Brigands	78-80	77-78	73	68	50	71-72	—	—	—	—	—
Merchants	81	79	74	69	51	73-80	—	—	—	—	—
General Folk ¶	82	80	75	70	52	81-85	—	—	50	38	55
Orcs (N)											
Small Patrol (2-6)	83-86	81-85	76-82	71-79	53-70	—	31-50	19-38	51-75	39-55	56-70
Normal Patrol (6-10)	87	86	83-85	80-85	71-83	—	51-80	39-58	76-88	56-68	71-76
Warband (12-30)	88-89	87-88	86-87	86-89	84-91	—	81-90	59-63	89-91	69-71	77
Females & Imps (1-10)	—	—	—	—	—	—	91	64-78	—	72-74	78
Slaves & Guards	—	—	—	—	—	—	92	79-88	—	75-94	79-93
Elite Trackers	—	—	—	—	—	86	93-95	89-93	92-93	95-96	94-95
Special †	—	—	—	90	92	87	96	94-98	94	97	96
Trolls (N)											
Cave-trolls	90	89	88-89	91-92	93	—	97	99	95-99	98-99	97-99
Hill-trolls	91	90	90	—	94	—	98	—	—	—	—
Forest-trolls	92	91-92	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Stone-trolls	93	93	91	93	95	—	99	—	—	—	—
Young-trolls	94-96	94	92-94	94-95	96	—	—	—	—	—	—
Other Non-mannish Races											
Stone Giants	97	95-96	95-97	96-97	97	—	—	—	—	—	—
Elves	98	97-98	98	98	98	88-92	—	—	—	—	—
Dwarves	99	99	99	99	99	93-97	—	—	—	—	—
Other Beings ‡	00	00	00	00	00	98-00	00	00	00	00	00

Use of this Chart and Codes: This chart is designed to aid a Gamemaster using this module during the post T.A. 1637 period (after the Great Plague). It can be used to determine the location and occurrence of encounters which are not set in a fixed place by this package or the Gamemaster. If an encounter is rolled that is inappropriate, just reroll until an appropriate one is obtained. See the Master NPC Chart, Master Military Chart and The Master Beast Chart for details on specific encounters.

The Gamemaster should determine the group's location and the appropriate column and then roll for a possible encounter. The period of time covered by an encounter roll is either the **Time** given on the chart or the time it takes the group to cover the **Distance** given on the chart, whichever is shorter. If an encounter roll is less than or equal to the **Chance of Encounter** given on the chart, a second roll (1-100) is made to determine the nature of the encounter.

An encounter does not always require a fight or similar activity; a group can avoid or placate some of the above dangers with proper action or good maneuver rolls. This chart only gives the Gamemaster a guide for encounters with unusual or potentially dangerous sites or creatures.

(N) — These creatures are entirely or primarily nocturnal. If primarily nocturnal (orcs, giants, bats) they will appear only 50% of the time during daylight hours, and never if entirely nocturnal. Of course, if you are underground, these restrictions do not apply.

★ — Specific trap types are described in Section 8.14. Some traps will not be functional due to not being activated or maintained. For each 20 years (round down) that have passed since the trap was last in use, there is a 1% chance the trap will not take effect whenever it would normally be set off (due to disuse and no maintenance). For example, if a trap had been out of use for 200 years there would be a 10% chance that a trap would not go off. There is always at least a 10% chance that a trap will work despite its age. Such a trap still has a chance of going off every time that someone hits the trigger mechanism (i.e., a trap might not go off when the first person hits the trigger, but it might still go off later). The Gamemaster may also want to assign a chance that traps are not activated (i.e., not armed or primed to go off). We suggest a 10-20% chance overall.

§ — May be Alpine Marmots, Roe Deer, Lynx, Rabbits, Red Squirrels, Badgers, Stoats, Pine Martens, Red Foxes, Dogs, Wildcats, etc., or the GM may reroll or, ideally, determine the type and number by referring to a general creature listing, such as *MERP* chart ST-2 (p. 88-89) or *Arms Law* *Claw Law* charts 11.52 and 11.62. When referring to such a general listing, roll once to determine if the encounter is with an animal or a monster (e.g., 01-80 results in animals; 81-00 means monsters). Then roll again and count down from the top of the chart to determine the specific type of creature. Note that some types (e.g., monsters from a non-Middle-earth mythos) may be inappropriate, and another roll can be made.

† — General Folk could be almost anybody but probably not someone very famous or powerful. They might include traveling merchants, unemployed soldiers, messengers, other adventurers, etc. See the Master NPC Chart for other possibilities.

† — Special Orcs could include Orc parties lead by the Great Goblin or any of the other NPC's listed in Section 8.13 or 8.23.

‡ — Other Beings are usually alone, frequently powerful and often, but not always, evil. They might be wizards, lords, monsters, etc. The GM may reroll or, ideally, construct an encounter with a unique group or individual, such as a figure of note from the Master NPC Chart.

11.5 RANDOM FEATURES TABLE

Structure	City Level Passage	Ice Caves Passage	Fungi Caves Passage	Mines Passage	Specific* Features
Nothing	01-20	01-15	01-15	01-10	01-35
Passage bends left †	21-24	16-20	16-18	11-13	—
Passage bends right †	25-28	21-25	19-21	14-16	—
Passage straightens †	29-32	26-30	22-24	17-19	—
Passage slopes down †	33-34	31-34	25-26	20-21	—
Passage slopes up †	35-36	35-36	27-28	22-25	—
Passage levels off †	37-38	37-39	29-30	26-28	—
Passage Narrows †	39	40	31-32	29	—
Passage Broadens †	40	41	33-34	30	—
Dead-end †	41	42-45	35-37	31-36	—
Intersecting Passage †	42-51	46-59	38-47	37-48	36-55
Exit to Mountainside †	—	60-61	—	—	—
Exit to Under-deeps †	—	—	—	49	—
Light Shaft	52-56	62-71	48-49	—	56-61
Spring Pool/Well	57-61	72-74	50-55	50-51	62-71
Lava pool	62	75	56	51-54	72-73
Stairwell §	63-67	76	57-58	55	74-78
Rampway §	68-72	77-81	59-63	56-60	79-83
Slide Chute §	73-74	—	64-65	—	84-85
Slide Pole §	75	—	66-67	—	86-87
Stream/River ‡	76	82	68-70	61-63	88-89
Shaft/Pit ‡	77	83-84	71-74	64-67	90-93
Minor Chasm ‡	78-82	85-87	75-79	68-73	94-97
Crypt *	83-85	88-92	80	74	—
Forging-hall *	—	—	81	75-76	—
Dungeon *	86-87	—	82	77	—
Minor Armory *	88-90	—	—	78	—
Guard Post *	91-95	—	83-85	79	—
Cavern/Grotto *	96-97	93-97	86-93	80-82	—
Store-hall *	98	—	94-98	83-85	—
Excavation Chamber *	—	—	—	86-87	—
Quarry *	—	—	—	88-91	—
Junction Chamber * ▶	—	—	—	92-99	—
Special *	99-00	98-00	99-00	00	98-00

Use of this Chart and Codes: Section 8.1 contains the route maps, showing the principle passages, rooms, and key locations. Frequently used staircases and the traverse connecting routes are also indicated. The route maps do not show the smaller rooms, secondary passages, and natural phenomena. This table can be used to determine the location of these spots.

When in Goblin-gate, a group is in one of four areas: on a City Level, in the Ice Caves, in the Fungi Caves, or in the Mines. In addition, the group is either in a "passage" or at a "specific feature" (i.e., a room, a hall, a cavern, etc.). These two pieces of information determine which column of this table is used.

The Gamemaster should regularly determine the appropriate column and roll for possible features. We suggest a distance of 200' for each set of rolls in the Ice Caves and the Fungi Caves and 500' in the other areas. Features should be generated until a "nothing" or a "direction change" (marked with a †) result is obtained. If more than one feature is obtained, the Gamemaster should distribute their locations over the length covered by the roll (200' or 500'). Certain features will require more than one roll to generate, as specified below. If some results seem to be inappropriate, ignore them and reroll.

Note: When traveling along a passage not specifically drawn on the route maps, the passage is assumed to progress in the last direction given (i.e., straight, bending, sloping, etc.) until a result indicates that the direction changes or until a feature given on the route map is reached.

Note: This chart aids a Gamemaster in determining what structures and features are in a particular passage. When using this procedure, a Gamemaster should record the random structures which he generates for a section, so that he can reuse them if his characters visit sections already explored. Remember that Goblin-gate is so large, it could never be completely mapped in a dozen modules; thus, this table is intended as a simulation which allows a Gamemaster to handle Goblin-gate in a FRP environment.

Special — When this result is obtained the Gamemaster can either make up and use an unusual feature or structure or use a feature not normally found in that area or he can ignore the special result and reroll.

* — These features require further rolls on the appropriate "SPECIFIC FEATURE" column until a "nothing" result is obtained.

§ — These features (minor stairwells, rampways, slide chutes, and slide poles) usually only go up or down 1 or 2 levels (treat the Ice Caves as the top level, then the 3 City Levels, then the Fungi Caves, and the Mines as the bottom level). Make a roll as follows to determine how far up or down they go: 01-45, up one level; 46-90, down one level; 91-96 up one level and down one level; 97-98 up two levels; 99-00 down two levels. Ignore results that would result in going below the Mines or above the Ice Caves.

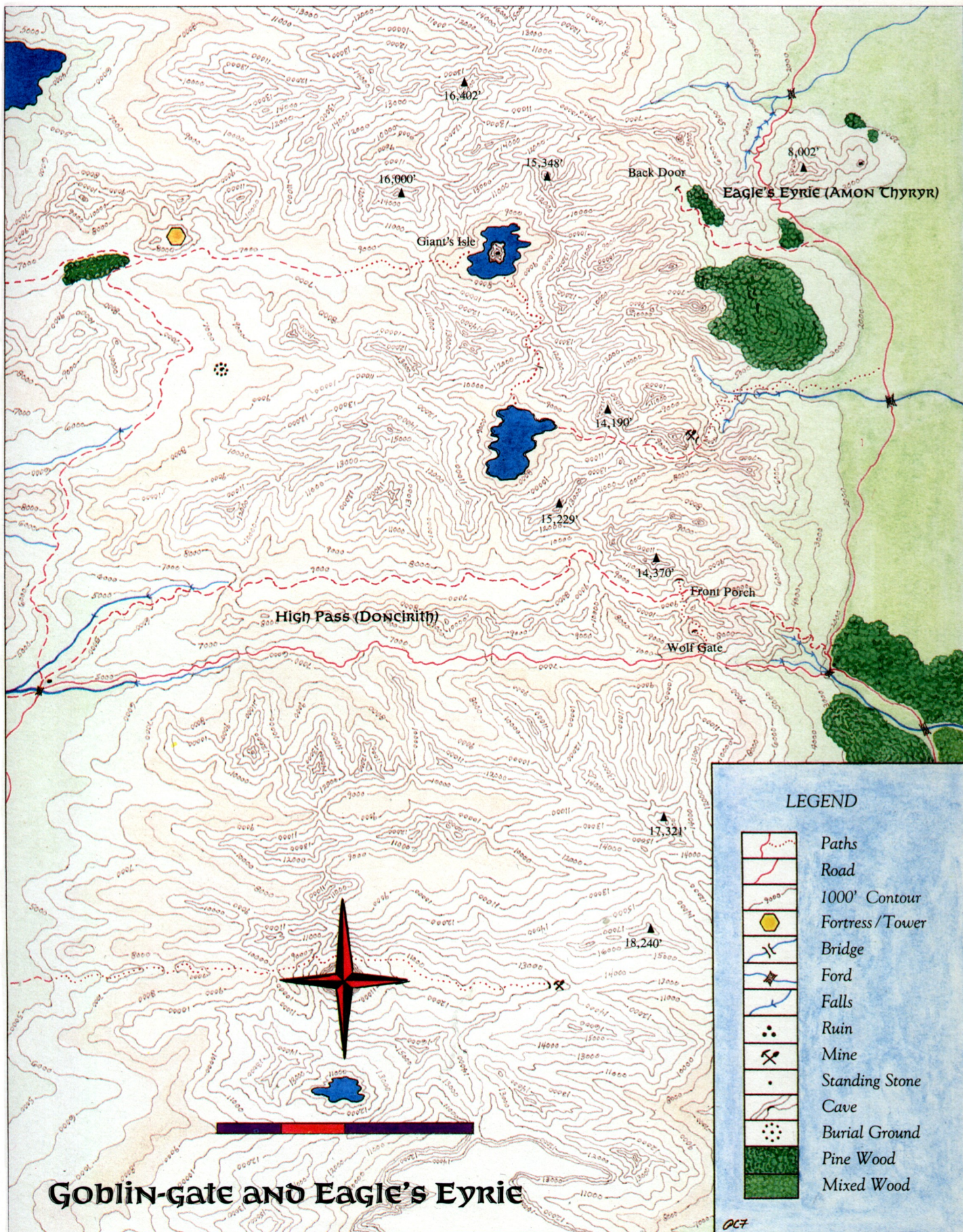
† — A second roll is required to determine the direction that an "intersecting passage" lead: 01-40, left; 41-80, right; 81-00, left and right. A roll is also required to determine the slope of each passage: 01-90, level; 91-95, slanting downward; 96-00, slanting upward.

▶ — Whenever a junction chamber is encountered, make a roll as follows to determine how many passages join in the chamber: 01-35, three; 36-85, four; 86-95, five; 96-00, six.

† — These are "direction change" results, which (along with the "nothing" result) halt the feature generation process for a given section of passage. If the passage being traversed is on the route maps, ignore these results and reroll.

‡ — Make a roll to determine the presence of bridges or aqueducts: 01-20, none; 21-50, rope & plank bridge; 51-80, fixed stone arch bridge; 81-90, fixed iron bridge; 91-98, aqueduct; 99-00, wooden draw-bridge. The presence of other features can be determined by making further rolls until a "nothing" result is obtained: 01-45, nothing; 46-65, cliff stairs up; 66-85, cliff stairs down; 86-90, path to left; 91-95, path to right; 96-98, path both ways; 99, ramp down; 00, ramp up. If some results seem to be inappropriate, just ignore them and reroll.



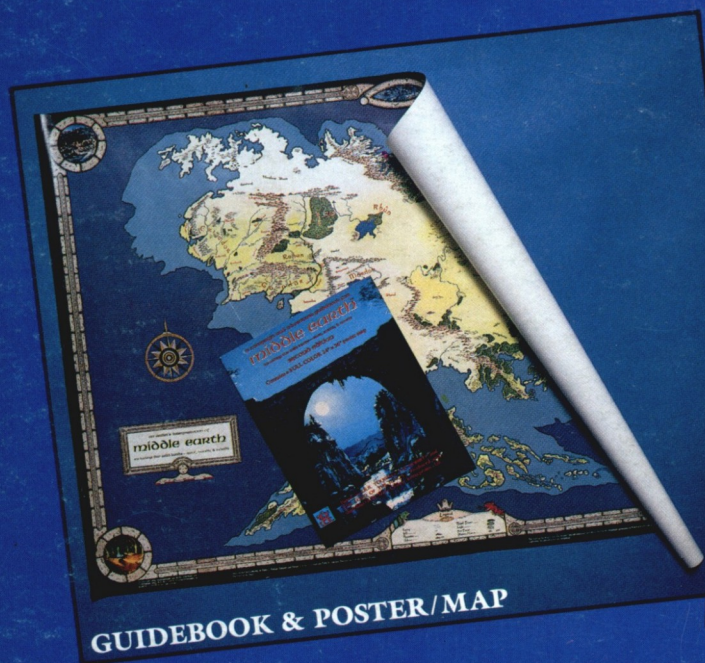


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